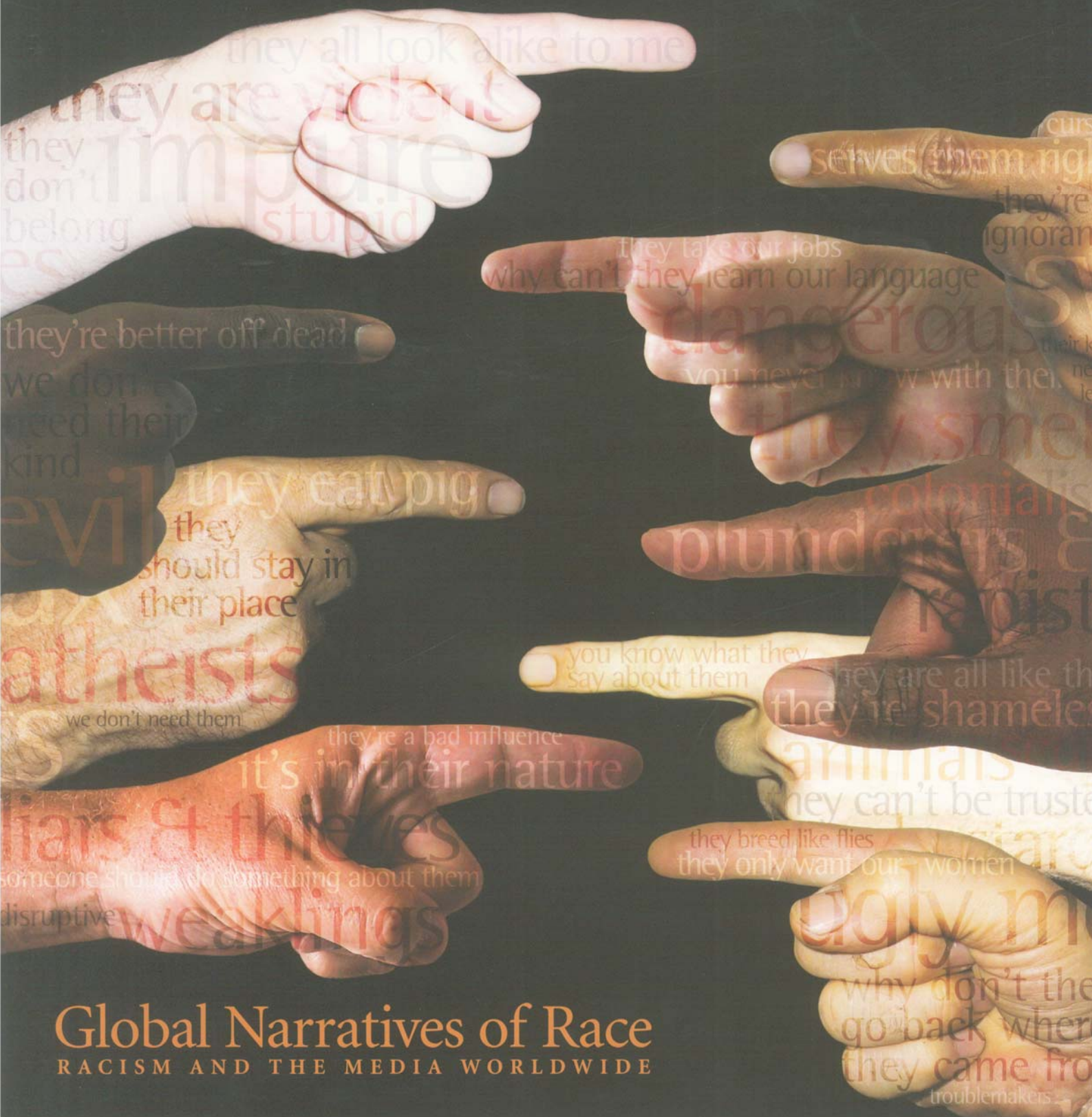


RHODES 20 JOURNALISM

Review



Global Narratives of Race
RACISM AND THE MEDIA WORLDWIDE

Jointly published by the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University and the Media Peace Centre

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We are shaped largely by the stories we are told, and the mass media are the paramount storytellers of today's world. Looking back several centuries, we can see how 'racialising narratives' developed in a variety of forms, and are now being globalised by the world's media. These overarching stories maintain and encourage power imbalances and inequities.

- How does a racist become a racist? Can a racist shed his or her racist beliefs? Scientists, psychologists and philosophers differ widely in their theories on the origins and nature of racism. Here we explore how we 'construct the enemy' through projection, and the potential for reasoning with the racist

Balkans 24 Beaks/Snouts. Drina/Drava – Milica Pesic explores the media's markers of race and ethnicity in the Balkans.

- [illegible]

60 Websites and reading material 60 List of contributors and contacts

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From the Editors... The Many Faces of Racism



Last year South African journalists reluctantly agreed to examine themselves under public spotlight when the Human Right Commission decided to hold hearings into racism in the media. The hearings were prompted by accusations by black lawyers and accountants that the media – still predominantly ‘white’-owned – had an agenda in discrediting the new black elite running the economics and the governance of this country.

At the hearings there was one huge point of agreement: there is no single area in South African life that is still not shot through with racism as a result of the legacies of both colonialism and apartheid.

But the issues of disagreement were many: who is to blame for ongoing racism? Who needs to fix it? How? And what is racism anyway in a post-apartheid society? In two sessions of hearings the HRC worked through broadcast and print and took multiple submissions from as many editors to try to find a way through the quagmire. It was a fraught and difficult process, very emotional and very taxing.

Last year, Review (RJR 19 at <http://journ.ru.ac.za/rjr/index.html>) published the first of a two-part series on race. Our intention was to inject into the debate sense and meaning and help. We gave those whom we respect for their intellectual clarity the space to nitpick over the term race and pull apart the issues. We also focused on newsrooms where people with initiative are trying out new ways of working and producing journalism.

This year the discussion over racism comes back to South Africa in global form with the UN conference to be held in Durban from 28 August to 7 September (see report on page 59). This country was chosen as the venue for its remarkable rejection of apartheid and the symbolic value that has for the world, but it's also an interesting venue because it demonstrates the pernicious and lingering traces of racism which the UN wants to grapple with. As the conference website announces ‘as racial discrimination and ethnic violence grow in complexity, they become more of a challenge for the international community’.

Racism has many faces and many expressions all over the world, but a critical component is how the media operates to make racism a normal part of everyday life so that we cannot imagine a different kind of world. This second special edition of Review focuses on the multi-faceted representations of race all over the world and seeks again to inject sense, meaning and help so that journalists are equipped to deal with the complexities and have the intellectual stuff to inform these very important debates.

The media and racism project of the Media Peace Centre and Rhodes Journalism Review was designed to contribute constructively to debate and positive change on these issues in South Africa and internationally. Comprising two editions of Review, the Global Narratives of Race conference in Cape Town in December 2000 (see the emerging guidelines for journalists on page 59) and a racism and media website (under development), the project aims to strengthen a global network of journalists and others committed to combating racism and representing people more fairly.

We thank our funders for making this project possible: Heinrich Boll Stiftung (Germany), Open Society Foundation (South Africa), DFID (UK) and the Human Rights Policy Department (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK).

—ANTHEA GORMAN

Racism in the media is everywhere we look. Sometimes it hits us in the face, other times it is much more subtle, and insidious. Much of the media, in fact, helps institutionalise racism in society – by perpetuating racial stereotypes, and by maintaining structural imbalances in media control and access.

One of the biggest challenges in combating racism in the media worldwide is getting enough media to acknowledge its existence. That is one of the aims of this issue, and of our 30 contributors from 14 countries in their own work. Many of them work for media watch organisations, ever-vigilant for signs of discrimination; others work for innovative centres or projects promoting diversity or better representation of marginalised peoples; still others work in the mainstream pursuing better practice in covering race.

If racism is the denigration of another person or group according to ‘race’, then what is ‘race’? ‘Race’ is a social construct, and must be de-constructed to understand its implications. We start broadly with ‘Global Narratives of Race’ – looking at how racial difference has been constructed and reproduced by the media, at the overarching narratives that shape our understanding of who we are, and who we are not. With increasing globalisation, these narratives are shaping the worldviews of more and more people. We need to take a hard look at the mega-stories the media are telling us – the stories we as journalists are telling – and what *isn't* being told.

How does racism work, cognitively speaking? That's the question posed in our second section, ‘Racism at Work’. We look at psychological analyses of early childhood development, particularly the formation of ‘the enemy’, and at how racism develops through the projection of our ‘split-off selves’. Here we also consider if a racist can be reasonable – and ultimately, can they be reasoned out of their racism? Hopefully the issues raised here will help each of us fathom our own racialistic frameworks.

In Section 3, ‘Country by Colour’, we look at variations on a theme, the localised versions of racism in the media around the world. We range from a Native American campaign in the US to eliminate the caricaturing of Indian people in sports and the media, to the development of peace journalism to cover Indonesia's warring communities, to progressive media initiatives in Germany to confront the neo-Nazis – and beyond. As Janine Jackson of the New York-based media watch organisation, FAIR, writes: “The right to inclusive, fair media will not be granted. It must be won.” Our contributors are all, one way or another, engaged in the struggle.

Definitions of race, and discourses around racism, keep shifting. Much depends on demographics, and on political and economic climates. The racism debate in South Africa, for instance, is hugely different from that in the United States – where it is mostly confined to academia, taken up by society only when a crisis like the LA riots hits. This issue, we hope, reflects those differences.

We also hope that, collectively, these articles inspire deeper understanding of racism and the media's role in both constructing and combating it. We hope that they point towards better ways of representing different people, reflecting the complexity of identities not reduced to ‘race’ or otherwise diminished.

—MELISSA BAUMANN



Guerrilla Graphics



Chaz Maviyane-Davies, the graphic designer for this issue, has been described by the UK *Design* magazine as “the guerrilla of graphic design”. For more than two decades the award-winning, controversial artist's work has taken on issues of consumerism, health, nutrition and human rights. He has studied (MA, the Central School of Art and Design in London) and worked in Britain, Japan, Malaysia, the US and Zimbabwe, his country of origin. From 1983 until recently he ran the renowned design studio in Harare, Zimbabwe, The Maviyane-Project. Due to adverse political conditions in his homeland, Maviyane-Davies earlier this year moved to the US, where he is cur-

rently an Associate Professor of Design at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. His work has been exhibited internationally and is included in several permanent collections at various galleries.

For this Review he not only designed the cover graphic, and all the visual material in the first two sections; he also came up with the truly brilliant idea of creating ‘mantones’ for the ‘Country by Colour’ section. If we are going to be coloured-obsessed about humans then let's do it thoroughly and take it to the printers! So look closely, the entire section is colour-coded to fit the mantone chart on page 23. His website is www.maviyane.co.zw.

The first step toward lightening THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness. PEAR'S SOAP is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while among the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place.

– Advertisement for Pear's Soap in McClure's Magazine, 1899.

'The White Man's Burden' How global media empires continue

The current globalisation of the world's media amounts to "the re-colonisation of the developing countries," writes **Peter Kareithi**, and further extends age-old racist representations...

WE MAKE SENSE of our world from the stories we are told. From these stories we construct the sense of who we are and, more importantly, who we are not. The construction of that difference – of the 'other' – is crucial to the discourse of race. In post-industrial societies such as the United States, the news and entertainment media tell most of the stories to most of the people most of the time. They not only provide

narratives for specific discourses about race, but also a shared experience – a common starting point for such dialogue.

Many of the stories that these media tell largely provide narratives that nurture notions of white supremacy and promote discrimination, exploitation and violence

against people of colour. The rapidly increasing globalisation of such media, and their integration with the exploding communication technologies, has facilitated a corresponding globalisation of these racialised narratives. The result of such globalisation is likely to be increased racial fragmentation within national boundaries, and intensified economic and environmental racism by industrialised nations against the people of developing nations.

'DIFFERENCE' AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

The construction of the 'other' is vital to the construction of the self. We know what 'black' means not because there is some essence of 'blackness', but because we can contrast it with its opposite, 'white'. It is the 'difference' between white and black that signifies, that carries meaning. These binary combinations – white/black, day/night, masculine/feminine, citizen/alien – have the great value of capturing the diversity of the world within their either/or extremes, but also run the risk of reductionism. In everyday life, the marking of difference is the basis of the symbolic order which we call 'culture'.

Culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system. According to Richard Dyer, we are always "making sense" of things in terms of some wider categories. In his essay on stereotyping, Dyer (R. Dyer (ed), *Gays and Film*, 1977) argues that without the use of types, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to make sense of the world. Stereotypes, Dyer argues, get hold of the few "simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized" characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity. Stereotyping reduces, essentialises, naturalises and fixes 'difference'.

Stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power. Power is usually directed against the subordinate or excluded group. One aspect of this power is ethnocentrism – "the application of the norms of one's own culture to that of others" (R. Brown, *Social Psychology*, 1965). In short, stereotyping is what Foucault called a "power/knowledge" sort of game. It classifies people accord-

ing to a norm and constructs the excluded as 'other'. It is an aspect of the struggle for Gramscian hegemony.

From the stories we are told we construct our notions of 'social types', of 'normalcy' and of the 'natural' and 'inevitable' with which we learn to read the world around us and beyond. In a world of increasingly consolidated corporate media, audiences become more dependent on journalists, filmmakers and television producers to provide them with the representations, the signs, of the world by which they can encounter the world's reality. It is in those representations that the audiences find the narratives for their discourses about race.

ORIGINS OF RACIALISED REPRESENTATIONS

What are the typical forms and representational practices used to represent 'difference' in popular culture today, and where did these popular figures come from?

Stuart Hall ("The Spectacle of the Other," in Hall (ed), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practice*, 1997) identifies three major moments when the West (meaning imperial Europe and its extended territories in the 'New World') encountered black people, giving rise to an avalanche of popular representations based on the marking of racial difference. The first began with the 16th century contact between European traders and the West African kingdoms, which provided a source of black slaves for three centuries. Its effects were to be found in slavery and in the post-slave societies of the New World. The second was the European colonisation of Africa and the 'scramble' among the European powers for the control of colonial territory, markets and raw materials. The third was the post-World War II migrations from the 'Third World' into Europe and North America. Hall has argued that Western ideas about 'race' and images of racial difference were profoundly shaped by those three fateful encounters.

The exploration and colonisation of Africa produced an explosion of representations of Africa in Europe (J. Mackenzie (ed), *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, 1986). In Britain, for instance, images of racial difference drawn from the imperial encounter – conveyed through writings, maps, illustrations, oral accounts, advertising, commodities and

Racialised representations of black males as violent

other sources – flooded the popular culture at the end of the 19th century. These images identified Africans with Nature, as symbolising 'the primitive' in contrast with 'the civilised' world.

Down at the plantation in the Americas, the racialised representations of slaves heavily emphasised the 'historical' case against the black man based on his supposed failure to develop a civilised way of life in Africa. As portrayed in proslavery writing, Africa was and always had been the scene of unmitigated savagery, cannibalism, devil worship, and licentiousness. Also advanced was an early form of biological argument, based on real or imagined physiological and anatomical differences, which allegedly explained mental

to construct 'difference'

and physical inferiority of blacks to whites. There was also an appeal to deep-seated white fears of widespread miscegenation as pro-slavery theorists sought to deepen white anxieties by claiming that the abolition of slavery would lead to inter-marriage and the degeneracy of the race. (G. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* 1987).

These arguments were organised in a rigid polemical pattern once the defenders of slavery found themselves in a propaganda war with the abolitionists (Frederickson, 1987). Some of these arguments endured almost unaltered through to the closing decade of the 20th century, as demonstrated in laws banning inter-racial marriages in South Africa under apartheid, and in the theorising of Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray in their infamous book, *The Bell Curve*, and other pseudo-scientific works that make claims such as genetic intellectual inferiority of blacks to whites.

Racial theory applied the Culture/Nature distinction differently to the two racialised groups. Among whites, 'Culture' was opposed to 'Nature'. Among blacks, it was assumed that 'Culture' coincided with 'Nature'. Whites developed 'Culture' to subdue and overcome 'Nature'. For blacks, 'Culture' and 'Nature' were interchangeable (Hall, 1997).

The coming of the American cinema provided a new popular medium through which these racialised representations found unprecedented wide circulation, both within the United States and the rest of the world. Cinema intensified old stereotypes of blacks – as being innately lazy, primitive, rightly subservient; or, in some cases, 'noble savages', good Christians and devoted servants; or, occupying an ambiguous middle ground, blacks tolerated but not admired, such as the minstrels and entertainers who cracked mindless jokes, or the tricksters telling tall tales.

American cinema also added new stereotypes. In his study, *Toms, Coons, Mulattos, Mammies and Bucks: an Interpretative History of Blacks in American Films*, Donald Bogle (1973) identifies the five main stereotypes which, he argues, made the cross-over from slavery to modern film, and later to television: the loyal, submissive 'Toms'; the slapstick, entertaining 'Coons'; the 'Tragic Mulattos', or mixed-race women, cruelly caught between "a divided racial inheritance"; 'Mammies', the prototypical house servants, usually

then on, decade after decade, the parade of black 'characters' continued: in the 30s and 40s, white actors playing in black face and, when black people finally played black roles, they were limited to subordinate roles (jesters, simpletons, faithful servants). Also in the 30s came movies such as Mark

Allegret's *Zou Zou*, starring Josephine Baker against a background of savage Africa, a vivid early example of the erotic animalisation of Africans in cinema (b. hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, 1992). The equation of Africans with Nature as opposed to Culture was captured over and over in such movies as the *Tarzan* series, *King Solomon's Mines* and *Return to King Solomon's Mines*.

The infantilisation of the colonised people by the colonisers, or the slaves by the slave owners, found expression in early cinema and is still common today in the depiction of Third World nations by media in the industrial nations. In *Casablanca* (1942) Bergman asks Bogart, "Who is the boy playing the piano?" referring to Dooley Wilson, an adult black man. On American television, such infantilisation continued in programmes such as *Different Strokes* and *Webster*. Combinations of the infantile and the Coon are evident in the 1970s' black comedies such as *Good Times* and also in the 1990s' programmes such as *Martin*, *In Living Color* and *The Wayan Brothers*.

If the invention of American cinema provided a medium for unprecedented circulation of racialised representations, television technology delivered those representations into every American home and beyond. New technology facilitated a continuous daily dose of common racialised images shared throughout the culture: in the news, in sports, in docudramas, in made-for-TV movies, in situation comedies and in music videos.



Stereotyping reduces, essentialises, naturalises and fixes 'difference'.

entertainment media are just as common in the news – or so-called 'reality' media. Most news coverage of minorities, especially blacks, in the United States focuses on entertainment, sports, poverty and crime. Yes, there are many great black entertainers and superb athletes; just as there exists much black

poverty and crime. But there are also many great black engineers, doctors, educators and statesmen and women whose coverage is minimal. There are also many white criminals and much white poverty and illiteracy, but these do not receive as much attention by the news media. The collective result of these representations over time is to associate these maladies with blackness in the public psyche.

This tendency to associate blackness with negative social behavior in the public psyche is reinforced by the news media's tendency to exclude blacks when reporting positive social developments. Newsmagazine covers offer a good illustration of the sway of the white image. Consider the following:

On 10 May 1999, *Time* ran a story, "Growing Up Online," which featured a white boy around 12 years old. On 19 October 1998, *Time* ran a story "How to Make Your Kids a Better Student," which featured a white boy about 10 years old. In fact, between 8 January 1996 and 6 September 1999, *Time* ran 30 covers about the 'prototypical' American child or adult. The people in the images were anonymous and the topics ranged from "Too Much Homework," "Taking Risks" and "Taking Care of Our Parents". Every image was of a white person. Between 21 September 1998 and 6 September 1999, *Newsweek* ran 10 covers that required the 'anonymous representation' type of image. All covers showed only whites (R. Entman and A. Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 2000).

What all this tells us is clear: When editors think 'an

and inclined to crime have provided social justification for white state violence against black men in the most horrible ways imaginable.

fat, bossy and cantankerous, but utterly devoted to their white households; and the big, strong, renegade 'Bad Bucks', "over-sexed and savage, violent and frenzied as they lust for white flesh." There are many traces of this in contemporary images of black youth and representations of black urban inner-city culture.

There have been many twists and turns in the ways that black experience has been represented in American film, but the repertoire of stereotypes drawn from slavery days has never entirely disappeared. One of the most influential films of all time, D.W. Griffiths' *The Birth of a Nation*, introduced these black 'types' to the cinema in 1915, with its rallying to the cause of the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacy. From

The American racial experience, as represented in these media, became the common starting point for the discourse of race all over Europe in those countries with large populations of non-white immigrants from the former colonies. In Britain, in France, in Germany and Italy, these discourses shaped the modes of media representations of West Indians, Pakistanis, Moroccans, Algerians, Palestinians, Turks, Nigerians and a host of other members of racial minorities. Thanks to the recent explosion in new communication technologies, and increasing consolidation in media ownership and content production, these images now threaten to become the basis of a new global culture.

The racialised representations found in cinema and

American person', they automatically think, 'white'.

News coverage of Africa epitomises the media's association of blackness with negativity. Africa right now is back on the top of prime time news in United States. The story is AIDS. In the 1990s, it was the wars in Somalia and Rwanda. In the 1980s it was famine in Ethiopia. War, famine and disease – the three phenomena every American elementary school child links with Africa.

Media coverage of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere often represents 'the other' as driven by primitive emotion, lacking rationality or intellect. The international coverage of the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda suggested that the genocide was the result of some innate, inter-ethnic

hatred that had erupted into irrational violence – unlike, for instance, the conflict in Northern Ireland. Muslims around the world are repeatedly cast as bloodthirsty zealots always ready to kill and be killed in the name of Allah. This reductionist representation of the Arab 'terrorist' illegitimises in the Western mind any claim to economic or socio-political roots (other than religious difference) to the Middle East violence or the Western conflicts with the nations of Libya, Iran and Iraq.

Consider, too, the case of the US/UN mission in Somalia in 1993. Reporting from Mogadishu was driven not by the plight of the Somali people, but by American interests – those of the journalists, the corporations they worked for, the government policies those corporations defend and, somewhere in there, the perceived interests of the audience. The media ignored the complexity of Somali history, framing the conflict instead in terms of mere anarchy, greed and viciousness, echoing the Mafia wars of the 1920s and 1930s and using language such as 'warlords' to describe the leaders of the various political factions.

Early on in the international reportage came one of its most powerful images: the representation of Mogadishu as a black ghetto. This resonated well with American audiences, for it provided them with images common in domestic news – of 'inner-city' black neighbourhoods infested with crime and drugs. The media focused on young Somali males on Mogadishu's streets, armed and willing to shoot to kill at little or no provocation. These young males were shown stealing from food convoys, from white relief workers, from rival gangs and from each other – not unlike common depictions of inner-city American youth. American journalists regularly reported how most of these youths were always high on a local 'narcotic' drug called khat (miraa) – very much like the black American youths regularly portrayed as high on crack. The absurdity is that throughout most of the areas where khat is used, it is considered no stronger than coffee.

In keeping with its scenario, the media cast General Aidid in the image of paramount gang leader ordering contracts on the lives of cops (the killing of the Pakistani troops and subsequent deaths of American GIs) and leaders of rival gangs – as a kind of modern-day Al Capone. A massive manhunt was ordered for Aidid, complete with a \$250 000 reward posted on streetcorners in cities all over Somalia ('Wanted Dead or Alive'). The American GI was cast in the image of John Wayne, hunting down and putting the 'bad guys' out of business.

REPRESENTATION AND POWER

Over time, such stereotypical representations shape the attitudes of media audiences on a wide range of important social issues, creating an enabling environment for contin-

ued or intensified discriminatory policies. In the United States, for instance, such representations are closely linked to retrogressive policies in areas such as welfare reform and affirmative action, and to the justification of continued discrimination against blacks, Hispanics and other minorities in areas such as employment, housing, education and access to health care. The racist ideology bred by such representations ignores the huge quantities of tax breaks and subsidies going to corporations (corporate welfare) while casting the poor as leeches who live off public largesse.

Racialised representations of black males as violent and inclined to crime have provided social justification for white state violence against black men in the most horrible ways imaginable. The LA police officers' violence against Rodney King has been replicated in countless similar episodes across the country.

The policy of targeting black people through a lopsided administration of justice – what is often called 'racial profiling' – has devastated black communities all over the United States. The nation's prisons are jammed with black men. One out of three young African American men is under criminal justice supervision. More than 56% of 18- to 35-year-old African American males are either in prison, jail, on probation or parole, or being sought on warrants on any

given day. Nine out of 10 people on death row in American prisons are black. Throughout the evening news, blacks are profiled in the usual degrading postures: in handcuffs, stretched out on the ground, spread-eagled against a wall, in court, marching off to prisons and drug wards. These images are recycled over and over in the news, in music videos, in entertainment television and in cinema.

GLOBAL MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY AND THE DISCOURSE OF RACE

With the death of Soviet communism and the US' emergence as the unchallenged superpower, American-European capitalism has embarked on a third phase of imperialist expansion, following the conquest of the Americas and the colonisation of Africa and Asia. Facilitating this third phase is the recent explosion in new communications technologies, whose emergence coincided with the death of the Soviet empire. If the manifestations of the first and second phases of European imperialist expansion were conquest and colonisation, the manifestation of this third phase is economic and cultural globalisation. Consumerism, not Christianity, is the religion of this latest phase of imperialism, and global media are its missionaries.

Prior to the 1980s and 1990s, national media systems were largely organised around domestically owned radio, television and newspaper industries, although there were major import markets for films, TV shows, music and books

that tended to be dominated by US-based firms. All of this is changing rapidly. The global media market has come to be dominated by a few multi-national corporations. Tops among them are Disney, AOL-Time Warner, Sony, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi and Bertelsmann. Of these, only three are truly US firms, though all of them have core operations in America. Between them these companies own the major US film studios and all but one of the US television networks. They control 80-85% of the global music market; the preponderance of satellite broadcasting worldwide; a significant percentage of book and commercial magazine publishing; all or part of most of the commercial cable TV channels in the US and worldwide; and a significant portion of European terrestrial (traditional over-the-air) television. (R. McChesney, "Global Media, Neoliberalism, and Imperialism," *Monthly Review*, Vol 52, No 10, 2001).

The trend toward megamedia is also true in developing countries – in what are often called 'second-tier' companies. Mexico's Televisa, Brazil's Globo, Argentina's Clarin and Venezuela's Cisneros, for example, are among the world's 60 or 70 largest media corporations. These firms tend to dominate their own national and regional media markets, which have been experiencing rapid consolidation as well. In Africa, South African media groups are rapidly spreading

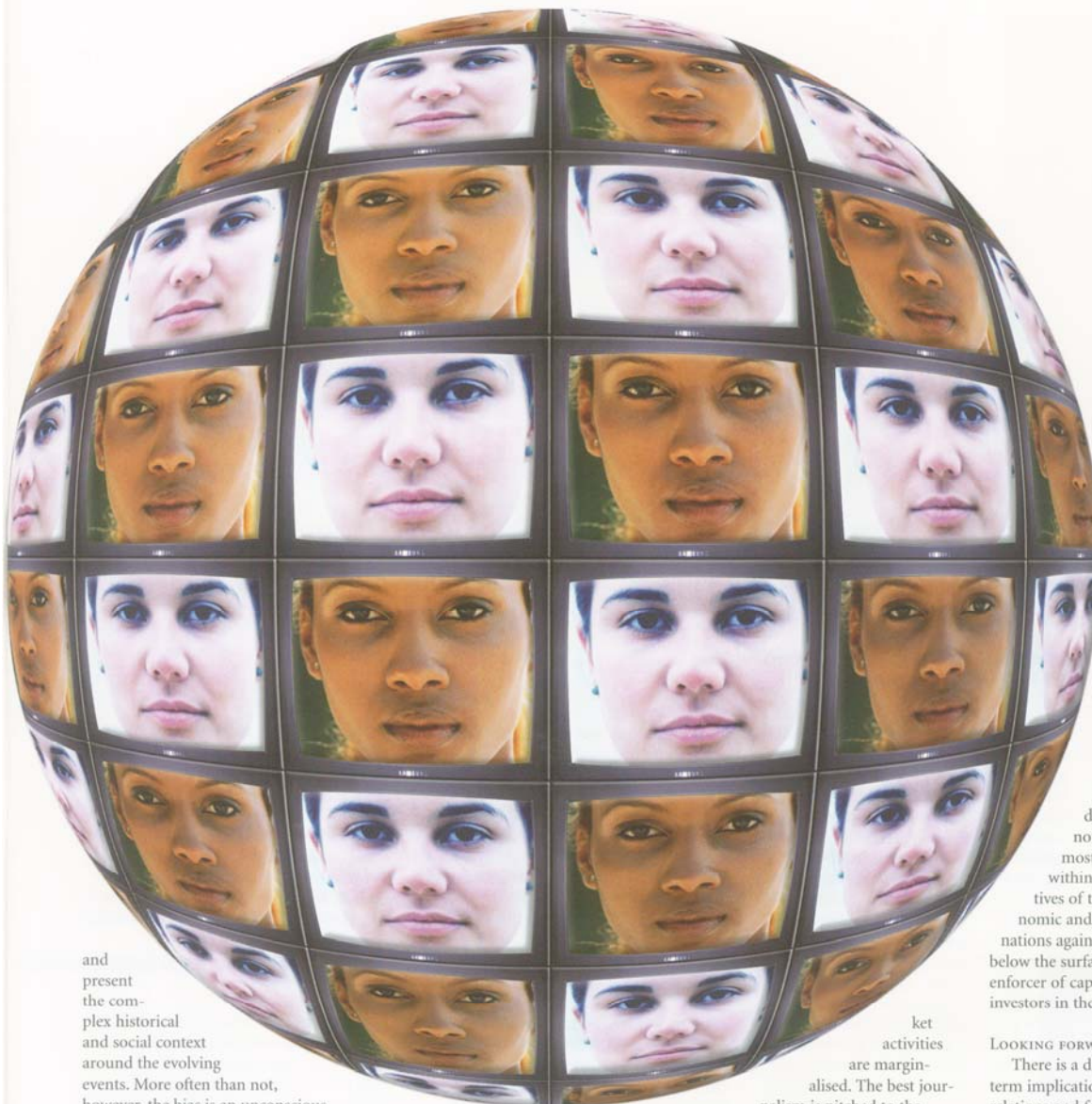
Consumerism, not Christianity, is the religion of this latest phase of imperialism, and global media are its missionaries.

their influence and control over southern Africa and beyond. These second-tier companies generate much of their revenue from multi-national corporate advertising, and they have extensive ties and joint ventures with the largest media multi-nationals, as well as with Wall Street investment banks.

The global media system is significant to the formation and expansion of global and regional markets for goods and services, often sold by the largest multi-national corporations. But the emerging global media system also has significant cultural and political implications, specifically with regard to democracy, imperialism and the discourse of race. The global commercial media system is radically bourgeois in that it respects no tradition or custom if it stands in the way of profits. Ultimately, once capitalist relations have become pre-eminent, the global corporate media system is politically conservative and potentially racist – because the media giants are significant beneficiaries of the current social structures around the world, and any upheaval in property or social relations is not in their interests.

Sometimes the bias is explicit; other times it is subtle and due purely to commercial concerns. It is easier, and cheaper, to tell stories based on simplistic, stereotypical themes that resonate with a conditioned audience than it is to research

Ultimately, once capitali



and present the complex historical and social context around the evolving events. More often than not, however, the bias is an unconscious propagation of what has been 'normalised' and 'naturalised' over centuries, but the record of such 'naturalisation' has been erased from the public psyche.

As Dyer observes, "the establishment of normalcy (ie, what is accepted as 'normal') through social- and stereotypes is one aspect of the habit of ruling groups ... to attempt to fashion the whole of society according to their own world view, value system, sensibility and ideology. So right is this world view for the ruling groups that they make

ket activities are marginalised. The best journalism is pitched to the business class and suited to its needs and prejudices. As McChesney puts it, "the journalism reserved for the masses tends to be the sort of drivel provided by the media giants on their US television stations" (McChesney, 2001). Media conglomerates gradually weed out public sphere substance in favor of light entertainment, thereby promoting a deep and profound de-politicisation.

The global media giants are the quintessential multinational firms – with shareholders, headquarters, and opera-

is nothing short of the re-colonisation of the developing countries by the United States and its European allies. The first two phases of European-American imperialism were structured in racial inequality, and there is no reason to believe the third will be any different.

The American racial experience, as represented in the American media and reproduced in the new global media, threatens to become the common starting point for the discourses of race everywhere, even in nations not structured in racial inequality. That will most likely lead to increased racial fragmentation within national boundaries. The economic objectives of the globalisation project imply intensified economic and environmental racism by industrialised nations against the people of developing nations. Not far below the surface is the role of the US military as the global enforcer of capitalism, with US-based corporations and investors in the driver's seat.

LOOKING FORWARD

There is a desperate lack of public discussion of the long-term implications of current media developments for race relations and for democracy in general. Corporate media have the advantage of controlling the very channels where citizens would expect to find criticism and discussion of media policy in a free society. But resistance is growing.

Grassroots movements are sprouting up in many countries, including in the United States and much of Europe, with an agenda to push for structural media reform such as breaking up the big companies, recharging non-profit and non-commercial broadcasting and creating a sector of non-profit and non-commercial independent media under popular control. These efforts are beginning to attract broad-based support. Other activists are developing independent and so-called 'pirate' media – using the Internet for everything from e-zines to radio broadcasting and video streaming – to counteract the corporate system.

With the corporate media consolidating, one thing is clear: As the struggle for the sign intensifies, organising for democratic media must be part of any strategy that expects to have a chance of success in combating racism.

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relations have become pre-eminent, the global corporate media system is politically conservative and potentially racist.

it appear (as it does appear to them) as 'natural' and 'inevitable' – and for everyone – and, in so far as they succeed, they establish their hegemony" (Dyer, 1977).

With greater concentration, media firms acquire more ability to extract profit from their activities. Ad spending in developing countries has grown at more than twice the rate of GDP growth in the past decade as global media have penetrated those economies. Latin American ad spending, for example, was expected to increase by nearly eight percent in both 2000 and 2001 (McChesney, 2001). This hyper-commercialism generates an implicit political bias in media content. Consumerism, class and racial inequalities and so-called 'individualism' tend to be taken as natural, even benevolent, while political action, civic values and anti-mar-

tions scattered across the globe. They advance corporate and commercial interests and values and denigrate or ignore that which cannot be incorporated into the profit mission. There is no discernible difference in the firms' content, whether they are owned by shareholders in Japan or France or have corporate headquarters in New York, Bonn or Sydney. In this sense, the basic split is not between nation-states, but between the rich and the poor, across national borders. And the rich and poor of many nations are often defined across ethnic and racial lines, whether in the United States, Europe, Brazil, India or South Africa.

So far, as lucrative as the global system has been for the rich, it has meant disaster for the world's poor and working classes. What is at stake under the new globalisation project

Reproducing Racism

How media helps us racialise

Global media changes “are likely to tighten, rather than unravel, the web of racism that surrounds us,” argues **Oscar Gandy Jr.** Gandy takes a structural approach to assess prospects for moving beyond racialising in the media system.

Melissa Baumann interviewed him for Review:

In your book *Communication and Race: A Structural Perspective* (Arnold/Oxford University Press, 1998), you write of ‘the media’s reproduction of racism’. What do you mean by ‘reproduction’ – from both the point of view of producers/distributors and consumers?

If we understand racism to be a set of relationships that are based on perceptions and expectations regarding the various ‘oth-

ers’ we will encounter, then the mass media can be understood to play a critical role in providing the primary, and most readily available, images, impressions and information that we use to form those perceptions and expectations. As expectations govern behaviour, negative assessments of the racialised ‘other’ insures that the number and quality of relations across the colour line will be limited.

To say that the media are implicated in the reproduction of racism is not to say that they ultimately determine our perceptions of the social world. But the mass media do not construct an image of the world out of whole cloth. In some cases, the mass media, especially the news media, are little more than conduits for the messages that have been designed to meet the strategic goals of political and economic elites.

It is also true that the media are guided by an assessment of what ‘the audience’ is ‘ready to hear’. By this I mean that media producers have to take into account their best estimate of the limits of consumer tastes and preferences for themes, characters, and relationships. This is complicated further by the influence that investors, clients and, to a far lesser extent, regu-

latory agents may have over the production of media content.

Like other social systems, media systems do change, often dramatically, from time to time. My sense, however, is that the changes that we are observing in the development of the global media system are likely to tighten, rather than unravel, the web of racism that surrounds us.

will be exposed to a more consistent stream of images and impressions that will reinforce the assumptions about the world that attracted them to these environments in the first place.

To the degree that segregation within media environments is matched by segregation, and limited interaction with others in our daily lives, then the impressions derived from media will be the primary impressions

Media produced for the poor folks at or near the bottom of the racial hierarchy

You have written (in the journal *Media Development*, Vol. XLVII 2/2000): “Racism continues to be good business within the context of societies in which racial and ethnic distinctions can be used to establish, reinforce, and justify inequality in the distribution of power and resources.” How does this relate to growing trends in the mass media to segment the media market along racial or ethnic lines? Doesn’t this potentially aggravate racism?

Although it is a complicated, and generally unpopular, position, I am of the opinion that racial segmentation in media is more likely to reinforce racial segregation in social relations, and thereby contribute to a further decline in race relations. Sociologists have already noted that the trend toward greater racial understanding has peaked, and in some cases has already begun to decline among adolescents. I believe that media segmentation will only accelerate this decline.

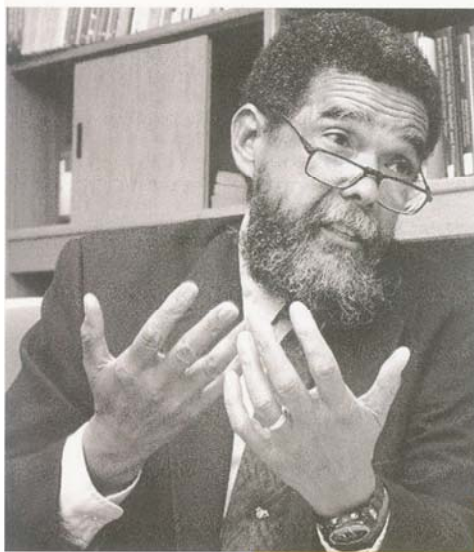
Segmentation that is guided by a commercial logic will tend to rely on familiar stereotypes to clearly define and attract the ‘right audience’ for the content being provided. Consumers who spend more and more of their time within media environments that are racially, and economically, defined

we will rely upon to govern our social and political choices regarding others who are outside our primary group.

In addition, the sorts of ‘corrupt segmentation’ that advertising invites means that media produced for the poor folks at or near the bottom of the racial hierarchy will be of the lowest quality, and will most often be financed by the sale of dangerous, debilitating or worthless goods and services. I say this because if the advertisers are unwilling to pay the market price for an audience they don’t value, the only alternative for communicators who continue to produce for that market is to reduce the cost of producing content that attracts that audience, holding their noses while they do business with the ‘sellers of sin’.

Can you say more about how communication about race influences the distribution of power? Tied into this is the media’s conferral of status to different groups at different times, often aggravating racial, ethnic and class divisions. Examples of media impact in this regard?

The best way to think about this process is to understand the role that the media play in shaping the public’s orientation to policies designed to overcome the legacy of slavery and the history of discrimination. The mass media serve a number of functions. They



In some cases, the mass media, especially the news media, are little more than conduits for the messages that have been designed to meet the strategic goals of political and economic elites.



Race signs: racism in the mass media has become generally less explicit over the years. It tends to be reproduced more in code words and images.

describe the state of the world, and warn us about problems. Sometimes they discuss these problems in terms of racial disparity.

The media play a critical role in helping us to appreciate the seriousness of the disparity – how much inequality is too much? They help us to evaluate public policies meant to reduce that disparity by providing a basis for understanding its cause. It is here that the media may provide cues that lead to blaming

even worse than the initial distorted impression of the world.

One could argue that racism in the mass media has become generally less explicit over the years. It tends to be reproduced more in code words and images. Could you give examples of some of this codification, and how it works psychologically/cognitively?

There is a lot of work to be done that would help to identify the more subtle ways

As I mentioned earlier, although we tend to talk about 'the media' as if they were collective actors, it is also important to understand the ways in which they function as resources for policy elites. I have written in the past about 'information subsidies' to describe the ways in which media sources provide information to media in forms that are often passed on to the public without modification. Thus, we find that from time to

ences are few and far between. Almost none are willing to support the production of content that serves the informational and conceptual needs of the poorest among us.

How could the media better help us find, as you put it, "an operational definition of racial identity"?

I invite journalists to really push hard on trying to uncover and convey an understanding of the complexity which surrounds issues of race, class and gender. It is especially

will be of the lowest quality, and will most often be financed by the sale of dangerous, debilitating or worthless goods and services.

the victim, rather than revealing the nature and extent of discrimination.

In the framing of these stories about racial disparities, the media may help to reinforce an understanding of social policy as a 'zero-sum game', where assistance to victims means a personal or group loss. The mass media have played a critical role, for instance, in creating an impression among white males that they are the victims of affirmative action policies.

The media have clearly missed an opportunity to help the American public understand the ways in which institutional racism worsens the social position of African Americans. The news media have largely failed to inform its audience about the ways in which 'reasonable racism' is destructive of the social fabric.

Police stop black automobile drivers and search black airline passengers because they believe (incorrectly) that African Americans are more likely to be carrying illegal drugs. Because they stop and search far more black than white travelers, more blacks will be arrested and imprisoned for possession. This is a clear case of expectations producing the reality (a self-fulfilling prophecy). There are countless other examples in which a seemingly rational action, based on erroneous belief, eventually creates a condition that is

in which statements about race are still being made. It is especially important to pursue the ways in which these statements are made 'unintentionally'.

Martin Gilens' study of the photographs used in news magazines is a good example of this (see his book, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*). Gilens observes that the number of black people pictured in stories about poverty is disproportionate. That is, there are far more pictures of black people than their status among the poor would justify. But more importantly, according to Gilens, the black people portrayed were less likely to be the sorts of people that would evoke a sympathetic response (eg, old, or visibly handicapped). Thus the over-representation of seemingly able-bodied African Americans works symbolically, but cumulatively rather than individually, to maintain an impression of poverty as a black problem, reflecting characteristic laziness.

You also talk about the media's role in 'constructing race', and promoting racism, by constructing what is 'foreign' and thereby promoting nationalism and ethnic divisiveness (eg, the media in Britain making cultural accusations of "not being British enough"). Could you elaborate on this, with other examples?

time xenophobia is activated in the public by policy elites who would like to influence laws governing immigration, language use, residency requirements and access to education and social services.

In your book you set forth two ideal standards by which to measure the media's efforts to counter racism: one asks if certain media "contribute to an understanding and appreciation of difference"; and the other asks whether it has "helped to shape participation in the public sphere by informing individuals of their interests, including interests that are determined in part by their membership in racial and ethnic groups". What media initiatives currently or in the recent past stand out for you as coming close to these goals?

Certainly the programmes on public television that feature African American and other minority scientists and engineers, in addition to those series which highlight the contributions that black people make to arts and culture, contribute to an appreciation of difference.

I really have no good examples of media doing a good job in the public sphere. I have only more warning and concern. Advertisers and investors willing to be associated with content that angers and mobilises their audi-

cially important for journalists to question, rather than readily pass on, the assessments and interpretations of 'the facts' and explanations that people might provide for social problems. They should look to the 'interests' that are served if that impression, or conclusion, becomes widespread.

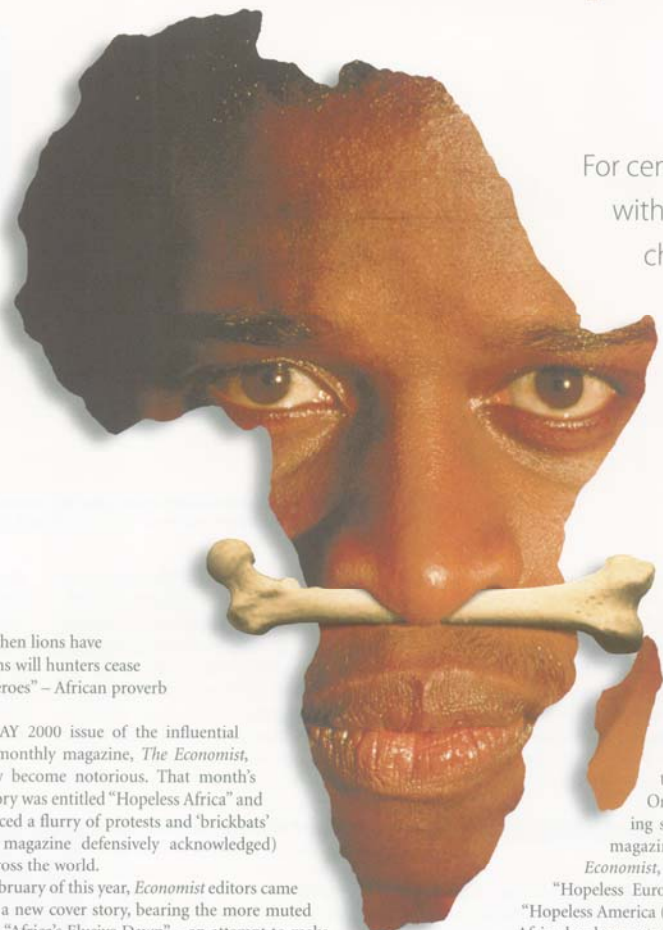
Along these lines, I would invite journalists and commentators to question themselves and others who might slip into talking about race as causal. A person's 'race' cannot be the cause of anything they do, or think. The only time race can be thought of as causal is in terms of the responses that people may have when they encounter people that they have 'raced' in their minds. This might be extended to a policy that leads journalists to avoid racial identification, and certainly if identifications must be made, the race of the victims is far more important than the race of the accused.

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Framing Africa

How the western media maintains ancient prejudices

Imagine if "the world,"



"Only when lions have historians will hunters cease being heroes" – African proverb

THE MAY 2000 issue of the influential British monthly magazine, *The Economist*, has now become notorious. That month's cover story was entitled "Hopeless Africa" and it produced a flurry of protests and 'brickbats' (as the magazine defensively acknowledged) from across the world.

In February of this year, *Economist* editors came up with a new cover story, bearing the more muted heading, "Africa's Elusive Dawn" – an attempt to make slight amends for the appalling picture the earlier issue had drawn of an entire continent, without regard to its vastness, variety or regional differences. Yet the magazine did not exactly withdraw its earlier condemnations. The title rather implied a concession on the part of the editors that there still, in fact, might be some cause for hope in Africa.

Apparently baffled in their quest for signs of hope elsewhere, they concentrated on a lengthy analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of post-apartheid South Africa. This time round, they gave the rest of the continent barely a passing mention.

This careful focus highlighted, once again, South Africa's position as the Great White Hope of the opinion makers of the Western world. In spite of the traumas of a difficult transition from apartheid towards democracy (with AIDS, crime, unemployment and dangerous levels of financial inequality being worrying, destabilising factors), South Africa is still regarded as a beacon of hope on an otherwise savagely incomprehensible continent.

This point of view is not very different from that which emerges in the carefully constructed scenarios penned by H Rider Haggard, Winston Churchill or Rudyard Kipling during the age of imperialism, a hundred years before – the idea of South Africa as an outpost of a settled, comprehensible and civilised world just barely holding out on the edges of a continent of incipient savagery and chaos, a land of wealth and beauty that just might have a chance of becoming a success story.

For centuries the West has equated 'Africa' with darkness, despair, corruption and chaos – to a large degree a convenient projection based on racial subordination, economic greed and imperialist interest.

John Matshikiza reflects:

The key question is: why should Africa, as a continent, have to live up to any expectations at all? By whose expectations is it being judged?

One cannot imagine a leading story in an international magazine, such as *The Economist*, bearing the title "Hopeless Europe", "Hopeless Asia", or "Hopeless America (North and South)".

Africa has been set up in the Western psyche as a hopeless case, an entity that is not an entity, but which nevertheless, by its refusal to fall into acceptable norms, provides an unchallenged argument to justify its exploitation. And the Western media continues to shore up the myths that justify the continued denigration of the African continent – the same justifications that paved the way for the unparalleled excesses of the trade in millions of African slaves to Europe and the Americas between the 15th and the 19th centuries, the brutality of King Leopold's Congo estate, the German genocide against the Herero people of Namibia and the imperial and colonial eras that followed – to mention but a few.

The Economist's "Hopeless Africa" cover story might well turn out to have had disguised blessings. If nothing else, it brought attention to the way in which the African continent and its peoples continue to be represented in the Western media. It discredited the idea of balanced reporting, in that none of its contributors actually came from the African continent, or had a deep understanding of its issues. Prejudices were presented as hard facts – contradicting the deepest tenets of responsible journalism.

The first 'hard fact' was articulated in the first sentences of its editorial page. "At the start of the 19th century," it led, "Freetown (Sierra Leone) was remote and malarial, but also a place of hope. This settlement for destitute Africans from England and former slaves from the Americas had become the main base in West Africa for enforcing the British act that abolished the slave trade.

The key question is: Why should Africa,

in The Economist's phrase, were to give up on the entire European continent on the basis of the intractable problems of Bosnia and Macedonia.

Or if Latin America were to be junked on the basis of ongoing drug wars in Colombia.

"At the start of the 21st century," it continued, "Freetown symbolises failure and despair." The hapless former colony could do no more than look on helplessly as its last hope of salvation, the peacekeeping mission of the United Nations, "degenerated into a shambles, calling into question the outside world's readiness to help end the fighting not just in Sierra Leone but in any of Africa's many dreadful wars. Indeed, since the difficulties of helping Sierra Leone seemed so intractable, and since Sierra Leone seemed to epitomise so much of the rest of Africa, it began to look as though the world might just give up on the entire continent."

Imagine if "the world", in *The Economist's* phrase, were to give up on the entire European continent on the basis of the intractable problems of Bosnia and Macedonia. Or if Latin America were to be junked on the basis of ongoing drug wars in Colombia. That is the level of analysis that this respected journal wishes its readers to buy in to. But worse than this is its selective version of history – a history that, if more fully told, might help all of us to understand the underlying causes of the unacceptable trauma of a civil war in one little corner of the vast African continent.

The Economist's high-sounding "British act that abolished the slave trade" came about only after centuries of that country's benefiting from the trade in African slaves. Slave revolts

newfound American reality – a white reality that had no further need of their labour.

Europe and America were dumping their colour problem, like toxic waste, back on the nearest and most convenient shore of Africa, without regard to the complex and living realities of existing African nations. These African nations had already been destabilised by centuries of external warfare and colonial invasion – they were now nations that would be obliged to receive these unexpected immigrants. And those black immigrants from a distant world would be obliged to create a new presence, a new identity, on shores that they had never known.

In addition to this, Britain was also using its new colonies in Africa and Australia as dumping grounds for its own unwanted social elements – political and religious heretics, pirates, pimps, prostitutes and unreconstructed criminals. And so, from far afield in 19th century Britain and America, the seeds of an African civil war in the 20th and 21st centuries were sown.

The Economist is not a unique example of how the African continent continues to be represented in much of the Western media. The issue under discussion merely provides a one-stop example of biased reporting that fails to take into account the point of view of African people. And it contains many sweep-

called *Fantastic Invasion*, is one example. Even more notable is the work of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, who was first sent to cover Ghana's progress towards independence by the Polish news agency in 1957, and more or less stayed on to cover the continent's unfolding dramas until the 1990s and beyond. Kapuscinski's reporting is published in several outstanding books – *The Emperor*, recounting the downfall of Ethiopia's Haile Selassie; *Another Day of Life*, an intimate and heartrending account of the Angolan civil war; and his recently published memoirs, *The Shadow of the Sun: my African life*. Of this powerful antidote to *The Economist's* imperialist reporting, a British reviewer commented: "Bound by centuries of misconceptions, our shallow views warped by ingrained prejudice, we follow Kapuscinski's trail of tears over four decades to our own enlightenment. What was dark, incomprehensible and frightening becomes clearer, illuminated by his intelligent empathy."

Africa itself produces many excellent journals probing the complexities of the continent. The French-language *Jeune Afrique* group, with its specialised monthly titles *Jeune Afrique L'Intelligent* and *Jeune Afrique Economique*, are just two examples. The critical analysis they provide on key issues across all of Africa demonstrates the existence of articulate and sophisticated African journalists who do not shy away from the major issues of the day, and are able to criticise constructively.

These perspectives seldom find their way into the powerful organs of the Western media, in which Africa continues to be 'covered' from a Western perspective. As ever, economic control goes hand-in-hand with control over the flow of information. And as long as that continues to be the case, the idea of Africa as an endemically 'hopeless' continent continues to hold the power of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

South African JOHN MATSHIKIZA has worked in theatre, film, television and print media in Britain, Senegal, the United States and South Africa. Since 1999 he has written the popular column, "With the Lid Off," for the *Mail and Guardian*. He travels extensively on the African continent.

as a continent, have to live up to any expectations at all? By whose expectations is it being judged?

(notably that in Haiti in 1804) and the modernisation of American and European economies that came about due to the wealth generated by slave-labour played a far greater role in bringing the practice to an end than did liberal thinking in Britain. After four centuries of justification, the slave trade had become redundant.

Freetown in Sierra Leone was a settlement that brought more misery than the hope that *The Economist* would have us believe in. The "destitute Africans from England" were involuntarily transported there because the England that they had been born into, or imported into as slaves, chose not to accommodate them, for reasons of colour. And the "former slaves from the Americas" had been thrust onto this "remote and malarial" coast in an attempt to remove them from the

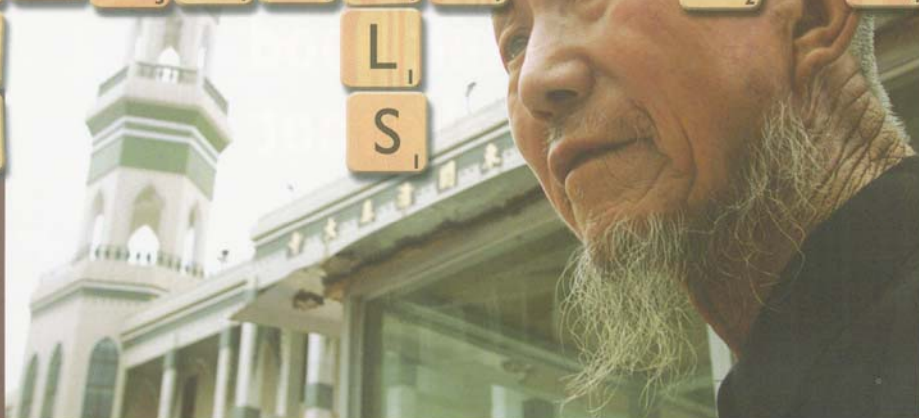
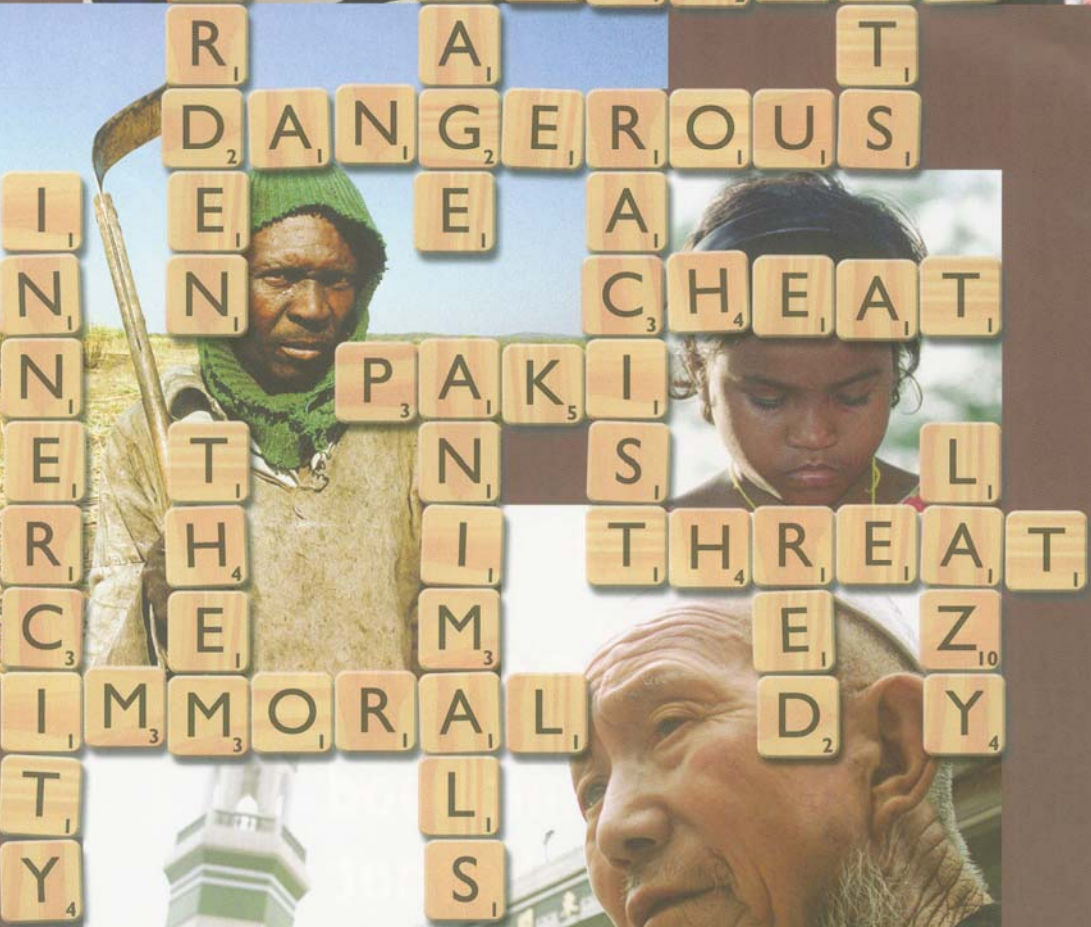
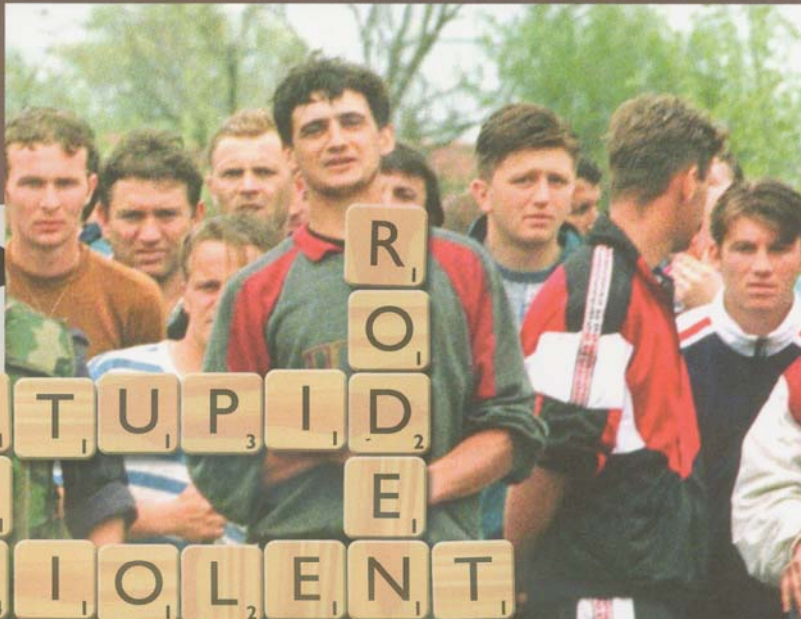
ing generalisations from varied parts of the continent, apart from the worst-case example of Sierra Leone.

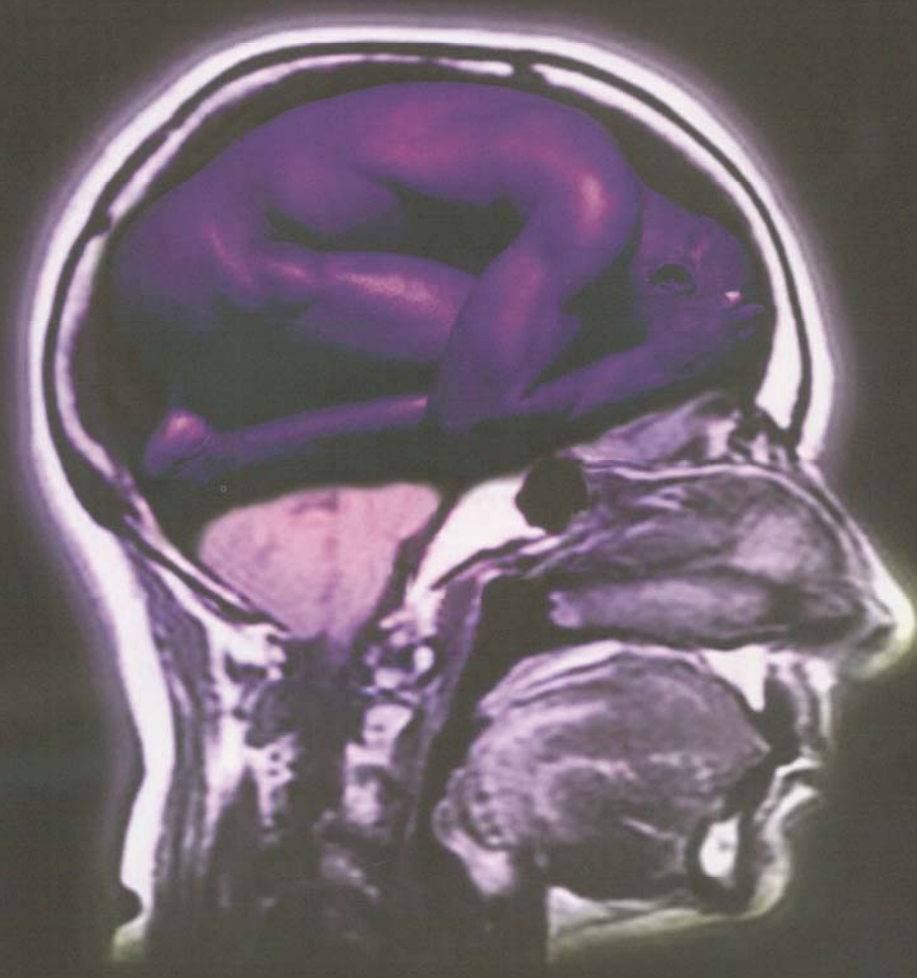
The media exert great power and influence over the minds of governments, investors and the general public alike. In continuing to spread the bad news, and failing to have eyes to recognise the good news when it is there, the media plays a potent role in maintaining ancient prejudices – and these prejudices can hardly be overstressed, considering the role they have played in allowing Northern audiences to turn a blind eye to the ravages committed against the continent and its peoples, from slavery to apartheid to the ongoing, long-range economic control of the post-colonial era.

There are noble exceptions to this type of reporting. Patrick Marnham's African journalism, collected in a volume

Racism at Work

How does a racist become a racist? Can a racist shed his or her racist beliefs? Scientists, psychologists and philosophers differ widely in their theories on the origins and nature of racism. Here we explore how we 'construct the enemy' through projection, and the potential for reasoning with the racist. Meanwhile, no one has had the last word on our 'cognitive incapacities'...





Racism as Projection

How early childhood
can help it take root

Psychologist **Helene Lewis** documents how

The child's first experience of 'the other as enemy' occurs at approximately eight months.

IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED that it is psychologically far more comfortable for the individual to despise another person or group, than to abhor him- or herself. Most psychologists would also argue that racism cannot be simply understood as some 'force of evil', but rather as a phenomenon that manifests as a trade-off among positive objectives associated with identity, community and society as a whole.

As a psycho-historian, I hold an underlying assumption that people have, as individuals and groups, a psychological investment in the continuation of conflict, racial and otherwise. The individual both needs and uses 'enemies' as external stabilisers for a sense of identity and inner control. Racism is one means of defining and categorising these 'enemies', whose perceived flaws elevate the racist's sense of self.

To understand racism better, it is important to understand childrearing, and the evolution of childrearing over time. Racism is learned behaviour, originating in early childhood rearing and training and often concretised in adolescence. The good news is that what has been learned can be unlearned, if the individual's psyche hasn't been too wounded.

The realisation of harmonious humankind – of a 'non-racial society', to use a once-popular South African phrase – is still far off. Yet over a 1000-year span, there has clearly been progress from a psycho-historical perspective – progress based on improved childrearing. Improved childrearing over the ages has rendered healthier individuals, healthier societies and thus less projection, more compassion and more tolerance towards others.

In studying childhood over many generations, it is important to concentrate on the moments that most affect the psyche of the next generation: primarily, what happens when an adult is face to face with a child who needs something.

Three options exist:

1. The parent can use the child as a vehicle for projection of the contents (mostly disowned by himself) of his own unconscious.
2. He can use the child as a substitute for an adult figure (parent) in his own childhood.
3. He can empathise with the child's needs and act to satisfy them (empathic reach).

up, abandoned, raped, battered and tortured. Wounded and damaged children have led to wounded and vengeful adults (societies).

Six main childrearing modes have been identified by psychohistorians. Infanticide was a dominant mode centuries ago, and has diminished but not entirely disappeared. The intrusive childrearing mode (beginning in the 16th century) was primarily one of controlling the child, to make it 'obedient'. This mode still persists today, alternating with other earlier childrearing modes, the abandonment and the ambivalent modes, and more progressive modes like socialising and helping, presently the most prevalent mode.

Parents from each of the six childrearing modes co-exist in modern nations today. Each mode leads to a specific psychoclass comprised of individuals who have had similar childrearing/upbringing. Much political – and racial – conflict occurs because of the psychoclasses' vastly different value systems, particularly their vastly different tolerance for 'freedom' in its various forms.

RACISM AND CHILDHOOD

The child's first experience of 'the other as enemy' occurs at approximately eight months. The 'enemy' (stranger) is perceived by the child as an 'external object' ('not mother') that he has to protect himself against by his ego-defense mechanisms: externalisation, projection and displacement.

- Externalisation is a primitive mechanism by which the child rids himself of unpleasant self-images and feeling states (eg, aggression towards mother is displaced onto a doll by hitting it). The child still has to learn to integrate these feelings within his own being.
- Projection develops at a later stage and is a far more sophisticated system. Different from externalisation which pertains to the individual himself, projection is used by the individual to ascribe his own unacceptable thoughts, impulses or traits to someone 'out there' in an effort to be rid of them. As individuals we project our own unacceptable (disowned) parts onto another person or onto another race. This projection lies at the roots of racism.
- Displacement is the investment of feelings about one object onto another, feelings which you were not able to openly express (eg, antagonism felt for an oppressive father onto a boss).

anger onto someone else.

This displacement results in a precursor of the 'enemy'. Someone else on whom the aggression is displaced becomes dangerous – and may also become a suitable container (poison container) for the unwanted (split-off parts) of the child's sense of self.

This displacement is a necessary part of the psyche's growth. However, its nature can vary from acceptable to poisonous/destructive. With (ego) maturation there is a growing ability to repress these unintegrated parts, these split-off parts, waiting to be

As individuals we project our own unacceptable (disowned) parts onto another person or onto another race. This projection lies at the roots of racism.

projected under the right circumstances (eg, when the individual feels vulnerable or anxious) onto an external object (person/group/another race etc). No doubt, the potential for having individualised enemies as a child finds its way, in the long run, into the formation of shared enemies.

THE HOME FACTOR

Home influence presents as the dominant factor in the development of racism. Children have good reasons for adopting 'ready-made' racist attitudes from their parents. Little children, in particular, are 'delivered to their parents' – totally dependent on them. For survival, as a 'captive audience' they have to comply.

The first six years of life are important for the development of social attitudes. However, early childhood alone is not responsible; we are not fully developed by age six. As such, there is a significant difference between adopting prejudice and developing prejudice.

Adopting prejudice is a 'taking over of attitudes' and stereotypes from family and the cultural environment – an adoption of



CHILD TRAINING

Various studies indicate that mothers (or other caretakers) of prejudiced children – far more often than mothers of unprejudiced children – believe that:

- Obedience is the most important behaviour for a child to learn;
- A child should never be allowed to oppose the will of his parents – the parents' word is law;
- A child should never keep a secret from his parents;
- A quiet child is preferable to a noisy one;
- Early sex-play (masturbation) should be punished.

In summary, mothers (caretakers) of prejudiced children tend to insist on unquestioned obedience, suppress the child's impulses and discipline harshly.

This leads to a child constantly being on guard. Consequently, the child learns that power and authority dominate human relationships – not trust and tolerance. The first stage is thus set for a hierarchical view of society. Equality doesn't prevail. But much worse, the child learns to mistrust his impulses: he must not get angry, not have tantrums, not disobey, not play with his sex organs (he is 'dirty' and must fight such 'evil' within himself). The seeds of prejudice ('outsiders' become the threat) have been sown.

Through not trusting his own impulses, the child comes to fear evil impulses in others. Not capable of recognising his own destructive impulses within, he recognises them in 'the other' and starts to punish them for these projected, 'disowned parts'. He needs his misguided projection to maintain his own fractured self. Without it he will disintegrate, collapse. And this is the pathology behind racism.

as children we begin – with the projection of our 'dark, split-off sides' – to construct 'the enemy' at the core of racism...

The central direction of evolutionary progress among humankind is from personal neediness to personal independence; from family enmeshment to family caregiving; and from social dependency and violence to social dependability and empathy (Lloyd de Mause, *Foundations of Psycho-history*, 1982). Childhood must always first evolve before major social, cultural and economic innovation can occur.

What is needed, in fact, is an evolution of parenting. Through history, many children have been routinely murdered, neglected, tied

Studies have indicated a "striking upsurge" in a child's aggressive drive at about nine months of age, which accounts for the development of obstinacy and willfulness (Vamik Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*, 1976). This upsurge presents a need to master and channel aggressive feelings, which brings both conflict and ambivalence to the child; because the child depends on his mother's love, these angry and aggressive impulses threaten him with the possible loss of her love, should they be expressed directly to her. This leads children to displace their

parental views. However, there is also the reality of training, in which a dysfunctional home atmosphere is created, that develops prejudice as a lifestyle.

In training, parents may or may not express their own prejudices (though they often do). The crucial factor is the specific childrearing mode – the way the parents discipline, 'love' and threaten their child. If it is such that the child develops suspicion, fear and hate, he will sooner or later project onto other (out) groups.

Yet we project not only our dark, split-off sides. We also project our unacknowledged strengths. For the first we need our enemies, for the latter our allies. The irony is that we are much more similar to both our foes and allies than we'd ever care to realise.

HELENE LEWIS is a professional psychologist in private practice in Cape Town, South Africa. She is at present doing her doctoral studies, focusing on 'The Development of Social Conscience within the Afrikaner', through the University of Port Elizabeth.

RACISTS CAN BELIEVE some pretty odd things.

I'm not talking about the completely out-of-left field, lunatic-fringe racists who might believe that God deems that white people have dominion over black people, or that there is a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world.

I'm talking about your run-of-the-mill racist who believes that skin colour, eye shape, hair texture and so on are reliable markers for determining who has what capacities, and who is deserving of different treatment or levels of respect. This belief is fundamental to at least many brands of racism; patently false, it seems an odd thing to believe.

Yet we ought to respect racists as rational agents, as doing so will be conducive to building a racially just society. We could ask of the 'run-of-the-mill' racist mentioned above: "Why would someone believe such a thing?" It could of course be that his belief is based on ignorance. If that is so, then given more information – evidence that his belief is false – a racist ought to give it up. And perhaps some would do just that.

But many would not. Many would turn out to be (as Lewis Gordon calls them) 'stubborn racists'. Stubborn racists do not give up their racist beliefs despite having been presented with evidence and argument that would seem to require them to do so.

presented with evidence and argument that would seem to require them to do so.

Kwame Anthony Appiah, head of Harvard University's Committee on African Studies and a longtime commentator on matters of 'race', puts this stubbornness down to a "cognitive incapacity" – the stubborn racist's hanging on to a demonstrably false belief is the result of a flaw in his rational apparatus. What

is interesting about this 'cognitive incapacity' is that it appears as "systematically distorted rationality". Racists are often more than capable of forming rational beliefs based on evidence in other areas of their lives, yet these rational abilities are truncated specifically when it comes to evidence to do with race (Appiah, "Racisms," in David Theo Goldberg, ed, *Anatomy of Racism*, 1990).

Having identified the cognitive incapacity at the heart of

Treating racists as inherently deficient is a failure on our part to respect

much racism, and the poor prospects for leading someone out of their prejudice, Appiah goes on to claim: "[T]o the extent that their prejudices are really not subject to any kind of rational control, we may wonder whether it is right to treat such people as morally responsible for the acts their racial prejudice motivates, or morally reprehensible for holding the views to which their prejudice leads them. ... Racial prejudice ... may threaten an agent's autonomy, making it appropriate to treat or train rather than to reason with them."

The message here is that, having discovered that someone is racially prejudiced, we reach a point where reasoning can go no further. Appiah believes we can reason with the racist about how he ought to behave given that he is prejudiced.

We can demonstrate to him that he is prejudiced, that he suffers from a rational disability, and so needs to be careful about how he conducts himself. Much as we would advise someone prone to fainting not to drive a car, we would advise a racist not to get involved in, say, the drafting of policies with racial implications. However, the prospects of reasoning him out of his prejudice are dim. With respect to his beliefs about race, we are to treat him as not being a rational agent.

What are we to make of Appiah's "cognitive incapacity" claim? It can be tempting to view an opponent – especially one in debates as volatile as those concerning race – to just be a bit thick. There is a need to posit a fundamental difference between the two of you, because doing so allows the comfort of confidence in your belief ("Sure it has been

'Respecting the Racist'



**If racists are 'rational',
minds can change**

Many argue that racists are cognitively incapable of changing their racialistic views. But, argues philosopher **Tom Martin**, in most cases they can be talked out of their prejudice – and to not try to do so amounts to "denying others their full humanity"...

objected to, but only by stupid people") and no further need to engage with your opponent ("What, after all, would be the point?"). While no doubt many racists are quite stupid, it is certainly not the case that they all are. As we have seen, stubborn racists can often appear to be very intelligent in other areas of their lives.

I believe that there is great danger in attributing racism to cognitive incapacity. First, because such a diagnosis tends to

their humanity and their possibilities for change.

put an end to dialogue and, if we are to hope for a racially just society, we must hold open the possibility that our opponents can be won over. Treating racists as inherently deficient is a failure on our part to respect their humanity and their possibilities for change.

We should not be too quick to give up the possibility of reasoning someone out of his prejudice. We ought not, in fighting racism, to fall into the racist trap of denying others their full humanity.

Second, and more importantly, it doesn't strike me as an accurate portrayal of the situation. As we have seen, the purported 'incapacity' appears as a matter of 'systematically distorted rationality'.

Stubborn racists seem unable to take *certain sorts of evidence* into account with respect to *certain sorts of beliefs* – in this case, evidence that conflicts with racist beliefs. That it is so systematic tips us off to the fact that there is something more going on here than a fundamental 'cognitive incapacity'.

Ignorance is certainly involved here, but it is not 'ignorance' in the sense of 'absence of pertinent information'. Rather it is an active 'ignoring' – a specifically targeted refusal to accept or take into account pertinent information.

Demonstrably false beliefs held by an otherwise mentally healthy racist may well be a matter of irrationality. Appiah says as much. My disagreement with him regards the nature of this irrationality. For Appiah it is a 'cognitive incapacity'. While for him this incapacity can at times be seen as being to the political or economic advantage of the racist – a fact



which may be used in an attempt to dislodge the racist's prejudice – often it is not (and even if it is it may be of no use) and so we should treat the racist as cognitively disabled. In my view we should see racial prejudice as fundamentally motivated, and that the motivations run much deeper than Appiah allows.

What could motivate someone to adopt an irrational belief? Jean-Paul Sartre claimed that racists attain a particular kind of identity and world-view through their racism. By believing in racial essences (that certain capacities, character traits and moral worth can be predetermined by purported racial characteristics) – not just the essences of other races, but of one's own as well – the racist is able to see himself as the holder of a particular social role, particular rights and a particular destiny which enables him to, in a sense, relax. He can escape from the struggle, ambiguities and responsibilities inherent in dealing with real people in real situations, by instead dealing with himself and others on the level of clear-cut stereotypes (Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 1948).

Sartre claims that such a move on the part of racists is really a matter of cowardice, motivated by a fear of humanity, one's own and that of others, and all that entails. Sartre wrote, in reference to French anti-Semitism, that the anti-Semite is "a man who is afraid. Not of the Jews, to be sure, but of himself, of his own consciousness, of his liberty, of his

instincts, of his responsibilities, of solitariness, of change, of society, and the world – of everything except the Jews. He is a coward who does not want to admit his cowardice to himself".

Thus racism is an approach to deep human concerns. It is by no means the only approach to these concerns, and it is

certainly not one that should be taken. Understanding racism in this way enables us to see it as having a rationale, and in so doing identify viable methods for combating it.

Racism is motivated and based, in the end, on choice – choices of certain goals and choices regarding the methods used in achieving those goals. Racists are and should be held morally accountable for their beliefs.

This requires us to continue to respect racists as rational agents. This does not mean that we respect their beliefs – racist beliefs are despicable – but it does mean that we respect racists' potential for change. We need to 'go that extra mile' in understanding the bases of racism and continuing the dialogue in light of this, rather than dismissing racists as irremediably sick.

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THOMAS MARTIN is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. He is currently working on a book on Sartrean understandings of racism and sexism, entitled *Oppression and the Human Condition* (to be published by Rowman and Littlefield).

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Country by Colour...

Racism has fundamentally the same roots, and the same expression, all over the world. But there are many variations on the theme, and a wide variance in different societies' capacity to deal with racism – to even talk about it – openly. Here we look at racism and the media worldwide: at how racism is being enforced, even generated, by the media, and at how certain media initiatives are taking racism on head-first...

'mujahedins'

IN THE SUMMER of 1997 I did a BBC radio programme on xenophobia in the Czech Republic. One of the people I interviewed, a minister, asked me whether there were any visible differences between Serbs and Croats. "Of course," I said, trying to be humorous. "Just look at my nose. We Serbs have beaks, whereas Croats have those ugly snouts."

The minister gave me a strange look. Had my exaggeration been any subtler, I would probably have easily confirmed his assumptions. He was rather familiar with our faces (having spent several holidays in what was once called Tito's Yugoslavia), but confronted with news of war and destruction, he had begun to believe that "when differences between ethnic groups in society had become so catastrophic, these differences just *had* to be *visible*" (Mark Thompson, *Balkans*

(Thompson, *ibid*). On the other hand, in the Balkans, ethnicity "has been promoted as a term by nationalists who wanted their claims to souls and territory to have more gravitas, more depth, than the term 'nation' and its cognates, tainted as they still are by their status in Titoist discourse, could give it". "Ethnicity has no such taint, it has a more elemental ring," says Thompson, concluding that "since ethnicity has been exploited so much during the last 15 years in the Balkans, it has become quite as disgraceful as its grisly cousin 'race'".

What else but 'racism' to call what we have experienced in the Balkans, both in everyday life and through the media, ever since Slobodan

For many inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula, it has been made very difficult to like their mirror image.

Programme Director for the International Crises Group, Brussels, speaking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, September 2000).

In his book *The Warrior's Honor*, Michael Ignatieff tries to answer a similar question by quoting a Serbian soldier fighting in Croatia: "We smoke 'Drina', they smoke 'Drava' (the two most popular brands of Serbian and Croatian cigarettes)." Being heavy smokers, and always trying to be funny, if not cynical, is not the end of similarities between the two biggest enemies in the Balkans. In fact, there are many more similarities than differences between them. For these and many other reasons, Ignatieff employs Freud's thesis of the 'narcissism of minor differences' when describing similarities between the two ethnic groups.

For many inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula, it has been made very difficult to like their mirror image. Everything and everyone – from history books, to the politicians, to the media – have been telling them that their mirror image, the others, other ethnic groups, other nations – THEY have made 'our lives miserable'. Whereas WE are 'fighting for freedom', 'defending', 'guarding' and 'protecting' our 'native soil'.

The last 15 years of the Balkan's bloody history have proved that we can talk here about racism of the worst kind, even though the word itself hasn't been used much in the region – except when tainting the 'others'. Mark Thompson explains why this is so. He talks about the term 'ethnicity' as used in two different ways: in Britain and in the Balkans. In the UK, Thompson says, the term ethnicity has been promoted "in reaction to the fascist appropriation of 'race'"

Milosevic got into power in 1987? I will use here some examples from countries at war, as well as from those that haven't (yet) experienced the war. It should be noted, as media and human rights activist Mariana Lenkova does, that with the exceptions of Greece and Turkey, "all Balkan countries are former communist dictatorships, a fact which makes people *a priori* less sensitive towards democratic values and human rights" ("Black & White vs. Diversity", *Greek Helsinki Monitor*, 1998).

The Roma (popularly known as Gypsies) are the biggest ethnic minority in Europe – and the most vulnerable. Mostly populating former communist countries, they have always been at the bottom of society. Their status has deteriorated with the arrival of 'democracy' in various countries. They are now "blamed for everything – from the worst economic and social problems to the everyday petty crimes" (Lenkova, *ibid*).

The Roma are a scapegoat nation, found a study conducted by the European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media (ECWPNM). The ECWPNM found ample evidence, including a company ad published in March in the Romanian newspaper *Anuntul Telefonie*: "Total Protect seeks security guards ... Roma excluded." Romanian law is explicit: "Discrimination based on race, sex, language, origin, social origin, ethnic identity or nationality is **forbidden**." Both Total Protect and *Anuntul Telefonie* are yet to be punished for this violation of the law.

Generally speaking, media in the Balkans, in Lenkova's words, "recycle prejudicial concepts related to the Roma again

'Muslim extremists'

'fascists'

The last 15 years of the Balkan

Beaks/Snouts, Drina/Drava

The media's markers of race and ethnicity in the Balkans



Milica Pesic, fired from TV Serbia during the Balkans war for refusing to report propaganda, outlines how the region's media promote racial and ethnic strife – and argues the urgent need to 'report diversity'...

and again". Here are some headlines from Bulgarian newspapers: "Gypsies Swallow Thousands of Turtles"; "Gypsy Boys Chopped Two Old Men with an Axe for a Lump of Cheese"; "A Gypsy Split the Skull of an Old Woman for Revenge"; "The Gypsies: Unarmed but hungry and very dangerous; Dark-skinned Bulgarians".

So much for peacetime. Wartime has been even worse. Tens of thousands of people, mostly Muslims, have been killed just for not being from 'my' ethnic group. Talking about the Balkan media in *Forging the War*, the very first book on media (mis)behaviour in the Balkans, Mark Thompson says: "Discrimination was either a policy priority, or a necessary side-effect of policy, and the media were used accordingly. Used as a state-monopoly, like the army, the police and taxation."

The case of TV Serbia has become the best known example of how to use media to make people think, believe and do what political leaders want them to. Completely in the hands

bombardment of TV Serbia) cost \$2 million a day.

However, I leave the blame with us, the Balkan people. If a marriage is not good, anyone can destroy it. And ours obviously didn't work. Yet, we did our best not to fix it.

Tens of thousands of people, mostly Muslims, have been killed just for not being from 'my' ethnic group.

Some of us journalists tried to: after being fired for refusing to take part in war propaganda in our then-Yugoslav republics, we started AIM, the Alternative Information Network. We managed to produce and publish un-biased articles on what was happening around us – so that independent newspapers, say in Serbia, could have reliable analyses of events in Croatia and vice versa.

Freedom of expression, professionalism and journalism education are our basic needs. Ignorance should not be an excuse for anything. Fair, accurate, sympathetic and in-depth reporting is vital in promoting understanding between different ethnic groups. Only thus can we begin confronting irrational prejudices and challenging extremist political agendas. Such reporting provides a

critical bulwark against the inflammation of conflict, both internally and externally.

At the European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media we pursue similar standards. In our 'Reporting Diversity' and other training projects, we try to teach our colleagues that being different is neither a privilege, nor a threat. We live in diverse societies, and journalists must reflect that diversity. The more that people recognise themselves in the media, the easier it will be for them to see it as their media too. Thus the media will have more and more impact.

'Seeing the others as myself, and seeing myself as the others' is the working title of the next phase of our training. Vive la difference!

MILICA PESIC is director of the European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media, based in London. The Centre's main programme is the Reporting Diversity Network, and its work focuses primarily on Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

'jihad warriors'

bloody history have proved that we can talk here about racism of the worst kind, even though the word itself hasn't been used much in the region.

of Milosevic's regime, TV Serbia had only two goals: to convince people in Serbia that all their problems were created by the other ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia; and to convince them that war was inevitable.

To achieve this TV Serbia used different methods, from omitting and obscuring the news to inventing completely new events. Disturbing images and words were used continuously. Other ethnic groups were labelled 'fascists', 'mujahedins', 'jihad warriors', 'commando-terrorist groups', 'Muslim extremists' and 'Islamic fundamentalists'. On the other side, the Serbs were 'protecting' their 'native soil' and 'Serbian brave and honest history'. "The opposite ethnic group as a whole, the opposite nation as a whole, the opposite religion as a whole were proclaimed inhuman beings," says Dr Vojin Dimitrijevic, a human rights expert from Belgrade. "And if somebody is not human, then it is easier to kill, destroy, torture, humiliate them."

That propaganda was premeditated – which constitutes it as a crime. Fomenting ethnic, religious or racial hatred was prohibited by the then-Yugoslav, as well as international, laws on human rights. But no one cared. When we, journalists fired from TV Serbia, tried to find money to start a TV station that would be strong enough to compete with TV Serbia and asked for \$6 million, we were told it was too much. NATO's six-week war in 1999 against Serbia (which included



Bosnian Serbs block the road to Koraj preventing Muslim refugees from visiting their old homes.

'commando-terrorist groups'

"Ethnicity has been exploited so much during the last 15 years in the Balkans,

it has become quite as disgraceful as its grisly cousin, 'race'" – Mark Thompson

Black people in the Brazilian media are either invisible, or strangely visible, or present as consumers, argues **Sueli Carneiro**. Media in Brazil are turning their backs on important social gains...

The Empty Mirror

Why Brazil's blacks don't recognise themselves in the media's reflection

RACISM and the media in Brazil, for me, divides into three aspects: the question of the invisible black; the question of perverse visibility; and the question of visibility in the context of Brazil's current racial neo-democracy.

I shall begin with a statement by the black militant poet Arnaldo Xavier. Using what he calls Muniz Sodré's metaphorical equation, Xavier says in an article recently published in *Jornal da Tarde*:

"Brazilian television is to blacks what a mirror is to a vampire. Blacks look: they do not recognise themselves, they do not see themselves."

The 'invisible black' is the consequence of the aesthetics of white privilege: the paradigm, the standard, of 'good looks' is set by colour – the lighter someone is, the more they ennoble a product. The black man, on the other hand, represents the opposite, the negative pole, for the blacker he is the more he degrades the product. Therefore he must be made invisible!

Yet visibility, when it occurs, can have an even more devastating effect. Let us take as an example the soap operas of Globo, the television network that for the last two decades has topped the ratings with its Brazilian audience and has also had some success in exporting its soap operas abroad.

One of Globo's more controversial soaps was *Pátria Minha*. In that soap opera, three black characters enabled the character played by Tarcísio Meira to exacerbate his racist and reactionary personality. The black characters were also used to enhance the progressive and contentious character played by Cláudia Abreu, who, in the context of the racist scenes, acted as a reborn Princesa Isabel – the saviour of the three impotent black characters in the programme.

Last year TV Globo, commemorating the 500th anniversary of Brazil's 'discovery' by Europeans, broadcast what was virtually a follow-up of *Pátria Minha* – the soap opera *Terra Nostra*. Part of the story line has the rich, pitiless coffee plantation owner pondering the impossibility of settling the Italian immigrants in the slave quarters deserted after the abolition of slavery.

—Are you going to put the Italians in the slave quarters? asks the contractor.

to the treatment dealt out to blacks. Spirit, pride and courage are thus attributes which only whiteness can confer.

The author of *Terra Nostra* answered the repudiation of the black community by saying that a black avenger is on his way. One fears to see what may materialise. But even if this avenger turns up, will he be able to wipe out the impact on the social imagination and on the self-esteem of blacks, especially children and adolescents, of dozens of episodes equating black people with supposedly voluntary and submissive servitude?

In *Terra Nostra* as well as other soap operas, black people show no resentment for

for 500 years – a national project of white, western hegemony with the minority and subordinate admission of blacks, Brazilian Indians and non-whites in general.

The story lines of these soap operas deliberately ignore what happens to blacks in the real world: ignore the struggles for equal rights and opportunities; the efforts for assertiveness of ethnic-cultural identity; the demands for public politics; the heroic examples of survival in a society racially hostile to blacks.

The press, for its part, goes even further than televised soap operas. Recently *Correio do Povo*, a Porto Alegre newspaper, in a story on transgenic techniques and cross breeding (eg, maize and chickens), concluded with this coarse reference to Brazil's women of mixed race: "In the debate about transgenic techniques, the noblest of fruits was not mentioned: our glorious 'mulata'."

As physician-activist Fatima de Oliveira responded in *Jornal do Povo*: "Women are not fruit, they are human beings."

Ah, but there have been changes!

Some of the advances are due in part to the recycling power of the myth of racial democracy in our society, and to the wariness of the country's elite towards the explosive character of the racial question in Brazil.

What are the signs? TV Globo has settled for a minimum of one and a maximum of three blacks per soap opera, representing at least a slight increase in blacks' media presence. An increased black presence is also noticeable in advertising – though an ad depicting a black person in a crowd of whites is not exactly an inclusive perspective.

The magazine *Raça Brasil*, "the magazine for Brazilian blacks," according to its own definition, is an editorial success. And the research agency Grotera has found out that there is a black middle class of seven million people capable of more sophisticated consumption and anxious to abandon invisibility, especially through the media and advertising.

But the achievements of black people concerning the

'infantile'

A landless peasant family camps outside in Rio de Janeiro.



'submissive'

The 'invisible black' is the consequence of the aesthetics of white privilege: the paradigm, the standard, of 'good looks' is set by colour – the lighter someone is, the more they ennoble a product.

—No. They're white. They have in their hearts the spirit of freedom. They're not going to accept slave quarters, answers the coffee baron.

On the verge of a new millennium, we see/hear a black child, the talented child actor who plays Tiziu in *Terra Nostra*, complain against his fate: "God didn't want to make me white." In a dialogue between Tiziu and the Italian Matteo, the boy tells the Italian that if he misbehaves the overseer will put him in the stocks, as he used to do with the blacks. Matteo, the Italian hero, responds by saying that the overseer will be a dead man if he tries anything of the kind.

This is the key that explains these stereotyped constructions. The subtext is the assumed resignation of blacks in the face of slavery's violence, in contrast to the courage, pride and spirit of the white immigrant, who would never submit

centuries of slavery, no demand for equality, no contention in relation to the social hierarchy into which they have been inserted. The critical discourse against slavery, where it exists, is generally uttered by white characters.

The stupidity with which blacks are portrayed aims to emphasise, to maximise, the assumed white superiority. The stupidity, submissiveness and infantilism of black characters in these plots seek to reiterate the racist image of an incomplete humanity for blacks that contrasts with a complete humanity for whites, even when they are whites of a subaltern class, as in the case of the Italian immigrants of *Terra Nostra*.

This racist stereotyping justifies blacks' exclusion and marginalisation. It legitimises a national project being built

demystification of Brazil's racial democracy, making racism visible and reverting some discriminatory practices, have not quite legitimated our political action as a social movement. Rather, we have begun to *subsidise* something that I call a 'racial neo-democracy', whose slogan is: *Yes to the consumer, no to the citizen*. This is the visibility granted within the boundaries of the current neo-democracy – a visibility restricted to our capacity of consumption.

'stupid'

SUELI CARNEIRO works for Instituto Geledes in Sao Paulo, an advocacy organisation defending the rights of black women in Brazil. She is an Ashoka Fellow, selected for her work in gender equity and race relations.



Cultural Blunders and Different

IT'S EARLY MORNING in Igloolik. I flip on the TV in my motel room and turn to the weather channel. The temperature is minus forty-seven degrees Celsius. It's also a blustery day and, with the wind-chill, it'll feel like sixty-five degrees below zero. I have a sudden urge to go back to bed. But today I must shoot a TV news story about a giant igloo that is being built in town.

The story promises to be a good one. The people of Igloolik have a community festival each year called 'The welcoming of the return of the sun'. It happens when the sun at last peeks above the horizon after the depths

of winter. From the end of November to the middle of January, the people of Igloolik don't see the sun at all.

This year they are making a huge igloo out of blocks of ice to use as a venue for drum dancing and other stuff. Now you might think, unless you live in Canada, that igloos are always made out of ice. Well, no. In the town of Igloolik, which is known for its igloos, (the word

itself means 'place of igloos'), most igloos are made of snow. This is the first time the big festival igloo is to be built out of ice.

I look down at my boots, which are rated to only minus forty-five, and decide to check with the member of my crew who will know best if they'll be okay out there – the Inuk (singular for Inuit) reporter, Paul Irngaut. Paul is staying with his mother (Igloolik is his home town) and he comes over in the truck we've rented. He says I'll be fine – I just have to walk around inside the igloo (where it'll be a toasty minus twenty) as soon as my toes start feeling numb.

Paul and I had agreed on doing the igloo story as an extra to the elections we were in

town to cover. But we were thinking very differently about it as we started the shoot. These differences in approach, perhaps because of our two very different cultures, would surface again.

Paul knew his people would marvel at the igloo, an outsized variation on a tradition. I remember him being impressed with its structure. Paul was himself an igloo builder of note – still making a snow home on occasion when he was out hunting caribou on the weekends. I, on the other hand, was thinking about how CBC viewers in Toronto or Vancouver would view it.

We get to the site of the igloo just outside town. It is really cold. We shoot an elder cutting snow blocks to use as benches inside the igloo. The bricks for the actual structure have been cut out of a nearby lake, loaded onto a qamotik (Inuit sled) and then towed by snowmobile to the site.

The elder is good camera material: he has on traditional clothes – a homemade parka, kammiks (caribou skin boots) and a colourful nasik (knitted hat). But Paul spends too much time chatting with the elder off camera. When we do the interview, it seems to go on and on.

We try for a shot of a 10-year-old kid who is lifting blocks of ice off a qamotik. I think: Get the kid big in the frame; you can't go wrong with a shot of a cute kid. But Paul wants shots of the kid being directed by his elders in the art of working with snow.

The cameraman and I scramble to get back to the warmth of the hotel to eat a hot meal. I have a club sandwich, Paul has fresh caribou at his brother's place.

When we get back home to Iqaluit, the soon-to-be capital of the new territory of Nunavut to work on our stories, there are more surprises. Paul transcribes the more interesting soundbites. The elder has said

some interesting things. When Paul asked about what challenges they'd overcome during the building of the igloo, the elder said that a bunch of ice blocks had been stolen by some townsfolk who melted them down for drinking water so they had to go back to the lake to cut more. But his answer seems repetitive. I cut his answer in half and plug it into my script. Paul doesn't like the cut. He says elders especially tend to talk in circles – finishing off sections by coming back to their original point. Transcribed into English it looks repetitive but in the original it feels completely natural, he says. Further, elders are respected figures in Inuit culture. My cut would seem rude. We compromise on length.

The script, I think, has a strong opening. I've written 'Igloolik means place of igloos' off the top. The opening visual is to be a beautiful dawn sun rising over the town.

But Paul, who is translating it into spoken Inuktitut on the fly, freezes at the very first line: 'Igloolik means place of igloos'. Fair enough. In Inuktitut, Igloolik certainly does mean place of igloos. But Paul is voicing this in Inuktitut. It would be the equivalent of saying: 'Igloolik, igloolik.'

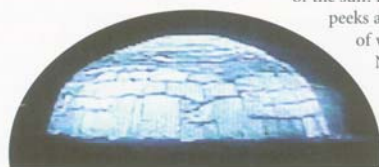
There's a moment of realisation and we start laughing. 'Igloolik, igloolik.'

Okay, I decide, instead of 'Igloolik, igloolik' he'll say 'Igloolik has long been known for its igloos.'

'Sorry about that,' I say to Paul. 'That was a pretty stupid thing to write.'

'Yeah, it was,' he says with a smile.

DOUG MITCHELL is a TV lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University. He is a graduate of Carleton University, Toronto and worked for CBC in Nunavut for two years.



The Big Igloo by Doug Mitchell

Paul Irngaut was a television reporter and video journalist with Canadian Broadcasting for 11 years. He helped launch Canada's first Inuktitut-language daily news and current affairs show, *Igalaaq*. Paul left CBC last year to become executive liaison with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the land claims organisation of the Inuit of the eastern arctic.

HOW did you get your start in television journalism?

I was in Ottawa upgrading my academic skills and I was going to school with this young chap who was hosting this show for CBC. At the time the Inuktitut portion of the show was done out of Ottawa. The guy that was doing it had to leave so they asked me to take over. So I hosted about 10 episodes and that's how I was introduced to television.

And then I moved back up north to Igloolik to work at the Science Institute. The CBC show was moved to Iqaluit and called Aqsarniit (Northern Lights) and in the format that they had they used to have different regular topics and one of them was science and since I was working at the Science Institute and I spoke the language they asked

me to do some segments for them. So I did and then this writer/broadcaster position opened and I got the job.

What was it that attracted you to the job of a TV journalist?

Basically it was a way to communicate with the Inuit. And the Inuktitut language was in trouble a bit and in a way I wanted to serve the Inuktitut language by doing it well on TV.

Was it important to tell your people's stories?

Yes. I think as an aboriginal journalist you want to tell the aboriginal story. And lots of important stories wouldn't get done if we didn't do them.



Conventions

Working on Iglaaaq

In 1999, Canada divided the Northwest Territories to create the new territory of Nunavut. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) saw a need to strengthen its bureau there and in 1998 they sent **Doug Mitchell** from Toronto to run the bureau in Iqaluit, expecting that the creation of the new territory would create lots of interesting

news.



At the time, I was the bureau producer for Canadian Broadcasting Television in the eastern arctic. I led a team of two Inuit reporters and one southern Canadian cameraman (bizarrely, all three were named Paul). Our job? To cover Nunavut – an area almost two million square kilometres in size populated by fewer than 30 000 people. My crew produced daily news and current affairs in two languages – English and Inuktitut (the Inuit language), some of it directed from Yellowknife, lying two time zones to the west.

We were broadcasting countrywide, including to Anglophone cities, but the key audiences were scatterings of people in Nunavut: those of the north, transplanted southerners and bilingual Inuit.

Working in Nunavut in a cultural milieu I didn't understand meant I couldn't take as given that I knew what was going on and therefore couldn't make decisions – producer-style –

ers and bilingual Inuit. Our executive producers, two time zones to the west, focused on the English-speaking audience and its familiarity with the conventions of broadcast news.

I came to realize that helping a people tell their own stories was to become my priority. It was impossible to do both.

For example the giant igloo story. The Inuit reporters approached this reverentially as a very important story about the reclamation of their heritage. It was both something special and new but about a tradition thousands of years old.

For a southern audience – and the way I was approaching the story at the time – it was the exoticism of the whole thing, the quirky story that you get at the end of the bulletin.

So working from Iqaluit I started to operate differently by:

- getting Inuit reporters to drive the story meetings with their ideas,

that made the best sense in Inuktitut.

I realised I had to be open to doing things differently and shake off the conviction that things have to be the way they were taught and done in the south. I learnt that journalism needs to adapt to the culture and audience it serves rather than trying to adapt them to itself.

Instead of me pushing Paul to make his stories fit my southern hard-nosed journalistic values, I learnt to let him take the lead and adapt to his superior sense of the local situation.

My relationship with my seniors became fraught. We ended up doing a lot of 'soft' stories: interesting cultural events and new seal skin fashions. The people in Yellowknife always wanted 'hard' news. We did do that, sometimes really big stories but we were criticised for being soft.

However, our Inuit audience loved the broadcasts and greeted us warmly wherever we travelled.

Eventually I realised that the bureau ideally needed an Inuk producer. The problem is that there are very few university-educated Inuit and those trained by CBC would get snapped up by government.

I came to realize that helping a people tell their own stories was to become my priority.

alone. The strict hierarchy of the TV newsroom had to change because I had to trust the Inuit reporters' knowledge and instincts for stories.

Our broadcasts went out countrywide but our key audience was in the north with its transplanted southern-

with me helping shape the stories and not dictate what they should be,

- reorganising the vetting process. Instead of just making cutting decisions I began to work with reporters to agree on translations

What did you enjoy most about the day-to-day job?

Story meetings because you find out so much about what's going on in your community.

What frustrated you about your job?

Dealing with Yellowknife, dealing with people there that didn't really grasp what was going on here and what was important to people here.

Do you think Inuit and non-Inuit audiences want different things from television news and current affairs?

Well, I think the qallunaq (non-Inuit) audience wants hard news and news from the south. The Inuit audience wants hard news

too but also more about their communities. Also I think they're more into good news stories. They don't like it when a whole newscast is full of negative stories. And they want stories about culture.

Did your cultural values as an Inuk conflict with the conventions of journalism?

Definitely. For example, in Inuit society you don't really every criticize your elders – certainly not publicly. But in journalism, you have to ask the tough questions and your story may put down an elder and I found that very, very hard to do.

Why did you leave CBC after 11 years as a reporter/video journalist?

After so many years of doing reports, I just

got frustrated with all the politics and working with Yellowknife. Even though they were so far away from us they had so much effect on what we did in our bureau. I'm doing more for my people now because I'm informing them about very practical things they need to know.

Inuit girl in Iqaluit in the new Canadian territory Nunavut.



French Semantics

Expanding the French media's discourse on 'minorities' and racism

The mere existence of 'minorities', 'races' and 'ethnic groups' in France is not even generally acknowledged,



reports **Serge Gordey**. Here he looks at the media's sidestepping of such realities...

'beur'

IN JULY 1998, France won the soccer world cup. Journalists talked of "a black, white and 'beur' (French citizens of Afro-Arab origin) France" to describe the team, which was in fact made up of players from different ethnic backgrounds. Jacques Chirac, the country's president, rejoiced in the success of a "France of all colours".

For a week the streets were overrun with enthusiastic crowds. Youth from the working-class suburbs invaded the public spaces. As the stock market rose, France found itself a multi-cultural country, young

Perhaps France had changed its image, but the images on television remained the same. In October 1999, the "Collectif Egalité" (Equality Collective), an initiative of black artists and writers, met with the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, the regulating authority for radio and television in France. The members of the collective protested against the under-representation of minorities in the French media. They insisted that quotas be established to guarantee that the on-screen presence of comedians, animators and television journalists be proportionate to

contemporary French society, or which does so only in a marginal way, practically never giving leading roles to minority representatives: the 'Maghrebins' (people originally from the Maghreb, or from North Africa), present in the country's daily life, are practically absent in French drama."

In May 2000, the Collectif Egalité called for a street demonstration which drew several thousand people. Shortly afterward, the government published a decree aimed at changing the mandate of public television, in order "to take account of the richness and diversity

Would the constant presence of 'blacks' or 'Arabs' on our television screens not in fact hide the real social and economic inequalities?

and full of hope. Had the old chauvinistic France, usually hanging onto its glorious past, truly changed its image?

To tell the truth, many political and cultural figures could hardly disguise their discomfort: on the right, where the supporters of racism and xenophobia had gained a lot of ground over the last 15 years, it was difficult to associate with these crowds, where the joys of victory had mixed the 'pure' French with the so-called 'half-breeds' from northern Africa. The intellectual left restrained its pleasure: the fraternising between France's rich and poor seemed a little too pretty, and France's social inequalities and institutionalised racism too readily forgotten.

the demographic significance of their members' communities. The Conseil commissioned a report.

The report's findings were harsh: "[In studio shows and news programmes] even when they are represented, the visible minorities are rarely given the right to speak. If one

in the backgrounds of the cultures comprising French society, to fight against discrimination and to strengthen civil society, particularly for youth".

Such a proclamation caused a heated debate in the media, among the intellectuals and among political leaders.

In a country like France where political struggles often take on a philosophical dimension,

looks at TV drama, one finds that 81% of them show, at one time or another, members of minorities. However, 74% of these dramas are foreign, mainly American, and only 26% are French ... This analysis signals an undeniable shortcoming in French drama production, which fails to reflect the diversity of

The differences declared were not about stating the facts or about the need for solutions. The very nature of the debate, as well as the solutions advanced, brought to light some sharply opposed positions: was it necessary to establish quotas in order to force television to reflect the country's reality? And



North Africans being deported from Europe.



The French (multi) national soccer team.

how do you define 'ethnic diversity'? In what way does respect for 'ethnic diversity' mean reconsidering established concepts about society and its institutions?

The quota question gave rise to a dispute over the "chartered accountants in charge of verifying the mathematical concordance between what was on our screens and social reality, the number of women or men, of Christians, Protestants, Jews or Muslims, of blacks and other persons of colour, of the young or the old, of the handicapped, of homosexuals..." (Zair Kedadouche, President of the association, Integration France, in *Liberation*, 15 November 1999). Is this a way of enforcing, according to the first article of the French Constitution, "equality before the law for all citizens, without regard to origin, race or religion", or is it rather a means to identify citizens according to their belonging to certain communities or races? The debate harked back to the very definition of the Republic, born of the French Revolution.

"When Zinedine Zidane (a soccer champi-

member of the Conseil National du Parti Communiste and Vice-President of SOS Racisme, *Liberation*, 30 May 2000).

Around this question of defining the country's citizenry, what asserts itself in the French debate is the concern of dividing society along ethnic, racial and religious lines. How do you establish objective criteria for defining a 'minority'? How do you avoid having citizens judged not according to merit, but according to their ancestry and skin colour?

The other expressed concern is that in overemphasising the alleged genetic and cultural differences, one underestimates the social question: would the constant presence of 'blacks' or 'Arabs' on our television screens not in fact hide the real social and economic inequalities faced by immigrant workers (often from ex-colonies) and their families?

Among the television professionals, the question of minority access to the media raised political questions about the role of public television: "Very well, ensure that the

particularly, must actively intervene in this alchemy, so that the minorities, whoever they are, whether they identify themselves as such or not, are able to recognise themselves and perhaps understand themselves better. Differences do exist. It is necessary to accept them, and to show them in programming, in the treatment of news, in the content of documentaries, in the subjects of film or drama" (Jerome Clement, President of the public television broadcaster, La Sept/Arte, *Liberation*, 3 July 2000).

In a country like France where political struggles often take on a philosophical dimension, the question of minority representation thus becomes an acid test. It reveals institutional shortcomings, a distance between laws and enforcement, between ideals and practical realities. The problem is that the most heated struggles over 'principles' go along with a marked sluggishness in putting reform mechanisms to work. In this debate, the risk is that neither the ideas nor the practice will change.

In May 2001, M6, a French commercial television station, broadcast "Loft Story", the French version of "Big Brother". The game is for two contestants, a man and a woman, to win together a luxury home, after defeating their rivals. Among the 11 contestants at the start, there was a young man Aziz and a

young woman Kenza, both of Arab origin. They were never defined as such, though one was able to hear during the show insults with racist connotations. The large French anti-racist organisation, MRAP (Movement Against Racism and For Friendship between People) decided to take the channel to court for calling for

racial hatred, while the contestants themselves pretended the slurs were only harmless jokes, commonly exchanged between youth from different communities.

Aziz was the first man 'eliminated' by the audience, and Kenza the first woman. Was this 'progress' in the fact that the exclusion of Aziz and Kenza didn't have any particularly overt ethnic connotation? Or was it, on the contrary, a sign of a xenophobia even more pernicious, potentially acted upon without a word being uttered? To this day, the question has hardly been considered by the mainstream French media.

SERGE GORDEY is a television producer currently working as Executive Producer of magazine programmes for Point du Jour in Paris. He has also worked for Internews and on independent media development in the Balkans.

the question of minority representation thus becomes an acid test.

on) scores, France wins. And hundreds of thousands of young people, immigrants and not, proudly wave the national flag. The blue, white and red unites us. These are not the colours of a 'majority', but those of an enlightened and humanitarian France," affirmed another source (Nasser Ramdane,

anchors are people of colour. But we must be careful that this does not serve as a cheap way out when it comes to dealing with a real problem within our democracy. Exchange comes from knowledge of the culture, of the cultural options and ways of life of each minority, not from quotas. Public television,

In what way does respect for 'ethnic diversity' mean reconsidering established concepts about society and its institutions?

Anti-racist activities in Germany are generally not taken seriously, either by the mainstream media or society at large.

RACISM IS NO STRANGER to Germany, and again has recently attracted international public attention. In July 2001 a European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) report identified increased incidents of racism and anti-Semitism in the country. While the number actually engaged in racial violence is relatively small, far more people are seen to sympathise with racist and anti-Semitic ideas. That's why, the report concluded, racially motivated violence represents a "general climate of racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance", and is not easily dismissed as an "East German problem".

The ECRI report identifies racial discrimination in the housing market; low levels of representation of children from migrant groups in higher education; high rates of unemployment amongst migrants; and the general criminalisation of asylum seekers. It also warns that distorted representation of the compensation of Jewish 'slave labour' may even reinforce anti-Semitism. Home Secretary Otto Schily responded by dismissing the report, and even questioning the right of the authors to criticise Germany, as they were not themselves German.

Anti-racist activities in Germany are generally not taken seriously, either by the mainstream media or more broadly, society at large. In the same week that the ECRI report appeared, two music groups in Germany released anti-racist CDs. On *"Brothers Keepers"*, Afro-German rappers came together to do the song "Adriano" (last warning), dedicated to Alberto Adriano, a black German viciously killed last year by a group of young white Germans in a racist attack. The other CD, *"This Song is Ours"* by Kanak Attak, is a musical project organised by migrants of the so-called '2nd Generation'. The lyrics on both

SEBNITZ – BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Widespread antagonism towards migrants persists in Germany, and the infamous 'Sebnitz case' illustrates this well. It illustrates the insidious threat of scores of neo-Nazi cadres around the country; and it also illustrates the media's confusion and hypocrisy when it comes to 'telling the truth' and defending justice.

In 1997, a group of young neo-Nazis were accused of murdering, in a public swimming pool in the picturesque East German town of Sebnitz, six-year-old Joseph Abdulla, the son of a German mother and Iraqi father. The

provide a network and platform to move migrants beyond their 'victim' identity, to claim a continuity of anti-racist struggles since at least the 60s, in order to apply past experience to the struggles ahead. 'Kanak' is an abusive term meaning something like 'bloody foreigner' and we at Kanak Attak are combating the 'Kanakisation' of people.

Kanak Attak took off with an evening at a Berlin theatre, where alongside talks, lectures, discussions, film and music, a revue was presented, which told the migrant, anti-racist resistance story.

The media reaction was remarkable. There

Despite their pretense of 'speaking for others', particularly the rank and file, the media actually speak for only themselves.

CDs express a self-confident identity and commitment to fighting racism, a message of "We have had enough." The CDs expose the everyday experience of racist attacks and abuse, as well as structural, institutionalised forms of racism and the misguided 'anti-racist campaigns' of political leaders. The mass media have greeted both releases with a 'healthy scepticism', or in some cases without even acknowledging them as strong anti-racist statements.

case was subsequently dismissed due to 'insufficient evidence'.

Because the mother was not content with the case's dismissal, over the last three years she has gathered absolutely convincing evidence, which led to the German media introspectively examining themselves and their initial downplaying of this case. Although the case remains nebulous, it is remarkable that after initial dismay within the media there emerged a willingness to admit that such attacks are a feature of life in Germany.

Even 10 years ago it was assumed that racist attacks, such as the spate of fatal arson attacks on migrant hostels in the early 1990s, were somehow caused by the migrants themselves. The shift in public attitudes, including those of journalists, expressed a realisation that deep-seated racial antagonisms towards 'outsiders' continues to pervade German civil society.

Yet the story subsequently took another turn: in the media discourse, the 'proof' put forward by the mother collapsed; it became 'clear' that accusations made by migrants were not to be trusted; and the media berated themselves for having begun to believe the mounting 'evidence'.

The whole matter, for now, has ended with a double sermon: the media chastising itself, and also wishfully thinking: "If only the extremists on both sides would disappear, then normal people, German and foreign alike, could learn to live together". The subtext is pretty clear: again, migrants are the source of the problem. Let's 'blame the victim'.

KANAK ATTAK: THE TRAP OF REPRESENTATION

Founded nearly four years ago, the anti-racist project Kanak Attak aims to 'rewrite' the untold history of anti-racist resistance by migrants in Germany. The intention is to

was only one article which even acknowledged that this was an *anti-racist* project. The dismissal of the activists and their audience as 'loudmouthed half-breeds', 'bastard-culture' and 'migrant political activists' shows the conservative chain of argument. It was suggested that it was not clear for whom the activists/performers were talking. In other words: "They shouldn't really speak, because they don't represent anyone."

The second important question that evening for the media was the question of heritage. For example, I was approached by a journalist whose main interest was to find out where I 'came from'. Since I refused to reply to this symbolic expatriation, she invented a biography of my family for her article: "By the way: Bojadzjev is German, her far-off ancestors came from Bulgaria." Like most of the other journalists, she didn't talk at all about the work of Kanak Attak, about its anti-racist projects and the fact that a lot of migrants of the first, second and third generations are centrally organised in the project.

Again, the articles on that evening stylised the journalists and their newspapers as representing the 'genuine word of the rank and file', the real affected who are being co-opted by incompetent, would-be anti-racists. This is an anti-intellectual argument. It suggests that the cultural scene is something dubious, and that people working within that space do not have legitimate criticisms.

In fact, despite their pretense of 'speaking for others', particularly the rank and file, the media actually speak for only themselves. And observing the media in Germany makes it pretty clear: racism in this country has not been understood at all.

MANUELA BOJADZJEV and VANESSA BARTH are both members of Kanak Attak. Bojadzjev gave a presentation on Kanak Attak at the Global Narratives of Race Conference in Cape Town in December.

Coverage of racism in Germany tends to focus on sensationalist attacks by neo-Nazis, and generally ignores the country's institutionalised

racism, write **Manuela Bojadzjev** and **Vanessa Barth**.

Anti-racist activities, often in the cultural realm, tend to be received sceptically or are even deliberately overlooked. But a national movement to confront racism – led by the migrants most often its 'victims' – is demanding its own representation...

How German are They?

'Kanak'

The struggle against Germany's 'identity politics'



'bloody foreigner'

A German newspaper's campaign to expose right-wing hate

'Outing' Racists

Racism, and racist attacks, are on the rise in Germany – and a progressive newspaper decided to fight back, report **Heike Kleffner** and **Meike Jansen**.

MORE THAN 10 000 right-wing extremist crimes were registered for the year 2000 in Germany by the Federal German Police. This number marks an increase of about 40% in racist attacks, anti-Semitic desecrations of Jewish graveyards and neo-Nazi propaganda activities all over Germany. One of these crimes – the murder of Mozambican national Alberto Adriano in June – sparked a new wave of public debates and activities against the rise of an increasingly violent right-wing, extremist youth culture.

The 39-year-old Adriano, father of three children and married to a German, was beaten and stomped to death by three young neo-Nazis in the inner city park of Dessau, a city internationally known as the home of the renowned Bauhaus architectural school. Adriano had been living in Germany for almost 20 years, and his death sent shockwaves through the German public. Suddenly, the daily racist discriminations and terror that foreigners were experiencing in these towns became a subject of conversation. Politicians started to talk openly about the hegemony of a right-wing youth culture,

'loud-mouthed half-breeds'

"We want to support all those who until now had to stand by themselves up against right-wing terror" – the 'Z' Campaign

especially in small rural towns in the former East Germany; newspapers reported on the situation in these towns; and a lot of people affected by right-wing activities started to talk about taking action.

A week after Adriano's death, the national leftist newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* ('Die Taz') from Berlin initiated a campaign called 'Z'. The letter 'Z' stands for the first letter in the German word 'Zivilcourage' – 'civil or citizens' courage' in English.

The idea was simple, but effective, especially when one looks at the history and the readers of *Die Tageszeitung*. The newspaper was founded 22 years ago in the wake of the founding of the Green Party, which had just come onto the political stage in Germany. From the start, *Die Tageszeitung* has had its own publishing house, and so has been able



Neo-nazi rally: last year police recorded 10 000 right-wing crimes in Germany.

to maintain its independence from big publishing corporations. The newspaper's readers are said to be especially socially conscious.

When *Die Taz* started its Z campaign, Barbara Junge, one of the initiators of the campaign within the newspaper, wrote about its aims: "We want to support all those who until now had to stand by themselves up against right-wing terror. And we want to encourage those who until now have not dared to stand up – for whatever reasons. Those who do not want to silently stand by and watch are invited to participate in the campaign."

Die Taz itself initiated Z with two page

In the wake of these two stories and Z's launch, many people immediately joined the campaign, largely *Die Taz*'s readers and fellow journalists. Z never wanted to replace grassroots initiatives, but it has pursued one main goal: to connect people active on anti-racist issues and to provide thorough information on racism and related issues to interested people.

Z has its own pages on the *Die Taz* website, and upon request the campaign organises events and provides educational materials, for example to schools and teachers. The campaign is acting on two tracks: people from all over Germany call the Z number or send

one stories which caused controversial public debates. One story contained quotes from politicians and ministers from the main German political parties – the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats etc – which had racist content or messages. The aim was to show that racism and the ensuing violence are rooted in the midst of society, not at its fringes, and that politicians bear at least some responsibility for the establishment of a strong right wing when they make racist and chauvinist remarks. The second story was a photo board of the heads of 22 nationally known neo-Nazi cadres. The intent was to rob the leading figures of the neo-Nazi movement of their anonymity – a move which caused a lot of debate both within the newspaper, but also among fellow journalists and readers.

emails asking for help, ie with organising an event with an expert; or, on the other track, Z stands for specific reporting in the newspaper itself – articles and research focused on the issue of right-wing extremism and the situation of the non-white population in Germany. Z started small but by now has turned into a network of finely woven contacts and local support systems. It has become one of many backbones of civil society in Germany.

HEIKE KLEFFNER and MEIKE JANSEN both work for *Die Tageszeitung* in Berlin, and are members of the Z campaign. Jansen presented the project at the Global Narratives of Race conference in Cape Town in December.

'bastard-culture'

How the media blatantly berates the Roma people

THE MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL of the Roma – Hungary's largest and most underprivileged minority – feeds widespread anti-Romani stereotypes and prejudices held by the majority society. In the early '90s, the Roma were mainly portrayed either as criminals and jobless social misfits, or talented, emotional and sensual people – characterised therefore either by negative prejudice or romantic cliché. The main themes along which the Roma appeared in the media were crime, poverty, parasitism, music, arts and politics. Despite a considerable increase in the number of articles appearing about the Roma over the last decade, the range of Roma-related coverage remains limited.

Along with representing the Roma in selective social roles, the mainstream media also generalises them as 'Gypsies', narrowly and pejoratively focusing on their ethnicity. Media openly states the ethnic origins of wanted suspects or convicted criminals. Most Roma sources do not speak for themselves. Instead, readers usually learn of Romani opinion through an intermediary.

In December 1995, a group of journalists and other intellectuals – some Roma, some not – decided to set up the Roma Press Centre (RPC), in order to diversify and improve the portrayal of the Roma in the media and to establish standards for minority reporting. Based in Budapest, the RPC is a non-governmental, non-profit news agency striving to increase public awareness of issues in the Romani community and to influence public discourse.

Partially as a result of the RPC's efforts, media coverage of the Roma has been extended, and now includes issues such as discrimination, civil rights, economic issues, traditions, emigration and assimilation. As a primary news source for most Hungarian media outlets, the RPC feels that it has had significant

impact on improving the representation of Roma in the mainstream print media. In a number of cases, the Centre was the first to alert the public to specific issues like mass evictions or the discriminatory channelling of Roma children into schools for the mentally handicapped. Going beyond its role as a wire service, in 1996 the RPC launched a programme for training Romani journalists. The RPC also developed a training scheme for Roma non-government organisations on media relations, and runs a radio wire service and a regional news exchange programme.

Yet in spite of the RPC and others' efforts,

much of the bias towards the Roma in the Hungarian media continues. A brief look at some recent articles offers evidence of such.

On 10 September 1999, *Népszava*, a mainstream daily often associated with the Budapest intelligentsia, ran an article titled "Man Sold His Own Sister for Two Thousand Marks". The article offered the following story:

The Bács-Kiskun County police has taken 31-year-old Lajos K. into custody on the charge of human trafficking. The man from Kalocsa sold his 15-year-old sister Krisztina to a German Romani couple. The 'purchasers' were looking for a bride for their 17-year-old son, and got into contact with Lajos K. through a friend. The police started investigating after the case was reported by a civilian. However, presently they are only investigating the actions of Lajos K. They have not been able to obtain any information about where Krisztina is or the identity of the German couple.

The facts in the article were evidently derived entirely from police sources, and the subjects of the article were neither quoted nor, evidently, consulted in any way. Further, an inflammatory headline was appended ver-

'illegals'



Roma dance in Bucharest to promote their culture.

turing into the field of marriage, an issue fraught with misunderstanding across the Roma/non-Roma cultural border.

An article entitled "The Whole Local Government Resigned," appearing in the 22 September issue of the daily *Metro*, also dealt with the issue of Romani criminality, although no crime was mentioned:

The seven members of the local government in Felsődobsza, Borsod county, have resigned from their posts. They justified their decision with the claim that they can no longer stop the decline of public order, since one-fourth of the population are Roma, and recently a new Romani family moved into the village from Inota.

The article appeared as a short news item. No background information of any kind was provided. The connection of Roma and crime was assumed.

Articles appearing recently in which Roma were victims of crimes did not manage to avoid playing on commonly held assumptions about Roma and thereby perpetuating anti-Romani stereotypes. For example, an article called "Romani family beaten in Ózd," appearing in the 9 September edition of the daily *Magyar Hírlap*, reported:

A Romani family was attacked in Ózd, Borsod county. In the Otelep part of the town, 20-25 men got out of six cars and went into the house, where they broke and damaged the fur-

wealth of other Roma-related themes available in Romania:

Julian Radulescu from Romania, who claims to be the emperor of all the Gypsies of the world, has passed his high school final exams successfully. The 61-year-old Gypsy sovereign was most at home in geography on the exam, and he got 8.6 point out of the maximum 10. His achievement was outstanding in history and French as well. However, he had problems in maths, where he barely passed the test. Radulescu has bestowed the title "Julian I, Emperor of all Gypsies" upon himself. However, the situation around his throne is somewhat confused, because he has a rival, actually quite near at hand: another self-proclaimed Gypsy king lives less than a hundred meters away from Radulescu in the same street.

Other articles reporting on Roma in foreign countries represented Roma as 'illegals' and people who take advantage of the gullibility and goodwill of non-Roma. For example, *Magyar Hírlap* reported on 20 April 1999 that Roma were "Taking Advantage of the Tragedy":

*Gypsies leaving Romania illegally and begging in foreign countries, especially in France, are taking considerable advantage of the Kosovo tragedy. According to news sources in Bucharest, the Roma begging mainly in Paris pretend to be Albanian refugees from Kosovo. They tell incredible horror stories about their alleged persecution, their suffering and adventures. They sing Romani songs they claim to be ancient Kosovar folk songs. The *Libertate Daily* in Bucharest reports that recently the income of Roma begging in Paris has multiplied tenfold.*

Hungarian media, however, are not unique in their transmission of prejudice against the Roma. Certain British tabloids often react hysterically to the influx of East-European Romani refugees to England, and even the most established Western magazines sometimes fail 'the PC test' regarding Roma people. In its April 2001 issue, *National Geographic* magazine ran an article about Roma, titled "Gypsies: The Outsiders". When entering the house of a Slovak Roma in a village of "medieval squalor", the *National Geographic* journalist observed that the home was "surprisingly neat and cosy inside," as if poverty was necessarily a synonym for negligence.

GABOR MIKLOSI is the International Co-ordinator of the Roma Press Centre and a freelance journalist reporting on minorities.

Even the most established Western magazines sometimes fail 'the PC test' regarding Roma people.

'Gypsy Caesar' and Other Stories

The Roma, commonly referred to as 'Gypsies', a term highly offensive to them, are among the most favourite media targets across Europe. Hungary's Roma Press Center has been trying for the last six years to improve the Roma's representation, reports **Gabor Miklosi**.



niture and the doors, they threw out the TV set and began to beat family members. By the time the police arrived at the site, the attackers had escaped. Family member Attila Botos said in the private TV channel RTL Klub's news programme that the men were shouting 'you will die, Gypsies'. Botos said that he had 700 relatives and they would go and find the attackers.

The police were evidently powerless to prevent anti-Romani crime. Although Roma were in fact interviewed and spoke in the article, the article concluded by resorting to the 'Roma have large and violent families' stereotype.

Hungarian newspapers have recently also looked to Roma abroad for extravagant news items. One of the major national dailies, *Népszabadság*, published an article about a Romani leader in Romania on 4 September 1999, entitled "Gypsy Caesar Passes His Final Exams". Aside from perpetuating stereotypes of uneducated Roma and Romani leaders, the article was particularly noteworthy given the

'cheats'

Chinese Indonesian prays at a Jakarta temple.



REUTERS

Since 1998, Indonesia has been one of the world's most conflict-ridden nations. At the same time, Indonesian media have gained their freedom after 32 years of oppression. Covering conflicts of SARA (Suku = ethnicity, Agama = religion, Ras = race and Antargolongan = group), taboo under the New Order era, is no longer forbidden. Such issues now make headline news, introducing a degree of division of which people were previously unaware.

Lacking adequate education, many people get easily provoked or angered by what they consume in the news, and take action. These actions include mobilising *jihad* armies to areas of conflict, attacking press institutions and terrorising or intimidating journalists.

RACIAL, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT
Indonesia has had more than its share of

'rapists'

(Pontianak) and Central Kalimantan (Sampit) are clearly racial – between Dayak, Malay and Madura tribes. The conflicts were mostly initiated by a criminal act followed by group revenge (*vendetta*), but many experts blamed the previous government for social and economical gaps and lack of education. In Central Sulawesi (Poso), the conflict is between Muslims and Christians, initiated by actors from another conflict area (South Moluccas). Conflict in the Moluccas (especially South Moluccas and Ambon) is said to be a mixture of both race and religion. There are elements of tribal friction aggravated by jealousy over economic achievements (the Ambonise/Mollucas versus BBM, or Bugis, Bhuton, Makasar), and of religious friction between Muslims and Christians – even among Ambonise/Moluccas themselves.

In covering these conflicts, some Indonesian media tend to take sides. In the Moluccas/Ambon conflicts this has been very clear. *Republika*, for instance, a daily pub-

- *Suara Pembaruan* maintained it was not a conflict between Muslims and Christians; reported that the situation was under control; relied on perspective of local officials; message directed to Muslims and the press.
- During the Moluccas conflict, media often used language as sources directed or suggested. Here is a list of common terminology used: Red Group vs White Group, genocide, massacre, holocaust, the most brutal war, systematic rapes, burned alive, sadistic, cutting of the body, eat the body and drink the blood.

THE PEACE JOURNALISM MOVEMENT

People have accused the press of contributing to the escalation of conflicts. In 2000, many workshops, discussions and seminars for journalists on Peace Journalism – journalism that focuses less on the war-mongering and more on the people and prospects for peacemaking – were held, sponsored by foundations and institutions such as USAID,

Softening the Story

How Indonesian journalists are changing the way they cover conflict

Racial, ethnic and religious conflict in Indonesia has been frequent, and brutal – and often aggravated by the media. **Sirikit Syah** tells how Peace Journalism and its



adherents are helping to 'soften', and deepen, the way such conflicts are reported...

conflict – mostly between indigenous people and government over separatist struggles. But racial and religious conflicts have dominated the media for the last three years – not surprising in a country whose 200 million people split into more than 300 different groups and, although 80% Muslim, also has a variety of religions. During that time such conflicts have happened in the Moluccas, Central Sulawesi, West Kalimantan, and Central Kalimantan.

Since its independence in 1945 (first from the Dutch, then the Japanese), Indonesia's primarily political conflicts had racial and religious elements, but were not conflicts based on religion or race. The more recent escalation of racial and religious conflicts could be linked to the independence of East Timor, the freedom of the press and the new, unfortunately weak, government under former President Abdurrahman Wahid.

The conflicts in West Kalimantan

lished in Jakarta, became the Islamic voice in those conflicts, along with the explicitly Muslim Media Dakwah (Islamic Media). *Republika's* mission was expressed through the choice of sources being interviewed, the main pictures on the front page and the language used. At some points it even provoked Muslims in Java to launch a *jihad* to the conflict regions.

On the other hand, *Kompas* and *Suara Pembaruan*, newspapers also published in Jakarta and Christian-owned, proved to be moderate, even peaceable, in their coverage of such conflict. In addition to covering both sides, they tended to choose words carefully and did not readily headline 'conflict news'. Some considered this, however, to be hiding the facts; our media standards vary dramatically.

The organisation Kabar Kabar Kebencian (Hatred News) monitored the coverage of the South Moluccas conflict, and found these results:

- Both Media Dakwah and *Republika* narrated the conflict from the perspective of suffering Muslims/Muslim fatalities, focusing on the 'violence and sadism' of Christians; they used Islamic sources; they directed their messages to Muslims.
- *Kompas* framed the conflict as being initiated among local politicians; its coverage was critical of government; queried lack of foreign intervention; sources mainly from government elite; message aimed at government.

The Asia Foundation and the British Council. They were held in Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and some other major cities in Indonesia. More than 100 journalists have participated in these seminars and workshops – and they are starting to make a difference.

A few months after the workshops, conflict between the Dayak and Madura tribes erupted in Sampit (Central Kalimantan).

Despite the number of casualties – hundreds of people were killed – and the sadistic nature of the killings, the Indonesian media chose to play a 'softener' role. The majority of coverage was in feature format – mapping the conflicts, exposing people's voices instead of elites, exposing refugee suffering, investigating the backgrounds of conflict, covering both sides and giving space to citizens' small but significant reconciliation efforts. The media in general, and particularly in Sampit, pursued the standards of Peace Journalism and tended to support any effort towards peace and reconciliation. Instead of the usual sadistic/violent pictures of headless bodies, images of refugees dominated the local media.

Though still small and in its early days, the Peace Journalism movement in Indonesia is growing and having an impact on the coverage of racial and religious conflicts. If only journalists could cover our political conflicts with such sanity.

'sadists'

Many people get easily provoked or angered by what they consume in the news, and take action.

These actions include mobilising *jihad* armies to areas of conflict,

attacking press institutions and terrorising or intimidating journalists.

SIRIKIT SYAH is Executive Director of the Media Consumers' Board, and a lecturer in journalism and mass communication science at the University of Dr Soetomo Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia. She is also a freelance correspondent for *The Jakarta Post Daily*, and the author of numerous books and articles.

As more foreigners arrive in Japan, 'racial homogeneity' appears in print as something that once existed and is now being lost.

THE JAPANESE mass media is not as inward-looking as is often thought: there is fair coverage of events and trends taking place in other countries. However, this coverage tends to focus on Western nations, especially the US. News from Africa and Latin America is still quite rare, being limited largely to news clips or documentaries concerning dramatic events such as wars or natural disasters. Japanese audiences remain underexposed to the culture, values and lifestyles found in the Philippines, Indonesia, Russia and other neighbours, not to mention countries that are geographically more distant.

This state of affairs has helped set the stage for problems in the coverage of Japan's domestic ethnic and cultural diversity. Perhaps the most fundamental of these problems is the media's characterisation of Japanese society as ethnically homogeneous.

In 1986, then-Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro made remarks which implied that the key to Japanese success was the homogeneity of its people. He suggested that this purity made Japanese society superior to that of the US, which was tainted with the blood of blacks, Hispanics and others. While the remarks drew a significant backlash from both the public and media, most critics found fault only with the notion that the Japanese were racially superior, skirting the issue of racial homogeneity completely.

While the major newspapers and news broadcasts do not often refer to Japan's supposed racial homogeneity, such references may be found quite regularly in a variety of programming and magazine articles, as well as in publications of government agencies and political parties, especially those on the conservative side of the political spectrum.

One recent example is the 1998 essay for the National Institute of Materials and Chemical Research by Yoneda Yukio, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University, in which the writer refers to Japanese as "the language of our nearly homogeneous nation", in order to stress its importance in the world.

The following lines from the official publication of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party are of special importance as they actually helped to shape Japan's immigration policy in the early 1990s: "People opposed to the idea of introducing foreign labourers into Japan say that such a move will cause the ethnic structure of our nearly racially homogeneous society to deteriorate. However, they will probably agree to the idea of bringing in foreign nationals who, owing to their Japanese ancestry, are thoroughly acquainted (sic) with Japanese customs."

As more foreigners arrive in Japan, 'racial homogeneity' appears in print as something that once existed and is now being lost. For example, Ishige Naomichi, the Director of the National Folkloric Museum, recently wrote the following words in an official publication of the Finance Ministry. "In about 70% of the nations around the world, one out of 10 people is ethnically different (from the norm). In Japan, it is only one in 100 people. In other words, Japan – which is referred to as a so-called racially homogeneous nation – is an exception among nations." Although these and other similar writings are not part of the mainstream mass media, their influence on the perceptions held by the media and the public is significant.

The belief that Japanese society is homogeneous – or nearly so – is one that has permeated the media and public

perception both domestically and internationally. Indeed, it often seems that the very people who would be expected to rebut the racial homogeneity theory have fallen prey to it themselves. When the term made a rare appearance in a major newspaper last year, it did so in one of Japan's most left-of-centre dailies, as a remark from non-fiction writer Ishikawa Yoshimi, one of Japan's more liberal thinkers: "Japan has enjoyed the strength that comes from having been, in certain respects, a racially homogeneous society. However, this same trait has proved to be a weakness, in the face of globalisation."

The perpetuation of this myth profoundly affects the media's ability to cover ethnic or race-related issues. This is most noticeable in crime reporting.

In 1998, a jewellery store owner in Hamamatsu City (Shizuoka Prefecture), after confirming that a patron was Brazilian, attempted to eject that person from the store, pointing to a poster in that shop that banned all foreigners, and called the police when she refused to go. The woman took the shopkeeper to court on charges of racial discrimination and was awarded damages in a precedent-setting case. While most media companies covered the decision as a positive step, noting, for example, that Japan lacks a domestic law which explicitly prohibits racial discrimination, Tahara Souichiro, one of Japan's most prominent journalists and supposedly a left-of-centre observer, called the *New York Times* coverage of the case "error-filled Japan-bashing" and expressed sympathy for the shopkeeper who had to pay damages.

In 1997, a 14-year-old Brazilian boy was taken captive in front of the Komaki City train station (Aichi Prefecture) where he had been playing with his friends, driven to a remote location and beaten to death by more than 10 Japanese youths. Announcing the three to five year prison sentences for the chief perpetrators of the crime, the judge acknowledged that the youths had attacked the boy solely because he was Brazilian. With the exception of a few articles published after the verdict was announced, no Japanese media reports referred to the killing as a racially motivated hate crime. Rather, articles and news segments that took up the matter often focused on Japanese residents' complaints about the lifestyles of Brazilians living in Japan.

In Japan, it is quite common for mainstream newspapers to print headlines which stress that a crime suspect was foreign or foreign-looking. For example, an *Asahi Shimbun* article of 17 April 2000, reads: "A Man Appearing to be a Foreigner Robbed a Safe and Escaped." Lines such as "the

'Racially Pure'? How Japan's media upholds the myth of 'racial homogeneity'

Racism against 'foreigners' in Japan is both structural and prevalent in the media. **Tony Laszlo** reports that many Japanese perceive their country's 'racial purity' to be under threat...



The paucity of articles, and the gloominess of the topics, have largely skewed the way the Japanese have come to see Africans:



Shin'ichi Takeuchi reports on some of the images of Africa in his country...

'Always Suffering' Japan's favourite stereotypes of Africa

IN JAPAN, the perception of Africa and Africans seems to be made up of stereotypes. Africa, to the extent that it is reported at all, is a remote place, too large and disembodied to offer context to the fragmented reports that readers or viewers see. Sometimes there are, indeed, detailed and conscientious documentaries. NHK, the Japanese public broadcaster, has shown reports on such topics as Liberian child soldiers, the role of radio in the Rwandan genocide and the relationship between 'conflict diamonds' and arms sales. *Asahi Shimbun*, a major newspaper, recently gave in-depth coverage of the outflow from

Africa of its soccer players.

But overall, the paucity of articles, and the gloominess of the topics, have largely skewed the way the Japanese have come to see Africans: they are always suffering. Another stereotype of Africans is that they are very 'traditional', a code word for backward. In an advertisement for Canon cameras recently, a Japanese soccer star holding a digital camera is made to stand next to a Masai warrior holding a spear. It is plain they are being put in symbolic opposition. But this is not so much because the Japanese have any racial antipathy; it is rather because African themes

as presented here are so threadbare and one-dimensional. African traditions and wildlife often feature on television, the life of ordinary Africans, less so.

How this has come about can be seen from the fact that the three major Japanese dailies, *Asahi*, *Yomiuri* and *Mainichi*, have only one Africa correspondent each. As a consequence, a lot of what Japanese readers see has been filtered through the European and American media, whose newsgathering makes up the shortfall. But European and American media, too, have their stereotypes.

Nevertheless, we should not forget the few

Japanese 'Africa lovers', such as Matsumoto Jin'ichi at *Asahi Shimbun*, whose original works on Africa have deepened Japanese understanding of the continent. A deepened understanding is an effective antidote to stereotypical thinking.

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Kimonos and cellphones: young Japanese women today.

suspect spoke a language that appeared to be Chinese (or was Chinese-like)," are also common.

These kinds of problems have arisen, in part, because discrimination in Japan is sometimes structural. For example, a Ministry of Public Management 'resident certificate', used to list members of families, may not include names of family members who happen not to be Japanese, such as adopted children. Television polls ignore non-Japanese viewership. 'Japanese Only' signs on private and quasi-public establishments remain in place in more than 100 establishments across Japan. Only Japanese are allowed, as a rule, to join volunteer fire-fighting brigades.

It is not enough to urge the media to give greater and more appropriate coverage. A re-examination of the ideas of racial purity and diversity by the media and the government would effect a more lasting change to the way these concepts are understood in Japanese society.

TONY LASZLO is the Director of ISSHO Kikaku, a Tokyo-based NGO which monitors multiculturalisation in Japan. As a journalist, he covers social and political issues in English and Japanese. He also lectures at a number of Japan's universities and acts as a consultant. ■

Tokyo Governor Warns against 'Criminal Genes'

By Tony Laszlo

"I was shown a corpse whose skin had been viciously stripped from the face, leaving it completely unrecognisable..."

WITH THIS DESCRIPTION of an exceptionally brutal murder, Ishihara Shintaro, the Governor of Tokyo, set the stage for classic incitement of racism and xenophobia in "Japan – Defend your Internal Flank!", a column that appeared on the front page of the 8 May 2001 edition of *Sankei Shimbun*.

According to the governor, the Tokyo police had correctly theorised that both the victim and the perpetrator were foreign, most likely Chinese. What led the police to that conclusion? "This type of criminal modus operandi is simply not employed by Japanese people," Ishihara writes. "There is a justifiable fear that it will not be long before the entire nature of Japanese society itself will be altered by the spread of this type of crime that is so indicative of the ethnic DNA [of the Chinese]."

The governor not only holds that "ethnic DNA" exists, he declares that the Chinese have a brutally criminal set of it. The Japanese, by inference, are genetically peaceful and law-abiding. But the writer is not content to stop with essentialism and racism. Rather, he calls upon the people of Japan (but only those with Japanese blood) "to preserve the country's national fabric and social virtues", to rally around him.

"The time has come for us [the Japanese people] to drive out this encroaching evil," he says, referring to foreigners, especially Chinese, who he paints as criminals so fierce that "even the Japanese gangsters hesitate to enter" certain central districts of Tokyo at night. "We must ensure that the evil does not take root in Japan and destroy our society to come," the governor writes.

Ishihara provides no scientific evidence to back up his "criminal ethnic DNA" theory. Like the classic racist leaders before him, he

employs essentialism to lead the reader to the 'obvious' conclusion: Chinese people are intrinsically evil, and more violent and criminal than the Japanese, by virtue of their genetic make-up.

The governor does put forward statistics to 'prove' that foreigners are mostly criminals and most crime is being committed by non-Japanese. Unfortunately, the statistics are purposely misleading and often simply wrong. Ishihara states that there is no reason to believe that crime committed by foreigners will decrease. This is most curious in light of the fact that latest police figures (1999-2000) show that arrest of foreigners is on the decline. Ishihara portrays Japanese prisons overflowing with foreigners; in fact, foreigners represented 1.9% of persons arrested in Japan in

2000. And many of these foreigners (in the case of Chinese nationals, 2 373, or half) are arrested for non-criminal violations such as failure to present an Alien Registration Card.

While it is true that the *Sankei* caters to the right-leaning audience, it is also a very influential newspaper (fourth among Japan's nationally distributed dailies). Nor is Governor Ishihara some crank personality on the fringe of society. He is the elected leader of Tokyo and his popularity ratings make him a strong potential candidate for the Prime Minister seat.

'ethnic DNA'

'racially impure'

'criminal genes'

they are always suffering.



Zimbabwean
Blackman Ngoro

reports on reporting Africa from Japan...

How Africa Fares on the Nikkei Index African news in Japan is framed by investments and technology

FOR JOURNALISTS in Japan, the gathering and passing along of news is organised around press (kisha) clubs. These clubs effectively define news as that which has import for the West, including Japan. Good or bad, it's only news if it is likely to affect stock markets. Reporting in Tokyo is mostly about exchange rates and business, finance and economic news.

If you're African, as I am, and you want to report on Africa or the rest of the Third World, you'll have to develop your own network, one which doesn't depend on the kisha clubs. Not even the Foreign Correspondents

Club is big on Third World issues, unless it's something like the US bombing Sudan.

In my own case I have to be creative. To make any Third World report of mine attractive, I have to dress it up in the garb of investment or technology news, say. This is because Japanese companies are in Africa for the same reason as anyone else, and that's to turn a profit.

To get that kind of information, you must get inside Keidanren, the powerful business umbrella organisation, and then get to know the companies within that organisation which have investments in Africa, or are plan-

ning to. This is akin to establishing a completely new beat where there wasn't one before. You also have to hobnob with African diplomats and Japanese politicians who have an eye on Africa.

This is not as boring or tedious as it may sound. After a glass or two of wine a diplomat might let slip a bit of inside information, 'off the record' mind you. You can always call the following day and coolly ask him to confirm what he said. Even if he asks you to hedge it with "sources said" or "according to embassy officials", you will have earned yourself a juicy little piece.

All in all, reporting on Africa here is more exciting, but you generally have to stay sober. No falling about at the press club or you'll miss a story or a deadline and then you can kiss your job goodbye.

BLACKMAN NGORO is a Zimbabwean freelance journalist now working in Tokyo. He has worked for the South African *Sunday Independent* and *The Argus*. He is working on a masters thesis on the issue of Japanese media coverage of Africa.

Behind the Rainbow

Why Mauritius' 'rainbow nation' is a mirage

'non-people'

Mauritian politicians proclaim national unity, but the fate of at least one segment of society, the country's Afro-Creoles, challenges such claims, writes

Loga Virahsawmy...



THERE ARE MANY kinds of Mauritians. Most are descended from people brought from India. There are some Chinese. There are French and English speakers. And there is a sizeable number of people called Afro-Creoles.

These last, descended from slaves, speak the language that binds together the disparate peoples of this island nation – Mauritian Creole. Yet the Afro-Creoles themselves are a non-people, denied their history or even their identity. Though Mauritian Creole is understood by nearly everyone, it is still unrecognised in law and is banned from schools. The Afro-Creoles have been ghettoised, their vibrant language hushed up. English is the official language; the media uses French. There is no Afro-Creole newspaper.

Politicians here are fond of saying, in Creole: "Enn sel lepep enn sel nation" (one country, one nation) and "nation larkansiel" (rainbow nation), but Mauritius is a country where the colours of the rainbow don't mix.

Afro-Creoles have become the wretched of Mauritius, liv-

ing in what looked like suspicious circumstances, was too much, and they rebelled. For a moment, the international media focused on their plight.

Symbols of opulence like supermarkets, restaurants and businesses were looted. Cars were set alight. The wave of violence soon reached peaceful villages known for their racial harmony. Houses were burnt down. Yesterday's friends were made enemies overnight. President Cardinal Jean Margeot went to these villages promising moral, financial and social support but the harm had already been done.

Since then, measures have been taken in earnest to improve the lot of the Afro-Creoles. The government has set up three large projects: a trust fund for the financially vulnerable; a resource transfer programme; and a social awareness programme called "Anou Dibout Ansam" (Let's stand up together).

The private sector, religious bodies and NGOs have put up structures to help the most vulnerable with housing, education and recreational facilities, but progress is slow. There is still much to be done to remedy the decades of neglect of the Afro-Creole people.

Afro-Creoles themselves are a non-people, denied their history or even their identity...

ing in ghettos with the barest minimum of infrastructure and inferior schools. Drugs, alcohol, prostitution, child delinquency, street children and failure at school are rampant.

When in February 1999 a popular Afro-Creole singer, Kaya, died in prison, Afro-Creoles rioted. The death of their

LOGA VIRAHSAWMY works in Mauritius as a freelance journalist for the national newspaper L'Express and for the South African newspaper Beeld. She is a gender activist and co-author of the book *Konpran Feminin* (Maternal Thinking).

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'Talk Across the Races'



South African media's unmet goal

Last year the South African Human Rights Commission (HRC) hearings on racism in the SA media sparked much debate. Prompted by complaints from the Black Lawyers' and Black Accountants' associations, which felt that white-owned and controlled media unfairly attacked the country's black leadership, the hearings called in mainstream print and broadcast editors to testify on newsroom operations, decision making and the pace of transformation. After the hearings media organisations across the country ran workshops on racism and the media. *Anthea Garman* asked **Mathatha Tsedu**, chair of the SA National Editors' Forum (Sanef) and deputy chief executive of SABC news, if there are signs of significant change...

What impact did the hearings have on the media?

The hearings were extremely useful. They forced us to look at ourselves in a very public debate and to find answers. We journalists are experts at discussing others and giving advice and criticism, but we're also experts at avoiding discussing ourselves. The good thing about the hearings was that almost all the mainstream editors were there talking about their own problems and their plans for overcoming them. It was useful for reminding people about the promises they'd made about transformation and getting them to work again at what needs to be done.

It seems that the SA media is not paying much attention to the World Conference Against Racism which we will be hosting?

One of the difficult things is to get hold of information from the United Nations about what's happening. But the SABC will be the host broadcaster for the world and we are planning to send 100 people to the conference. Our agenda is not finalised but we are holding workshops to ensure that those going have a common understanding of their purpose. As a build-up to the conference the SABC has commissioned inserts both here and internationally to air in the run-up.

We should hold onto the credo of journalism: concern for the underdogs – the major victims of racism are the poor and illiterate.

Can you give us an example?

For instance, here at the SABC we are making changes over the next few months to the main 8 o'clock news bulletin. Racism is a constant issue here and to be thinking about it keeps us on track as we talk about staffing and content. When I was at *The Star* we realised that every time we wrote about Aids we would illustrate the story with a black face. If we ever used a white person the face would be obscured. It's all very well to talk about 'stereotypes', but you have to break that down and ask what it means when you're actually working on the newsroom floor.

Last year when editors were subpoenaed to attend the HRC hearings the atmosphere was very acrimonious and emotional. Has the discussion become more rational?

No. Even within Sanef, whenever race is raised the discussion becomes very difficult.

When people talk about race and the media they easily use the term 'white media'. Have there been shifts in control?

There are areas where black control has been attained and is growing, but there are also places where it has been reversed. *The Sowetan*, with *Sunday World* and *Leadership*, and the NAIL (New African Investments Limited) radio stations is a growing empire but our biggest media company – Independent – is foreign-owned and white-controlled and is not looking for black partners. *City Press*, a black newspaper is now back in the Naspers stable and *The Citizen*, which was owned by Kagiso Trust, is now with Caxton. But the bigger problem is that we don't have media that talk across the races – they are still segregated by aiming at specific audiences. However, if you look at editorial control you see more change, with black journalists moving into positions where they can inject perspectives and change decisions about content.

Do you think it's important to attend this conference?

Some people feel the conference is unnecessary, but I feel the fight against racism is very important. We have to continue the debate begun last year even if it's a reluctant debate. We also need to look at the wider world and see if racism affects just us or also afflicts other people.

Where's Sanef at now?

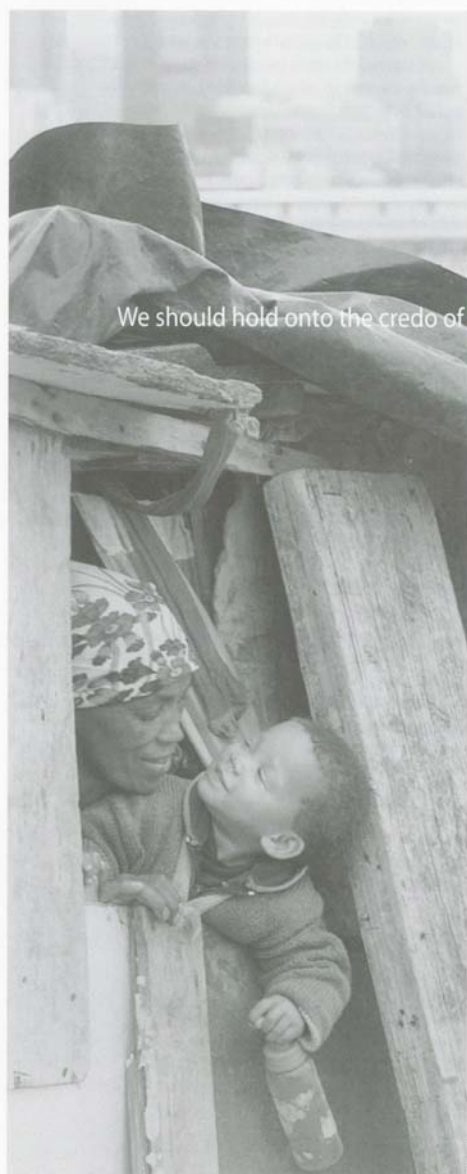
Last year at our AGM we looked again at our mission and goals. Our first priority was press freedom and we asked ourselves if that really is our biggest challenge. We decided no, our biggest challenge now is to find sufficiently skilled journalists to put out a credible media product every day. So we have placed that as our first priority.

Sanef was born out of a merger between the mainly white Conference of Editors and the Black Editors Forum, and despite very real tension over the race hearings it seems to be surviving...

Our internal tensions have been manageable. We don't have unanimity but we are able to coerce everyone along! My attitude as chair is to engage everyone, whoever they are – even government. At the recent *bosberaad* with the Cabinet (see the "Way Forward" insert in this edition of *Review*) some people arrived really angry with issues they'd been bottling up. But we all realised there's a future out there in which we need to take each other's word and move forward.

Is there a race-free future for SA?

It's foolhardy to think we will reach a stage when race will disappear, but we must break it down and work at it – each effort makes the country better. And we should hold onto the credo of journalism: concern for the underdogs – the major victims of racism are the poor and illiterate. Our call is to understand that and keep the debate going. ■

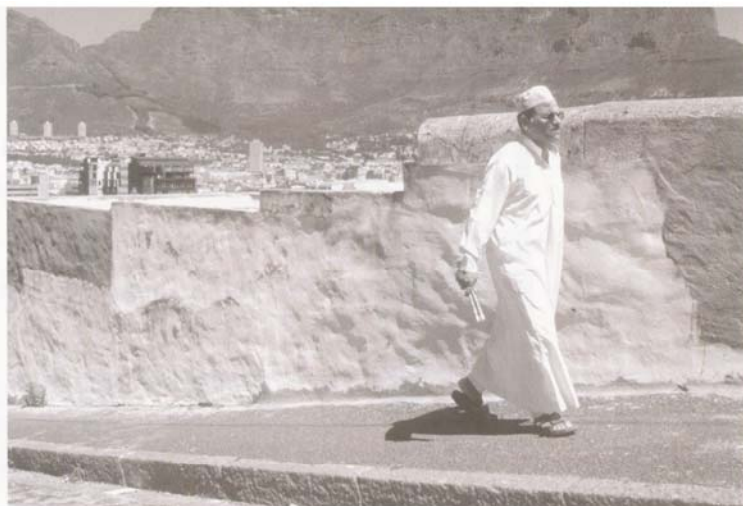


Shacks against the skyline: the life of the poor urbanised.

Nick Shepherd teaches a class on 'race and racism' at the University of Cape Town.



Here he shares the journey he undertakes with his students to find a "civil space" to discuss sensitive and complex issues...



Crossing the Street Navigating through racism's heavy traffic

So wide, historically, is the gulf between black and white that, in reality, we have different perceptions of South Africa, depending where you are, this side of the street or the other.

— President Thabo Mbeki, speaking to Hugo Young of *The Guardian* ("Across the great divide," *Mail and Guardian*, 1-7 June 2001)

IN PRESIDENT MBEKI's striking image, black and white South Africans face one another on different sides of the street. The intervening traffic ('history') results in the production of different 'perceptions', even different realities. The question arises: What happens when one tries to cross the street? Will you be mown down by a passing truck? Ticketed for jay-walking? Or is there a traffic island on which we can huddle, in however provisional a way, as we try to sort out perceptions and perspectives?

This past semester I convened and taught a course called "Debates in African Studies: Race and Racism" in the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town. My colleagues on the course were Brenda Cooper and Harry Garuba. This is not the first time we have taught the course – we taught a similar course last year – but by now I have had time to sort out my own perceptions.

The course material covered a range of topics: race and colonialism; race and apartheid; the origins and deconstruction of the idea of race; slave narratives; black and white fictions of Africa; traveller texts; Dark Continent myths; race and anti-colonialism; race and post-colonialism; race and

i.e. the past, and their faith in themselves and hopes for the future. We are aware of the terrible role played by our education and religion in creating amongst us a false understanding of ourselves. We must therefore work out schemes not only to correct this, but further to be our own authorities rather than wait to be interpreted by others. Whites can only see us from the outside ...

Or again, as a young Hegelian:

*Since the thesis is a white racism there can only be one valid antithesis i.e. a solid black unity to counter-balance the scale. If South Africa is to be a land where black and white live together in harmony without fear of group exploitation, it is only when these two opposites have interplayed and produced a viable synthesis of ideas and a modus vivendi. (Biko, *The Definition of Black Consciousness*).*

What such a synthesis might be, of course, remains an open question. Non-racism? Anti-racism? Or the gradual disappearance of racial consciousness, like a grease spot attacked by a dose of Omo?

Frantz Fanon has always been revered by a sector of anti- and postcolonial writers, most famously by Homi Bhabha who provides the foreword to the Pluto Press edition of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Born in Martinique, educated in France in the shadow of Sartre and the Existentialists, later becoming the Algerian revolution's most passionately articulate spokesperson – Fanon's life story itself leads us through many of the preoccupations of current postcolonial theory: hybridity, diaspora, translation, the experience of

youth cross the country bearing burning torches. A fuhrer is not at hand, but one is sure to emerge. It all seems otherworldly, a continent rather than a lifetime away. The clip from the 1994 elections is closer to home and also, somehow, sadder. A figure dances towards us: "Today I am a king of the world!" The camera pans the long, patient queues.

Of course, the most interesting thing about the course was the manner in which it echoed, in microcosm, a broader public debate in South African society. Issues of race and racism, it seems, have never been so current in public culture, have never devoured so many newspaper inches or exercised so many talking heads. Is this a sign of public health, of a long-delayed loosening of tongues, or is it the sign of an obsession which threatens to throw us off balance?

The class is divided. Is Mbeki re-racialising South African society? asks one section of the class. Was it ever de-racialised? asks another. One thing seems clear, in the name of 'race' we are currently debating a range of issues: wealth and redistribution, access to resources, class formation, issues of authority and representation.

The immediate context of the course is the United Nations World Conference against Racism, to be held in Durban in late August and early September. A group of students from the course tries to get observer status, but is rebuffed. Are they an official student organisation? Accreditation must be obtained from Geneva. Geneva will not reply to emails.

Issues of race and racism, it seems, have never been so current in public culture, have never devoured so many newspaper inches

or exercised so many talking heads. Is this a sign of public health, of a long-delayed loosening of tongues?

gender; 'blackness'; 'whiteness'; race and HIV/AIDS; race and identity; race and diaspora. We read widely: JM Coetzee's perceptive essay on "The Mind of Apartheid"; Henry Louis Gates' African safari (described in *Wonders of the African World*); the still resonant poetry of Leopold Senghor; the rage and erudition of Frantz Fanon; the compelling, activist prose of Steve Biko; Stuart Hall's careful untangling of key terms: race, culture, identity, diaspora.

What have been my impressions of the course? These are necessarily scattered, a jumble of words, images, fragments of dialogue, moments of indifference or high emotion. Beginning with the words, one of my impressions has been the return to relevance of the work of Steve Biko, and the continuing relevance of Frantz Fanon. They were probably the most widely quoted and referenced writers in recent projects and assignments. For decades the words of Biko have led an underground existence, not only because of their censoring under apartheid, but also in the Congress-aligned liberation movement, and in the mid-90s, in the years of rainbow-nationism. Now, suddenly, they tumble from the mouth of the President, and Biko's short, polemical journalistic pieces assume a kind of eerie prescience. He writes:

There is always an interplay between the history of a people

racism as embodied practice, the uneasy marriage of the personal and the political. In the final, glowing sentence of "The Fact of Blackness" he writes:

I feel in myself a soul as immense as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest of rivers, my chest has the power to expand without limit. I am a master and I am advised to adopt the humility of the cripple. Yesterday, awakening to the world, I saw the sky turn upon itself utterly and wholly. I wanted to rise, but the disembowelling silence fell back upon me, its wings paralysed. Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep.

A note of hope, or of despair? The class is divided and cannot decide.

The images which I have in mind come from two short video clips which I showed the class. The first is a black-and-white documentary made up of archival footage of the 1938 Great Trek re-enactments (the "Eufees"), a high-point in the formation of Afrikaner nationalism. The second is news footage of the 1994 elections. In the first, stick figures cross the screen in jerky formation, or gather around the wagons, the women in kappies, the men in beards. There is haranguing of the folk, and a kind of mass jubilation. Pyres are lit and foundation-stones laid. Clean-limbed voortrekker

What conclusions have we reached as a class? The danger would seem to lie in being content to remain on opposite sides of the street, hurling bottles and insults, or in imagining the street (the 'historical gulf') to be uncrossable.

We are formed by our different histories, as both Biko and Mbeki point out in their different contexts, but at the same time – in however provisional a way – there is a sense in which we are self-creating, can bend these histories to our own purposes, work with them to create something splendid and unexpected.

The immediate challenge is to create a civil space in which we can discuss issues of race without fear of reprisals ("Look Mama, a racist!"). The more accommodating non-racism of the post-1994 years has been overtaken – run down! – by two sets of material realities: those associated with the continuing, obscene, racially-based disparities in wealth, and those associated with HIV/AIDS. Ideally, discussions of 'race' need to take place in these two contexts.

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Khoisan Revivalism

The claims of Africa's first indigenous peoples

An unexpected development in post-apartheid South Africa is the revivalism of Khoisan identity, the truly indigenous of the country whose blood flows through many who now know themselves by different names.

Anthea Garman reports.



WHEN THE GOVERNMENT of South Africa released its new Coat of Arms last year two fragile figures from ancient rock art were placed in the centre of the shield and the words "ǃke e: ǀxarra ǁke" ("Unity in diversity" in the extinct language /Xam) were placed underneath.

Professor Jatti Bredekamp, a historian at the University of the Western Cape, says of all the changes from old apartheid identity to a new African identity, the Coat of Arms is the only symbol which incorporates the indigenous peoples. But, he says, it is still an important emblem and will have the effect of "changing a nation's consciousness". Khoisan heritage and culture is becoming "more and more pertinent in post-apartheid South Africa".

In the mid-90s there was an emergence of the awareness of Khoisan heritage coinciding with black South African expressions of identity which found a home in the concept of the 'African Renaissance'.

"The Khoisan are not extinct as was believed in the 20th century," he says. The word 'Khoisan' is a deliberate term for the descendants of the first indigenous people of South Africa. It is an anthropological word used first in the mid-20th century for the people formerly known – pejoratively – as 'bushmen' and 'hottentots'. It's a portmanteau term standing for the San – the hunter/gatherers and the Khoi – the herders.

But it was only in the mid-90s that Khoisan descendants began to throw off the apartheid racial classification of 'coloured' (or sometimes 'Griqua' and 'Nama') and adopt the term as a conscious expression of distinct identity.

Brekamp says the Khoisan are the oldest of the world's indigenous peoples who first came into contact with

Europeans in Africa in the late 15th century.

Critical issues now for those identifying themselves as Khoisan are the right to assert their own identity and not have identity imposed on them (either from the past or in the future), and the restitution of traditional lands.

There are various bodies representing these people and speaking for them – notably in world forums. These bodies rely on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1996 and the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 of 1989 to assert their right to be respected as a people by the state.

In 1995 and 1996 South African Khoisan people attended United Nations conferences to make their presence known to the world. They succeeded in speaking for themselves rather than being spoken for by the South African Government and were recognised as the first indigenous peoples of Africa.

In 1997 UWC hosted an international conference on Khoisan identity and cultural heritage. This resulted in the formation of the Cape Cultural Heritage Development Organisation as a voice for the Khoisan.

Even though the ANC was preoccupied with transition post-1994 Bredekamp says Nelson Mandela showed "profound interest" in Khoisan religious issues.

At a time when the new South African Government was negotiating with traditional leaders of all types Khoisan people found they were able to use this agenda to put their own concerns on the table. However, Bredekamp says, the political process is in a "lethargic state". This relates to the very real difficulty the government faces in incorporating tribal ways into modern politics and the resulting impasse affects the Khoisan.

But culturally there is much ferment: the South African Heritage Resources Agency and the departments of arts and culture and tourism are looking into stimulating projects all over the country which will highlight Khoisan culture and

'hotnot'

provide jobs in the tourism industry to Khoisan people.

And earlier this year when the National Khoisan Consultative Conference met, Deputy President Jacob Zuma opened the proceedings by calling it a 'defining moment for this nation'.

The NKCC has an council of 20 people who represent 10 regions in the country. The NKCC is an umbrella body representing many of the groups who have previously carried the flag for the scattered nations of the Khoisan.

Andrew Abraham Stockenstrom le Fleur, great-grandson of the Robben Island prisoner whose full name he carries and chairperson of the Griqua National Conference of South Africa, is working towards the day when government accommodates indigenous people's rights.

"We have first nation status and we need a council to represent us in government. There are many people involved in this process. Our languages died out. We speak only Afrikaans and English. It's very sad. We need to take action to reclaim our heritage."

Chairperson of the National Khoisan Consultative Council, Cecil le Fleur, says: "We need to raise awareness of our heritage. We need to re-introduce the pride of who we are. We want to penetrate the coloured community. There's so much gangsterism because people want to belong. They want to fit in and be part of something. They call themselves 'coloured' but they don't know where they originate. The Western lifestyle was pushed on them throughout the colonial period. They can't see how important it is to see their roots. We need to unite our people. We need to show them where they belong."

In pursuit of what is rightfully theirs, the council is working towards establishing a legislative body to oversee the fulfilment of these and other rights.

"We want back our ancestral land and we want to protect our intellectual property. It's a big concern to the council that so many times people have come in, taken photos or made videos of our people and then gone off to make a lot of money without any real benefit for the Khoisan."

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Critical issues



Prof Jatti Bredekamp outlines the critical issues affecting the Khoisan as:

- Due recognition of Khoisan symbols by the Christian churches of this country (many Khoisan are converted);
- Inclusion of Khoisan languages and history in education in schools;
- Consultation on the diorama – a depiction on the Khoisan as the colonialists encountered them – in the South African

Museum in Cape Town before it is dismantled because the current director thinks it is "demeaning". Many Khoisan argue it is one of the only places in SA which depicts their history;

- Repatriation of Khoisan remains – many bodies were taken over the years for scientific use by researchers impervious to Khoisan concerns about treating their ancestors with respect;
- Land rights;
- Protection of indigenous knowledge; and
- Fair representation in the media – on the issue of representation Bredekamp says "We are often still seen as 'boesman' and 'hotnot'. But he says, after this year's conference, coverage by the English press has showed less insensitivity to the aspirations of the Khoisan but Afrikaans journalism continues to be disinterested and not keen to disaggregate the Khoisan from the old notion of the 'coloured' race created under apartheid.

Khoisan broadcasting

Although the SA national broadcaster struggles to fulfil its mandate to broadcast in all 11 of the country's national languages, the Khoisan people – mostly concentrated in the Northern Cape – do have their own radio station.

XK-FM has 5 000 listeners and was launched in August last year. It has two producers who broadcast in the !Xhu language while two others broadcast in Khwe.

Producer Owen Kock says the station is situated in Schmidtsdrift (an area notorious for the dumping of soldier-trackers who were used by the apartheid defence force for cross border raids).

Programmes cover news, current affairs, music, story telling, education and dramas. "It is particularly our music and drama programmes that are the main crowd-pullers," says Owen.

Rising through the ranks requires an editorial slant and orientation informed by racist

standards based on a system whose criteria devalues everything that is black.

To be black and proud of it
is to invite professional handicap.

NOT LONG AGO I was at the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism in Johannesburg, enjoying drinks with a few colleagues after finishing a four-day course on writing about race. I was standing at a table laden with peanuts, chips, soft-drinks and beer talking with a senior black journalist I have known for some years. This brother – let's call him 'Themba' – had risen in the ranks of a once whites-only newspaper and the future looked bright for him. I was in a provocative mood and was looking for his take on what determines success for black journalists in South Africa's still largely white-controlled media.

A bit later, a CNN Journalist of the Year winner from Lagos asked what I planned to do now that I had finished the course. He probably did not expect to hear anything less than an ambitious project of leading newsrooms on how to deal with downplayed racism.

I told him with a kind of exhausted sincerity: "Man, I would be mad to think that the moguls are ready to give a black man who is not white inside a chance to do his thing."

"I will go back to my newspaper and do what I have always done: report from a black perspective in a manner that is sensitive to the negative portrayal of the black image in the media."

He may have thought that I was joking, what with my expensive-looking casual suit and my posh car parked outside. But I was dead serious. The prerequisite for success for a black journalist is that he must be what Aggrey Klaaste calls a 'house-nigger', and have joined the white boys' club with its black-image bashing and undermining of black institutions.

I have to say that Themba actually influenced my answer to the Nigerian. Earlier on Themba had admitted that when you are a black senior journalist in a white-controlled institution, especially a newspaper, you have to do as you are told by your bosses. With much patience, hard work, discipline and focus, he had moved through a succession of beats and ranks until he had become one of the editorial executives.

Of course, it is not a crime for one to follow the rules and play the game if one wants to get ahead in any corporate environment. But in Themba's case, there was a troubling requirement that instilled a sense of guilt about his achievement.

"The higher you rise as a black journalist in the white-controlled media, the greater the expectation that you help perpetuate racial stereotypes and confirm their prejudices towards black people," Themba said.

"For a black journalist to reach the top, you have to sell out in the sense that whites expect you to turn your back on your own people, including your fellow blacks who look up to you for leadership and direction. In fact, things are so bad that a senior black journalist or editor must be a black racist, doing exactly the same things that white colleagues do to black people."

It would have been far easier for Themba to shut up and pretend that it was all hunky-dory. But I suppose he had simply decided to spill the beans and clear his conscience.

I decided then that he was that rare man in journalism – willing to talk about how circumstances force black journalists and editors to betray their own people, the majority of consumers of their papers.

I believe there is an urgent need to examine the psychic impact of white racism and supremacy on black journalists. It is an indictment of black journalism that very few have the guts to integrate the ideal of 'black is beautiful', for instance, in the agenda of their publications. Instead, rising

through the ranks requires an editorial slant and orientation that is informed by racist standards based on a system whose criteria devalues everything that is black. There are far too few men – or women – in Themba's position who call into question the white measure of intelligence, or challenge journalists reporting as though they are writing for people in London.

In the current status quo, there exists a caste system which suggests that the more white your outlook, social mannerisms and intellectual orientation, then the greater the value you are presumed to add to a media institution, especially a white one. Even in this age of a supposed 'African Renaissance', a black journalist who adopts a pro-black stance is ridiculed for being "angry, frustrated and holding onto outdated philosophies", condemned for offering nothing new in his thinking except to complain about imaginary racism.

What is surprising is the willingness of black journalists and editors to promote white supremacy, even among themselves. They do this by constructing a hierarchy of house-niggers obsessed with whiteness. And many are in denial about it. It is this pretence at ignorance that has made it easy for them not to be held accountable.

There is almost no black journalist or editor today who lives up to the example of the late Steve Biko, who sought to intervene and alter the racist stereotypes that insisted that blacks – including those in the media – can only progress if they think, behave and exhibit the same mannerisms and attitudes as whites. In fact, Biko's brutal murder was immediately followed by the dismantling of black self-confidence and dignity among black media professionals. This naked neo-colonisation has gone unnoticed and undiscussed, largely because it has created major psychological shifts in the consciousness of black journalists, especially those who desire success and achievement in white terms.

In fact, to be black and proud of it is to invite professional handicap. If you project white views, on the other hand, you are at an advantage; everyone recognises your "mature and intelligent" point of view. To some extent, the danger of buying into whiteness has been obscured by the assumption that there is nothing 'white' about being successful or making it in white-controlled media.

Depoliticised and apathetic black journalists and editors have rationalised their lack of intuitive contact with the problems of the black majority by convincing themselves that they do not need to live in the townships, for instance, to report passionately about the problems of black people.

Some of us have vivid recollections of non-black colleagues who insisted on saying that Black Consciousness exponents in newsrooms are "obsessed with racism". This charge, of course, is specifically directed at those journalists for whom racism is a worthy issue; its intention is to undermine what they have to say and call their integrity into question.

There is an urgent need for black journalists and editors themselves to challenge this sensibility, especially among themselves. When Biko embarked on *I Write What I Like*, he sought to do the same.

SANDILE MEMELA is Assistant Editor (Features) for *City Press* in Johannesburg. Memela was voted best arts journalist of the year in 1999 by the President's Arts and Culture Trust.

'white boys' club'

'house-nigger'

Few dare to say so, but in their race to the top, many black journalists are 'selling out' and promoting prejudice against their own people, argues

Sandile Memela...



Rising Through the Ranks How South Africa's black journalists are internalising racism

The Trouble with 'Race'

Racism must go, few would dispute that. Better still: journalists should consign not just racism, but also the concept of 'race', to the proverbial spike, writes **Guy Berger**...

OUR APPROACH to race affects whether South Africa becomes an entirely race-free society, or if we remain racial but without the racism. It's the difference between a non-racial future where Nelson Mandela is a national hero, versus a multi-racial scenario where he is 'owned' and acclaimed only by his 'own' race.

The options are: a future where skin colour retains significant meaning, or an alternative where social differences (like class and language) cut across race, and where a common, over-arching culture emerges.

At the heart of this is the question: How do we as journalists understand race and racism? Here's an example. Transport your imagination to a workshop convened by the South African National Editors' Forum in Johannesburg last year. Participants are talking about a trial where three people get stiff sentences for murder and rape. The perpetrators are black men and the victims are white women.

You hear a journalist criticise a newspaper report that says, "the mainly black crowd at the court cheered the severity of the sentences". She asks why the colour of the crowd is singled out? It implies, she argues, that normally black people are not expected to behave like this. It conveys the assumption that blacks (in contrast to whites) typically regard life as cheap. The connotation is also that blacks usually side with killers of whites because it's evidently newsworthy when they don't.

Another journalist takes a different view. He says that it is precisely because of such assumptions that the story correctly highlights the race of the crowd – how else will whites be shown that their stereotypes are incorrect?

"Are you only writing for whites?" asks a third journalist.

A fourth journalist observes: "Because most whites so dehumanised most blacks, why should blacks give a damn about white deaths?" In other words, the stereotype has a real foundation. So, he proposes, it is indeed newsworthy that black people broke with type and showed support for the sentences.

You listen as the debate develops, and as it concludes without resolution.

So, is the report racist or not? The answer depends on your outlook about what race signifies, when it's a relevant factor and when its representation (or omission) entails racism. Here's my take on race theory and how it relates to covering this story:

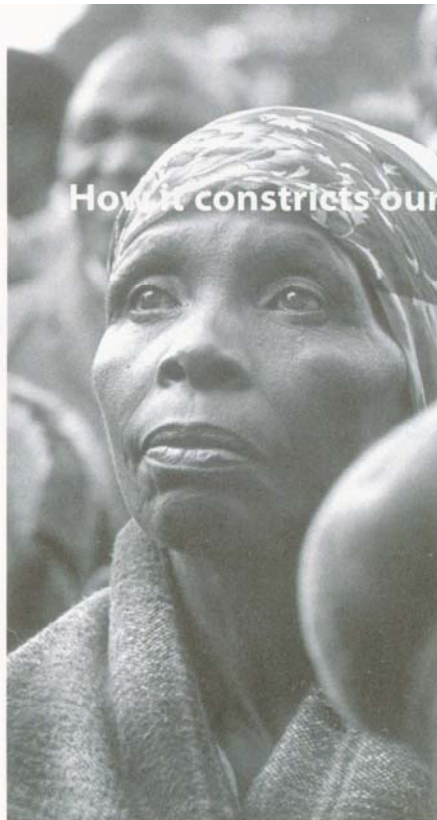
RACISM RELIES ON RACE

In its 2000 report "Faultlines", the Human Rights Commission (HRC) says, *racism* is different from *racialism*. Whereas racialism entails value-free expressions about races, racism is unfair discrimination in terms of the Bill of Rights.

In a similar vein, US academic David Goldberg writes: "Racial differentiation – the discrimination between races and their purported members – is not in and of itself racist.

We speak of 'black business' and 'black self-respect' or 'Jewish political interests' without thereby demeaning members of the group to whom we refer."

Likewise, Tunisian theorist Albert Memmi states: "The description of a



How it constricts our view of the world

difference does not constitute racism; it constitutes a description ... Ultimately, one becomes racist only with the deployment of a difference to denigrate the other."

There is no problem at a general level with this definition of racism as distinct from racialism. But how easy is it to separate the pair in practice?

Very difficult, would be the reply by French author Michel Wieviorka, who sees racialism and racism as terrible twins. In his analysis, there is little logic to distinguishing races unless racism is at play.

Certainly, South Africa has a close intertwining of racialism and racism. Consider a newspaper or a broadcaster that targets a group that – for reasons of class, residence, culture or language – still coincides with historically race-defined parameters. For example, *The Sowetan* serves mainly working-class readers who are still almost all black; the *Financial Mail* serves upper-class readers who remain mainly white.

This racial niching risks a segregationist outlook where each racial 'community' is deemed to be interested only in its 'own affairs'. It is an outlook where the lives and loves, the dramas and deaths of 'other' races do not make news for the targeted race. In racial media, in other words, some races are more valued than others.

It may not be inherently racist to cater to audiences like this but media racialism can be a slippery slope to reinforcing racism. And this is because, both in practice and in theory, racialism works off a base of race. Racialism, without links to racism, is hard to imagine.

RACES ARE MADE, NOT GIVEN

For there to be racism, there need to be races. But what count as 'racial' features in some contexts can in others be as socially insignificant and unnoticed as the number of eyelashes a person has. A complexion in South Africa that counts a person as 'coloured' is just part of the spectrum of being black in the US.

The key point, therefore, as the writer Antvar Brah puts it, is not race difference as if it were a self-evident fact, but instead who defines it, and how.

This view contrasts with those who see race as something natural. For example, the HRC's "Faultlines" report tells us that the idea of race "suggests that certain groups of people have common inheritable characteristics which divide them

from others, a kind of racial essence".

In short, for the HRC, we can embrace race – as an essence that we each inherit – in a value-free way, without having to take racism on board.

This is an assumption that runs directly against arguments by renowned race theorist, Anthony Appiah. For him, racial identity cannot rest on any essence – because this would falsely assume intrinsic qualities for all group members. Instead, he argues that races only exist as a social and historical construct.

Historian Robert Miles shows that Irish and Jews, today deemed white in the US, were previously treated as inferior non-white races. Miles puts it thus: "The signification of racial phenotypical features is not an end in itself. It is effected for particular purposes in particular periods."

Back home, Steve Biko built an oppositional 'black' identity against apartheid's divide-and-rule attempt to differentiate Zulus and Xhosas, set Transkeians against Ciskeians, polarise Africans from Indians, separate Indians from coloureds, and so on. In a way, Biko mirrored the Nationalist government's project of engendering among previously divided English and Afrikaners a common 'whiteness' that would defend against the 'non-whites' and especially against the 'Reds'.

What this shows is that because races are socially constructed categories with specific histories, they cannot be value-free.

Because races are made and not given, not only can they mean different things, but they also need not always be with us. At some point, black and white identities can become redundant.

RACE RUINS OUR COMMONALITY AND OUR UNIQUENESS

Racial identity implies unity. Writes Goldberg: "When this identity is internalised it prompts identification, a sense of belonging together." The result, he says, is that racial differentiation also defines Otherness, and therefore excludes people defined as different.

In South Africa, it works like this: "I am white, because I declare you as different, as black". Or: "I am black-black because you are Indian, coloured or white." Racial difference, in short, is both chillingly interdependent and comes with a built-in tendency to become racial division.

Appiah warns, racial 'unity' can elicit a tyranny that conscripts individuals to specific 'races'. Racial solidarity and conformity then trumps individuality. Accordingly, no white can ever transcend racism; no black may ever differ with his or her peers. This coercive racial typing does not necessarily amount to racism – that is, in the sense of unfair discrimination – but it is not very different to it.

RACE FAILS TO TELL THE FULL STORY

Besides highlighting division and hindering a vision of a race-free future, there is a further problem in retaining race – especially for journalists. This is that race presents, as British analyst Paul Gilroy argues, a basis for absolutists to see physical features as a factual basis for sameness (within a race) and difference (between races).

James Donald and Ali Rattansi observe, that 'race' produces simplified interpretations of complex social, economic and cultural relations.

Similarly, the writer Percy Cohen notes that racial formulations are reductionist: they claim that people can be explained by skin colour or other racial attributes, that is, by a single, simple cause. Yet, at most, race tells only part of the story.

This is a critical matter when it comes to journalism, because it impacts directly on whether the media can avoid racism and yet hold on to the idea that a person's race suffices to page 57 ►



Because races are made and not given, not only can they mean different things, but they also need not always be with us.



A Toast to 'Charles' Shifting notions of stereotypes in SA advertising

THE TERM 'RACIAL STEREOTYPING' is usually understood to refer to negative or pejorative depictions. In advertising, there is no racial stereotyping, because no sensible advertiser would wish to offend the target audience or indeed lose the goodwill of any potential other buyers. Or is there?

On closer examination racial stereotyping does occur but racial stereotyping which is overtly pejorative is rare. It generally arises in adverts where members of a social group other than the target audience are depicted as secondary characters. Quite likely, the people who are making the advertisements will identify with a social group that is more empowered within the social structure than those who are represented in negative stereotypical roles. So it may not seem that character representations have been created or selected which amount to racial stereotypes. Stereotypes are group concepts; therefore different groups might regard the same stereotypes either as positive or negative.

Producing communications that draw upon the characterisation of people from any social group is always bound to

what might be termed "conventional racial stereotyping" did occur. A possible example would be a commercial for Dixie Dishwashing Liquid, where a black woman employed as a domestic servant exclaimed 'Hau Madam!' after the effectiveness of the product had been demonstrated to her. Of course, this depiction was consistent with ethnographic veracity, as a great number of white households in South Africa had domestic servants whose real life roles corresponded to the depiction in the advertisement.

However, in an apartheid (and post-apartheid) context, given the sensitivity of a large majority of economically and socially disadvantaged groups, this depiction can be offensive.

After the introduction of TV2/3 (aimed at 'black' audiences) in 1982, conventional forms of racial stereotyping became quite rare. It was the absence of blacks in TV1 commercials and the absence of whites in TV2/3 commercials that became the underpinning ideological principle.

During most of the reformist apartheid era the broad-

'Hau Madam!'



From apartheid ethnic separation in the 70s, to affirmative depictions of blacks in the 80s through to subtle denigration of whites in the 90s, **Alexander Holt** takes a look South African advertising.

of advertising reinforced ethnically derived forms of stereotyping that were not pejorative in the sense that racial stereotyping is usually understood in the West. Indeed, it was

sometimes argued that the objective of the ethnically designated apartheid broadcasting dispensation was to protect the cultural topography of South Africa from European cultural imperialism.

However, media messages based upon ethnic characteristics tend also to reinforce a parochial past. When directed at urban dwellers who are trying to compete in an industrialised society, such stereotypes are arguably regressive. On the other hand, a strong case can be made that by allowing easy comparisons of lifestyles, the pejorative racial stereotyping of the time acted as a catalyst to make the aggrieved groups seek equality. Apartheid social planners had devised their Bantustan policy in order to counter the longer-term integrating processes of a market economy. However, economic dependence upon blacks as labour and as consumers for manufactured goods was unavoidable, and by the 1980s constituted a major structural contradiction in the apartheid state.

There has been a transition in the depiction of blacks in South African advertising from ethnic to westernised or

be a tricky business. Despite the cautious nature of the work, the prevailing climate of reception can sometimes be misjudged, resulting in the publication of depictions that are more pejorative than had been planned or intended.

The historical context in which any media message is produced and consumed is important in determining the nature of the representation and its reception. In the South African context, one finds that the conventional definitions of racial stereotyping, as understood in the West, do not always readily fit some of the depictions of blacks in South African advertising over the past 20 years or so.

When television advertising was first introduced in 1978, a few instances of

cosmopolitan and middle class. These depictions are likely to be decoded as positive and evidence of change

casting dispensation, largely dominated by the SABC, continued to support forms of ethnic stereotyping consistent with the conception of 'separate nations' underpinning the Bantustan project. In some instances, particularly where urban black consumption of a product exceeded that of whites, it would have been more practical for advertisers to make use of a single commercial produced in English.

'white bagel'

However, the language stipulation of the different SABC TV channels was strictly enforced. To make use of the TV2/3 channels it was necessary for advertisers to make separate commercials for what were deemed the 'different racial groups'. These streams

A yet more complex situation arises if one broadens the definition of racial stereotyping to include depictions that are not overtly pejorative or even depictions that are intended to be affirmative. As reform gathered pace during the 1980s, some of the large business organisations began to contest the ethnic media dispensation by producing English-language commercials depicting blacks stereotyped in middle-class roles interacting with whites without displaying any aspects of ethnicity. From the mid-1980s onwards, such affirmative black depictions in the advertising for certain products arguably contributed to social change. Initially, such commercials could only be broadcast on the white

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What is happening?

MEDIA DIVERSITY



Print Media SA established a Print Development Unit (PDU) in February 2000 to:

- 1 Provide support to emerging print media to assist in their growth and sustainability.
- 2 Increase diversity of ownership in print media.
- 3 Widen the range of voices in South Africa.
- 4 Broaden the culture of reading.

To assist emerging publishers the PDU has implemented:

- 5 A pilot study involving the in-depth development of two publications to serve as a development model for PDU support.
- 6 A development programme providing comprehensive individual assistance to emerging publishers. This includes drawing up detailed business plans, training, facilitating access to loan finance and after-care support.
- 7 A mentoring programme providing guidance in business, marketing and editorial skills to emerging publishers.
- 8 A training programme offering courses on developing practical business skills, financial analyses, advertising and marketing, editorial and design, printing and pricing, and information technology.

For further information please contact: Natasha Stretton, Print Development Unit,
Tel: 011 447 1264, Fax: 011 447 1289, Email: natashas@printmedia.org.za

It is disturbing to see Tanzanian cartoonists today

portraying people of Asian and European origin with

prominent, curved noses, the same way Nazi artists portrayed Jews.

'colonists'

THROUGHOUT THE 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Tanzania prided itself on being a leading anti-apartheid campaigner; it was one of the frontline states in the war against colonialism and racism on the continent. The official media, echoing government policy, was staunchly anti-racism.

But now, with the advent of liberalisation, headlines and news articles with racist undertones, or even outright racism, are increasingly appearing. Such pieces are now to be found not only in the popular press, but also in papers that influence public opinion. Well-respected newspapers

have taken to referring to people by their race or ethnicity, even when the two have nothing to do with the story being told.

As the Media Council of Tanzania's media critic, Kajubi Mukajanga, warned:

"It is a serious ethical problem that should be addressed today and not tomorrow."

Tanzania's liberalised media is one of the biggest in the region. There are 10 daily newspapers (four English, six Swahili and four evening newspapers) and 14 weeklies. The country has seven television stations, 12 cable television stations and more than 23 radio stations. It is second in media volume only to South Africa in sub-Saharan Africa.

The power of the media to influence events, opinion and decision-making in present-day Tanzania needs no discourse. It has been amply demonstrated during election time, when protagonists compete for media attention, and where the media has proved quite effective in shaping public opinion.

During Tanzania's elections late last year, the Tanzania Elections 2000 Media Monitoring Project felt compelled to add racism/tribalism and xenophobia to its watch list when it became apparent these were to be a feature of media coverage of the elections. The monitoring project recorded about 248 stories with racism/tribalism connotations and 18 stories that were xenophobic. A total of 10 263 entries were recorded in just three months. The project monitored 15 newspapers, seven TV stations and six radio stations.

The monitors found, for example, that some of the articles were aimed at fomenting hatred between the people of the mainland and the Pemba Islands. Headlines such as "White lunatic harries Nyerere", "Indians continue wave of impregnating house-girls", "Indians murder African youth" and "Somali banditry on the rise" have become common since 1999. In a society such as Tanzania's, where what is written in the press is taken at face-value, appearing to condone racism, however fleetingly, is dangerous.

Much of the racism seems to be aimed at the financially well off, mostly Indians and now white South African investors. A month ago a South African firm, AFGEM, which is investing in the gemstone-rich country around Arusha in the north, was the latest victim. The headline "Boers found another colony in Tanzania" had nothing to do with the issue at hand, which was that AFGEM was trying to protect its area and property from invaders and marketing Tanzanite using a brand name. Similar white-bashing happened when



Tanzania's newly liberalised – and racialised media – is having a powerful effect on daily life in the country and the Media Council is not able to stop reporting that discriminates against Asians and non-Tanzanians.

a leading Tanzanian bank NBC was sold to ABSA, the South African banking group in December 1999.

It is disturbing to see Tanzanian cartoonists today portraying people of Asian and European origin with prominent, curved noses, the same way Nazi artists portrayed Jews. A major Swahili-language Sunday paper from one of the bigger publishing houses has made its selling point the vilification of Tanzanians of Asian origin. There was a time when for nine straight weeks it either led with a story scandalising the Asians, or at least had such a story on the front page.

During the national mourning following the death of Julius Nyerere, anyone who was not 'African' (read 'black') who dared criticise Nyerere was shouted down. Another example is a story which alleged that a white husband had grossly mistreated his black wife and then left for Europe with the children. There was a range of serious accusations in the story, from forced sodomy to corruption, blackmail and battering. Yet no attempt at all was made to balance the story. Even the police, who are said to have been called in, were not contacted.

Tanzanian reporters and their editors are forgetting Article Six of the Code of Ethics in the Constitution of the Media Council of Tanzania, adopted at the National Journalists and Stakeholders Convention in May 1995. It reads: "A journalist should not engage in publication, directly or indirectly or by implication, of stories, information, photos that injure, or discriminate against anybody for his/her colour, religion, origin or sex." But the council does not have the teeth to stop discriminatory reporting. It can only suggest and advise. Nevertheless, there are moves afoot for the government to give the council the clout to enforce a code of ethics on media practitioners.

AHMED MERERE is a senior journalist with *The Guardian* in Tanzania. He is also a correspondent for *Mango* magazine and the Sorvis News Agency, both based in Norway. His research includes media coverage of the Land Law March, the fight against child labour and the promotion of South-South co-operation.

'white lunatics'

A Call for a Code of Ethics

'bandits'

Ahmed Merere rings an alarm



about the increasing racism in his country's media...

What we have here is a classic campaign of demonisation, conjuring up a menacing 'other', threatening our way of life.

Reporting fairly on those seeking a safe home

THERE WAS a carnival atmosphere when I went to the Halkevi Centre last February, on a bright, blowy North London afternoon at the end of winter. Car horns blared, voices were raised in excitement and the chilly breeze caught the flags and sheaves of colourful posters as increasingly exasperated men tried to attach them to car windows with bluetack.

These were Turkish Kurds, staging an exuberant demonstration to mark the second anniversary of an important event in their liberation struggle. The capture of Abdullah Ocalan by Ankara's secret servicemen was replete with symbolism. Apparently a severe setback, his incarceration and the death sentence passed on him – though held in abeyance – focused global attention on the oppressive Turkish state. His dignified appeals for peace have put the onus on the Turks to engage meaningfully with his people's demands.

The Kurds are perhaps the world's outstanding example of a nation without a state, scattered, as they are, through Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Ten years ago, as they fled the oppression of Saddam Hussein, they were protected in a UN 'safe haven'. Today, US and British planes, patrolling the 'no-fly zone' which Washington and London have imposed on northern Iraq, turn a blind eye as the Turkish air force cross the border to bombard Kurdish positions.

Some time soon, in a Whitehall office just five miles or so south of the Halkevi Centre, bureaucrats will decide whether Britain should back the Ilisu Dam, which would flood 70 000 homes in the Kurdish heartland of southern Turkey.

This representation of one of Britain's biggest contingents of asylum seekers breaks several important conventions. Seldom are such people portrayed in media reports as active or capable of organising themselves. Seldom are we invited to reflect on the harrowing circumstances which drove many from their homeland.

As a native of North London, I can testify that over the last decade, the cultural vigour and business acumen these people brought with them has helped to transform what used to be a bleak, rundown urban thoroughfare into the vibrant high street of today, with the Halkevi Community Centre at one end and a cornucopia of eateries, shops and services. But this is an aspect of relations between asylum seekers and the wider community which is seldom aired.

Readers and audiences of mainstream news, at least those

North London, from forming. Immigration minister Barbara Roche said this was to "ease the burden on communities".

Anyone who has bought or sold a house in the capital recently knows that living round the corner from somewhere like Stoke Newington Road, full of thriving Kurdish businesses, is a much more desirable proposition than an area bare of such amenities as it used to be. Their presence has, in fact, contributed to the upward mobility of London N16 in estate agents' windows.

So how have they come to be portrayed as a 'burden', and how has this construction of the Kurds and people like them come to be a touchstone of discussions about asylum seekers and immigration?

'THEM'

"Londoners face a £63 bill per household for the capital's bogus asylum seekers," *The Daily Mail* raged in March of last year. "The decision and appeals process can take years and all applicants have the right to be housed and supported while their cases crawl through the overloaded system."

A familiar theme – the claim that Britain's generous welfare benefits draw economic migrants like a magnet from across the world. A Romanian asylum seeker arrested for begging with a baby "told how her

family of eight live rent-free on £640 a month benefit", the same paper reported. Those accommodated in holding centres live "the kind of life many locals could only dream of", according to another *Mail* exclusive, this from a village in rural

Somerset where asylum seekers were to be housed in a former private school with its own grounds and swimming pool. Yet another "revealed" that it costs "nearly as much to keep an asylum seeker as a room at the luxurious Ritz Hotel".

Asylum seekers, by these accounts, are scroungers and layabouts, filling their hours with free use of swimming pools and subsidised visits to football matches. In the image which launched the campaign in the *Mail* and its sister paper, *London's Evening Standard*, they present a perverted, alien notion of family by thrusting their suspiciously docile babies under the noses of commuters, begging for cash. Romanian gypsies have "a code which values begging more highly than labour"; if they work at all, it is for "cash in hand", cheating the taxpayer. We are in danger of being

'swamped'

'rising tide'

Responding to Difference



Jake Lynch suggests ways to counter racist representation of 'the other'...

without benefit of such first-hand knowledge, might have been puzzled, therefore, to read in a recent edition of *The Economist* that "immigrants add to overall economic activity". The magazine quoted an American survey which suggested that, even without reckoning up the eventual contributions of their children to the US economy of the future, "the country as a whole gains from them, by about \$10 billion a year".

The occasion of my previous visit to the Halkevi was to report on the likely effects of the government's Asylum and Immigration Bill – recently enacted – which introduced a dispersal system to prevent large groups, such as the one in

"swamped" by a "rising tide" of would-be immigrants intent on grabbing a share of our prosperity.

Time for a dose of reality. Asylum seekers in Britain are not entitled to work for the first six months after their arrival, even if they wanted to; an authoritative UN study, released earlier this year, found that the overriding reason for people to seek asylum in a particular place is the presence of existing groups of their fellow countrymen and women, not the level of benefits. And in terms of the number of would-be refugees per head of the existing population, Britain comes about mid-table among European Union countries.

Numbers have recently dropped to the lowest monthly

Media hysteria in Britain over the rights of asylum seekers has further sharpened distinctions between 'them' and 'us'

'bogus asylum seekers'

figure in two years – 5 000 in April – though appeals against refusal of asylum are now at record levels. Fewer than one in 10 are officially deemed genuine claims – though 16% are granted exceptional leave to remain. A list of the main places of origin reads like a who's who of the world's most oppressive or trouble-torn countries, such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Somalia.

An old journalist's maxim – never let the facts get in the way of a good story. What we have here is a classic campaign of demonisation, conjuring up a menacing 'other', threatening our way of life. It bears closer examination. If asylum seekers are 'them', who are 'we'?

'Us'

The Concorde crash in Paris last year posed a particular problem to London's popular press. A story of obvious global importance, worthy of a front-page lead, but for one highly inconvenient detail – all the victims were Germans. Sympathy for the old enemy is not a prominent feature in the shrill rhetorical conventions of British tabloids. So, the victims were framed as "hard-working family members"



Iraqi Kurds celebrate Nawrooz, the first uprising against tyranny thousands of years ago.

Seldom are we invited to reflect on the harrowing circumstances which drove many from their homeland.

who'd saved up for the holiday of a lifetime, when disaster struck.

Tragedy reached even deeper into the 'self' with the fatal train crash at London's Paddington Station in 1999. What really caught reporters' imaginations was that people in the foremost carriage suffered the worst impact. "They were among the best of us," the *Mail* gushed in its front-page lead, "hard-working family contributors" conscientiously trying to reach the office on time, moving to the front of the train to disembark as it came to rest.

It is a formula which crops up in the unlikelyst of circumstances. A special report on Zimbabwe's land conflict featured one white farming family, the wife and mother a former model, whose plight "hard-working families everywhere" would recognise.

TACTICS

This study of the terms in which 'us' and 'them', the 'self' and a threatening 'other' are being constructed affords essential clues for the reporter seeking to challenge the categories

In order to properly contextualise the story, I included, in the same package, shots of one of the Turkish army's periodic bombardments of 'targets' in Kurdish areas. On this occasion, asylum seekers had gathered at the centre to watch reports about the conflict on a satellite TV channel, so the shots naturally belonged in the piece.

• Just talking to asylum seekers themselves is often enough to transgress the boundary between 'us' and 'them' and unravel the process of demonisation.

Ekrem Aksu, the young man I interviewed on that bright winter's day, had modest enough aims of gaining qualifications, getting a job and settling down. As the representative of 'other'-ness – alterity, in the interesting sense of alter-ego – he left something to be desired.

'illegal begging'

ABSURDITIES

Part of the point in going to Halkevi to cover the Asylum Bill, with its provision for dispersal, was to illustrate the argument that asylum seekers, if allowed to gather in communities capable of supporting themselves with things like language and computer classes, can thrive. They are more likely to become a 'burden' if they are split up.

This is one of several reasons why the bill, published on the high tide of media hysteria led by the *Mail* and *Standard*, was greeted by groups working for immigrants rights as absurd. Voltaire said that someone who can persuade us to believe absurdities can persuade us to commit atrocities. While 'atrocities' is a much-overused word in journalism, it is certain that racism in all its forms, including physical violence and intimidation, has flourished as a result of this media and political discourse about asylum seekers.

No less an authority than the Association of Chief Police Officers found that racist attacks rose on the back of such coverage. They warned news organisations to be more responsible to avoid placing themselves on the wrong side of the law and inciting more offences to be committed. They

also found that such offences rose in response to reporting of the inflammatory speeches some politicians have now begun to make, playing to the gallery the media has created.

These have become useful points to mention in adding context to reports, since another plank of the 'self' is respect for the law. The original rash of scare stories made much of asylum seekers engaging in "illegal begging". If demonising them leads to more unlawful behaviour, not less, then once again the facile distinctions begin to break down.

What is at stake here is one of the essential questions in a diverse society – how we respond to difference. Are we threatened – or complemented and completed – by it? Journalists have an opportunity to help us see elements of the other in the self and vice versa, something which can help us know ourselves better. Or they can erect rhetorical barricades which can all too easily lead to real ones dividing us, playing on our fears about what may lie on the far side.

The last word perhaps belongs with Amnesty International, which has just condemned Britain for its attitude. The journey from Afghanistan, country of origin for Britain's biggest contingent of asylum seekers today, is one from "desperation to despair", Amnesty's report said. It singled out the lack of legal advice and interpreters for applicants 'dispersed' under the Asylum and Immigration Act as a particular concern.

Underlying all this is a contest over the meaning of Britishness and the British archetype. Is it ethnically based, the 'white ratepayer' of the suburbs whose home is his castle? Or a freedom-loving exponent of fair play and support for the underdog? The issue for journalists is to consider how we are representing ourselves, before we begin thinking about how to represent anyone else.

JAKE LYNCH is a freelance journalist based in London, and has worked as an international correspondent for television and newspapers. Over the past year he has filed several reports for *Sky News* on the issue of asylum seekers.

'burden'

and defended the exclusivity of 'Britishness'.

by transgressing the boundary between them. A three-point plan for fairer coverage:

- Focus on the hard work many asylum seekers and members of immigrant communities do, if allowed to get on with it. The facts are an ally here. Most immigrant communities in Britain place a high premium on hard work and family values.

So I included, in my report for *Sky News* on the Asylum Bill, an interview with Halkevi Centre Director Yeshehar Ismailoglu, in which he proudly described his training programmes and their outstanding success in placing people in jobs and helping them start their own businesses.

- Hard-working families everywhere need security in their homes almost before everything else.

'Lotten Amellican!'

Taking on the powerful in the US media

IN MANY WAYS, racism in US media operates much like racism in any other institution or industry – entrenched, often unexamined, attitudes and practices marginalise people of colour and exclude them from positions of power. Media content reflects this imbalance, with minorities and our perspectives largely missing or misrepresented. But racism, or more precisely white supremacy, in US media is also reinforced by the decisive, but rarely discussed, corporate commercial nature of the US media system – a system that privileges consumers over citizens and private profit over public interest.

Fighting for Fairness



Racism is institutionalised in the American media, argues **Janine Jackson**, by the under-representation of people of colour in US newsrooms, by top-down reporting which favours those in power and by the commercialisation of news. It's time to demand major, structural changes in the US media industry...

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

A 1987 Boston study (summarised in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, 5-6/87) showed what many already knew: white-owned media tend to view communities of colour through a lens of pathology, with African Americans disproportionately linked to stories of crime, violence or purported social dysfunction (eg, drug use, 'unwed motherhood'). Indeed, mainstream television journalists, themselves overwhelmingly white, acknowledge that they routinely illustrate stories about crime rates or welfare dependency

including the declaration on TV's "Meet the Press" by eminent *Washington Post* reporter David Broder that "the Chinese are not nice people". Several newspapers ran a cartoon by Pat Oliphant, depicting a buck-toothed, slant-eyed waiter, spilling a bowl of "cat gizzard noodles" on Uncle Sam, then demanding, "Apologise, Lotten Amellican!"

Critics also note media double standards on race. Reporters seem more likely to call public demonstrations by African Americans 'riots', for example, while rallies, even violent ones, involving mainly white people rarely earn that label. Criminal suspects who are black or Hispanic are identified by race more often than white suspects. Black leaders, like Jesse Jackson, are frequently called on by media to account for the actions or statements of other blacks, in a kind of 'one standing for all' rule that is not applied to white community leaders. And while it is frankly impossible to imagine mainstream media devoting weeks and weeks of respectful, legitimising coverage to a book that argued that white people are genetically inferior to non-whites, this was precisely the US media's response to *The Bell Curve*, a pseudo-scientific treatise that claimed the reverse.

Such things seem nearly subtle alongside radio hosts like New York's Bob Grant, who regularly refers on-air to blacks as "savages" and "subhumanoids", and has described Haitian immigrants as "like maggots on a hot day". The West Coast has Los Angeles' "Mark & Brian Show" which ran a promotional campaign on the theme of "black hoes" (meant to invoke the term "black whore") in which the station gave out black garden implements to listeners and advertisers.

Lest one believe that such scurrilousness exists on the US media fringe, until it was cancelled in the wake of an activist campaign, Bob Grant's show aired on the ABC radio network's flagship New York City station. The 'black hoe' hosts work for none other than the Walt Disney Company, which – in the wake of lawsuits and complaints brought on by that campaign – did not fire the hosts, but promoted them.

journalists may strive for accuracy and balance, 'objectivity' *per se* is not really possible in newsgathering. Media decisions rely on judgments made by human beings – judgments about what stories are newsworthy, which sources are credible, what language is acceptable. It matters very much, then, that US media remains, particularly at the top, overwhelmingly white – and male.

The most recent survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that the percentage of journalists of colour actually declined – to 11.6% – in 2000; fully 44% of daily newspapers have no people of colour in decision-making roles.

Other media aren't much better: Latinos, blacks, Asian Americans and Native Americans make up just seven percent of writers for primetime network TV, according to one survey, while filling about 16% of on-air parts on primetime shows. And the higher you go, the fewer people of colour you find: there are only a handful of minorities in media's corridors of power.

This behind-the-scenes under-representation is a key reason US media looks the way it does. But we must add to it a certain 'top-down' approach to journalism, endemic in the US press, which essentially defines 'news' as what the powerful say and do. Confronted with the dominance of their guest list by white males, for example, the producers of *Nightline* offered not apologies but an explanation: "We try to get the players, the people who really are the decision makers," said then-producer Richard Kaplan, "to hold their feet to the fire." Many journalists see no problem with this 'traditional' approach to newsgathering, even if means that whole sectors of society – those outside of power – are marginalised.

Compounding these biases is the fact that US media are overwhelmingly corporate-dominated and commercially driven. On one level, corporatisation has meant ever-escalating concentration in the media industry, such that the majority of the country's newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations are now controlled by a tiny handful of compa-

Clearly, media that will not speak of racism will not successfully challenge it. It is an open secret in US broadcasting that advertisers pay less

for programmes that garner non-white audiences, and that some sponsors refuse to place ads on such programmes at all.

'savages'

'subhumanoids'

'black hoes'

with a 'B-roll' of black and brown people, whether or not such images fit the facts of a particular story.

Such associations, of course, foment fears and stereotypes, resulting in misinformed public opinion and misdirected public policy.

The corollary to media's often negative framing of people of colour is that African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans only rarely appear in more positive contexts, as 'experts' or sources in news stories. A study of ABC's *Nightline*, for example, found that non-whites made up less than nine percent of the guests on that prestigious news programme.

Wars and international disputes frequently showcase media prejudice: the recent spy plane standoff between the US and China unleashed a spate of racist commentary,

There is no shortage of examples of racist media, big and little, overt and indirect. Crucially, however, there is virtually no sustained media discussion of racism itself. The word itself is abjured, even in contexts in which it is perfectly appropriate, like coverage of anti-discrimination programmes and policies. A 1998 study of major news outlets' coverage of affirmative action policies found that just 15% of stories made *any reference at all* to inequity or bias (past or present) against people of colour (or women). The result is to make racism seem like a 'perception' or a 'claim' made by people of colour, rather than observable fact.

Clearly, media that will not speak of racism will not successfully challenge it.

HOW IT GETS THAT WAY

It has long been recognised that while

Historically excluded, minority owners have a difficult time squeezing into such a consolidated field.

Commercialism also means, simply enough, that the driving force in US media is not the audience, as is generally believed, but the advertisers. Commercial media producers do not want just to reach the largest possible audience, but the particular audience their sponsors want to 'target' – and those are generally well-off and white.

These facts are not so much denied by media executives as they are excused as being 'just business' with their anti-democratic implications denied. But for anyone interested in media diversity, the results are devastating. For example, it is an open secret in US broadcasting that advertisers pay less for pro-

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In the few instances where Latinos are not invisible in the paper which I studied,



MANY STUDIES show that US newspapers tend to present Hispanics/Latinos (US residents of Latin American descent) as both a subordinated 'race' and as an underclass. But a close look at news coverage of Latinos in a typical US mid-size newspaper reveals something else. Latino news is also genderised in ways that underline Latinos' assumed race and class inferiority.

Genderisation can be understood here to refer to the way journalism ascribes gender-related attributes to social groups. This process occurs, for example, by writing either a 'soft' feature or a 'hard' news story on a given event or issue, or by placing a news item in the Home or Business section. It is also evident in the way that either men's or women's voices are privileged, and in foregrounding either men or women in photographs. Genderisation is also present in

have found. A minuscule fraction (0.14%) of the paper's archives of 181 088 items cover Latino current affairs. As researcher Gaye Tuchman would say, Latinos are "symbolically annihilated" – meaning that the mass media either ignore or systematically misrepresent marginalised groups in stereotypical, trivialising and disempowering ways.

In the few instances where Latinos are not invisible in the paper which I studied, they are portrayed as low-status individuals. There is a pattern of de-legitimising Latino knowledge. To take just one example, in a the front-page article, "More Latinos leaving Catholicism for Baptist faith", only one of the four pastors quoted as experts is Latino, and his knowledge is framed as secondary or supplementary in a 'sidebar'.

Researchers Lana Rakow and Kimberlie Kranich show that women often appear in news stories as ordinary people, as "specimens" ... "to illustrate the private consequences of public events and actions". "Here is what a woman who abuses her children looks like", "here is an ordinary woman who

fled her home in an earthquake". Likewise, Latinos in the paper I studied often serve as a narrative device to make a connection between the private and the public spheres

– rather than as authoritative sources of information.

Latino news in the paper is often covered by women reporters. Research on readers' perceptions of the work of male versus

'womanised'

The relative abundance of articles about Latinos with female bylines is likely to suggest to the average reader that Latino news is not as important

imbalances in coverage of actions pertaining to women's stereotypical domains (eg, food, education), versus stories about men's traditional domains (eg, politics, business).

In patriarchal cultures, imbuing a social group with feminine features has tremendous political consequences, because the group is automatically marked as inferior.

A detailed study of coverage in a prominent North Carolina daily newspaper shows that Latinos are portrayed as a particular race and a specific class – and as a people who exhibit traits that in Western culture are commonly attributed to women, such as being yielding, childlike and soft-spoken. Women in this model are assumed to be inferior, subordinate, dependent – and overlooked.

My analysis confirms the substantial invisibility of Latinos in news that other studies

This treatment echoes the status ascribed to 'womanhood'. The genderisation becomes even more apparent by the fact that the only Latino expert quoted on the paper's front page in the four years of my study was a woman. In other words, Latinos are represented by someone who is not recognised by patriarchal culture as a possessor of legiti-

mate knowledge – namely, a man. female writers has shown that readers tend to assume that pieces bearing a man's signature have more merit than those with a woman's signature.

The relative abundance of articles about Latinos with female bylines is likely to suggest to the average reader that Latino news is not as important as other news. It also con-

In patriarchal cultures, imbuing a social group with feminine features has tremendous

mate knowledge – namely, a man.

Genderisation goes deeper still: most of the time, when Latinos are quoted, they are quoted as ordinary people talking about their personal experience, not as experts. This orientation towards personal experience is typically viewed as a form of subjective/feminine knowledge.

tributes to further genderisation of Latino news because:

- Latino current affairs are often covered as 'soft' rather than as 'hard' news, because, as noted by academic Liesbet van Zoonen, women journalists "tend to prevail in those areas that can be seen as an extension of their domestic responsibilities

Genderising Latino News

How media coverage conflates

Hispanics/Latinos are the fastest growing 'minority' in America, and may one

No wonder, then, that much of the media tends to assign 'feminine' –

Lucila Vargas reports.



they are portrayed as low-status individuals. There is a pattern of de-legitimising Latino knowledge.

(such as) human interest and feature sections of newspapers”.

- The paper's overall narrative about Latinos contains a relatively high number of female voices because – as many studies have shown – women journalists tend to include more women sources than their male counterparts.
- The coverage constructs the local Latino community as predominantly female. Portrayals of individual members of a group add flesh and texture to that group's public identity. I found only six lengthy features about Latino individuals, and they profile six women, but only three men. Apart from a Cuban-American man, women are the sole focus of entire articles, and the longest profile features a woman. This predominance of Latinas as newsmakers contradicts the news media's tendency to neglect women newsmakers, but adds to the picture of Latinos in general as subordinate.

as other news.

The body politic is the male domain *par excellence*. Although Latinos have become an important political constituency, Latino politicians (overwhelmingly men) and Latino advocacy organisations (male-dominated institutions) are diminished by neglecting to record their speech.

Two sample front-page items in the paper I studied deal with a crucial political issue for

of a single member of the Hispanic Caucus.

The near absence of references to Latino political organisations, coupled with this scarcity of quotes from Latino politicians and the downplaying of their accomplishments, restricts Latino public/political participation. As feminist writer Jean Bethke Elstain contends, the failure to record the public speech of women and other social groups has been instrumental in trivialising their public presence and restricting their political actions.

The patriarchal male/female divide means that social life is structured according to neatly divided spheres: work/leisure, political/domestic, public/private, economic life/emotional life, and so forth. Those who perform in the public sphere of work and economic life are gendered as masculine; those who do not, as feminine.

Two traditionally male-dominated sections, Sports and Business, are conspicuous for their extremely poor coverage of Latino news. I found only five items on Latino news in the Business section. In addition, there was a story framed as an affirmative action piece rather than as a business article. Its focus is racial-ethnic strife, not business. Moreover, the few items about Latino businesses are

Latinos are farmworkers; 2) farmworkers are victims; 3) farmworkers are passive; and 4) farmworkers are 'illegal aliens'. In most stories, farmworkers are deprived of their vigour by being deprived of agency. They are described as experiencing situations rather than as performing actions. Thus, the construction of farmworkers as victims and as passive draws on the association of women and victimisation that is prevalent in Western culture and often reproduced by the news media.

Nonetheless, I also found some paradoxes. For instance, a source of ambivalence in the coverage has to do with coverage of Cuban Americans who are highlighted as having masculine traits. The Cuban-American population, at least in the immigration wave of the early 1960s, is composed of white, middle and upper class individuals. It seems therefore that the genderisation of Latinos is conflated with race and class distinctions.

My study examined the coverage of one newspaper only, in a particular setting and

time.

However, since 46% of the 259 items, and over 25% of the 16 front-page items that I examined, were provided by prestigious wire services, the analysis suggests that the genderisation of Latino news may not be unique to that paper only.

So why does the coverage of Latino current affairs turn out to be the way it is, despite – as appears to be the case with the paper I studied – the best of editorial intentions? Most critical probably are journalists' personal values and, especially, their attitudes, beliefs and ideological assumptions about Latinos and, more generally, about 'others'.

DR LUCILA VARGAS teaches at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This article draws from a lengthier version published in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol 17, no 3, pp 261-293 (September 2000).

political consequences, because the group is automatically marked as inferior.

Latinos, the support of minority congressional caucuses. Although these are fairly long articles, they mention Latino newsmakers only in passing. One article, "GOP targets congressional caucus money", focuses on the Congressional Black Caucus and contains only an incidental reference to the Hispanic Caucus. The article fails to include the voice

often 'womanised' by placement and style. Two stories about local stores catering to Latinos are crafted as human interest stories rather than as business articles.

Genderisation processes work hand in hand with processes of economic stratification to produce the paper's overriding class narrative. This narrative assumes that 1)

gender, race and class

day surpass the white population in some states. read 'subordinate' – attributes to them in their coverage.

'feminine'

'yielding'

'subordinate'



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Sharing the Pain

Why the media should enable the telling of racial grief

Americans, journalists included, have difficulty discussing racism openly. **Melissa Baumann** recently attended a media workshop where three stories stood out, pointing towards ways to cover race-related issues more deeply...

My Mama is preparing to die. This is nothing new. She started to make these preparations when I was in fourth grade, 34 years ago...

CARMEN DUARTE keeps crying when she reads about her mother. She is presenting her 36-part series for the *Arizona Star* on her mother's life, a life chronicling her mother's family leaving Mexico, her mother's labouring hard in Arizona's cotton fields, and now finding solace in her *santos* and the world of spirits.

It is beautiful work, written with compassion in the style of magical realism, though an authentically true story. It is one of the works honoured at the third annual "Let's Do It Better" workshop at the Columbia School of Journalism in New York – a three-day gathering of roughly 40 journalists from around the

we choose, most often, to foster discontent and conflict. "The pain I have caused you" is something most of us don't bother, or can't bear, to think about.

Americans, journalists included, don't like to talk about 'race' and the pain they may have inflicted. Unlike in South Africa, where accusations of 'racism' are flung around quite indiscriminately these days, the issue is mostly kept under wraps in US newsrooms. And the discourse at this workshop is no exception.

No one really talks about 'race' and 'racism', and certainly not their own, with the exception of one candid presenter who confesses his bias in undervaluing a television story about discrimination against Asian Americans. Participants seem grateful to him for mentioning the unmentionable.

Sumterville, Alabama by a white man named Jerry Dial, neighbour and brother-in-law of William Fulton, Lavinia's owner.

But "Going back to find Lavinia" (the story's title), Richardson's physical retracing of her ancestor's path and meeting descendants of Dial and Fulton, reframed her world.

Lavinia lived and died a servant, Richardson writes. But in death she has attained a power that life never granted her. She is my family's Eve, our beginning and the person to whom we can furthest trace our roots. As generations of her children from that union now seek details of her life, back she leads us. To find her – and our own origin – we must look in places we have avoided for more than a century and see our family as never before: in black and white.

Translating racial grief into social claims was at the heart of the civil rights struggle. But it's time, as well, to return to the grief itself.

country to encourage a collective search for better practice in covering race-related issues and promoting diversity.

Duarte's mother Nala, we learn, was "yanked" from school at age 8 to help her family work; slaved for nearly 70 years at menial tasks to support *la familia*; and never shed the stigma she was born with – that she "would grow up stupid" *due to un gran susto* (a great shock) her mother suffered when seven months pregnant with her.

When her father, the story goes, was knocked dead by a lightning bolt.

I later ask Duarte why she cries when she reads what she has written.

"I get very emotional when I remember my mother's face, when she was talking about the past," she says. "I can feel her pain."

Throughout all the other presentations it echoes, a subtext not openly discussed, but for me the reason that we are all actually there, and what we need to learn: overcoming racism, healing the divisions of race, means feeling each other's pain – enabling people to share their pain, tell their stories and, if necessary, owning the hurt we have caused others.

As journalists we are well placed to do this – to foster empathy among people. But rather

"We have to concentrate on the work," says workshop director Arlene Morgan. "If we didn't, we'd lose them all."

But we also, in some cases, look at the context of the work.

There were no black editors among a staff of 1 100 at the *Los Angeles Times* when Lisa Richardson wrote her story about her family's genealogical search which led her to her slave great-great-great grandmother Lavinia and

Richardson often deflects the pain – of acknowledging Lavinia's servitude and 'rape,' of not finding 'missing' black relatives, of acquiring 'new' white ones – with humour. She tells us how a young descendant of William Fulton emailed her one day after the article was done. "What can you tell me about my great-great-great-grandfather?" she asked Richardson.

"He owned my great-great-great-grand-

Overcoming racism, healing the divisions of race, means feeling each other's pain

some white branches of the family tree. The white editors at the paper, Richardson suggests, just weren't that interested in her story – they didn't engage and left her pretty much on her own.

It was a painful journey, Richardson confides, one that never brought her back to her African roots, as she had hoped. *But I have reshaped my family*, she writes, *in ways I never imagined.*

Before the quest which led to Richardson's article, the family had traced their lineage firmly back to Lavinia's daughter Ellen, another Richardson – fathered in 1849 in

mother," was the reply, and Richardson tells it with a smirk of satisfaction.

"Then the white relatives wanted to do a cookbook together – a *cookbook!*" Richardson adds. "We said, 'what do we have to do a cookbook for, we know all the recipes. We used to do all the cooking!'"

Yet the weight – of the story, of the journey – persists. No longer can Richardson claim to be the child solely of 'the wronged' and 'the innocent'. She writes: "I am descended from both slave and master."

Getting around, getting over, framing according to 'race' means looking at identity



Black Fashion Museum founder Lois Alexander-Lane. Through fabric the museum recovers the role black women – many of them slaves – have played in shaping the way people have dressed through history.

enabling people to share their pain, tell their stories and, if necessary, owning the hurt we have caused others.

more deeply, in more complex ways. Finally, the US Census allows people to check more than one box when it comes to the 'race' category. Jill Atkin Simms, the focus of another workshop presentation, now checks 'other'.

"Family Secrets", produced by Alice Pifer for ABC's *20/20*, follows Simms on a trail back into her shrouded – and painful – past. Early on Simms, perceptibly a 30-ish white woman, describes the "sense of shame" she had growing up in her family, because they were hiding something. What they were hiding was their black ancestry, which Simms confirms as she researches the life of her

great-grandmother Anita Hemmings, the first African American woman to attend the prestigious Vassar College. Hemmings 'passed for white' there until her roommate 'outed' her; she graduated in spite of the scandal.

"I just was overwhelmed," Simms says. "I saw so many of my family in her. I was so proud of her. I just was overcome."

The 'Hemmings discovery' led to others – to Robert Hemmings, Anita's father and a relative of Sally Hemings, the former slave of Thomas Jefferson; to Anita's brother Frederick, one of the first black graduates of MIT; to Anita's daughter Ellen, who was

'raised white' according to the wishes of her mother and her light-skinned husband. This decision to 'live as whites' sadly segregated Anita's family from the rest of the clan, a decision which troubles Simms: "She denied her child and grandchildren a wonderful family." Her anger is mixed with an inherited sadness, the shared pain of identities forcibly hidden.

Simms' quest totally upended her sense of self. "I used to look in the mirror and I looked at my blue eyes, and my red hair, white skin, and I started wondering, 'What is blackness, and what is whiteness?...' I didn't

realise how many forms racism took until I started looking at my own family."

The story, at least on film, has a happy ending: a celebratory gathering of the descendants of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson at Jefferson's former home, Monticello, in Virginia. Simms attends with her husband and young son, who wastes no time embracing a black female relative and asking: "Are you part of our family?"

Talking with relatives of a multitude of shades, posing for the grand family portrait on Monticello's steps, Simms is beaming. Like Richardson, she has discovered that she descends "from both slave and master"; unlike Richardson, she has just identified with the oppressed, not the oppressor. There's a huge difference.

Says Simms: "I felt like I truly belonged someplace for the first time in my life."

Listening to the pain, enabling its narration through authentic voices – that's what came through in these three stories about pain, about the pain of being poor and 'alien' in a land of abundance, the pain of acknowledging the oppressor in oneself, the pain of having to hide one's identity.

As Anne Anlin Cheng argues in her recent book *The Melancholy of Race* (Oxford University Press, 2001) we are much more comfortable with racial grievances than with racial grief. Translating racial grief into social claims was at the heart of the civil rights struggle. But it's time, as well, to return to the grief itself. As Cheng writes: "We need to take on the task of acknowledging racial grief in a theoretically and socially responsible way. A sustained focus on the intangible wounds that form the fissures underneath visible phenomena of discrimination should be taking place *in addition to*, not in place of, the work of advocacy."

MELISSA BAUMANN is Co-Director of the Media Peace Centre and Co-Editor of this publication. For more information on the "Let's Do It Better" workshops, contact Arlene Morgan, Director, Workshop on Journalism, Race and Ethnicity, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University, New York, NY, at race@jrn.columbia.edu.

Even in this day and age of 'political correctness', school, university and professional sports teams across the country still athletic names and mascots. This commodification of Indian people is reflected more broadly across



Charlene Teters, an artist, educator and long-term activist, calls for more Americans

How media continue to caricature Native Americans

Undeclared War

AT THE START of the new millennium, we are still involved in what Seminole activist Michael Haney has called "the longest undeclared war against the American Indian, here in our own homeland". This war, no longer on literal battlefields, is now being fought in courtrooms, corporate boardrooms and classrooms over the appropriation of Native American names and spiritual and cultural symbols by the professional sports world, Hollywood, schools and universities. The issue for us is the right to self-identification and self-determination.

For 50 years the American Indian community has worked to banish images and names like Cleveland's Chief Wahoo, Washington Redskins, Kansas City Chiefs, Atlanta Braves. We remind people of consciousness how they echo other historic racist images of the past. Chief Wahoo offends Indian people the same way that Little Black Sambo offended African Americans and the Frito Bandito offended the Hispanic community – and should have offended all of us.

My own involvement in this now national struggle began with my children's humiliation and pain. Most Native People have tolerated distorted images of Indians on Saturday morning cartoons and Westerns. Like most people of colour who have been de-humanised by stereotypes, we were told to tolerate these distortions, that we "can't do anything about it". I sought to make my children strong through a positive identity, so they wouldn't be hurt by an American mass media permeated by racial distortions. I worked hard to instill my children's pride in their

Spokane and Colville heritage by teaching them their birthright, culture, songs, history, stories and images of themselves and their people. As soon as they could walk, they took part in winter ceremonies and social dances, like pow-wows. But with all that, their self-esteem was still seriously undermined when we moved to the University of Illinois, whose mascot was a dancing Indian called Chief Illiniwek.

As a graduate student in that environment I witnessed sororities and fraternities sponsor "buck and squaw" dances using caricatures of Indian people on their posters and T-shirts. A local bar, a favourite student hangout, featured a flashing neon sign with a drunken cartoon Indian falling down over and over again. One sorority held an annual beauty contest called the Miss Illini Squaw contest. Racist caricatures of Indian people permeated this campus community, and challenged my children's identity every time they left the safety of their own home, undoing the positive work of my family. I soon realised that I could not live in this community with my children and not address the issue.

I took a stand for my children, by standing outside the local basketball stadium, holding a sign that said, "Indian People are Human Beings, not Mascots" to let my children know that our cultural identity was important to protect – not just for us, but for future generations. Thus began my involvement in the long and ongoing struggles of Indian People, here in our own homeland.

A few years ago during the media frenzy that surrounded the baseball playoff games

I took a stand for my children, by standing outside the local basketball stadium, holding a sign that said, "Indian People are Human Beings, not Mascots" to let my children know that our cultural identity was important to protect – not just for us, but for future generations.

between New York and Cleveland, the *New York Post*, caught up in the hype, covered its front page with the headline, "Take the Tribe and ... SCALP 'EM'!" Little concern was shown for the Indian children or community living in New York City or around the country. The American public has been conditioned by the sports industry, educational institutions and the media to trivialise indigenous culture as common and harmless entertainment.

For more than 150 years popular culture has successfully candy-coated colonial America's racial attitudes towards American Indian people into palatable contemporary stereotypes. From sports team mascots to tourism, we are things – things to be entertained by, things to strike fear with, things to be colourful backdrops, things to be mined for profit, and never, ever fully-fledged human beings. When you translate the tribal names we have given ourselves, they translate to our humanness in some way – as "the human beings", "the first people" or "the original people". That is why it is so hard for us to understand, at the turn of the new millennium, why we are still involved in the debate around the humanness of Indian people.

Native American students do not feel welcome

on high school or college campuses if the school uses

'Little Red Sambo'

'Squaws'

clinging to racist representations of Native Americans in their different media.

to rally to the cause of dismantling these stereotypes...

as its mascot (not a clown, a mythical creature or an animal) a chief, the highest political position you can attain in our society. Using our names, likenesses and religious symbols to excite the crowd does not feel like honour or respect. It is hurtful and confusing to our young people. To reduce the victims of genocide to a mascot is at best unthinking, and immoral at worst. An educational institution's mission is to educate, not mis-educate, and to alleviate the ignorance behind racist stereotypes, not perpetuate them.

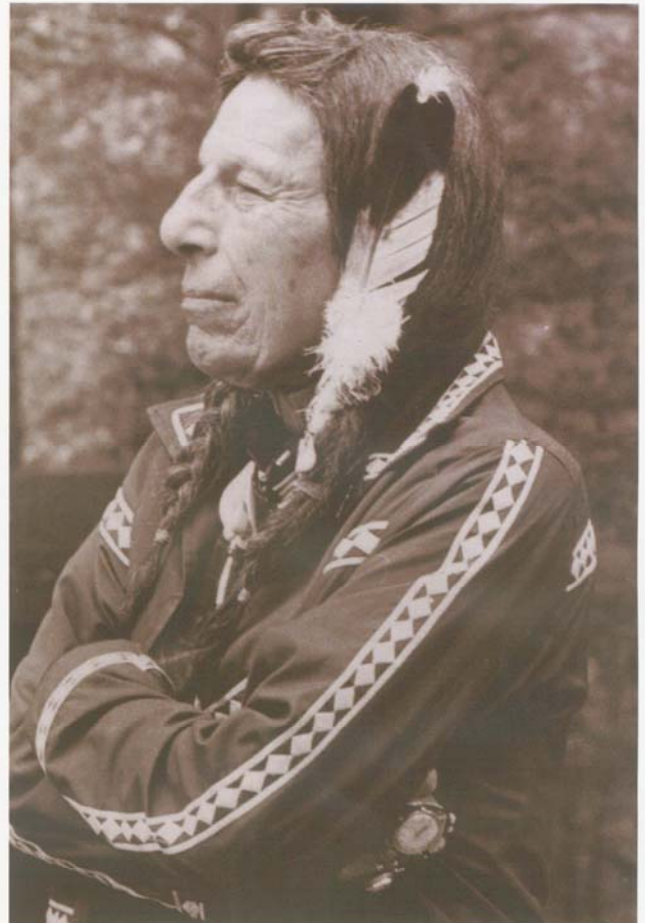
Student leadership has played a significant role in bringing the mascot issue forward. In the 1970s students at Stanford and Dartmouth were successful in changing the athletic team identity from "Indians" to a race-neutral name and symbol. Since 1988 the student-led struggle to retire the dancing Indian mascot/symbol at the University of Illinois has drawn out, with little chance of reform in the face of an arrogant and entrenched, governor-appointed Board of Trustees.

Still, in recent years significant contributions to this movement to eradicate racist mascots have been made. At least six universities have changed their names, and the Los Angeles Board of Education voted to ban school appropriation of Indian names and images. In schools across the country the mascot issue is being challenged, in debates led by young Native people with newfound pride in reclaiming themselves. The Interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility, a national organisation of investors with combined portfolios worth an estimated \$90 bil-

lion, have appealed to companies to discontinue using stereotypes that negatively impact upon Native Americans, people of colour and women. Also, tribal leadership, which once thought that "there are more important issues in Indian country", is now making a closer connection between mass media stereotyping and disrespect of tribal sovereignty.

Native artists, reflecting the consciousness of Native nations, are addressing this issue of stereotyping in their paintings, installations and writings. A recent example is Edgar Heap of Birds' public art piece commissioned by the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1996. The controversial billboard juxtaposed a likeness of the Cleveland logo Chief Wahoo with the phrase "Smile for Racism". The work was nearly banned by the commissioning agency because it was perceived as offensive to the "Cleveland community". Meanwhile, the Cleveland American Indian community continues to protest outside the Cleveland baseball stadium during every home game because of the objectionable red-faced, big-nosed, bucktooth Cleveland Indian logo. Three years ago the "Cleveland Five", including this writer, were arrested for burning effigies of Little Red Sambo (the Cleveland Indian logo) and Little Black Sambo. The "Five" were held for 30 hours and then released without being charged, in what was another attempt to hush the voices of real Indian people.

For those who want to trivialise this issue, I say that racism is never trivial. Whose responsibility is this? Everyone who considers themselves anti-racist! Native leadership and



To reduce the victims of genocide to a mascot is at best unthinking, and immoral at worst.

'Redskins'

'Chief Wahoo'

allies working on the mascot issue call upon people nationwide to work towards the elimination of the misrepresentation and abuses of Indian images, names and spiritual way of life by sports and media. American Indians are a people – not mascots, and not fetishes to be worn by the dominant society.

CHARLENE TETERS is an activist, artist and writer and founding board member of the National Coalition on Racism, Sports and the Media.

A Toast to 'Charles'

◀ from page 44

designated TV1 channel, which also had a large number of urban black viewers. Advertising for Castle Lager led the way with some milestone commercials such as 'Train' (1984), 'Joggers' (1987), 'Musicians' (1987), 'Canoe Race' (1989), 'Reunion' (1989) and 'Homecoming' (1990). This discourse of apartheid-breaching advertising manifested itself across nearly all brands of beer, and by the end of the 1980s had found its way into the advertising of virtually all the major corporations.

In the post-apartheid period there have been some instances of racial stereotyping of whites in advertisements. Indeed, some advertisements seem to represent a form of sub-conscious white self-effacement in penance for apartheid. An example of this is the advertising campaign for Vodacom that depicts a white bagel (Jewish male) making a fool of himself. By including white onlookers who frown upon the bagel, who are thus identified with the black point of view, this campaign attempts to legitimise the pejorative nature of its representation.

In conclusion, stereotypes are group concepts and may not always be generally recognised as stereotypes. The more obviously pejorative forms of racial stereotyping do in certain circumstances occur in advertisements, but are rare. Establishing an adequate framework for criticising less obvious forms of racial stereotyping is a complex task; depictions that are currently accepted at face value may in the future be regarded as racial stereotypes. There has been a transition in the depiction of blacks in South African advertising from ethnic to westernised or cosmopolitan and middle class. In a context of relative underdevelopment, these affirmative depictions are in general more likely to be decoded as being positive, as evidence of democratic change and upward mobility.

ALEX HOLT is a lecturer in cultural studies, film, and advertising. His doctoral dissertation studied racial stereotyping in SABC-TV commercials during the period of reform. He is co-ordinator of the World Conference Against Racism Film Festival due to take place in Durban from 29 to 31 August and 2 to 7 September 2001.

Fighting for Fairness

◀ from page 49

grammes that garner non-white audiences, and that some sponsors refuse to place ads on such programmes at all. The policy, known as "discounting", is pervasive, but was brought to light only in 1999 when an internal memo from a media representation firm was leaked, in which the company advised its sales staff not to place ads on so-called 'urban' radio stations, explaining that businesses want "prospects, not suspects".

Clearly, advertisers' preferences, which determine which programmes are deemed successful and are therefore likely to be reproduced, are always not based in 'market sense': investigation by the Federal Communications Commission found that some companies offered explanations rank with bias for their refusal to buy ads on radio stations with primarily non-white listenerships. A Latino-formatted station was denied an ad for Ivory soap because, a representative claimed, "Hispanics don't bathe as frequently as non-Hispanics". Other companies cited worries that "our pilferage will increase" if they advertised on minority stations, or said simply, "your station will bring too many black people to my place of business".

The point is not that corporate advertisers can be racist. Rather, the US media's commercial structure means that, whatever the intentions of individual writers, producers and editors, the bottom-line values of advertisers and owners are allowed to trump media's creative and democratic potential.

The Trouble with Race

◀ from page 43

fices to explain things, that race is automatically and intrinsically relevant.

If we understand that 'races' are really fluid results of historical processes of racialisation, we can see that they are far from being ever-present, let alone in a consistent form or intensity.

To apply this insight to the case of the crowd at the court, the point is that black South Africans are not essentially caring or uncaring about white murders – or vice versa. Such racial assumptions have to be tested rather than taken for granted. Instead of working within the simplistic paradigm of race essentialism, journalists reporting the story could simply have asked the crowd: "Why are you cheering?"

To the extent that some spectators explained they were present to demonstrate 'black' empathy with the victims' families, the story could have reported on exactly this particular racialisation. But maybe different, non-racial, answers might have been given.

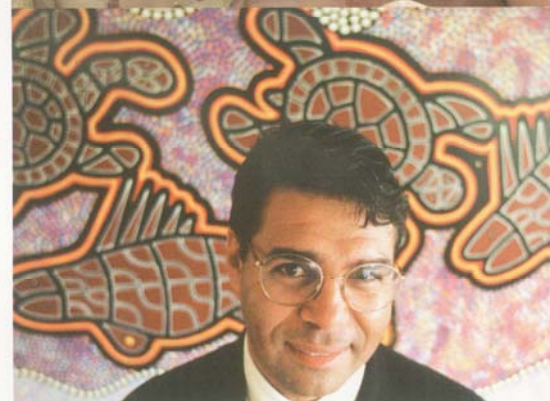
RACE OVERSHADOWS OTHER REASONS

To see race as a social construction rather than a birth-mark opens our eyes to the wider range of ways we are shaped and defined. It helps us put race in its place – which is alongside class, gender, nationality and the many other factors that influence who we are and how we behave.

Understanding racism's roots in racialisation means that we can begin to do journalism that is also opposed to sexism and xenophobia.

We must rage against racism and we must repair its damage. But if we really want to eradicate this disgrace, we have to go further. That means a quest to erase race from the prominent place it occupies in how we make sense of the world and how we seek our undecided future.

GUY BERGER is Professor and head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.



FIGHTING BACK

The various expressions and sources of media racism mean that media activists have many fronts on which to fight. Some groups, like the NAACP, call for increased representation of people of colour in the media, both behind-the-scenes and on the front page.

Others take on racist media directly: a campaign led by FAIR and others got the ABC radio network to reconsider including openly racist host Bob Grant in their lineup. Activists have encouraged local public TV stations to air documentaries on, for example, the role of US blacks in World War II.

Media activists also use research and monitoring to support their arguments. Recently, a coalition of juvenile justice

activists are also increasingly creating their own. Access to new technology, while not a panacea, is allowing independent journalists and artists to create and distribute their own media, providing a vital alternative perspective. For example, both the Republican and the Democratic National Conventions in 2000 featured Independent Media Centres – ad-hoc, informally organised coalitions that supported dozens of alternative radio reporters, print journalists and film and videomakers who covered the conventions from a very different angle than the major media, including the voices of social justice activists, artists and social critics who were not being heard on the nightly news.

These encouraging efforts offer the best hope for moving toward truly diverse, anti-racist media. Ultimately, it

will take a broad-based movement to demand structural changes in the US media industry – changes that would break

up the dominant conglomerates, establish independent public broadcasting and promote strong, non-profit sources of information. Like other rights, the right to inclusive, fair media will not be granted. It must be won.

JANINE JACKSON is programme director of FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), a media watch group based in New York. She is also host/producer of "Counter-Spin", FAIR's radio show.

White-owned media tend to view communities of colour through a lens of pathology.

groups released a report on media coverage of youth crime, showing that, while crime involving young people is actually declining, the public's fear of such crime is increasing, in good part due to alarmist, misleading media coverage.

As well as talking back to media, activists also intervene in media, helping grassroots groups develop media skills and strategies to counter destructive coverage of their issues and also to serve as resources for reporters and hopefully improve coverage that way.

While fighting to improve mainstream media, media



A guide to better practice – 10 ideas for journalists to implement

IN DECEMBER last year media people from South African and abroad met to discuss how globalisation, technology and power influence the portrayal of race and presence of racism in the media.

Held in December at the Centre for the Book in Cape Town the delegates also worked on the development of a guidelines and best practices document.

Conference sponsor, the Media Peace Centre, endeavoured to further discussion of issues raised by the South African Human Rights Commission in its report of racism in the media (August 2000), by convening a national conference in which international delegates participated.

The vision was to contextualise the problem of racism in South Africa within an international perspective.

Agreement was expressed that racism – and its representation in the media – is a fundamental human rights violation. The media therefore faces the challenge of balancing this right (the right to equality) against their understanding of the right to freedom of expression.

Everyone in a society is entitled to participate equally; and, to support this, the representation of each person in the media must be done with respect, contributing to social transformation.

Participants came up with a 10-point document with guidelines for good journalism and best practice in dealing with and covering racism and race in the media.

This document needs development, but constitutes a sound point of departure.

The guidelines include:

- Avoid labelling identity (in terms of race and colour) – it stigmatises and does not support a culture of equality.
- Create and nurture a "language of tolerance, diversity and equality" in the media.
- Deepen both the journalist's and the audience's understanding of the context (historical, social, political, economic) out of which a story emerges as well as the con-

text into which it is reported.

- Consult constitutional frameworks and resulting legislation (eg: the forthcoming Equity Act in South Africa) for formal guidance in reporting more equitably. Journalists should make it their business to be familiar with these frameworks and legislation.
- Build capacity in newsrooms and journalism training institutions by running training courses dealing with issues of race and racism in the media.
- Avoid coded information in news (eg: "A man from Khayelitsha killed seven people" using place to code for race) which is perceived as reinforcing racism in the media. This needs to be challenged and modified.
- Be careful of overclassifying news into 'beats', some participants argued that because reporters are sent to cover potentially volatile stories with sensitive race issues but are handicapped by the limitations of their 'beat frameworks'.
- Recognise and advance the advisory role of the media and its capacity to assist communities in understanding social and economic problems.
- Explore the potential for self-regulation on racism/race issues. This would require providing the time, space and motivation for self-reflection on the media's part, something journalists are not inclined to do, in the harried world of deadlines.
- Explore the link between race and other issues – relations of power within the media have to be thought through within the paradigm of race, but also within the paradigms of gender and class.

These guidelines will be taken further through interaction on the web and other venues. Consult the Media Peace Centre website at www.mediapeacecentre.org for developments and interaction.

The Global Narratives of Race conference was funded by Heinrich Boll Stiftung and organised for the Media Peace Centre by Southern Hemisphere Consultants. ■

A dream to free the world of racial hatred

DURING the last 50 years since the adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community has made some important advances in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. National and international laws have been enacted and numerous international human rights instruments, particularly a treaty to ban racial discrimination, have been adopted. Progress has been made – witness the defeat of apartheid in South Africa. Yet, the dream of a world free of racial hatred and bias remains only half fulfilled.

As technology brings the peoples of the world closer together and political barriers tumble, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance continue to ravage our societies. Horrors such as "ethnic cleansing" have emerged in recent years, while ideas of racial superiority have spread to new media like the Internet. Even globalisation carries risks that can lead to exclusion and increased inequality, very often along racial and ethnic lines.

As racial discrimination and ethnic violence grow in complexity, they become more of a challenge for the international community. As a result, new tools to deal with racism are called for. "This World Conference has the potential to be among the most significant gatherings at the start of this century," the Secretary-General of the Conference and High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, said. "It can be more: it can shape and embody the spirit of the new century, based on the shared conviction that we are all members of one human family."

In 1997 the General Assembly decided to hold the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa this year. Robinson has promised to make "it a conference of actions not just words".

During 1999 and 2000 six regional experts seminars were held in: Geneva, Warsaw, Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Santiago de Chile. The objectives of each seminar was to discuss the issues of priority concern for that region, to advance the regional dialogue on racism, raise awareness, share information and best practices. The experts' seminars focused on issues such as refugees and multi-ethnic states, remedies available to victims, protection of minorities, migrants and trafficking of persons, ethnic conflicts and economic and social measures for vulnerable groups.

Regional intergovernmental meetings are also being held. During the year 2000, European countries met in Strasbourg in October and the meeting for the Americas was held in Santiago de Chile in December. The African regional preparatory meeting took place in Dakar in January 2001; and the meeting of the Asian group was held in Tehran in February 2001. Non-governmental organisations have adopted a similar preparatory process worldwide.

As a result the following themes have been decided on:

Theme 1: Sources, causes, forms and contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance;

Theme 2: Victims of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance;

Theme 3: Measures of prevention, education and protection aimed at the eradication of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels;

Theme 4: Provision for effective remedies, recourse, redress, [compensatory] and other measures at the national, regional and international levels; (*The bracket indicates that consensus could not be reached on the word "compensatory"*)

Theme 5: Strategies to achieve full and effective equality, including international co-operation and enhancement of the United Nations and other international mechanisms in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia.

It is estimated that 12 000 delegates will attend the conference of which 6 000 are expected to be representatives of civil society. The governments conference (at the International Convention Centre) will run from 31 August to 7 September and the NGO Forum, at Kingsmead Cricket Stadium, from 28 August to 1 September. ■



FURTHER INFORMATION IS AT:

<http://www.un.org/WCAR/> (the UN site)

<http://www.racism.gov.za> (The SA government site)

http://www.sahrc.org.za/national_conference_on_racism.htm (The SA Human Rights Commission site)

<http://www.hri.ca/racism/> (aimed at NGOs)

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Internet sites on race/racism in all its forms

Comprehensive world site covering multiple issues and with useful links.
www.worldracism.com

Worldwide aboriginal and indigenous links
<http://cf.vicnet.net.au/aboriginal/links/setpage.cfm?page=Worldwide%20Aboriginal%20and%20Indigenous>

Crosspoint anti-racism site run by Magenta in the Netherlands
<http://www.magenta.nl/crosspoint/>

Artists against racism, site by students at Ryerson Polytechnic in Canada
<http://www.artistsagainstracism.org>

oneworld.net's guides aim to challenge and inform, questioning assumptions and suggesting alternatives on the subjects that really matter.
<http://www.oneworld.org/guides/racism/front.shtml>

South African millennium statement on Racism and Programme of Action arising from the national conference organised by the Human Rights Commission.
www.sahrc.org.za/national_conference_on_racism.htm

The SA Human Rights Commission's report 'Faultlines' into racism in the SA media
<http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/reports/hrc/racism-media-00.pdf>

Films & Videos on Race and Racism
<http://www.frif.com/subjects/racism.html>

BlackPressUSA.com is the joint web presence of America's Black community newspapers and the NNPA News Service – the last national Black Press news wire. It is a project of the Black Press Institute, a partnership between the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and Howard University.

<http://www.BlackPressUSA.com>

Media Watch, which began in 1984, distributes educational videos, media literacy information and newsletters to informed consumers of mass media. Their goal is to challenge abusive stereotypes and biased images commonly found in the media.

<http://www.mediawatch.com/>

ColorLines: Online magazine on race, culture, and organising
www.colorlines.com

The New York Times series 'How race is lived in America'
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/race/most-recent.html>

The UK page on the Commission for Racial Equality
<http://www.cre.gov.uk/>

Tony Laszlo's website
<http://www.issho.org/laszlo.html>

Peter Kareithi's website
<http://www.wanjomo.com/peterk/publications>

Kanak Attak's website
<http://www.kanak-attak.de>

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