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Race, Ethnicity and Global Communication Studies

Abstract

Race, as Downing and Husband (2005) remind us, is a 'social category' without a 'scientific basis' (p. 2). And yet, for better or worse, race is a fundamental dimension of contemporary life, one of the few master tropes that define identities, elicit solidarities and operate as an instrument of othering. Though 'more inclusive and less objectifying' (Spencer, p. 45), ethnicity is a 'transient concept' (p. 47) that, perhaps more so than 'race', reflects public and scholarly understandings of difference. They can also be burning issues in the life of nations and regions. As I am writing these words, public discourse in the United States has for several weeks been agitated by radio talk-show Don Imus's racist comments about the Rutgers University women's basketball team, the French intelligentsia is enjoying a collective sigh of relief at the weaker-than expected performance in the 2007 presidential election of the far-right and xenophobic French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, and sectarian polarization between Sunnis and Shi'as is gripping the Arab world, fuelled by the botched US–British occupation of Iraq, rhetorical war between the US and Iran and the consequences of the Israel–Hizbullah war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

Disciplines

Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication

Race, ethnicity and global communication studies

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Valerie Alia and Simone Bull

Media and Ethnic Minorities

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

Donald Browne

***Ethnic Minorities, Electronic Media, and the Public Sphere:
A Comparative Study***

Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2005.

John Downing and Charles Husband

Representing Race: Racism, Ethnicities and Media

London: Sage, 2005.

Stephen Spencer

Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation

London: Routledge, 2006.

Race, as Downing and Husband (2005) remind us, is a ‘social category’ without a ‘scientific basis’ (p. 2). And yet, for better or worse, race is a fundamental dimension of contemporary life, one of the few master tropes that define identities, elicit solidarities and operate as an instrument of othering. Though ‘more inclusive and less objectifying’ (Spencer, p. 45), ethnicity is a ‘transient concept’ (p. 47) that, perhaps more so than ‘race’, reflects public and scholarly understandings of difference. They can also be burning issues in the life of nations and regions. As I am writing these words, public discourse in the United States has for several weeks been agitated by radio talk-show Don Imus’s racist comments about the Rutgers University women’s basketball team, the French intelligentsia is enjoying a collective sigh of relief at the weaker-than-expected performance in the 2007 presidential election of the far-right and xenophobic French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, and sectarian polarization between Sunnis and Shi’as is gripping the Arab world, fuelled by the botched US–British occupation of Iraq, rhetorical war between the US and Iran and the consequences of the Israel–Hizbullah war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

That these fluid and contested notions retain a strong gravitational pull for scholars in communication and media studies should be celebrated as a refusal to settle for the necessary but now familiar critical analyses of racial and ethnic stereotypes peddled by various media. That racist assumptions and imagery persist in mainstream media worldwide is beyond dispute. What is at stake is our ability to arrive to a nuanced understanding of the increasingly bifurcated ways in which race, ethnicity and communication relate to each other and how at the same time they articulate notions such as agency, class, migration and nation. Relatedly, it is crucial to understand how demographic and politicoeconomic developments have forced a re-thinking of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’. The books reviewed in this essay offer a solid basis for students and scholars committed to going beyond the mere registering and decoding of stereotypes.

Theoretically ambitious, empirically rich, topically eclectic, and geographically broad, though not without shortcomings, the four books reviewed here broaden the scope of race and ethnicity as central themes and concerns in global media and communication studies.

In *Representing Race: Racisms, Ethnicities and Media*, John Downing, Director of the Global Media Research Center at Southern Illinois University, and Charles Husband, Director of the Ethnicity and Social Policy Research Unit at the University of Bradford, present the broadest approach to the topic among the four books under review, providing ‘a cumulative critical account of the roles played by the media in shaping attitudes and framing understandings of difference in the multi-ethnic world’ (Downing and Husband, p. 145). Though the book’s nine chapters are not organized explicitly into discrete parts, four virtual sections can be identified. The first would include Chapters 1, which deals with topical and definitional issues, and 2, which surveys the available academic research on racism, ethnicity and media. The second part would comprise Chapters 3, 4 and 5, each of which focuses on an area that in the authors’ opinion has received insufficient attention. Chapter 3 examines racism in the media of the extreme right (an important contribution, especially in its analysis of the nexus of the mainstream right with the extreme right); Chapter 4 discusses how race is constructed in accounts of violence and the media from a comparative perspective; Chapter 5 focuses on ‘the distinctive challenge of indigeneity’ (p. 123). Chapters 6–8 can be said to constitute part three, focusing on media structures, practices, monitoring and the mixed results of campaigns pressuring the media industries on behalf of minority groups. Chapter 9, ‘The Multi-Ethnic Public Sphere and Differentiated Citizenship’, brings together the various strands of the book in a discussion of the dynamic link between the politics of difference and emerging forms of citizenship.

Downing and Husband devote the second chapter of their book to academic research on racism, ethnicity and the media, at the end of which they note the dominance of textual and discursive research in that area, devoting sub-sections of the chapter to ‘image’, ‘stereotype’, ‘framing’, ‘ideology’, ‘representation’, ‘discourse’, and ‘the text’. They conclude with a short section on ‘Production and Media Political Economy’ where they bemoan ‘the paucity of studies’ in that area and conclude that ‘there is a huge amount of research to be done on the mesh between corporate cultures in the media industries and the production of “racially”-inflected news, entertainment, ads, computer games, popular music and the rest’ (p. 51).

The authors’ own attempt to begin to remedy this wide gap can be found in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 where the volume’s most original contributions reside. These three chapters explore various ways in which groups with vested interests monitor and pressure the media on issues of ethnic and racial representations, in addition to industry codes and practices. Various social and political groups have issued recommendations to guide media practices, ranging from the MacBride Report in 1980 to ‘Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media’ released in 2002 by the Vienna Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia. National journalists unions (in Britain, Netherlands and Finland) have stipulated guidelines for representing ethnicity and diversity, and the International Media Working Group on Racism and Xenophobia, a group of the International Federation of Journalists, conducts active sensitization campaigns. Though media monitoring in general occurs in a context in which it is viewed with some degree of legitimacy, the authors correctly caution us to think about the accountability of monitors through questions such as ‘who is pursuing monitoring on behalf of whom; what does the monitoring aim to reveal; who are the intended audiences; is the methodology appropriate to these tasks and is a viable dissemination strategy in place?’ Following this, the authors conclude that both media

monitoring and media codes of practice enjoy limited success though they provide benchmarks for media performance.

In the United States, lobbying interventions to impact media representations of racial and ethnic minorities have a long history going back to 1915 when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) protested racist content in D.W. Griffith's feature length movie *Birth of a Nation*. The NAACP and other groups would occasionally campaign against a movie or television show, but the period between 1992 and 2002 stands out because it witnessed 'sustained protests . . . [that kept issues of ethnic and racial representation] continuously on the table through advocacy groups' (pp. 161–62). As the authors explain, advocacy efforts are necessary because the structure of the US television industry is inhospitable to employing members of ethnic and racial minorities because it relies on 'informal networks of creative professionals' (p. 163) which are for the most part white, though African-Americans have been more successful than other minorities in joining the industry's ranks (Chapter 7 features a helpful chronology of advocacy activities between 1992 and 2002).

Though industry routines forged in a highly competitive environment are not receptive to favorable considerations of race and ethnicity as factors in offering employment, the informal networks on which the industry depend lead to forms of cronyism, which, the authors correctly argue, is a form of reverse affirmative action because it perpetuates inequalities. The lack of ethnic and racial diversity among media executives in the United States is compounded by the 'cultural incompetence' at the executive level to deal with issues of race and ethnicity, and an anxiety over discussing these issues in any depth that pervades the industry. It is perhaps because of this discomfort that some lobbying groups favor a 'honey' approach to advocacy, in which media institutions and executives are publicly praised for positive representations of racial and ethnic groups, though others prefer a 'vinegar' approach consisting of strident public criticism of negative portrayals.

Both sweet and sour approaches can be glimpsed in the context of the same incident. For example, after MSNBC jock-talk host Don Imus and his producer made racist comments about the mostly African-American women's basketball team of Rutgers University, the left-wing group Media Matters for America (MMA) issued an alert and posted a video clip with the now infamous dialogue between Imus and his sidekick producer Bernard McGuirk. Media Matters for America, which defines itself as a 'Web-based, not-for-profit, 501 (c) (3) progressive research and information center dedicated to comprehensively monitoring, analyzing, and correcting conservative misinformation in the U.S. media', was launched in ay 2004 by former neoconservative writer turned self-styled liberal activist David Brock whose current mission is to destroy 'the conservative media machine'. Since then, his outfit has gained enough fame and influence to make Bill O'Reilly, the pugilistic Fox News talk-show host, complain during an interview on Irish television, that MMA was 'an assassination website'.

In the Don Imus case, MMA's alert and criticism of MSNBC and CBS achieved considerable traction, liberating American cable television viewers of the seemingly endless saga of Anna Nicole Smith's death and its aftermath and forcing American presidential candidates to chime in on Imus's story, even compelling Republican contender and Imus acquaintance John McCain to declare himself a believer in redemption. Black leaders such as the Reverend Al Sharpton relentlessly called for Imus's sacking from both MSNBC, who simulcasts his show on cable television, and CBS radio, the original broadcaster. Though Imus was eventually fired by both companies, the media frenzy surrounding the incident illustrates how monitoring discourse can turn from vinegar to honey within the same story and supports Downing and Husband's

contention that media professionals are uncomfortable with in-depth discussion of race in the United States. The two media corporations hosting Imus did not sack him immediately, but only after the combined impact of advertisers' withdrawals, activist condemnations and a public relations nightmare, demonstrating the power of media monitoring. At the same time, the way the controversy disappeared from the headlines after Imus's sacking indicates that indeed there was no sustained discussion in the US media of the complexities of racial and ethnic representation.

Some of the books under review appear, felicitously, to be in dialogue with each other. Downing and Husband's regret that scholars are 'remarkably under-informed about [minority/ethnic media's] political economy' (p. 57) is addressed directly by Donald R. Browne, a professor of communication studies at the University of Minnesota and a founding figure of the comparative systems approach to media research in the United States. In *Ethnic Minorities, Electronic Media, and the Public Sphere: A Comparative Study*, which the author describes as a 'labor of love', Browne proposes a broad 'structural schema' for ethnic minority media, which range in scope from regional, as in the case of the Kurds, minorities in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, and the Sami, minorities in Finland, Norway and Sweden, to neighborhood, like Radio Sydvest operating in the southwest of Stockholm. After preliminary chapters dealing with definitional and conceptual issues, separate chapters are devoted to policies and policymaking (Chapter 3), audiences and communities (Chapter 4), programming (Chapter 5) and a concluding sixth chapter emphasizing the importance of structural factors. It is clear that the book is based on several years of fieldwork involving in-depth interviews, on-site observation, and the collection of several kinds of 'documentary evidence' in various parts of the world.

The author's ability to weave an incredible wealth of empirical data into a thematic narrative anchored in a broad range of case studies about ethnic media is a major contribution, but the book's towering achievement is without a doubt its focus on the policy-making and other structural aspects of ethnic media, addressing the major gap in the literature noted by Downing and Husband. Browne is incisively clear about this early on in the book when he writes that 'mine is not a study of the depiction of minorities by the mainstream media . . . My analysis is comparative, and contrasts the experiences of such services in more than two dozen nations around the world' (p. 5). He adds that 'very few of the authors whose work I have noted . . . have much to say about policy-making, about the role of audience research, or about the nature of the societal structures within which the ethnic minority media services operate' (p. 6).

After a brief survey of the policy and regulatory environment in which ethnic minority media operate, and emphasizing that – the European environment (regional) and the German case (local) notwithstanding – most policy-making processes are national in scope, Browne opens a section titled 'Policymaking in the Real World' with a *de rigueur* observation that 'there are two things that no one would want to see while they are being made if one expects to maintain an appetite for either of them: sausage and policies' (p. 79). He then offers a framework for policy-making involving what he calls 'full partners' (F), 'silent partners' (S), 'invisible partners' (I), 'junior partners' (J), and 'context' (C). According to Browne's framework, legislatures, executive office holders and political parties qualify as full partners, courts are silent partners, lobbyists, donors and broadcasters are invisible partners, regulatory agencies are junior partners, and the 'broader public' provides the broader context.

Not one to shy away from the sausage factory, the author plunges head on into the policy-making process, unraveling four case studies from Australia, the United States, South Africa and Germany. When the 1972 elections brought a Labor government to power in Australia, activists

pushed the government to establish community noncommercial broadcasting services, and in the same year the Migrant Workers Conference demanded the establishment of a broadcasting service for ethnic minorities. Major figures in the government were sympathetic to these demands, and the need for ethnic broadcasting was felt in 1975 when the Australian government launched a new and complex health care plan that it needed to explain to the population, up to 15 per cent of which did not have an adequate command of the English language. A bill was heatedly debated in Parliament, with members from various ethnic minorities in favor and opponents wondering ‘how do we know that they aren’t saying subversive things about [God, Motherhood, the Flag] when they speak in languages that we [mainstream whites] can’t understand?’ (p. 82). Advocates of a new service prevailed when the bill passed in 1977, and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) was launched in 1978. Browne uses his framework to explain the result as a combination of a social climate realizing the increased diversity of Australian society, with a progressive agenda animating the executive and part of the legislative branches of government, the technological possibilities afforded by the decline in the cost of broadcasting technology, and the growing lobbying power of émigrés in Australian politics.

That the Australian government engaged demands for media services catering to the needs of ethnic minorities is perhaps not as remarkable as Browne’s second case study, which involves an explicitly racist regime. How did the apartheid government agree to the establishment of a radio service for black South Africans? Supporters of the new service took advantage of the political opening afforded by the 1990 appointment of a Task Force on Broadcasting to begin the process of developing new broadcasting legislation. The case paradoxically grew stronger when the government started awarding licenses to right-wing Afrikaner groups through the Ministry of Home Affairs and apparently without consulting the Task Force on Broadcasting. The campaign by several anti-apartheid groups led by the Council for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) intensified with the emergence of the Campaign for Independent Broadcasting (CIB), a coalition comprising the ANC, the South African Trade Unions, the South African Council of Churches, and the Confederation of South African Trade Unions, leading to the appointment in 1993 of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. The ensuing Independent Broadcasting Act of 1994 enabled licensing based on geographically based and interest-based communities, which included universities, and language-cultural groups. Browne attributes the success of the anti-apartheid campaign in establishing black broadcasting to the realization that the apartheid regime was moribund, to the executive’s desire to issue licenses to Afrikaner groups, and, most influentially, to the active role of the myriad organizations who participated in the campaign based on the realization that community radio was ‘vital to the nation’s future’ (p. 90).

Browne concludes that no single factor determines the outcomes of policy initiatives aimed at creating media services for ethnic minorities. In both the Australian and South African cases, activists took advantage of political changes to influence the policy-making process. While in the first case the presence of supportive individuals in key positions was instrumental, the second case highlights the power of broad nongovernmental coalitions to effect policy changes even under an explicitly racist and repressive regime like apartheid. In comparison, the FCC’s minority preference policies depended on a combination of sympathetic commissioners, the new Equal Employment Opportunity legal environment, in addition to court rulings and active lobbying. The establishment of SFB4 Radio MultiKulti in Berlin, home to 430,000 minority residents in 1993, also depended on sympathetic influentials in addition to a favorable social climate reeling from the murders of Turkish residents in 1993 and the political clout of the

Green Party in the city. Success in establishing minority media services, Browne concludes, has historically depended on mapping out a strategy, identifying allies within the policy-making apparatus, and sustaining pressure on policy-making institutions, all within a reasonably favorable social climate.

Concern for the prevailing social climate towards ethnic minorities animates *Media and Ethnic Minorities*, in which authors Valerie Alia, a professor of Ethics and Identity at Leeds Metropolitan University, and Simone Bull, a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Sunderland, explore ‘the various ways in which ethnic minorities are represented, by “insiders” and “outsiders”, in particular locations, cross-culturally and internationally’ (p. 12). The book is made up of seven chapters grounded in a broadly postcolonial framework focusing on indigenous people like New Zealand’s Maoris and Canada’s Inuit, suggesting that a more appropriate – and specific – title would convey the book’s focus on representations of indigeneity specifically and not of ethnic minorities broadly. Chapter 1 uses the trope of ‘filth’ to understand the dynamics of othering surrounding indigeneity and ethnicity. Chapter 2 focuses on external representations of the Inuit people in Canada and related groups. Chapter 3 examines how external representations are internalized by the communities (mis?)represented. Subsequent chapters analyze the media’s lack of coverage of colonial oppression, elaborate theories of appropriation and identity, and discuss notions of diaspora and resistance from below. The latter notion finds an early expression in the book when the authors share a pungent Ethiopian proverb in the acknowledgements: ‘When the great lord passes, the wise peasant bows deeply and farts silently’ (p. vii).

The most significant contribution of Alia and Bull’s book is their sustained and critical discussion of what they call ‘the Once Were Warriors syndrome’, which takes its name from a controversial book by Maori writer Alan Duff about Maori life in New Zealand and refers to the tendency among some colonized ethnic groups to internalize external representations of their own identity, oftentimes with devastating consequences. No other book written by a Maori has been as intensely controversial, and at least one-third of New Zealanders watched the film adaptation, which topped Jurassic Park in Aotearoa, where the story takes place. The novel tells the story of a South Auckland family made up of a father, a mother and six children torn apart by domestic violence, alcohol and unemployment. Maoris reacted to the book/movie in two ways, with some considering it as reinforcing stereotypes while others seeing it as ‘gruesome but true’ (Alia and Bull, p. 54). At the heart of the debate over *Once Were Warriors* is the author’s ‘insistence that Maori were and are incessantly violent’ (p. 55), encapsulating Maori identity in the warrior trope. This image, the authors inform us, derives from an erroneous view of Maori society as continuously violent in which ‘conflicts that might actually have occurred sporadically over centuries were telescoped into cohesive wars’ (p. 55). Media references to *Once Were Warriors* in news reports about actual violence added fuel to the debate by further essentializing Maoris as inherently violent.

This analysis brings to the surface the power asymmetries inherent in intercultural relations. In *Once Were Warriors*, Duff advocates Maori integration into the broader society as a remedy to their woes, which he blames on the Maoris’ inability to assimilate. The problem in Duff’s eyes is cultural. If Maoris are associated with crime in public discourse, it is, according to Duff, because ‘Maori have no overwhelming disapproval of violence . . . Maori culturally condone certain acts of violence’ (quoted in Alia and Bull, p. 60). This simplistic culturalism echoes the ‘debates’ pervading post-9/11 public discourse about whether ‘Islam’ itself – as if such a thing existed as one entity – promotes violence, whether it is compatible with ‘modernity’

or 'democracy' and related ideologically-inspired polemics. And just as some Muslims believe these arguments, the authors show how some 'Maori youth were vulnerable to internalizing stereotyped criminalizations of Maori' (p. 65).

Stephen Spencer, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Sheffield Hallam University, writes that the purpose of his book *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation* is to 'examine the portrayal and meanings we attach to groups differentiated by "ethnicity" or "race" through analyses of examples from around the world as well as those we are confronted with every day' (p. xiv). The book, which is explicitly written as an instructional text, comprises nine chapters with laconic titles such as 'Representation', 'The Politics of Naming', 'Colonialism: Invisible Histories', 'Theories of Race and Ethnicity', and 'Identity: Marginal Voices and the Politics of Difference'. The first five chapters discuss theoretical issues surrounding race and ethnicity ranging from Weber and Marx to postcolonial thought. Chapter 6 provides a case study that focuses on indigenous Australians and Chapters 7, 8 and 9 make a return to theory discussing conflict, multiculturalism and hybridity.

Though various chapters in the Spencer volume echo the other books under review, his discussion of racial mixture and hybridity is commendable. 'It is very important,' Spencer writes, 'that the issues of race and ethnicity are discussed not as positivistic boundaries which exist eternally, but as transitory social constructs liable to change and shift, elusive meanings which float on the surface of everyday reality' (p. 217). The book's treatment of this complex issue is, however, uneven. After a couple of breathless pages on globalization, the author writes that 'cultural globalization based on hybrid ethnic identity has been perceived as a challenge to ideas of ethnic essentialism' (p. 220). Maybe so, but there are cases where cultural hybridization, essentialism and racism go hand-in-hand, that are not explored in the book. Also, as shown elsewhere (Kraidy, 2005), taking hybridity as a symptom of tolerance and enlightenment is at odds with a history in which hybridity and its synonyms were used as strategic discourses designed to contain, subdue or marginalize ethnic and racial difference. Spencer's treatment of racial mixture is perhaps a bit more optimistic than the facts support, when he for example writes that 'the notion of "mixed race", by drawing attention to the permeability between so-called races, may have a role in weakening the hold of racialised forms of thought and actions in the years ahead' (p. 226). Nonetheless, the author's theoretical dissection, accompanied by a segment of an interview with a mixed-race academic and mother, makes this tricky notion more palatable to students, something to be applauded all the more so because it is largely ignored in the other three books under review.

The final chapters in both Browne and Downing and Husband address the notion of ethnic and racial minority participation in the public sphere in relation to issues of media ownership and representation. All three authors are concerned about the extent to which small 'mini-sphere' (Browne, 2005), 'micro-public spheres' (Keane, 1998), or 'sphericules' (Gitlin, 1998) specific to ethnic minority populations are connected to broader national and transnational public spheres. Browne, who grounds his study, albeit loosely, in a Habermasian conception of the public sphere, notes that as far as ethnic minorities are concerned, the internet has largely failed to deliver on its promise to develop alternative public spheres, and has acted chiefly to 'promote the domination of the English language and the Western thought process' (p. 194). At the same time, as Downing and Husband note in their discussion of the politics of recognition, 'minority ethnic communities who have learnt to reject the homogenizing logic of majority liberal universalism are everywhere rejecting assimilation into the national norm' (p. 200). 'Liberal' national media policies and the ethnic minority media that these policies enable thus

have the dual effect of empowering ethnic communities while isolating them from national majorities, a trend accentuated by niche advertising and multicultural marketing.

After asking whether there ‘can be a single broadly public sphere’ (p. 195), Browne wonders whether a public sphere – large or small – facilitates dialogue, a chief Habermasian concern. Though media institutions have historically been uninterested in fostering dialogue with and among their audiences, and though when it did occur dialogue typically involved a narrow segment of dedicated audience members, electronic media according to Browne (2005) ‘seem better able to promote dialogue . . . in the provision of stimulation’ (p. 197). This would be especially the case with ethnic minority media and related issues of race, ethnicity and representation because they tend to stir debates that the mainstream would otherwise ignore. However, the richness of case studies and the requirements of empirical description and analysis prevented Browne from elaborating a more developed theoretical framework. (Also, at least the copy of Browne (2005) received by this reviewer is missing around 26 pages, starting on page 204 all odd-numbered pages are blank, which may have preempted a full appreciation of his theoretical contribution.)

More theoretically detailed, Downing and Husband (2005) write that, although there is no single normative literature from which to draw media policies related to issues of race and ethnicity, ‘the purpose of this discussion of “recognizing diversity” is to engender a reflexive anxiety. Within any national context it is all too easy to absorb a taken-for-granted national paradigm on citizenship and identity’ (p. 201). In this context, after proposing that citizenship should be differentiated, and not absorbed in a universal liberalism that neutralizes difference in the name of equality, the authors move from analyzing what *is*, to exploring what *should be*, from criticizing representational biases and abuses, to proposing a policy framework involving two ‘generations’ of human rights. First generation rights operate to ensure a broad legal and political environment that guarantees communication as a universal right. Second generation rights enable ‘the emergence, and continued vitality, of a media infrastructure that reflects the ethnic diversity present in society’ (p. 209).

What does it mean for research on race and ethnicity to be ‘global’? It means two things. First, global in the geographical sense, meaning that it should reflect experiences of race and ethnicity that span the whole globe. On that score, the books under review are exemplary in their examples and cases, but fall short of rendering the notion of race in its global and transnational complexity. For example, Downing and Husband’s analysis of racial issues in the US media industry leaves aside the important issue of how racial assumptions that are ostensibly about the *global market* guide production and distribution processes in the US industry. Because the US media industry is transnational and global, a full analysis of race in the context of that industry would ideally have a similar scope.

There is a second meaning to ‘global’ having to do with a sense of addressing the broader social and political context in which race and ethnicity can, and should be, studied. ‘I have never worked on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory’, wrote the eminent cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall (1995). Rather, he added, ‘I have always worked on the whole social formation which is racialized’ (1995: 53–4). Hall formulates race not as a subject, but rather as a prism, an optic through which to examine broader forces impinging on various dynamics of selfhood and difference. It is here that discussion of policy and structural issues in Browne (2005) and Downing and Husband (2005) constitutes a qualitative leap beyond strictly representational concerns. Delving into lobbying and policy-making deepens and broadens the scope of the analysis, especially as it pertains to notions of public sphere and public

participation, since, as Habermas (1989: 171) wrote, ‘The world fashioned by mass media is a public sphere in appearance only’.

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