

## Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

**FRANCES HENRY and CAROL TATOR, *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the English-Language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. ix + 271pp. Index, \$50 hardcover, \$24.95 paper.**

This study uses a cultural studies approach to show how journalists and broadcasters perpetuate racist biases in their writings on First Nations, immigrants, refugees, crime, and equity policies.

After an opening theoretical discussion, the early chapters cover existing work on racism in the Canadian media, quantitative data on people of colour working in print media in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, and research by the authors on the experiences of racialized minority journalists in Toronto. Henry and Tator then analyze *Globe and Mail* editorials on employment equity and discussions in the *National Post* on immigration, refugees, and the Tamils. They also offer a case study of Avery Haines, a television announcer who was fired for joking about racialized and other minorities when she did not know the microphone was on.

They include a critical analysis by Hier and Greenberg on the moral panic expressed in racialized news discourse which portrayed the 600 migrants who arrived from Fujian (province) in 1999 as criminals and wrongdoers. Henry and Tator also examine moral panic in the "Just Desserts" case and a Chinese restaurant slaying, showing that press reports disseminated "facts" which maintain stereotypes about escalating violence being caused by young black foreign men and warring Chinese gangs.

The authors examine representation of First Nations through press reports of the Jack Ramsay case and Mi'kmaq struggles over fishing rights at Burnt Church. Journalists' comments on both events contained racist and stereotypical narratives which supported, validated, and preserved the "dominant White, Anglo-European culture" and marginalized indigenous peoples.

The authors conclude that there is a long way to go before there are sufficient numbers of racialized minority journalists to adequately represent their own people in the media. They call for journalists and reporters to reflect on and understand how their own identities, histories, and frames of reference affect their work. Consistent with their previous enunciation of "democratic racism," Henry and Tator note the contradiction

between beliefs that the media uphold and disseminate the ideals of a democratic liberal society, and "the actual role of the media as purveyors of racialized discourse."

Funded by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation as part of the federal government's anti-racist policy, this project is a useful and convincing exposure of covert racism in the English-Canadian press. It could educate people in positions of power and others who need to understand Canada from the standpoint of those who are vilified and marginalized on a daily basis by insensitive and unreflective practices which influence people's thoughts and consciousness about minorities.

However, Henry and Tator should by now have picked up on the work of Stasiulis, Ng, Bannerji, Jhappan, and Satzewich, all of whom, like many sociologists outside Canada, have shown that racism, class and gender are closely associated, yet Henry and Tator are reluctant to examine those intersections. Although these authors mention how the media cater to the interests of elites with conservative ideals, the press reports presented in this volume are not just biased accounts. A good newspaper story increases sales and profits, using what Dorothy Smith calls ideological codes to organize text-mediated relations. Most importantly, the media are owned by mainly male, powerful members of Canada's ruling class (not simply a White cultural elite) who have the power to address racism and to encourage the journalists and reporters they employ to maintain standards of reporting which uphold democratic principles, human rights and respect for minorities. Unfortunately, these authors appear reluctant to apply to their findings the comments on class and ideology by Stuart Hall to which they refer in their early theoretical chapter. In their conclusions, insights into class are lost among diverse types of discourse and general comments on power.

Anti-racist and First Nations struggles are threats to powerful economic interests. This is a major reason why democratic racism is likely to persist and why research on racism needs to be more deeply focussed on social class-based dynamics. One does not have to be reductionist or essentialist to do this. As Joan Acker (in "Rewriting Class, Race and Gender: Problems in Feminist Rethinking", in *Revisioning Gender*, 2000: 62) has pointed out, "class relations are embedded in ongoing societal processes that also create and re-create gender and race relations." The active practices of many journalists and broadcasters are a prime example of those processes.

The book is useful reading for undergraduate courses on racism and related fields.

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