

Media, Stereotypes and the Perpetuation of Racism in Canada

James Crawford
Graduate Student
Educational Communications and Technology
University of Saskatchewan

May, 1998

[Select a different paper](#)

[Download a copy of the entire paper](#)

Introduction

This paper examines the role media has in the perpetuation of racism in Canada through stereotypes. A background to the topic of racism in Canada is offered first where concepts such as the *other*, *whiteness*, and *white privilege* are explored. This is followed by a functional definition of stereotypes and its critique. Finally, the paper will examine stereotypes in media such as television (TV), cinema, news, and advertising.

Whiteness and White Privilege

Just as there are racial identities of colour in Canada, there is also a white racial identity. To Canadians of European descent *whiteness* is akin to normalness; yet, as Frankenberg (1996) points out, it is unacknowledged and unknown to most white people. Euro-Canadians do not define themselves as white - they merely construct themselves as NOT being people of colour. This *invisibility* of *whiteness* is “historically, socially, politically and culturally produced and ... linked to ... relations of domination” (Weis et al., 1997, p.22). This domination manifests itself in the form of white privilege (examples to follow). These privileges are *invisible* to most Euro-Canadians; yet, they exist. They are built into Canadian society. It is a “protective pillow of resources and/or benefits of the doubt ... (that) repels gossip and voyeurism and instead demands dignity” (Fine, 1997, p 57).

Examples of White Privilege

- Norquay (1993) relates a story of going to New York with two other females, one black and one white. When they stopped a taxi, the white cab driver

asked if the black woman was with *this party* . Norquay tells the story to friends in Toronto and the black woman turns to Norquay and says, “you have obviously never tried to catch a cab with me here in Toronto” (p.249).

- Frankenberg (1996) mentioned examples of white people moving to the opposite side of the street when two, tall, black men approach on a sidewalk. These people do not move aside when approaching other white people because they are assumed to be *good* or *normal*. She also indicates that she received shoddy or poor service when she went into cafes in her town with friends of colour.
- Powell (1997) talked about expectations of failure for people of colour in US universities. A university sent out two different letters to new students. A letter to white students stated that they were the best and brightest, that the university was delighted in offering admission, and that they would be honoured to train the students for the leadership roles they would take in the community and country. A letter to black students stated how wonderful the university was and how fortunate the students were to have a chance to attend. The letter also outlined that many remedial and support programs were in place to help them when they ran into difficulty at this world-class university.

(Under) normal circumstances, white students get the “white” letter and never know that the second letter exists, while black students are absolutely clear that theirs is a race-coded letter. Black and white students meet at the same college in the same classes but with fundamentally different messages about their right and ability to be there. (Powell, 1997, p.5)

- A similar effect as the one above exists in Canada with inner-city schools. *Inner-city* , in this author’s experience, is really just a race-coded word for *Indian* where there is an assumption of failure and lower standards, translating into lower achievement.
- Powell (1997) also found that white students know the rules of the game and are better achievers just as members of white society know the rules of the game. This is one of the advantages of being white - they learn the rules as they grow up and succeed in life. Those who are not white, never get a chance to learn the rules and they are generally not successful.

White students who were overwhelmed and unable to finish the paper asked for an extension. Several of them took an extra 24 hours and turned in A papers, receiving an A-. Black students also reported lack of time as a major difficulty in completing the

paper; however, none of them considered asking for an extension, which as one black woman said, 1) would put me (the teacher) in an awkward situation and 2) would feel like “asking for welfare”. (Powell, 1997, p.8)

- Personal stories related to this author by persons of colour tell of scrutinization by police on the streets, discrimination in renting apartments (and the assumption of a partying lifestyle), and university professors being followed around by security in department stores. This lack of trust or expectation of wrong doing is not accorded the average white person.

One way that white privilege is maintained is through the construction of stereotypes of people of colour. Generally these stereotypes are different from ideas of a *normal* Canadian and depict negative images. Examples of this include those of Natives as alcoholics and lazy; of Chinese as treacherous; etc. The overall effect is to infer that whiteness is goodness.

Much of their (white) identity production swirls around the creation and maintenance of the dark “other” against which their own whiteness and goodness is necessarily understood. The social construction of this goodness, then, provides moral justification for privileged standpoints. (Weis et al., 1997, p.212)

People of colour are expected to conform to the values of *whiteness* yet this is impossible because it is based on race. As long as *whiteness* goes unacknowledged, anyone of colour will have difficulty in conforming.

Blacks and other people “of colour” are viewed as recent newcomers, or worse, “foreigners” who have no claim to Canadian heritage except through the generosity of Canadian immigration officials, who “allow” a certain quota of us to enter each year. (Shadd, 1989, p.3)

Even if a person’s family has been in Canada or the US for a number of generations, a person of colour will never be as *good* as a white person, and will never be allowed access to the privileges that accompany colour in our society.

To most residents (in the US), African Americans and Mexican Americans were simply the latest (and not too welcome) newcomers in a series of immigrant groups and would have to engage in the same process of self-help, assimilation, and perseverance that previous groups had experienced. (Sleeter, 1993, p.159)

Other literature illustrates this privilege and the lack of incentive for whiteness to be cast aside. Roediger (1991) examines the struggle for acceptance into the privileged white race by the Irish from a historical, political, economic and psychological perspective. The Irish immigrant was once negatively stereotyped as the *Irish nigger* during the flood of immigration during the mid-1800's. The "success of the Irish in being recognized as white resulted largely from the political power of the Irish ... voters. The imperative to define themselves as white came but from the particular 'public and psychological wages' whiteness offered" (p.137). These wages included preference in hiring over other groups, admission to public venues on equal footing with upper classes, admission to white schools, etc.

They were given public deference ... because they were white. They were admitted freely, with all classes of white people, to public functions (and) public parks. ... The police were drawn from their ranks and the courts, dependent on their votes, treated them with leniency. ... Their votes selected public officials and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment. ... White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed, and cost anywhere from twice to ten times colored schools. (Roediger, 1991, p.12)

The Irish and African-Americans "lived side by side in the teeming slums of American cities of the 1830's" (p.134). Yet, there was little incentive for the Irish to question their class position and dependency on wage labour. The "pleasures of whiteness could function as a 'wage' for white workers. That is, status and privileges conferred by race could be used to make up for alienating and exploitative class relationships. ... White workers could, and did, define and accept their class positions by fashioning identities as 'not slaves' and as 'not blacks' "(p.13).

Creation of 'Whiteness' in Canada

To fully understand the creation of *whiteness* in Canada, one needs to look at its historical formation. The study of *whiteness* is derived from the study of colonization. Edward Said (1978) described the relationship that British colonizers had with the people of the Middle East during early colonization. At that time, this area was referred to as the Orient and Said described this relationship as Orientalism. The Oriental or *other* was an image or stereotype created by the British. The *other* was basically everything that the West was not - s/he was dark, savage, bestial, lowbrow, etc. (Roediger, 1991). In some ways, British culture was able to define itself by positioning itself as opposite to the *other*. For example, British culture was civilized because its citizens did

not live in grass huts. British culture was technologically advanced as compared to the spears of the *other*. From this *othering*, colonizing countries like Britain, France, Germany, etc. were able to see themselves as civilized, advanced and dynamic when compared to the stable and primitive *others*. The fact that no single Oriental identity even existed was not taken into consideration (i.e. India and Egypt are very different cultures but categorized as Orientals in early colonialism). This *othering* process also provided justification for colonizing as the colonizer could claim that they were civilizing a primitive culture.

This process of *othering* was carried to North America and was used in the colonization of Native Americans and in the enslavement of African Americans. *Indians* were seen as a homogeneous group of savages despite the fact that individual groups varied extensively and had well developed social systems. *Niggers* were also portrayed as savage, uncivilized and with low intelligence. By creating this identity, expansion into North America was justified.

Stereotypes have an important function in the maintenance of racism. Between 1500 and 1800 A.D., the stereotype of Indians as savages served to justify the dispossession of Indian lands. The dispossession and its legacy have created a powerful-powerless relationship between white and Native peoples. In order to maintain this power structure, new stereotypes of Native peoples have been created, as the need has arisen. (Larocque, 1989, p.74)

Besides providing a justification for dispossessing lands of colonized people, the creation of a stable *other* has helped to maintain this relationship of inequity. In Canada, the stereotype of a *traditional Indian* conjures up images of mocassins, beads, canoes, etc. It is as if these groups of people have been untouched by western civilization during the last two hundred years. This stable identity has been perpetuated by the *othering* process involved in traditional anthropology since its inception.

(Traditional anthropology) depicted the colonized as members of a harmonious, internally homogeneous, unchanging culture. When so described, the culture appeared to “need” progress, or economic and moral uplifting. In addition, the “timeless traditional culture” served as a self-congratulatory reference point against which Western civilization could measure its own progressive historical evolution. The civilizing journey was conceived more as a rise than a fall, a process more of elevation than degradation (a long, arduous journey upward, culminating in “us”). ... It portrayed a “culture” sufficiently frozen to be an object of “scientific” knowledge. This genre of social description

made itself, and the culture so described, into an artifact worthy of being housed in the collection of a major museum. (Rosalda, 1989, p.31)

Inherent in the construction of these static stereotypes is the assumption that *whiteness* is goodness. Other races need to conform to the norm of *whiteness*. There is no room in Canadian society for the *other* unless they are in their purist form (i.e. unless the Indian remains primitive and stays on the reserve where s/he belongs). Otherwise, they should be assimilated into *Canadian culture*. By creating and maintaining static stereotypes, public attention to cries of structural inequity by marginalized groups can be deflected. For example, people of Native descent are no longer *real Indians* - if they were, they would not be having these problems because they would be living their traditional lives.

There seems to be a need to deny that racism exists. ... An area of growing concern to me is the very common practice of blaming Native peoples for their socioeconomic conditions. Blaming “forgets” that racism has also been institutionalized in government policies of assimilation, paternalism, and the historical and continuing confiscation of Native lands and resources. These policies have had a devastating impact on Native peoples but the fallout has been explained away as stemming from “cultural differences.” In turn “cultural differences” are reduced to stereotypes such as “Indians can’t or won’t adjust” to city life. In other words, Indian “culture”, rather than colonization or racism, is blamed for whatever has happened to Native peoples. (Laroque, 1989, p.74)

With the rise of Quebec nationalism in the 1960’s, the federal government’s response was to “increase and centralize its power. This entailed supplanting supposedly British institutions within Canada with indigenous Canadian equivalents” (Legare, 1995, p.348). Concurrent to this were the demands by other groups to have their contributions to the development of Canada recognized.

(Other) sections of the country began to imitate Quebec nationalists and articulate their own claims based on ethnic background and regional interests. They contended that, as immigrants from other (i.e., non-British and also non-French) nations, they too had contributed to the developing nation. They argued that their contributions were being ignored in the two founding nations debate, and they demanded equal recognition with French and English Canadians. (Legare, 1995, p.349)

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the government of Canada officially recognized the multicultural nature of Canada within a bilingual framework (Legare, 1995). This strategy was an attempt to reconcile the division in Canada between French, Aboriginal, and immigrant assertions of rights; and, to define a Canadian identity in the face of an invasion of US culture.

(It) is no coincidence that ethnicity and multiculturalism were officially discovered at a time when Canada faced internal and external threats to its nationhood. From the start, it was 'intended to ground Canadian nationhood in an identity that could be differentiated from threatening Others both within and without.' Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau believed that multiculturalism could serve as 'the glue of nationalism', a glue that could bind a uniquely defined nation, governed by a strong federal government. As a solution to internal divisions, official recognition of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework could counterbalance the contesting regional loyalties that endangered the unity of the nation. At the same time, by accepting all ethnically defined claims as equally valid, it could effectively neutralize nationalist claims to special status or rights, re-establishing and strengthening national unity. (Legare, 1995, p. 350)

Multiculturalism (MC) views Canadians as having British values, customs, etc. while still allowing for immigrants to celebrate their past cultures in a formalized way. These celebrations take place on special occasions and showcase historic traits such as food, clothing, music, material objects and language (Legare, 1995). However, this display is very much like the cultures found in museums or on a bookcase. They are taken out on special occasions but afterwards they are put back and everyone returns to *normal* or British customs. The overall effect of MC is to neutralize nationalist claims of special groups by making everyone the same or equal in present-day, British Canada or French Quebec. Those groups that do not accept this have to make a claim of distinctiveness or special status. However, this is impossible because under MC everyone is distinct and equal.

Although MC sounds very egalitarian and defines Canadian culture by its tolerance for the other cultures that make it up, it is still racist. MC reaffirms Aboriginal and immigrant groups as the *other* of traditional colonial discourses. By refusing to accept folklorization of their cultures and demanding to express their own cultural identities, these groups are excluded from citizenship in the eyes of many Canadians. They are "redefined as "special" (the problematic Canadian) or even unfair to those citizens who

“chose” to give up their old ethnic selves and embrace loyalty to the Canadian nation” (Legare, 1995, p.359). *Whiteness* is the norm to which they are expected to conform as expressed by a quote from the Winnipeg Free Press: “By what right do Aboriginal people (and immigrants) receive services and demand rights when they are unwilling to contribute to (i.e., be of) the nation?” (Legare, 1995, p.359).

MC only recognizes diversity superficially. The underlying assumption to most Euro-Canadians is that Canada is still *white*. Stereotypes play an important role in perpetuating this view. The construction of the *other* through stereotypes has helped to maintain *whiteness*, *white privilege* and its *invisibility*. The construction of static, primitive and dark images are used to elevate the status of whites and define them as NOT the *other*. The goodness and dynamic nature of *whiteness* is inferred but not overtly stated; and, the privilege that accompanies *whiteness* is assumed the normal consequence of not being the *other*.

However, stereotypes are not always bad and often serve a useful purpose in society. It is how they are constructed and who is constructing them that needs to be examined. The remainder of this paper analyses stereotypes. The focus is on stereotypes that appear in Canadian media such as television (TV), cinema, news and advertising.

The Effects of Media

The effects of media on the socialization of our youth is more profound today than at any other period in history. Traditionally, stories and beliefs were passed on through the family, religion, tribe, community or school. Today, by the end of high school, the average student will have spent 15 000 hours watching TV and only 11 000 hours in the classroom (Davison, 1997). Media is becoming less of a form of leisure and more an agent for the communication of values in the lives of our young people.

Media creates roles for people that are often accepted in society (Davison, 1997). Davison cited an example where agents of consumerism created the role for women to shave their body hair. It took only two years, through an advertising campaign in the early twentieth century by the Wilkinson Sword Razor Company to accomplish this. It did it by bombarding the public with images of how a women should look. The question that needs to be asked is: What kind of values are being passed to young people through media? The creation of these roles has the potential to reaffirm racism through existing stereotypes or to create new roles for the traditional others. One needs to examine stereotypes closely to determine if they are negative (reinforcing racism) or positive (creating new roles).

Stereotypes

Stereotypes tend to be constructed iconographically - a few verbal and visual traits are used to represent the character or group and they tend to be static and unchanging (Dyer, 1993). There are a number of approaches to studying racism in stereotypes. One approach is to focus on racist roles assigned to a group through negative stereotypes. Hooks (1996) referred to examples of traditional stereotyping of African-American women as either *mammies* or *whores* .

Dyer (1993) also followed this approach. He critiqued stereotypes by looking at the function they perform in society and used the traditional definition as first coined by Walter Lippman - “stereotypes are (i) an ordering process, (ii) a ‘short-cut’, (iii) referring to ‘the world’, and (iv) expressing ‘our’ values and beliefs” (p.11). Dyer expanded this definition as follows:

An Ordering Process of the mass of chaotic data that we receive. People use stereotypes to make sense of society through generalizations, patternings and typifications (p.12). Dyer saw two problems in this. First, this assumed that there is an absolute or definable truth to the world. In this case, stereotypes do not allow for a dynamic world and relegate a static quality to those stereotyped. Second, being a social construction, there is a power relationship implied - those with the power get to define the stereotype and impose their definition of reality. Examining Canadian media tends to highlight these concerns. As quantified in **The White Screen** (1997), visible minorities are under-represented in mass media in Canada. Thus, the construction of most stereotypes are from a white perspective. Assuming that racist stereotypes uphold the concept of *whiteness* and *white privilege* , one would expect whites depicted as NOT being like the traditional stereotypes of non-whites.

An example of this is in the movie **Kids**. Although this portrays minorities in the US, it has just as much impact on the formation of Canadian views (Davison, 1997). **Kids** is treated as a documentary-ethnographic film, exploring white kids in gangs. However, as Hooks (1996) pointed out, the movie is consistent with the traditional *othering* of African-Americans. Throughout the violent scenes, black (rap) music is playing in the background. Non-white skinned females are depicted as sexually loose and wild while the white females are depicted as innocent. Rival (black) gang members are seen as a threat. The entire premise of the movie is based on “making a big deal about two white gang members” (p.62) while black gang members are portrayed as commonplace. It is as if the corruption of two white teenagers is a major tragedy while the corruption of black teenagers is seen as commonplace. Hooks noted that the agenda of the film is consistent with the desire of the right to regulate racial mixing and divert focus from the real

issues like class exploitation, exclusion and racial subordination.

A Short Cut or easy way of representing a great deal of complex information and a host of connotations. In other words, a dumb blonde refers to more than just hair colour and intelligence. It also refers to sex, her status in society, her relationship to men, and her inability to behave and think rationally. The problem here is that stereotypes can oversimplify or falsely state the complexity of people.

Hooks referred to examples of traditional black families on TV shows like **The Jeffersons** and **Sanford and Son** as portraying and reinforcing a host of commonly-held connotations. The families are obsessed with upward mobility, material trappings of success, and lack creativity and imagination. Again, the underlying assumption is that *whiteness* is the norm and the only way to achieve success is by gravitating towards it. However, being that they are black, it is not quite possible. The humour in these shows is derived from the futile attempts of the characters to imitate white people.

Referring To 'The World' - The traditional definition assumes that stereotypes in media are a representation of someone in the world. Dyer noted that one should critique which world they represent - the social, individual, or some combination of the two. Dyer further stated that in Canadian culture and more so in the US, there is a tendency to concentrate on the individual. As a consequence, stereotypes are often used to represent failings of individuals, ignoring social influences on the problem. For example, media fiction often deals with social issues such as alcoholism. In doing so, the writer must take a perspective. Alcoholism can be examined from a social perspective (social influences on alcoholism), from an individual perspective (individual traits contributing to alcoholism), or from a combination of the two perspectives.

In dealing with social issues like alcoholism, Dyer identified two common forms of characterization in the media - the stereotype and the novelist. The stereotype is constructed through the use of a few, immediately recognizable and defining traits. These characters do not develop or grow. On the other hand, the novelist character grows throughout the fiction as more complexity is revealed. With this type of character, recovery from alcoholism is possible based on individual or psychological traits. Dyer stated that generally the overall effect of the writer's perspective (individual) and form of characterization (novelist) tends to leave the audience seeing success as individual and leaving the stereotype of the alcoholic intact. In other words, the burden of alcoholism generally lies with the individual and stereotypes reinforce this view.

Examples of the emphasis on the individual and denial of social factors can be

found in media. In her critique of **Hoop Dreams**, Hooks asserted that that film was a success at the box office with “white folks” (Hooks, 1996, p.78). The movie does not challenge any of the structural inequities in society but reinforces individualism and the American Dream - that the bottom of society can rise-up and succeed. It successfully shifts social criticism from the social realm and places success dependent on the individual. The black youth who was unsuccessful in making it in professional sports, failed because of personal failings. The effect on the audience is to confirm existing stereotypes of black youth - that when given a chance, most blacks would rather be hanging around with the gang, etc. A social commentary interrogating why professional sports is one of the few places that blacks can succeed in life is completely ignored. Instead, the message is that blacks need to conform or else stay within their racial group where they will not experience failure.

“Expressing Our Values” - Stereotypes are an effective way to invoke consensus about the way we think about a social group and imply that all members of society arrived at the same definition collectively. It also assumes that stereotypes express an agreement about a social group and arose before and independent of the stereotype. Dyer (1996) questioned who the “our” is in the traditional definition and suggested that it is usually from the stereotype that we get our ideas about a social group. Since stereotypes only represent a particular definition of reality, it is important to look at who proposes the stereotype and who has the power to enforce it. It can be difficult to determine who proposes stereotypes that have been around for a long time. However, the TV production **Out of Sync: Racial Bias and the Media** (1995) identified the construction of the stereotype of the *militant Indian* during the 1990’s beginning with the Oka conflict. The program suggested that this stereotype is a creation of the media to sensationalize Native issues and attract audiences, playing on the fears of the whites of an *Indian uprising* .

Dyer concluded by suggesting how to identify negative stereotypes for analysis and distinguished between social types and stereotypes. Social types tend to represent those that belong to society such as *working class Americans* . Stereotypes tend to represent those that do not belong or are outside society such as stereotypes of *non-Americans* . The social type tends to be more open and flexible. These characters can have a wide range of roles in the plot from hero, to villain, to helper. The stereotype generally has only an implicit and unchanging narration such as in the role of women in fiction. For example, women characters may appear diverse but they are all part of an implicit narrative. This narrative has a beginning and a middle (birth, childhood, marriage, family life) but very little end (old age, dying). Other examples include black males as ‘lying, cheating dogs when involved with black women’ and professional black women as ‘wild, irrational, castrating, bitch goddesses’ (Hooks, 1996, p.57).

Another approach is to look at stereotyping by omission. This approach considers how often a group appears in a non-traditional or typically white role. An online article on the Media Awareness Network, **The White Screen** (1997) indicated that visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples are still proportionally under-represented in the mass media in Canada, both on-air and off, despite such shows as **North of 60**, **The Rez**, and **The Cosby Show**. According to **The White Screen**, people from racial and ethnic backgrounds account for 16 percent of the people on the screen but seldom as the main characters. However, white males account for over 50 percent of the main characters. In advertising, only 20 percent of the ads feature people of colour. In news, 2.6 percent of the newsroom staff were non-white, five times less than the percentage of minorities in Canadian population. The portrayal of people of colour in news stories is equally weak. Although there are no overt, negative stereotypes, the absence or omission of these groups in non-traditional roles acts to reaffirm traditionally held views.

Bell Hooks (1996) took this approach in her book, **Reel to Real - Race, Sex and Class at the Movies**, where she looked at stereotypical images in the cinema and examined what is omitted. She stated that people learn about race (and sex, class, etc.) from the movies and that they give people the opportunity to experience the *other* without engaging them. In other words, static, traditional stereotypes are presented, but more complex realities are not explored. Many filmmakers do not want to challenge traditional stereotypes because it will interfere with the 'pure' vision or entertainment value of the movie. These artists escape criticism by claiming that they are only documenting life as it is; thereby, reinforcing stereotypes and not challenging their social construction.

In reality, challenging traditional stereotypes does not *sell* at the box office. Hooks referred to the movie **The Pelican Brief** as an example. The producers went to great lengths to prevent the audience from perceiving any potential romance between Julia Roberts (white) and Denzel Washington (black) in the advertising for the movie to appeal to white audiences. Furthermore, the audience gets the impression quickly that the white lady would never have any romantic interest in the black man. This conforms to standard, racist script but does not challenge the idea that romance between races could be as normal as same-race romance.

Hooks noted that stereotyping by omission occurs frequently and cited several examples. For example, the plot of the movie **Waiting to Exhale** centers around black, professional women and romance. They are not concerned with partnership and marriage in their lives; instead, their characters are concerned with "the obsession of getting a man, status, material success and petty competition with other women" (p.54). One could

argue that this is not negative stereotyping as they show images of successful black women. However, what this movie fails to show is black women who are concerned with partnership and marriage and by omitting these roles, the movie reinforces the traditional stereotype of black, professional women as “greedy bitches” (p.55).

Hooks cited examples of omission in advertising, too. Most couples that appear in advertising are white but rarely are black or minority couples shown. This reinforces traditional stereotypes of unhappy and dysfunctional black families as positive images of black families are omitted from the public.

News reporting is often guilty of omitting positive roles and focusing on negative ones. Under the guise of merely reporting the facts, news tends to create negative images of groups. For example, crimes of Native Canadians are reported along with those of white Canadians. However, the news agencies tend to ignore Natives otherwise - unless some other sensational issue like self-government or militant confrontation comes up. There are very few stories of Natives living crime-free, everyday lives in the city. The omission of these positive roles leaves traditional images of Natives intact.

The recent case in Saskatoon of Billy Taylor is another example. Taylor was previously convicted of sexual assault and banished to an island as part of an Aboriginal sentencing circle. Although it is important for the public to be aware of convictions for deterrence, etc., the current charge for Taylor is for assault. It has nothing to do with his previous conviction other than he has re-offended. Following this logic, experimental or non-traditional sentences of white, re-offenders should also be given such coverage. However, they are not. By omitting these other cases, the stereotype that Natives do not want to follow Canadian law is perpetuated (i.e., they need their own sentencing system). Omission of white cases also reinforces *whiteness*. By not giving equal examples of recidivism of whites on special programs, Canadians infer that traditional law is best and the only one that works.

Conclusion

Racism continues to exist in Canada despite Canada's official policy of multiculturalism and tolerance. Minorities are still ascribed negative traits as the *other* and used to infer *goodness* and *normalness* on whites without actually defining them as such. Media has played an active role in perpetuating this racism through negative stereotypes. Although public policy and multiculturalism have reduced overt, negative stereotyping, racism is still perpetuated by omission or by what is not being said. The lack of positive roles for minorities reaffirms traditional stereotypes. As advertising, cinema, news and TV play a bigger role in the socialization of youth, the

images of minorities that they see as children will be the images that they reproduce as adults. It is time that this circle is broken. Media must bare its share of this responsibility; but, so must the individual. Individuals have the option of turning media off and talking to others about what is going on.

The issue of racism in media will not resolve itself until it is realized that *white* values are not necessarily right values. Canada is no longer just a country of *whites* . There are other cultures and other ways of looking at the world. Canadians have to accept this fact and should encourage the incorporation of new ideas into their lives.

References

Davison, P. (1997). **Media Literacy Strategies for Gender Equity**. At <http://www.cfn.cs.dal.ca/CommunitySupport/AMLNS/violence.html>, pp.1-4.

Dyer, R. (1993). **The Matter of Images - Essays on Representations**. London, England: Routledge.

Fine, M. (1997). **Witnessing Whiteness**. In *Off White: Readings on Race, Power, and Society* , pp.57-65. New York: Routledge.

Frankenburg, R. (1996). **“When We Are Capable of Stopping, We Begin to See”: Being White, Seeing Whiteness**. In *Places We Call Home* , pp. 3-18. New York: Routledge.

Hooks, B. (1996). **Reel to Real - Race, Sex and Class at the Movies**. London, England: Routledge.

Larocque, E. (1989). **Racism Runs Through Canadian Society**. In O. McKague (Ed.), *Racism in Canada*. , pp. 73-76. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers.

Legare, E. (1995). **Canadian Multiculturalism and Aboriginal People: Negotiating a Place in the Nation**. *Identities* 1 (4), pp. 347-366.

Media Awareness Network (1997). **The White Screen**. At <http://www.screen.com/mnet/eng/issues/minrep/issues/Invisble.htm>, pp. 1-2.

Norquay, N. (1993). **The Other Side of Difference: Memory-work in the Mainstream**. *Qualitative Studies in Education* , 6 (3) pp. 241-251.

Powell, L. C. (1997). **The Achievement (K)not: Whiteness and “Black**

Underachievement". In *Off White: Readings on Race, Power, and Society* , pp. 3-12. New York: Routledge.

Roediger, D. (1991). **On Autobiography and Theory: An Introduction**. In *Wages of Whiteness* , pp. 3-17. London: Verso.

Roediger, D. (1991). **Irish-American Workers and White Racial Formation in the Antebellum United States**. In *Wages of Whiteness* , pp. 133-166. London: Verso.

Roman, L. G. (1993). **White is Color! White Defensiveness, Postmodernism and Anti-racist Pedagogy**. In C. McCarthy & W. Crichlow (Eds.), *Race Identity and Representation in Education* , pp. 71-88. New York: Routledge.

Rosaldo, R. (1989). **The Erosion of Classic Norms**, In *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* , pp. 25-45. Boston: Beacon Press.

Rosaldo, R. (1989). **Imperialist Nostalgia**. In *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* , pp. 68-87. Boston: Beacon Press.

Said, E. (1978). **Introduction**. In *Orientalism* , pp. 1-28. New York: Vintage Books.

Said, E. (1978). **Afterword**. In *Orientalism* , pp. 329-352. New York: Vintage Books.

Shadd, A. (1989). **Institutionalized Racism and Canadian History: Notes of a Black Canadian**. In O. McKague (Ed.), *Racism in Canada*. , pp. 1-5. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers.

Sleeter, C. E. (1993). **How White Teachers Construct Race**. In C. McCarthy & W. Crichlow (Eds.), *Race Identity and Representation in Education* , pp. 71-88. New York: Routledge.

TV Ontario (1995). **Out of Sync: Racial Bias and the Media**. Toronto: Producer.

Weis, L., Proweller, A. & Centrie, C. (1997). **Re-examining "A Moment in History": Loss of Privilege Inside White Working-class Masculinity in the 1990s**. In M. Fine, L. Weis, L.C. Powell & L.M. Wong (Eds.), *Off White: Readings on Race, Power, Society* , pp.210-228. New York: Routledge.