ETHNIC STEREOTYPES AND TELEVISION

An examination of white students' attitudes towards
ethnic stereotypes and television in
six midlands colleges

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SUMMARY

This research study sets out to identify and examine the ways in which the white majority have traditionally comprehended ethnic minority communities with particular reference to the role played by television in representing such communities. In the British context, television has come to dominate social and cultural life to the extent that the Reithian principles for television (that is, to educate, inform and entertain) have become crucially important in the maintenance, if not absolute creation, of notions of national culture. Given the concentration of ethnic minority communities in mainly inner-city areas, for the majority of white people, their only contact with such communities is through the vicarious experience afforded by television. The medium's role in representing ethnic communities honestly and realistically is thus vital and if for no other reason deserves careful examination.

My principal hypothesis is that television, through its characterisations of ethnic minority communities, maintains, reinforces and perpetuates stereotypical assumptions already held by the white majority about such communities, which hinder the pursuit of a harmonious and multi-cultural society.

In order to test this hypothesis, a survey was conducted with 650 white students attending further education colleges in the Midlands which sought to ascertain their attitudes towards ethnic stereotypes and television. Professionals working in the television industry were also interviewed and a short monitoring study of contemporary television fiction was later conducted. The survey findings suggest, inter alia, that young white people do make stereotypical judgments about ethnic minority people which conform to traditional assumptions; that inter-ethnic friendship tends to mediate the propensity to make more unfavourable assessments of ethnically-specific characteristics; and that the perception of ethnic minority communities in the real world closely parallel those which exist in the world of television fiction.

The specific merit of this study lies in its detailed examination of a significant and important sample population, the study both identifying general attitudes towards ethnic minority communities and also relating these general beliefs to student attitudes towards the ethnic portraits typically found in television. The study is thus able to establish that the ethnic stereotypes which exist in the popular white consciousness are regularly rehearsed through the contemporary medium of television.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"The British people have accepted millions of immigrants from the New Commonwealth since the war. As a result we have, for better or worse, ceased to be a white homogenous society and become a multi-racial society, with all the problems that brings...Unfortunately, the great and good of this country are not satisfied with having created a multi-racial society - they now want a multi-cultural society [and] we must stop encouraging the development of [such] society" (Hansard, 8.11.1989, pp.1108/9)

INTRODUCTION

The above quotation is taken from a statement made by John Townend, MP (Cons, Bridlington) who was responding to the House of Lords Amendment no.4 to the Employment Bill, requesting exemption for Sikhs from wearing safety helmets on construction sites. The notion that Britain is a multi-cultural society appears to have lost some of its credibility in recent years and the fact that 'ethnic' relations are discussed at all signifies that there is still a perception of particularity about the way in which black and white people interact which merits a separate category of social relation. The presumption of a more harmonious society, ushered in by the exciting language of multi-culturalism has sadly, and perhaps inevitably, remained unfulfilled.

The 1980s was a decade in which the dimension of ethnicity seemed to pervade all aspects of the burgeoning social agenda. Lord Scarman's post-

1981 comments, the Church of England's controversial report on inner-city deprivation ("Faith in the City", 1984), the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) equally damning "Black People and the Criminal Justice System" (1986) all provided ample evidence of the deprivations and disadvantages suffered by ethnic minority communities. It is the contention of this thesis, and part of its rationale, that the way in which the mass media, and specifically television, treat with issues incorporating such ethnic dimensions and the type of language and imagery commonly used in such discussions, perpetuates the particular and traditional perceptions of ethnic groups which have been consistently utilised by the white majority. The way in which the news and broadcast media concentrate on the problematic effects of multi-cultural Britain - for example, 'illegal' immigration or black crime or ethnic rivalry - fosters the view that there are only problems associated with the multi-cultural environment with no attendant, mitigating benefits.

The almost exclusive focus on such negative aspects of the multi-ethnic neighbourhood also serves to reinforce the view that ethnic minority groups are responsible for their own misfortune by frequently portraying such groups as passive victims, rather than looking to possible causal factors for their deprivations and disadvantage such as prejudice and discrimination. It is further argued that television fictions collude in the perpetuation of particular ethnic representations, at the very least because they fail to challenge stereotypical characterisations in popular entertainment programming. Whilst the educative, informational and entertainment functions of television, that is, its formal remit, are not in question, the power of television to alter beliefs or manipulate

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attitudes is rather more ambiguous. Can the way in which ethnic minority people are portrayed on television affect the viewer's personal perception of such groups in daily life and thus influence ethnic interaction? How powerful is television in shaping and influencing attitudes and possibly changing behaviour?

This study sets out to answer these questions and a fuller explanation of the research rationale and hypothesis is set out in Chapter 2. However, before these larger issues are considered it is important to understand exactly what is meant by the concepts which are so readily used in sociological discussions of minority-majority interaction. This chapter proceeds to briefly examine the major theories which have been postulated as appropriate frameworks within which to explore majority-minority relations and seeks to highlight the crucial differences between definitions of 'race' and 'ethnicity'.

EXPLANATORY MODELS OF MAJORITY-MINORITY INTERACTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the early part of this century ethnic minority communities were well established in Britain, albeit in small, localised pockets of the country. However, despite the fact that they constituted a tiny proportion of the total population, antagonism was nonetheless directed at these groups. Hiro reports that the first race riots occurred in Cardiff in 1919 and were quickly followed by riots in Glasgow, Hull, Manchester, Liverpool and London (Hiro, 1971). During this period, there were an estimated 30,000 members of ethnic communities living in Britain who were often blamed for

causing rioting, either because the riots were a direct consequence of their presence in Britain or because the ethnic communities were regarded as constituting part of the rioting fraternity itself (Hiro, 1971). Despite the small numbers of ethnic minority peoples, Barker & Drake argue that the twentieth century has witnessed a constant preoccupation with immigration levels, such emphasis having its roots in the time of Elizabeth I and emerging at various times since, particularly in this century.

> "The East End of London was being swamped by aliens who were coming in like an army of locusts eating up the native population or turning them out" (The Bishop of Stepney, writing in 1902, quoted in Barker and Drake, 1982, p.178)

Most contemporary theories of majority-minority interaction are and have been orientated towards status stratification or class-based explanations and away from the more biological deterministic models of the eighteenth and nineteenth Centuries. However, whilst using the internal space of the cranium as a reasonable and legitimate measure of intellectual ability may seem absurd in today's more enlightened times, it has to be accepted that all theoretical models are necessarily of their time and such biological determinist models were very popular in former times. However, whilst it may appear that significant progress has been made during the twentieth century towards more sophisticated models of social relations and away from the crude derivative analyses of earlier times, for example, using the term 'ethnic' rather than 'racial' when describing groups with similar phenotypical characteristics. But it could equally well be argued that such a shift is an exercise in label-swapping, that the process is simply one of semantics and that the fundamental problem of social and economic

inequality which exists in society between different groups is no nearer a solution now than before.

Race and Ethnicity

The words 'race' and 'ethnicity' are used almost interchangeably in much contemporary popular literature and even in academic writing there appears to be a similar confusion. However, the most common distinction is that race is used to describe groups who share specific physical characteristics such as skin colour, whilst 'ethnic' is used to describe groups which are culturally different from the majority group which may (for example, Romany travellers) or may not (for example, Afro-Caribbean people) share the same physical characteristics as the majority group. But ethnicity could conceivably be a characteristic of any group, even a majority, since it pertains to those aspects which bind the members of a group together and excludes all others.

The validity of the concept of race as a biological distinction is generally regarded as illegitimate by contemporary commentators although the term still enjoys popular usage as a descriptive tool. Ascribing individuals to particular races or racial groups is usually carried out on the basis of observable phenotypical characteristics without necessarily believing that such individuals are actually of a different 'race' to other people. If groups of individuals share particular cultural traits then it is argued here that such groups should more appropriately be described as ethnic groups and, where such groups are in a minority compared with the larger majority group, they should be described as 'ethnic minority' groups. For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'ethnic minority' will be

used to describe those groups which do not share the same phenotypical characteristics as the white majority, that is, are considered and treated differently because of their different skin colour. Notwithstanding the above, in the discussions of the survey findings carried out as part of this study, the categories of "black" and "Asian" are used since these (together with "white") were the categories listed in the survey questionnaire.

In any analysis of ethnic categorisation and labelling, there is inevitably a disjunction between self-identification and external ascription, where the majority seek to impose a label onto the minority, irrespective of the views of that minority. How individuals regard themselves and their own personal ethnic identity can be very different to the way in which they are regarded by others. In Hutnik's study of ethnic identity it was found that whilst Asian people tended to describe themselves by their religious affiliation ("I am a Sikh"), Afro-Caribbean people were more likely to describe their colour ("I am black") and white people to describe themselves by their nationality ("I am English") (Hutnik, 1985, p.306).

The Civil Rights campaigns in America in the 1960s and the 'Black Power' movement of the same period encouraged many Afro-Caribbean people living in Britain to adopt the term 'black' as a positive identity. Subsequently, though, the term 'black' has come to mean any individual who is not white and is used both in common speech and in the print and broadcast media. The term is also used to describe all those individuals who are the victims of racial discrimination, providing them with a uniting identity with which to campaign for racial equality.

However, although 'black' is often now used to describe anyone who is not white, regardless of culture or background, such reductionism is not always desired, particularly by unwilling and unwitting affiliates. Modood for example, whilst accepting the rationale behind using the label 'black', argues that the simplicity of the expression compromises both the concept of racial equality but more importantly the integrity of the Asian community (Modood, 1988). The thrust of Modood's argument is that the term 'black' should more appropriately be used exclusively to describe people of Afro-Caribbean origin since the term derived from that group's own such self-identity. Thus whilst Afro-Caribbean people define **themselves** as black, Modood argues that Asian people do not define themselves thus but suffer the consequences of such labelling in terms of diminished self-esteem and withdrawal from participation in political life.

"If the primary mode by which Asians are made to publicly relate to the rest of British society is through a black political identity then no one should be surprised if Asians remain politically under-represented and mis-represented and increasing numbers of successful Asians try to make themselves inconspicuous and opt for a path of apolitical assimilation" (Modood, 1988, p.399)

However, choosing such an 'opting-out' route could be simply the product of enhanced social status, of what has been described as the the middle-class 'sell-out', rather than a refusal to be labelled by others. Modood suggests that the majority of Asians would prefer to attach their own ethnic identity tag and, whilst admitting that he cannot prove his claim, states that the opposite view cannot be supported either. He makes no effort to suggest what alternative formulae might be more appropriate, although he does use what he describes as "the academic term, 'South

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Asian'" (Modood, 1988, p.397). Although the substance of Modood's argument is clearly valid, that is that individuals should have the right to self-identification, his particular emphasis is perhaps diversionary since the struggle for equality - for all, irrespective of ethnicity - must surely take precedence over identity considerations. It is still the case, after all, that despite how people might prefer to be described, they will still be labelled externally by majority preferred descriptions, as this thesis will amply demonstrate. As Goulbourne argues, the preoccupation with ethnic nomenclature and notions of ethnic separateness does not augur well for the goal of multi-culturalism and inter-ethnic harmony, where differences rather than similarities are stressed and feted (Goulbourne, forthcoming).

In Groups and Out Groups

The way in which groups desire to preserve and celebrate their identity and culture has and continues to be a significant focus for theoretical and empirical investigation. Van den Berghe, for example, is concerned to explain the resurgence of ethnic nationalism and suggests that human beings have a natural tendency to protect and promote their own kind, such favouring often resulting in nepotism. This is also the so-called "selfish gene" theory which is currently popular in socio-biology theory. Van den Berghe suggests that all groups are inclined to favour those who are like themselves either by way of special treatment, promotion, kindness or other supporting strategies. Individuals are equally disinclined to help or associate with anyone who is considered to be different to themselves. Van den Berghe's theory also includes notions of kinship and blood ties to

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reinforce the exclusivity of a particular group, preserving the group and strengthening it against outsider penetration (Van den Berghe, 1987). Although Van den Berghe was writing during the last decade, his arguments could as easily be used to explain, for example, the current turmoils in Armenia where the various ethnic groups are campaigning for their own individual cultures to be recognised by the Soviet authorities.

Barth also argues that groups have a desire to preserve their integrity by deliberately excluding outsiders thereby reinforcing the internal coherence of the group (Barth, 1969). The difficulty with this view is that it assumes that each separate group is a homogeneous unit, pursuing identical goals with identical aspirations and feelings. It makes no allowance for individual expression or autonomy and is, in any case confounded by a history scarred with the outcomes of intra-group conflict and war. Barth's thesis also implies that if all groups erect and preserve their own barriers to external penetration, then the notion of a harmonious multi-cultural community is rather a contradiction.

Whilst Rex characterises an ethnic (minority) group as typified by its exposure to oppression, exploitation and violence in varying degrees (Rex, 1983), Wagley & Harris suggest that such groups have a variety of distinguishing characteristics. They are subordinate sub-groups of a society; they have special physical or cultural traits which are held in low esteem by dominant groups; they are self-conscious units, bound together by particular and specific attributes which all members have in common and by the disadvantages which these attributes bring; membership of

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a group is hereditary, even if physical traits are less in evidence; and group members tend to inter-marry (Wagley & Harris, 1964). This analysis seems to be a comprehensive index of minority group characteristics and it is its all-embracing nature which ultimately reduces its impact as examples can always be found which defy one or more of the alleged characteristics.

Blauner cautions us to treat carefully the different experiences of colonised as opposed to migrant minority groups. He discusses the phenomenon of the Third World movement which grew up in the 1960s in America where the 'Third World' concept became a positive label which various minority groups attached to themselves to counter the externally constructed label of 'minority'. Blauner argues that by using the 'Third World' notion, a distinction is made, in the American context, between voluntary European settlers and **forced** colonised immigrants. Because the mode of entry in the country was different, so too were the experiences and treatment. Blauner suggests that the dominant majority perceive a difference between voluntary migrants and peoples who have been colonised and accord each group a different status. Since the forebears of black Americans entered the country as slaves, slaves they remain in the white American conscience, even though generations have been born free on American soil.

Blauner suggests that several significant differences exist between voluntary immigrant and colonised immigrant people, one of which is the former's ability to retain large parts of their culture through their status as free labourers. The social system of plantation life, on the

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other hand, ensured that African culture, at least in terms of free and open practice, was quickly destroyed, not least because of the dispersal of kinship groups. The Third World concept operates as an effort to dismiss the view that all ethnic minority groups should be analysed as if they constitute an homogenous group sharing the same experiences and history. The theory suggests similarities between the Third World within (in America) and the Third World without, identifying the position of Third World groups in America as being roughly co-terminus with the economic and social position of Third World countries in relation to the developed world. The theory uses a colonial model but, as Blauner himself points out, there are wide differences between the histories of Third World people, for example, between black Americans and American Indians, but Blauner argues that this simply points to the diversity of the colonial situation, it does not confound the theory itself.

Whilst Blauner's model seems quite persuasive, ultimately it has to do what other theories are accused of doing, namely, conflating the experiences of very different groups under the umbrella term of 'Third World'. The difference in social and economic experiences between the American Indian and the Afro-American is likely to be as great as that between an Italian- or Irish-American. Blauner appears to be simply substituting one aggregated group for another, with no real evidence to support his theory.

The Integration Model

For many race theorists, inter-racial harmony through integration and/or assimilation is the ultimate ideal. Park, writing in 1950 argued that

> "the race relations cycle which takes the form, to state it abstractedly, of contracts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation, is apparently progressive and irreversible. Customs regulations immigration restriction and racial barriers may slacken the tempo of the movement; may perhaps halt it altogether for a time; but cannot change its direction, cannot at any rate reverse it" (Park, 1950, p.36)

The analysis suggests not only that relations between ethnic groups are dynamic and continuous, but also that they are bound finally to result in integration. The model does not allow for conflict nor the possibility of opting-out from the apparently immutable destination.

Myrdal, who was also commenting on America during the period in which Parks was writing, argued that the sharing of a common value system and culture helped a society to cohere. The "American Dilemma" of which Myrdal writes is the moral one, which can accommodate contradictory attitudes such as a belief in justice together with a belief in the white man's superiority. Myrdal, in common with other theorists, believed that what people believe to be true is equally important as what is true, that views of social reality are not fixed or determined by outside experts but reside both in culture and individual attitude. The difficulty with this model is that it takes no account of structural and/or institutional racism nor the imperatives which govern discrimination and prejudice at the level of the individual.

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The suggestion that both immigrant and host communities have expectations of each other which are usually unrealistic is posited by Eisenstadt who suggests that it is frustration with unfulfilled aspirations which often causes conflict. He argues that the extent to which an immigrant (outsider) can be absorbed into the host (insider) culture depends on whether or not the aspirations of the outsider can be realised by a process of accommodation on the part of the insider group. However, Eisenstadt uses the term 'accommodation', and 'absorption' as if they were the same thing. What his theory seems to be implying, in the same way as Parks', is that the only reasonable aspiration for migrants to a host country is integration, the migrant internalising the culture of the host whilst abandoning his/her own. This theoretical model is ultimately compromised by its ethnocentric assumptions: there is no absolute imperative for such outsiders to become insiders, in fact the reverse would be more 'natural' since comfort would be gained from cherishing familiar cultural practices in an otherwise alien environment. There is no social or economic necessity for outsiders to become fully integrated into the host community over and above an understanding of those cultural practices which are necessary for social and economic participation, such as language and law. Provided the outsider understands the social and economic machinations of his/her chosen new environment, the experience of a new cultural dynamic should enhance rather than replace his/her original cultural repertoire. Thus culture cannot be regarded as a fixed and static set of practices but should rather be seen as a continuous process with new experiences enriching and modifying what has gone before.

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Shutz explores the idea of insiders and outsiders and the quest for ultimate integration. He considers the outsider approaching a strange group (the insider group) with a view to acceptance. He suggests that individuals carry a common-sense view of the world in their minds, shaped by personal experiences and methods of socialisation. An individual's social world is therefore comprehended through a system of

> "folkways, mores, laws, habits, customs, etiquette, fashions which...characterise - if not constitute - any social group at any given moment in its history" (Shutz in Bowker, 1976, p.101)

Shutz suggests that the social world of the individual has specific meanings for its actors in terms of being the location for action. the social actor need not know everything about his/her world, only the parts which are relevant to their own interests and actions. Shutz juxtaposes this personal orientation of the social actor with the impersonal and disinterested perspective of the onlooker or observer.

Because the social actor is selective about acquiring knowledge about the social world - needing only that which has a direct relevance to action - Shutz suggests that knowledge tends to be incoherent, partial and contradictory. This is also partly a function of the pragmatism with which individuals treat knowledge of their immediate social world. However, despite the omissions in knowledge, it provides a sufficiently coherent framework to allow the social actor to feel part of a group or society. Shutz describes the way in which an individual 'accepts' the validity of the cultural norms passed on by authority figures such as teachers and parents, as manifesting itself in the individual's consciousness as

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"thinking as usual". Is is the very fact of the stranger not sharing in the insider group's thinking as usual which serves to exclude her/him.

The stranger engages his/her own thinking as usual framework to comprehend new circumstances, including the formation of an objective idea about the host group. Shutz goes on to suggest that the stranger's pre-conceptions of the host group are inadequate because they were formed in isolation and it then becomes necessary to establish personal interaction with the host group. The stranger must then spend time collecting knowledge about the new group's cultural patterns and, having gained superficial knowledge, must master the culture so that it becomes part of the stranger's own thinking as usual. Even if the new language has been learnt, the stranger is still marked out as different because s/he can never share in the accumulated culture of generations. So, for example, the newspaper proprietor, Robert Maxwell constantly referred to a member of staff who was retiring as "Big Les", because he had no knowledge of what the name "Biggles" signified. Such is the powerful and often unconscious nature of cultural icons and images which become absorbed into the fabric and language of history. It is difficult, without a thorough knowledge of another group's thinking as usual, to pass as an insider.

If the stranger is unable to replace her/his own culture with that of the new insider group, s/he becomes marginalised and blamed for remaining outside the host culture. Acceptance of a new culture is a continuous process and it is only when the stranger looks upon the new culture as

their own, and has mastered it completely that "the stranger is no stranger any more and his specific problems have been solved" (Shutz in Bowker, 1976, p.111)

Again, we see that for Shutz as with many other integrationists, the ideal put forward for attainment is that of integration into the host society. This assumes firstly, that in each and every instance, migrants actually want to be fully integrated and secondly, that an inability to become integrated is the fault of the outsider for being unable to understand the cultural patterns of the new group. He suggests that over time thisdifficulty can be overcome by a "continuous process of inquiry into the cultural pattern of the approached group" (Shutz, in Bowker, 1976, p.111). But what if it is the approached group which prohibits the entry of the outsider, rather than the cultural pattern? Or rather, what if it is the individual members of society as well as the cultural structures of society which prohibit?

Social status model

A social status model for explaining inter-ethnic relations is put forward by Rex & Moore whereby members of different groups have different status positions in the social hierarchy and where the actions of some groups may have unseen but nonetheless detrimental affects on other groups.

> "The determinants of an ongoing social system are to be found in the varied and sometimes conflicting interests of the typical actors in that system" (Rex & Moore, 1967, p.4)

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In other words as we pursue our own goals, as individuals and in groups, it is likely that any successful effort on our part will mean a corresponding disappointment for someone else, intended or not. C Wright Mills suggests that in order to understand the ways in which social relations work, we have to look back to yesterday and forward to tomorrow. We must look at both the individual and at the group when regarding contemporary social problems.

> "Perhaps the most fruitful distinction is between 'the personal
> troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure'"
> (C Wright Mills, 1959, p.14)

How individuals perceive problems must be examined together with how "values cherished by an individual are felt by him to be threatened" (C Wright Mills, 1959, p.15) Even though he was writing 40 years ago, Wright Mills' caution to look at society from all points of view is still relevant.

A strong thematic motif which occurs in Rex' work is his focus on the colonial experience as the primary site for the generation of notions of white (British) superiority over all other groups. Thus he argues that aspects of history seep into the collective cultural consciousness of particular groups and orientate their perceptions. Rex argues that four hundred years of empire have left their imprint on the national consciousness of white Britons and encouraged an ethnocentric attitude towards groups which are deemed outsiders. Problems will inevitably arise when migrants from the 'old empire' attempt to find a place for themselves in British society, as their history of subjugation, if not always

enslavement, translates itself in the British mind as inferiority (Rex, 1983). The legacy of white imperialism is the perpetuation of the myth of natural white superiority.

Rex' theory also includes an element of class-based analysis whereby simple capital-led exploitation and oppression in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries masqueraded as natural inferiority and was justified thus. Rex has been criticised on several counts including his use of 'race relations' as a descriptive tool. The argument against the use of such a term is that it presumes that relations between different racial groups are special and different to relations within a group and encourages the 'racial' dimension to assume a false importance. Not only does it make the notion of race itself a special case, it also obscures the fundamental debate which should focus on class inequalities, issues of race being simple incidentals. Rex has also been criticised for insisting on a distinction between black and white working class, thereby creating division where there should be unity. However, whether or not sets of social relations should be called 'race relations' arguably makes little difference to the social actor who recognises the term and whose relations and behaviour are influenced by ethnic considerations. In any event, it cannot be legitimately argued that the riots which erupted during the 1980s, the annual coverage of events such as the Notting Hill Carnival and the revival of the National Front as a serious political force in France and Germany, should be considered in terms of simple class conflict, resulting from false consciousness on the part of the people.

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Rex argues that in order to understand society, it is first necessary to look at the way in which social structures and social situations affect the individual and his actions and the role that ideas play in social interaction (Rex, 1983). In concert with Berger & Luckman, Rex argues that knowledge operates at the level of high theory but also at the level of the everyday by influencing personal and therefore inter-ethnic relations. Thus for individuals to be able to comprehend an experience and share it with others, there must first be agreement on definitions of social experience, and these definitions may then take on the appearance of stereotypes or typifications. This appears to be an extremely persuasive argument since, at an individual level, it is impossible to make sense of a new experience without contrasting it or comparing it with previous experiences. The new experience then gets stored and is perhaps brought out at a later date for comparison with another 'new' experience. Thus relations between different ethnic groups are influenced by a variety of factors including experience and received 'knowledge' and the personal interpretation of reality or fact has to be acknowledged before the behaviour of society and its structures can be analysed.

For Simpson & Yinger an understanding of sociology, anthropology and social psychology are necessary in order to make sense of those behaviours of men and women which are described as race relations. They insist that there is no special theory called 'race relations', there is only a theory of human

behaviour. Equally, there is no one academic discipline which can claim to be more appropriate in explaining such behaviour than others. They suggest that

> "relations among races have a great deal in common with relations among groups that think of themselves as different on other grounds - culture, nationality, religion. Race differences are primarily important for what people believe them to be" (Simpson & Yinger, 1972, p.30)

They do however acknowledge that other people observe certain differences between groups but suggest that in this instance, race is used as a symbol for separating people and subsequently exposing them to differential treatment. For Banton, too, the terms race and race relations are fraught with linguistic problems, so varied are people's understanding of the terms. Banton suggests that interaction which takes place between two parties should be described as a racial relationship if one or both parties believes that they should behave or act differently because the other party is of a different race. Thus relations between black and white people only become racial when one side is treated differently by the other because of perceived racial differences. Using this model, the oft-stated striving for 'good' race relations is a contradiction in terms.

Banton argues that if people were more enlightened then they would classify others on a moral basis of good/bad rather than on physical and fixed attributes such as skin colour so that physical traits would cease to have any social significance. However, it is not simply a question of enlightenment or rather ignorance which encourages categorisation in terms of stereotypes, but a matter of history, personal preference and laziness. It is much easier to utilise generic descriptions which are based on observable characteristics than engage with each new person or event as a

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completely new experience. Banton suggests that much of the imagery which we have about race comes from the media. A theme that underlies much of Banton's theory is that of rational choice, whereby the choice made by an individual or groups of individuals who share the same goals, will have an intended outcome for the originating individual/group but also an unintended outcome for other individuals and/or groups (Banton, 1987).

As Banton's theory has a status-based explanation, it suggests that those with highest status will pursue goals which have a detrimental affect on the goal attainment of lower status groups. Banton's theoretical position emphasises the individual nature of social action as an explanation for social relations between groups. This implies that more satisfactory social relations could be achieved if action and behaviour could be changed. Whilst the theory appears to be an adequate explanation for individual action it does not treat with how and why different levels of status were originally attributed to different groups, nor does it address itself to the notion of structural or institutional racism. Banton's theory is predicated upon the view that human action is based upon rational and logical choices which, although perhaps true in some cases, cannot be true for all actions, and other explanations must be sought. Social action might, ideally, be based on rational and logical forethought, but in reality the information upon which individuals make choices is often imperfect, incomplete, misunderstood or unreliable in any combinations. No matter how logical or rational subsequent action may be, the erroneous predicates which formed the base for action guarantee that the outcome may be other than desired or expected.

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Plural Society Model

The plural society thesis seeks to explain the nature of ethnic relations in any given society in terms of the accommodation of a variety of different groups to each other. One of the major exponents of this theoretical model was Furnivall who wrote, among other things, about Burmese society where he had worked extensively. Commenting on Burmese society, Furnivall notes that there exists

> "a medley of peoples..each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language...there is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines...natives, Chinese, Indians and Europeans all have different functions..the obvious and outstanding result of contact between East and West has been the evolution of a plural society" (Furnivall, 1948, pp.304-305)

For Furnivall, the rise of plural societies is a result of economic life no longer being in the control of the social will. In other words, once a consensus breaks down on what goods should be produced for the benefit of the entire community, then economic activity is given over to market forces. A plural society is thus characterised by competition between groups where each group pursues its own goals and lives almost separate lives but bound by a shared economic system. Furnivall's original concept of plural society was substantially developed and expanded by several social theorists, most notably Michael Smith whose main interest is in examining the variations in institutional form which occur in plural societies (Smith, 1965, 1974). For Smith, the plural aspect of plural societies concerns the cultural and social aspects of everyday life but excludes the political dimension since he argues that there must be at least a minimal consensus on the institution of government in order for any

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society to function without war. Thus the political and legal framework of a society is accepted and shared by all citizens, and it is the social and cultural practices of different groups within the larger community which constitute its plural nature.

Commenting on American society, Smith suggests that it contains numerous sub-groups whose membership is defined by religious, political, cultural or other such preference. Where these groups consist of white Americans

"by themselves such ethnic and religious affiliations entail no direct or systematic differentiations or inequalities in the public sphere, in the educational, economic, social and political systems, although they provide effective bases for the organisation of corporate groups in pursuit of common interests" (Smith, 1974, p.225)

Thus for white Americans, membership of a particular interest group of whatever type makes no difference to their socio-economic status in society generally. However, if the membership of any of these groups is black and for Smith's purposes the fact of being black automatically places an individual into a group which is identified as a racial group, then it is immediately deemed inferior. Smith argues that despite the fact that black Americans share the same contemporary culture as their white neighbours, their history and experience is very different. For white American society, the original entry of black people into their country as slaves has encouraged a perception of black people as inferior. The way in which white settlers initially conquered and colonised the indigenous American Indian population is added proof of the superiority of the white man. The way in which Smith suggests the perceptions of black Americans have been

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formulated by whites provides a parallel to the British experience of empire.

Smith suggests that racial divisions constitute a social boundary between two closed sections of society and, as such, the society can be said to constitute a plural society. However, Smith is anxious to identify what he considers to be the main difference between a plural society and one which has plural features. Where a society consists of groups which practice modified forms of what are basically the same cultural mores such as marriage, religious worship or kinship patterns, then that society is not a plural one. For Smith, a plural society is characterised by the domination of one distinct cultural group over other groups, the dominant group usually being a minority group. This implies that a plural society is usually one which has been colonised by an invading force which then sets up the mode of government and rules over the indigenous peoples.

The notion of the plural society is clearly ambiguous and fraught with confusion with much speculation on the true nature of such societies. Kuper puts forward the thesis that societies should be examined for evidence of pluralism where

> "the stability of plural societies is seen as precarious and threatened by sharp cleavages between different plural sections whose relations to each other are generally characterised by inequality" (Kuper & Smith, 1959, p.7)

Van den Berghe also argues that plural societies are characterised by conflict and domination but suggests that communities exhibit greater or lesser degrees of pluralism, rather than constituting plural societies (Van

den Berghe, 1969). Michael Smith in any case appears to be defeated by the logic of his own argument when he says that the practice of different forms of the same basic institution does not necessarily connote a plural society. If that is so, then no society can really be deemed a plural society since the basic components of culture such as family, religion, music, art and so on, are present, arguably in all societies, but the tradition and practices will obviously vary. Where do heterogeneous societies stop and plural societies begin? The use of the notion of plural societies as an explanatory tool for understanding social relations in western society and particularly in Britain is limited since Britain does not exhibit the key characteristic of a plural society, as identified above, that is, domination by a cultural minority. As Braithwaite points out, the mere existence of an ethnic or cultural group which practices different social traditions does not necessarily lead to the types of problems associated with plural societies.

Class-based Analyses

Many contemporary theorists use a class-based analytical framework with which to understand and explain social relations between different ethnic groups. One of the principal writers of the 1940s to provide a Marxist perspective on the relationship between race and class was Oliver Cox who argues that racism and race prejudice are ideological constructs, generated

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by capital to serve its needs and protect its interests.

> "Race prejudice is the social attitude propagated among the
> public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatising
> some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the
> group itself or its resources or both may be justified" (Cox,
> 1959, p.393)

Thus the working class are hoodwinked into believing that black workers are not part of their group, that they are in some way different if not explicitly inferior. Racism therefore ensures that the exploitation of labour is maintained by obscuring the more fundamental problem of class inequalities at the expense of ethnic minority workers who are doubly exploited both because of their class position but also their status within that class. For Cox, the race element in social relations is a false one, where the real concern should focus on the capital/labour dichotomy. The problem with this position is that it implies a passive and ignorant working class fooled by capital into behaving in ways which contradict the former's own internal need for unity. The theory cannot comprehend of other motivating factors for racist behaviour and attitude such as irrational prejudice, ethnocentrism or the fulfilment of individual goals. It also implies that the working class is a cohesive group which has common aims and objectives. Whilst this might have been the case several decades ago, it is certainly not the case now. The conflation of race elements of social relations into class elements cannot fully explain prejudiced behaviour or racial bias in social structures and institutions and can only provide a partial explanation.

A rather different class analysis is provided by Miles who argues that 'race' is a value-laden and subjective term which, because of its over-use and ambiguity has been rendered illegitimate either in itself or as a descriptive or explanatory tool. The fundamental focus for Miles is the ideology of racism, how it originated and the ways in which it is reproduced. He suggests that the continued use of terms such as 'race' and 'race relations' gives a false prominence to the race dimension in what are, for Miles, class-based relations.

> "A sociology of race relations fails to attribute sufficient analytical significance to the position of black people in class relations...the analytical problem is to locate the place and impact of what I shall term the process of racial categorisation on class relations" (Miles, 1982, p.4)

Miles' substantive theory eschews what he terms "economistic Marxism" by which he means the view that racism was invented by capital to divide the working class, and instead looks to the position of migrant labour in Britain and explores specifically the ways in which part of the migrant labour force is racially categorised. He suggests, in concert with Cox, that black migrant workers are doubly disadvantaged because of their class position and the additional burden of racial prejudice and deals with intra-class conflict by utilising the concept of what he terms "class fractionalisation". By this Miles means that within any group, there will be sub-groups who will wish to have their own affiliations based on political, religious or social criteria. These discrete sub-groups will necessarily exclude people, and some of those excluded will be black migrants. However, both indigenous and migrant workers all share the same class since whatever their individual goals, their relationship to the mode of production will remain identical.

One of the main difficulties with Miles' theory is his explicit denial of race as a legitimate concept, whilst accepting that social actors might deem it an adequate descriptive tool. Whilst it might suit the 'radical' theorist to deny the validity of this or that concept, in this case 'race', when explanations are sought for the everyday behaviour of individuals, their own experiential categories through which their action is given meaning must also be considered. Thus, if an individual's behaviour towards another is informed by perceptions of that person's skin, then 'race' must be a valid concept deserving investigation.

Race as a political category, whereby the term acts as a unifier to effect action is suggested by Gilroy, who also calls for a re-definition of the term class. Gilroy examines class formation and change in class structures and the part played by ethnic minority groups in the processes of change. He suggests that a strict Marxist analysis of social relations cannot adequately account for the disadvantaged positions of groups who do not share the same class background such as women, young adults and disabled people.

> "If class analysis is to retain a place in explaining contemporary politics in general and the relationship between black and white workers, citizens, neighbours and friends, in particular, it must be ruthlessly modernised" (Gilroy, 1987, p.19)

Gilroy suggests that groups, rather than classes, form, dissolve and reform depending upon particular historical circumstances and coincidence of interests - groups get together to pursue common goals. Because of his dissatisfaction with the economic emphasis of class, he uses the term

"urban social movement" to describe groups which have a common interest, not necessarily economic, but who act collectively to attain group objectives. There does not appear to be a direct relationship between race and class for Gilroy because he implies that people will form urban social movements for reasons other than trying to improve their economic position. Thus the key to understanding racial conflict is to be found in understanding what factors influence social action. Gilroy remains rather unclear as to how the social researcher might begin to identify such factors since the theory implies that the transient nature of groups will essentially prohibit their analysis. However it seems clear that although Gilroy views race and class as two different concepts, he accepts that they can impact upon each other and as such, should be viewed together when attempting to examine the nature of social relations.

The major limitation to any theory which utilises some form of Marxist analysis is that it has to be deterministic and must result in finding capital culpable for whatever problem is under discussion. To reduce race problems to class problems is to deny the possibility of all other motivating forces for action, such as ethnocentrism, irrational prejudice and personal goal-attainment, dismissing them all as false consciousness. It is suggested here that a more satisfactory analytical framework might be achieved by substituting status for class as the stratification index with which to examine social relations in contemporary society and to explore the ways in which social status is attributed to and by particular groups within society.

Whilst concepts such as 'race' and 'ethnicity' enjoy a deal of theoretical examination in academic discourses of inter-ethnic relations in Britain, it is suggested here that for many white Britons, knowledge of ethnic communities is afforded exclusively through media portraits and discussions. Whilst the written media has been the traditional vehicle for transmitting information about cultural life, itself making a unique contribution to the cultural repertoire, it is argued here that the twentieth century has witnessed a transformation in bringing 'culture' to the masses. Television has not only become the primary disseminator of information about the world but also provides the most popular source of entertainment, replacing the cinema and theatre, to become the locus of cultural life. How then does the television image represent ethnic minority groups and their contribution to British life? The answers to this question form the basis of this study and the following chapters seek to explore aspects of ethnic representation and their affect and influence on the white viewing public.

> "popular ideas about racial relations reflect individual experiences and the images generated by the mass media" (Banton, 1988, p.15)

"Descent by blood counts a good deal. Heredity it is called....From the Saxon strain we have our regard for fair dealing. From the Viking, the hardihood to withstand the storm. From the Norman, the capacity to lead. All these strains combine to produce - as they have done for the last 900 years - our native English race" (Rt. Hon. Lord Denning, 1981, pp.v-vi)

"We can get to know only a few kin and friends intimately as individuals. Others we have to categorise through stereotypes" (Jonathan Benthall, Director of the Royal Anthropological Institute, TES, 26.12.1980)

INTRODUCTION

The ways in which ethnic minority communities are commonly perceived in contemporary times have their provenance in a much earlier period as has been consistently argued in this study so far. This chapter seeks to identify the major theoretical models which constitute the precursors of current ethnic representations, if not the historical bases for academic discourse. The main section discusses the key theoretical models which were highly influential on public opinion in previous times. The latter section briefly examines the more stereotypical representations of ethnic minority groups which have traditionally been utilised in popular 'adventure' fictions of the nineteenth century.

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EARLY THEORIES OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCE

Much of the early writings on race and ethnicity emerged from travellers' tales and written accounts of explorations, and later exploitations, conducted by voyagers travelling to the African coast (see Fryer 1984, Walvin 1973). Notwithstanding the above, Miles comments that discourses concerned with notions of 'otherness' existed prior even to these early explorations, since Europe had for several centuries been colonised by the superior powers of the Islamic world (Miles, 1989, p.13) Although many of the reports brought home by travellers were factual and alluded to the high living standards and riches of some of the African merchants, such facts were often interspersed with a great deal of fiction.

> "...the Ethiopians had no noses...the Arimapsi had a single eye
> in the forehead...the Anthropophagi [lived] on human flesh...the
> Gamphasantes went all naked...the Blemmyes had no heads at all
> but eyes and mouths in their breasts" (Hacket, 1566, in Fryer,
> 1984, pp.6-7)

Thus before most white Britons had actually seen ethnic minority peoples in Britain, they already had a **knowledge** of such groups garnered from distorted tales in cheap novels and folk stories which, in addition to fable, encouraged a strong fear of the unknown. Barthelemey, for example, argues that the English language itself connotes blackness with sin and evil so that such association was already well-established by the time that ethnic minority groups became visible in Britain. Dramatic plays at court, known as court masques, are recorded as early as 1510 where actors played in black-face to demonstrate the tension between good and evil (Barthelemey, 1987).

Ethnic minority communities have been established in Britain since at least the mid-sixteenth century (not including the various conquering forces such as the Romans) most of whom were brought forcibly into the country and worked mainly as servants and sometimes as court entertainers or prostitutes (Fryer, 1984). By the end of the sixteenth century, the black population in Britain was deemed undesirable and Elizabeth I issued a declaration thus:

> "Her Majestie understanding that there are of late divers blackmoores brought into this realme, of which kind of people there are allready here to manie...Her Majesty's leasure therefore ys that those kind of people should be sent forth of the land, and for that purpose there ys direction given to this bearer Edward Banes to take of those blackmoores that in this last voyage under Sir Thomas Baskerville were brought into this realme the nomber of tenn, to be transported by him out of the realme. Wherein wee require you to be ayding and assysting unto him as he shall have occacion thereof not to faile" (Fryer, 1984, p.10)

Efforts to rid England of these **blackmoores** were unsuccessful as was a declaration in similar vein five years later. From the beginning of the seventeenth century the black presence in Britain was firmly established and by the eighteenth century there were an estimated 10,000 ethnic minority people living in the country (Fryer, 1984). Deakin suggests that because of the centrality of the ports of London in commercial and economic activity, the East End and Stepney "attracted successive waves of immigrants" (Deakin in Bowker, 1976, p.159) who were looking for work and cheap accommodation.

Vizram suggests that an Indian presence can be located in Britain from the early seventeenth century mainly as a result of the formation of the East

India Company in 1599 and the subsequent travels of white speculators who returned to Britain with Indian servants. Ayahs (Indian nurse-maids) and lascars (Indian sailors) were very popular as servants with English people because they were efficient and, more importantly, a plentiful supply of cheap labour. Although many ayahs and lascars were free labourers, they were often treated no better than slaves. However, the services of many Indians were only required for the duration of the passage back to England. Despite any contract which might have been agreed with their employers, on arrival in England these servants were abandoned and left to fend for themselves. As reports of such incidents became more widespread, letters started appearing in the press calling the East India Company to take responsibility for these stranded people and give them free passage back to India (Vizram, 1986). Although at the time the Indian population was very small, Vizram comments that "the alien population of Britain was tolerated but racial prejudice abounded" (Vizram, 1986, p.56).

Barthelemy argues that social comment on minority ethnic groups often took dramatic form in vernacular plays so that

> "blacks [were] consistently assigned the role of the other...most of all the audience understood exactly what it means to be black...to be black is to be denied everything that the learned tradition has canonised" (Barthelemy, 1987, p.41)

He suggests that part of the moral theme of plays of this kind was that the black characters themselves knew that they were evil and accepted that not only could they never fit into British society, but that the society would always do its best to exclude them. In such a representation, all parties agreed that being black was a blight and only whiteness was acceptable.

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By the seventeenth century both black and Asian people were recorded as performing in the Lord Mayor's Pageant and black drummers were recruited as military bandsmen for the British army in the mid-seventeenth century (Fryer, 1984). As more contact was made with ethnic minority peoples through expeditions, so the theorising about ethnic difference began to take shape. Much of the early writings on race were descriptive and moralistic, where the christian/pagan dichotomy was a significant theme. Academic writing on the subject tended to emerge from anthropology which discipline had more or less monopolised the field of enquiry.

Walvin suggests that it was not until slavery had become systematically organised in the late seventeenth century that notions of inferiority and superiority became part of race theory. As justifications were required to support slave activity, so theories were devised to provide such support. Prior to slavery, although black people were seen as essentially different to whites, they were not seen as inherently inferior.

> "to justify his [African] importation, his slavery, his freedom and finally his position as a free man, Englishmen conjured up a variety of stereotyped images of the negro best suited to each particular purpose. Almost without exception these images which made such an impression on the public at large, bore little resemblance to fact. Caricature rather than truth was the hallmark of the English impression of the negro" (Walvin, 1987, p.71)

For Asheron, too, the concept of ethnocentrism was closely linked to the early period of slavery. He argues that in some of the first examples of colonisation, for example, the Dutch in South Africa, society was stratified on religious lines, with the literate christians dominating the illiterate pagans. However, once a person embraced christianity and was

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baptised, s/he then achieved the status of a free woman or man - it was only when slavery became a serious commercial business that inherent inferiority arguments began to surface.

> "Thus economic factors began to intrude and undermine the original christian/heathen status differentiation. In place of the latter distinction an economic and social hierarchy based on skin pigmentation was set up" (Asheron, 1953, p.62)

Although Asheron is commenting on the South African experience, his explanation could equally well apply to all countries which traded in slaves and which have a colonial history, particularly Britain.

Eighteenth Century Theories

The eighteenth century saw slavery and the slave trade become an extremely viable business venture both at home and abroad and advertisements to buy and sell slaves (usually children) became a frequent feature in magazines.

> "To be sold, a negro boy aged fourteen years old, warranted free from distemper and has had those diseases fatal to that colour; his price is £25 and would not be sold but the person he belongs to is leaving off business. Apply at the bar of the George coffee-house in Chancery Lane over the Gate" (London Advertiser, 1756 cited in Little, 1947)

As British enterprises became successful, notions of empire disguised as national pride became the accepted stance.

> "Intellectuals associated with the romantic movement in thought and literature were turning away from the universalism of the Enlightenment and embracing at least implicitly, concepts of inbred national character and genius that could readily be transmuted into concepts of "racial" superiority" (Frederickson, 1971, p.97)

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As printing processes became more developed during the eighteenth century written material became more widespread and accessible so that the already existing stereotypes of black people were perpetuated and reinforced through graphic exaggeration and caricature. This imagery was supplemented in the literature by numerous tracts by white plantation owners, anxious to provide justifications for slavery.

> the negro is possessed of passion not only strong but ungovernable; a mind dauntless, warlike and unmerciful; a temper extremely irascible; a disposition indolent, selfish and deceitful.." (Gentleman's Magazine, 1788 cited in Husband, 1987, p.60)

Whilst writings on race in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were orientated towards theories of difference, it was arguably in the nineteenth century that serious studies in biological determinism began to flourish. It is interesting to note that the more sophisticated and derogatory characterisations of ethnic minority peoples emerged at more or less the same time that European slavery was abolished. Although it is often thought that Lord Mansfield's judgment of 1772, whereby the black slave James Somerset was discharged from being forcibly returned to the plantation of his 'master', heralded in the demise of slavery, the practice was still popular up until at least the 1830s (Shyllon, 1974).

However, prior to the nineteenth century, Miles argues that most European representations and ideas about non-European peoples were ideas about differentness rather than racist descriptions. He argues that notions of 'race' and 'racial superiority' were not popular concepts before the end of the eighteenth century and that the representations which exist now have

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their roots in history.

> "Contemporary representations are always the product of historical legacy and active transformation in the light of prevailing circumstances including the pattern of class relations" (Miles, 1989, pp.39-40)

Although Mosse suggests that environmentalist theories were popular during the early part of the nineteenth century which explained the differences between ethnic groups in terms of differing environmental factors (see Lamarck, 1814 and Buffon, 1801). Biddis comments that despite the variety of explanations postulated for ethnic difference

> "where Britons came closest to unanimity was in their reluctance to allow that common ancestry implied contemporary equality with men so strange in custom and so heathen in worship" (Biddis, 1979, p.75)

Nineteenth Century Theories

It was during the nineteenth century that sophisticated theories of race radically altered, when doubt began to be cast on the notion that all peoples were descended from a common parentage. The idea of common descent had never been seriously questioned before, since early theories were explicitly grounded in the biblical tradition. However, a biological deterministic model of mankind began to emerge which suggested that there had been created several **types** of man in a hierarchical system (with caucasians at the top) and that causal associations could be inferred between physical characteristics and cultural and intellectual capabilities.

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Arthur de Gobineau was perhaps the most influential exponent of this theoretical model. His most significant contribution to race theory was "Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races" published in 1853 in which he attempted to demonstrate that inequality between different "racial types" was natural by comparing the accomplishments of the white races with the primitiveness of black people.

"I have convinced myself that everything great, noble and fruitful in the works of man on this earth, in science and in civilisation derives from a single starting point, in the development of a single germ and the result of a single thought; it belongs to one family alone [white], the different branches of which have reigned in all the civilised countries of the universe.." (Gobineau, cited in Biddis, 1970, p.42)

Gobineau's main theory was predicated upon the notion of a tripartite division of racial types, the whites, the yellows and the blacks all of whom, for Gobineau, had readily identifiably characteristics which were true for every member of each particular 'race'. Thus, black people were inherently lacking in intellectual ability "...his intellect will always move within a narrow circle", yellow people have "a general proneness to obesity [and] little physical energy and inclined to apathy", whereas white people are "gifted with reflective energy [and] an extreme love of liberty" (Biddis, 1970, p.135). The strength of this ethnocentric perception can still be seen in some of the work of contemporary writers. Halstead, for example, writing in 1989, questions the basis for rejecting theories of 'race' as explanations for physical and intellectual difference.

"It needs to be acknowledged that the Asian communities, from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or from East Africa belong to the Caucasoid race or sub-species. The Afro-Caribbeans are Negroid and the immigrants from Hong Kong, China & Japan Mongoloid" (Halstead, 1989, p.11)

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Such a typology would not be out of place in the biological determinist theories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The contemporary writer, Chinweizu, argues that African history needs to be retrieved from obscurity since the African nations have never been allowed access to their own culture. He argues that current investigations into black history have shown that one people who have been acknowledged as having an ancient civilisation, that is, the Egyptians, were black and that a rejection of the 'blackness' of the Egyptian people is a consequence of what he describes as "white skin chauvinism" (Chinweizu, 1987, p.83).

One of the central tenets of Gobineau's theory was a belief in the 'Aryan' myth of civilisation where he blamed the downfall of western civilisation generally and the French aristocracy in particular on tainted white blood-lines caused by too much "mixing" between the races. 'Aryan' is a Sanskrit word meaning people speaking Indo-European languages and it is believed that the 'Aryan' race originated in South-West Asia (Collins Concise Encyclopedia, 1978). The mythical element is firstly that such people existed under such a name, second, that they established an early civilised society and third, that they were the original master 'race' from which all other 'white' races are derived. In other words the 'Aryan' myth is a specific aspect of a more general ethnocentric belief in white superiority. For Gobineau, then, the natural superiority of the white race(s) has been diluted by the craven and misguided desire for inter-racial sexual alliances.

However, Gobineau did not entirely disagree with a small measure of miscegenation since he believed that a little variety was beneficial to the

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blood-lines, but he insisted that the dominance of the superior white blood-lines must be maintained for civilised society to thrive. Despite his insistence on racial 'purity' Gobineau allows that true genius is often born out of a 'misalliance' of culture.

Gobineau's explicit theory is suffused with racist imagery and description, elevating the white man to a position of cultural primacy through a thoroughly false interpretation of historical achievement and alleged success. His hierarchical taxonomy of racial types was clearly predicated upon ethnocentric assumptions, where non-white peoples are apparently devoid of any of the traits which allegedly characterise the civilised human being. Whilst Gobineau's theoretical model is dismissed by contemporary academics (although not all) for its bigoted assumptions and racist ideology, in the period in which Gobineau was writing his ideas were very persuasive, particularly so because of the 'scientific' bases from which they were derived. In addition to the legitimacy accorded such a 'scientific' model, it was probably also supported because of the seductive notion of according blame without rather than within. If the downfall of western civilisation and the diminishing power of the French aristocracy could be located in unnatural and irresistible biological urges which could not be assuaged, then positing a realistic solution to the social ills of the time would be unnecessary.

At the same time that Gobineau was expounding his miscegenationist theory in France, British (and other) academics were facing an assault on previously held beliefs in human provenance as a result of the publication of Charles Darwin's seminal study "On The Origin of Species" published in

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1859 and his later work "The Descent of Man" published in 1871. During the second half of the nineteenth century, many commentators incorporated aspects of Darwinian theory into their own scholarly treatises. Wallace, for example, suggested that once the physical set of man had been finally accomplished, the next stage of development was intellectual ability. His theory also supported the argument that environmental factors influenced such tendencies since the climate of the northern hemisphere encouraged a hardier, more ingenious race of men than that of the south which provided food in abundance and encouraged a much lazier style of life.

> ..."and is it not the fact that in all ages, and in every quarter
> of the globe, the inhabitants of temperate have been superior to
> those of tropical countries?" (Wallace, 1864, p.165 in Biddis,
> 1979)

In order to encourage survival of the fittest and to ensure that only the best and most able **did** survive, assisted selection was advocated (and still is) by enthusiastic followers of eugenics. Galton, an early proponent of eugenics argued that since intelligence was inherited in the same way as physical characteristics, then those groups with superior intelligence, that is, white people, should be encouraged to procreate whereas those with low intelligence, that is, all non-white groups should be restricted if not prohibited from having children. He argued that if this was done, it would only take a few generations to see an enormous improvement in the "breed of mankind" (Galton, 1865, p.320 in Biddis, 1979).

The theory of society as a self-regulating system consisting of mutually dependant institutions which exert force over each other was put forward by Herbert Spencer, a highly influential English nineteenth century theorist,

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"That all men should be alike or equal, by any standard whatever, is contrary to all the facts of human nature and all the conditions of human life" (Sumner, 1963, p.43)

Like many of his contemporaries, when Sumner writes about other cultures he uses paternalistic language and endows the customs and beliefs of native groups with child-like and irrational charm.

"Today the Papuans all smoke white clay pipes. Four weeks later no one will want to smoke a pipe [instead] all run around with red umbrellas.." (Sumner, 1963, p.187)

When discussing slavery, Sumner concentrates on the various forms of slavery which have occurred within rather than between racial groups, implying that it is human nature for one man to oppress another. Although he does accept the profit motive associated with slavery, his primary focus is on the naturalness of this activity. He was astute and honest enough, however, to see that the eventual abolition of slavery was a simple expedient, carried through because of the prevailing climate and anti-slavery pressure.

"No philosophical dogmas caused slavery to be abolished, so no philosophical dogmas can prevent its reintroduction if economic changes should make it fit and suitable again" (Sumner, 1963, p.266)

At least Sumner begins to give credence to the idea that factors other than simple human survival instincts have a decisive influence upon social structures and behaviour, such as economic interests which are about wealth accumulation and exploitation and not natural selection. As an explanatory framework for understanding social relations between different ethnic

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Charles Sumner. Sumner published several articles in the late 1880s making the case for free competition using Darwin's theory of natural selection although he became more supportive of interventionist strategies in later years. He was a staunch supporter of laissez-faire policies, arguing that to interfere with natural law was to encourage the survival of the unfittest and by according equal status to weak and strong alike, the natural resources which man had wrested from nature would be greatly reduced.

Although Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest and natural selection does not explicitly attribute superiority to the fittest, in Sumner's condemnation of interventionist measures, he says

> "..rattlesnakes survive where horses perish...a highly cultivated
> white man may die where Hottentots flourish.." (Sumner, quoted in
> Bannister, 1979, p.106)

The obvious value judgment that Sumner makes in decrying the outcome of interference in natural selection - where white men die and Hottentots live - provides clear evidence that he held implicit notions of racial worth if not an explicitly formulated theory of racial hierarchy. Sumner did retreat somewhat from this position in latter years and in 1906 he published "Folkways" which attempted to explain group behaviour by locating it in the more general struggle for survival. The folkways of the title are, according to Sumner, sets of customs, beliefs and habits which are handed down through behaviour, stories and literature and become social mores embedded in culture. Although Sumner has little to say explicitly about race, his theory certainly includes a notion of natural inequality.

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groups Sumner's theory is, at best, fatalistic since it suggests that natural law will preside unless and until interventionist steps are taken to redress the balance. In Sumner's theory, the inferior status of ethnic minority groups is a symptom of the more general inequalities which exist between all human beings. Because ethnic minority groups are weak (and no explanation is given as to why this is the case, except that they are less civilised) then they will naturally suffer in the struggle for survival. Sumner made no effort to find answers to the then prevailing social problems outside the limitations of natural law explanations and, in concert with other commentators of his period, was unable to comprehend the idea of social relations which did not assume white superiority.

For most commentators on race during the nineteenth century, descriptive analyses were made between white and black peoples, with black people inevitably perceived as inferior on a variety of indices. Most of these comparative exercises focused on the phenotypical traits of different groups, finding correlations between particular physical characteristics and intellectual and cultural development. Whilst much theory concentrated on differences between black natives and white europeans, Beddoe's work focused on British 'races' as evidenced by his major work "The Races of Britain" published in 1885 which sought to document the various races which were to be found in Britain. Beddoe's work included many tables and charts testifying to his great interest in comparing variables such as hair and eye colour and head shapes. From the physical data he collected, Beddoe deduced a range of other characteristics and attributes. He describes the "Irish type" as having a large head but little intelligence and comments that

"While Ireland is apparently its [the Irish type] present centre, most of its lineaments are such as lead us to think of Africa as its possible birth place; and it may well be, provisionally, to call it Africanoid.." (Beddoe, 1971, p.11)

Whilst these various academic theories were unlikely to be popular discussion material for the common man or woman in Victorian England, the general themes emerging from these discourses would most likely have informed more popular and populist writings during that period. Walvin suggests that the mid-Victorians often viewed the black personality as a happy-go-lucky, singing and dancing simpleton who was perversely indolent and at times even deliberately and obstinately stupid.

"I decidely like poor Quashee; and find him a pretty kind of man. With a pennyworth of oil, you can make a handsome glossy thing of Quashee, when the soul is not killed in him. A swift, supple creature; a merry-hearted, grinning dancing, singing, affectionate kind of creature with a great deal of melody and amenability in his composition" (Carlyle, 1859 quoted in Walvin, 1987)

Whilst debate continued at a theoretical level on appropriate explanations for ethnic difference, ethnic minority peoples continued to live their lives in Britain. Lorimer suggests that the difficulties actually experienced by ethnic minority groups were caused by low status rather than skin colour.

"The black poor did not suffer from universal or even widespread objections to their colour and...mixed reasonably freely with the commonality of Englishmen...to the black poor and negro sailors, the barriers of language, culture and social class proved greater obstacles to economic security and social acceptance than did distinctions of colour" (Lorimer, 1978, pp.43-44)

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However this is rather a naive view for Lorimer to take, given the intolerance expressed towards ethnic minority people since at least the reign of Elizabeth I. He suggests rather simplistically that alien culture and poverty are the twin fundamentals of social and economic exclusion, ethnicity operating as an unimportant additional dimension. However he also states that "poor blacks" mixed with the "commonality of Englishmen", presuming that poor whites regarded poor blacks as the same as themselves, where both groups were excluded from other social environments by their uniform poverty and attendant lack of social status.

Lorimer subsumes the ethnic dimension into the larger status-based debate. He reports that in the 1840s and 1850s various visiting black lecturers, particularly ex-slaves from America toured Britain arguing the case against slavery in America. Lorimer suggests that in general, these lecturers found a sympathetic audience amongst white Britons and personalities such as Sella Martins, Professor Allen and William Craft were welcomed into the privileged literary circles of the British elite. However, Lorimer points out that not all were welcomed equally and a distinguishing feature of acceptability was that some lecturers had

> "gained the friends, the influence and the training in the social
> graces to make them acceptable guests in these distinguished
> circles" (Lorimer, 1978, p.52)

In other words, Lorimer argues that it is status which accords acceptance rather than ethnicity. But Rich suggests that "the lurch into popular imperialism and jingoism in the late nineteenth century acted as a crucial

vehicle for the reinforcement and bolstering-up of racial notions" (Rich, 1986, p.201)

Merriman Labor, a West African lecturer records his experiences in London where he encountered insults and discrimination and cited unscrupulous newspapers which gave superficial and sensational coverage to African affairs and raised questions about racial inferiority and the dangers of liaisons between English women and African men (Merriman Labor, 1909, cited in Lorimer, 1978). Merriman Labor's testimony thus contradicts Lorimer's thesis that status provided an automatic entrance into the more privileged social settings and suggests that ethnicity was indeed a salient feature of acceptance. There are clear parallels here with contemporary society concerning the alleged welcome and authority accorded visiting minorities by the host majority, compared with the latter's attitudes towards their own internal minorities. It is argued here too that British white society treats visiting black personalities such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu or Jesse Jackson in a different way to resident black Britons because the former are regarded as exotic, non-threatening and most important, only temporary visitors.

Charles Mackay, writing during in the mid-1840s was appalled by what he considered to be the excessive championing of the cause of black American suffrage in Britain, not least because such support was not rooted in an authentic experience of black people by such proponents.

> "Whether if, unhappily for Great Britain and Ireland, there were
> four millions of negroes within the compass of their isles, they
> too might be less willing to confess than they are now, that the
> negro is a full brother, fit to take a seat in Parliament...or to

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intermarry with the fair daughters of our landed or commercial aristocracy" (Mackay, 1866, quoted in Biddis, 1979, p.104)

The substance of his argument engages with two very strong ethnic stereotypes. The first is that black people, given power, will corrupt and be corrupted by it and the second is the fear of liaisons between white women and black men. It is argued here that both these stereotypes are the product of much earlier views on ethnic difference where ethnic minority peoples were regarded as primitive and bestial. Mackay goes on to argue that in any case, slavery was good for black people because without the guidance of the civilising white hand, they quickly degenerate into their original primitive state.

> "Left to himself, and without white control and guidance, he forgets the lessons he has learnt and slides rapidly back to his original barbarism" (Mackay, 1866, p.596 in Biddis, 1979)

However, not all commentators were quite so negative. J E Cairnes was one of the few eminent Victorians who supported the cause of black American suffrage in the period immediately after the civil war. He argued that colour should not be the test for ignorance and poverty since

> "under the electoral laws of the Southern states as in force up to the present time, the most ignorant and lawless populations to be found in any country making pretence to civilisation are already invested with political power" (Cairnes, 1865, p.336 in Biddis, 1977, p.76)

However, despite Cairnes' apparent support for the cause of equality, he supports his argument by suggesting that the majority of emancipated slaves had white blood in their veins and were not therefore "true negroes" but

rather "Anglo-Africans". Thus such ex-slaves should be allowed to participate in the democratic processes because they were part-white, rather than simple human beings entitled to the same rights as everyone else. Cairnes' argument is thus rather compromised by his underlying ethnocentrism despite his support for egalitarianism.

As the abolitionist argument began to gather support in the 1860s, challengers pointed to the apparent hypocrisy of those who championed the cause of black Americans whilst ignoring the plight of their own starving poor since the experiences of both groups were similar. Although it was clear that obvious differences did exist between enslaved people and free poor people, it was argued that the two groups were united by their equally low status in the general hierarchy of humanity. Given the popular theory of natural selection and therefore natural inequality in the Victorian period, the following extract from the Saturday Review in 1864 is probably typical of attitudes during that period.

> "the Bethnal Green poor, as compared with the comfortable inhabitants of W London are a caste apart, a race of whom we know nothing...the great mass of the agricultural poor are divided from the educated and comfortable...by a barrier which custom has forced through long centuries...the English poor man or child is expected always to remember the condition in which God has placed him, exactly as the negro is expected to remember the skin which God has given him. The relation in both instances is that of perpetual superior to perpetual inferior...and no amount of kindness or goodness is suffered to alter this relation" (Lorimer, 1978, p.55)

Ethnic Imagery in Literature

As the costs of printing became cheaper and more sophisticated during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, an increasingly hungry

reading audience was treated to a continuous stream of cheap literature which included stories of African adventures where the barbarians were captured or civilised by the white man, as well as the more philanthropic tracts of the missionaries and abolitionists (Walvin, 1987). Despite their very different perspectives, both types of literature served to reinforce the existing stereotypes of black people as heathens and savages. Both depended on the white man to civilise the barbarian, baptise the pagan.

However, an important piece of 'adventure' literature which significantly pre-dated the era of 'commercial' slavery was Daniel Defoe's novel, "Robinson Crusoe" published in or about 1715. This work contains much of the negative imagery of the African to be found in much later work, many aspects of which were subsequently used to justify slavery. The first words that the eponymous hero teaches his subject/slave is his new name "Friday" and that of the 'hero' "Master". From the beginning then, the nature of the relationship is made explicit as that between servant and master. Early in the novel, Crusoe the provider offers Friday some clothing to cover his nakedness, of which it is assumed that Friday is ashamed.

> "I beckoned to him to come with me, and let him know I would give him some clothes: at which he seemed very glad, for he was stark naked" (Defoe, 1880, p.159)

Why the wearing of clothes in the intense heat of Africa seems a sensible thing to do can only be explained by the suggestion that Defoe is simply projecting his own English sense of propriety onto the servant, since he has already signified that Friday is basically a primitive, cannibalistic savage. That Defoe believes implicitly in the divine superiority of white

over black is a theme that underlies this and other of his work and in some passages the natural dominion that the white man has over others is made more explicit. Mid-way in the novel, after Crusoe and Friday have rescued two victims of a savage ambush, Crusoe reflects on his success.

> "My island was now peopled, and I thought myself rich in subjects: and it was a merry reflection, which I frequently made, how like a king I looked. First of all, the whole country was my own mere property, so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly, my people were perfectly subjected; I was absolutely lord and lawgiver; they all owed their lives to me, and were ready to lay down their lives, if there had been occasion for it, for me." (Defoe, 1880, p.186)

Fairchild, writing in the early years of this century, suggests that much of the work of the 'romantic' writers in the eighteenth century, depicting the African in his 'noble savage' persona, was inspired by a disenchantment with the excesses of an increasingly sophisticated era. The romantic writers were thus attempting to capture their lost innocence by eulogising the essential naturalness of the African primitive. The 'noble savage' stereotype, with its undertones of childishness and fear was no less racist than were other, more negative representations, since it similarly served to identify a specific group of people with typical characteristics attributed externally.

For other writers in the late eighteenth century, the subjugation of the black African to the white British will was so obvious as to scarcely merit comment. It was a popular perception at that time that not only was British - that is, white - superiority natural, it was also of inestimable benefit to the subjugated African, without which discipline he would revert back to bestiality (Kiernan, 1969). However, there were also writers who, during

this period, supported the anti-slavery campaign being waged both in Britain and America, but as Dabydeen points out, much of this apparent support was mere opportunism (Dabydeen, 1980). Writers and particularly poets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries often wrote movingly about the plight of the slave but their support often disguised a less altruistic motive.

"From the 1770s onwards England was deluged with anti-slavery verse [but] there is little evidence though to suggest that any of these poets devoted any personal time or effort, or dug deep into their pocket, to support the abolition cause" (Dabydeen, 1980, p.44)

Ridley suggests that the function of literary works during the nineteenth century was to filter the encounters with the 'New World' through a European perspective, so that the contrived reality of such encounters was mediated through the pen and perceptions of the writer (Ridley, 1983). He argues that colonial fiction expended much energy in justifying the imperial mission abroad, such stories bridging

"the twin publics of colony and mother country and seeing each in the light of the other [and] colonial fiction was naturally involved in mediating ideas between the two" (Ridley, 1987, p.100)

The adventure story replete with savages, cannibals, missionaries and white hunters was a highly popular literary genre and the themes with which such stories were inscribed were substantially present in much of the popular adventure-story fiction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Street suggests that the stereotypes to be found in the tales of the last century had a direct influence on the attitudes of their Victorian readership,

readers whose only knowledge of people outside their own country was afforded vicariously through the popular novel.

> "Behind the apparently trivial and harmless exotica of the tales of adventure lie deep preconceptions about the nature of humankind [such] preconceptions, and in particular the emphasis on 'race' as the ordering category for making sense of human variety, still persist in modern Britain" (Street, 1980, p.95)

For Street, the structure of the popular Victorian novel necessarily entailed an over-simplification of character types and themes, where the good/bad dichotomy quickly became synonymous with white/black characteristics.

> "Woven into the very fabric of the ... tales are the suppositions that the 'savage' is faithful, gullible, child-like and cannibalistic and often ugly; that friendship between the races is difficult and only possible if a native shows the qualities of an English gentleman and intermarriage is distinctly harmful..." (Street, 1980, p.55)

In America, the novel which is credited as contributing to the abolition of slavery in America was Harriet Becher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" published in 1852. Whilst the novel was undoubtedly an abolitionist tract, it was also an evangelising one, where both black and white would be saved if they only put their faith in Jesus. Even with the best of intentions, Mrs Stowe's black characterisations stop barely short of stereotype with "Uncle Tom" and "George" at either end of the servile spectrum, whilst the womenfolk alternate between deep (pagan) superstition and even deeper religiosity. The language and imagery of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" appears arcane to the contemporary eye, particularly in a text which was hailed as radical in its day, with the constant counterpointing of black/white, evil/good, believer/infidel as central plot motifs.

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"There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child with her golden head, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble brow...and her black, keen, subtle, cringing, yet acute neighbour. They stood...the Saxon, born of ages of cultivation, command, education physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil and vice!" (Stowe, 1852, p.255)

Implicit in this description is an assumption of at least cultural superiority of the 'Saxon' over the 'Afric' and a denial of centuries of African civilisation in the ante-slavery period. Mrs Stowe uses a range of literary devices to convey the more subtle ethnocentric assumptions with which the novel is inscribed. All the black characters are described by their first names, "Tom", "Chloe", "Eliza" whereas white female characters are prefixed by the title "Miss" even for children, with white men being described simply by their surnames. The black characters also 'speak' in a curious blend of Southern State vernacular and what Mrs Stowe means to approximate Creole speech, producing a strange hybrid which resonates unnaturally in the reader's mind.

The novel's publication spawned a variety of new forms, including the 'Uncle Tom' stereotype, meaning character eternally servile and eager to please the white master in addition to a variety hall musical genre where four different 'Uncle Tom' musicals played during the Christmas season in 1852 and by the end of the 1860s more than fifteen minstrel companies had been formed, establishing the 'black as entertainer' stereotype in the public consciousness (Lorimer, 1978). Black performers, but more usually white actors in black-face, toured the country as minstrels, purporting to provide a realistic account of the lives and songs of black slaves in America.

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Twentieth century literature too has provided many examples of ethnic stereotypes with particularly strong characterisations in those stories concentrating on the British Raj period, in the work of authors such as E M Forster and Rudyard Kipling. For Kipling, most Indian people were conceptualised as being naughty and wilful children who needed the guiding hand of the white protector. His poem "White Man's Burden" published in 1899 contains the following, telling verses:

"Take up the White Man's burden-
Send forth the best ye breed-
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild-
Your new-caught, sullen peoples
Half-devil and half-child

Take up the White Man's burden-
the savage wars of peace-
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought
(Kipling, 1923, p.371)

Kipling acknowledges that Indian people have been 'captured' by the British, albeit in their own country, and the tone of the poem implies that no matter how much the white man tries to help the Indian, his efforts will result in failure because of the wilful actions of the subjugated to thwart such civilising attempts. Goontilleke argues that unlike Kipling, E M Forster aligned himself to the liberal left in his perception of British India and quotes Forster with writing the following about the Independent Review, a magazine which acted as a vehicle for liberal ideas and which was

"founded to combat the aggressive Imperialism and the Protection

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campaign of Joe Chamberlain; and to advocate sanity in foreign affairs and a constructive policy at home" (E M Forster quoted in Goonetilleke, 1980, p.79)

However, as Rushdie has pointed out, if Forster had really wanted to provide a realistic account of British rule in India, it would have been more appropriate in "A Passage to India" (1924) for the rape scene to have featured an Indian victim and a white perpetrator, rather than the other way round (Rushdie, 1984).

Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan" stories which were published between 1912 and 1944 contained very specific stereotypes both about what English people were like and what African people were like, although it is unlikely that Burroughs had an extensive and personal knowledge of the latter. Newsinger suggests that Burroughs was fixated with notions of heredity and racial degeneration, a pre-occupation which informed all his work, not only the Tarzan series (Newsinger, 1986). Newsinger suggests that the Tarzan character-style is essentially a colonial propagandist one, generated from the glorious empire period of the early Twentieth Century. The thematic discourse which underlines all the Tarzan stories is concerned with the way in which heredity - in this case of the English aristocracy - will always shine through, despite adverse environmental and social circumstances. Not only do Tarzan's genes allow him ultimately to dominate the apes, but they also distance him from the primitive natives and their peculiar customs

"His [Tarzan's] breeding....saves him from the practice of cannibalism, from surrendering to the African darkness...in this way Tarzan's humanity is distinguished from that of the blacks. Their humanity is of a lower order" (Rice Burroughs quoted in Newsinger, 1986, p.62)

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It can be seen then, that academic discourses relating to ethnicity readily percolated down to inform the thinking of the general population through the cultural media of literature and through populist entertainment forms such as music hall and variety. It is suggested here that such media reinforced and perpetuated ethnic stereotypes through their articulation and representation of stereotypical images of ethnic minority people. The way in which these early images have influenced more contemporary characterisations in other cultural media is discussed in the following chapters.

"By and large I think they [black people] are too often
represented as being the villain. I'm talking drama here, but by
and large I'm not sure that that's unrealistic. I mean, it is
true to say that our prisons are full of people who come from the
racial minorities" (Bernard Clark, independent television
producer in interview with the author, 8.5.1989)

INTRODUCTION

The ways in which social beings think about themselves and each other do

not develop in a vacuum. Attitudes and behaviour are conditioned by a

variety of factors including experiential learning and common sense

understanding. We do not greet each new experience with a blank mind but

insert such new experience into the matrix which forms part of our frame of

reference. Common sense knowledge, on the other hand, does not derive

from actual experience but is simply **known** through oral history traditions

and through print and latterly broadcast media. The first part of this

chapter examines the nature of stereotypes and the ways in which the white

majority respond to ethnic minority communities. The second section

discusses typical ethnic characterisations in television fictions and the

last section details the research rationale and hypothesis.

THE NATURE OF ETHNIC STEREOTYPES

Popular media forms such as television provide the majority of white viewers with their only experience of ethnic minority communities andwhat becomes **known** about different ethnic groups becomes less determined by direct personal experience and more over-determined by the truth as presented by the mass media. Stereotypes are, arguably, historically specific and as the imagery and language associated with particular groups becomes inappropriate or outdated in any given period, so new forms are found to maintain and perpetuate the fundamental stereotypical concept: the 'Coolies' of yesterday are the 'Pakis' of today. But stories change in the re-telling and lapses occur between events and experiences and their subsequent written description.

> "The twilight zone that lies between living memory and written
> history is one of the favourite breeding places of mythology"
> (Woodward, 1974, p.xvi)

As argued above, a variety of stereotypes have been created about black people which have originated in folklore and become transformed into common-sense 'facts' through written and oral history. The stereotype of the black savage who can only be civilised by the white man is at least 400 years old and finds contemporary expression in third world reportage where child-like natives are shown aspects of 'civilisation' by white aid workers. The savage myth relating to black people encouraged feelings of fear so that black people were regarded as dangerous if encountered in their natural habitat (as in the many adventure stories containing tales of cannibalism and death) and threatening to white people in their new

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environment in Britain. However it is arguably only in the past decade that black people have been perceived as inherently criminal and even then, such stereotype usually pertains to young black men. But this particular stereotype is one of the most powerful and pernicious to emerge in recent times and since the 1980s the notion of black youth has become almost synonymous with street crime and drugs.

The 'noble savage' stereotype is a variation on the more general 'savage' icon, and whilst it does not connate the same pejorative assumptions, the savage aspect, with all its associations, is barely redeemed by the noble condition. In former times, primitive peoples were saved from themselves by the shining principle of christianity: in more recent times salvation is through cash. Thus the dependency myth is closely associated with the traditional pagan/christian dichotomy where primitive means inferior. The typification of the **nigger minstrel** also has a long history as Fryer has noted (Fryer, 1984) implying that singing and dancing are natural qualities of black people so that in contemporary times it is the field of entertainment in which they must confine all their social ambitions. Such a view also encourages ethnic minority groups to be viewed as simple amusements for others, as figures of fun for the white audience.

A relatively recent stereotype is that of black sportstar where all black people are endowed with natural athleticism in the same way as they are regarded as having natural rhythm. Just as the typification of the all-singing, all-dancing entertainer is not particularly pejorative, the natural athlete stereotype is focussed on physical attributes and abilities, placing black people firmly in the domain of the physical,

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leaving white folks to occupy the more privileged realm of the intellectual (see also Cashmore, 1982)..

Most of the stereotypes and myths which have been identified thus far are associated with Afro-Caribbean people but the myths which surround Asian people are equally strong but rather less prolific. It is most likely that Asian stereotypes emerged as a direct result of British colonial rule in India so that Asian people came to be regarded as passive and inherently docile. Common sense says that a people who have been conquered and colonised in their own country **must** be naturally inferior and weak. But there are paradoxes in the Asian stereotype since, although the Asian character is inherently weak, it is also devious: although passive it also tends towards internecine carnage. The contradictions which exist in the stereotypical perception of the Asian 'type' have found contemporary expression in the recent furore surrounding the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel , "The Satanic Verses", and the various responses to it. The Asian community as a whole (for media distinctions between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs are minimal if not entirely absent) are now regarded as religious fanatics, espousing devout religious principles on the one hand whilst contemplating killing on the other. The community are regarded as desiring to live in Britain whilst at the same time obeying the cultural dictums of an entirely different nation, further highlighting the differentness and otherness of this **alien** community to the white majority. The racist stereotypes which have proliferated since at least the sixteenth century still retain unswerving popularity among many white Britons today, and it is the contention of this thesis that such stereotypes have been transmitted and perpetuated through oral history traditions and through

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literature, but that such media have now been superseded by television which has become the dominant cultural transmitter in British society. It is suggested here that television programmes (and, by implication, producers) collude in the perpetuation of stereotypes, if only because of they lack any challenge to confront racist and stereotypical representations in popular programming.

Barker and Drake also argue that the ethnic stereotypes which are current today have their provenance in a much earlier time and that both the instigator and the subject of such categorisations necessarily change over time.

> "These stereotypes, sometimes refracted through the layered experiences, varying interests and resulting perceptions of many earlier generations...were seldom simple. We need therefore to take account of images which, once formed, possessed a remarkable durability and which could persist long after the social circumstances which had originally created them had died away" (Barker and Drake, 1982, p.180)

Although labels have always existed to describe people in terms of their colour, Forbes argues that it was during the colonial period that such descriptions became invested with a pejorative power.

> "Once developed, terms such as negro, mulatto, "Indian" and "half-breed" came to possess a power of their own, facilitating the stereotyping of people [and] this stereotyping came to have increasing 'racial' as opposed to 'cultural' content..." (Forbes, 1990, p.4)

For Cripps stereotypes are not static or fixed but alter form or style in order to maintain their credibility in changing social conditions. Popular culture appeals to the mass audience by using tested formulae and

presenting images which enable immediate recognition as common knowledge. However, it is exactly this repetition of myth masquerading as fact which ensures the perpetuation of racist imagery, even when the use of such imagery has rather less pernicious intention.

> "The most successful stereotypes grow beyond their original intentions [as literary devices] by reinforcing ethnocentricity, by contributing to the persistence of outmoded types and by winning fans who often confuse theatrical personae and devices with literal social reportage" (Cripps, 1980, p.17)

Barthes suggests that myths are socially constructed and do not occur in history by themselves independent of deliberate force.

> "Ancient or not, mythology can only have an historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history; it cannot possibly evolve from the 'nature of things' (Barthes, 1973, p.110)

But clearly **any** idea is a social construction - the real power of myths, ideas or any other ideological artefact becomes apparent when they are accorded legitimacy through other people's acceptance of their validity. It is why some ideas are deemed legitimate and valid and others are not that lies at the root of understanding social relations. Barthes contends that myths and stereotypes are socially determined and are given meaning and legitimacy by their common acceptance by the popular majority, but what are stereotypes and how do they function? A stereotype has a dictionary definition of "fixed conventionalised representation" and such definition does not necessarily connote a particularly negative value judgment. However for a model to be described as a stereotype is to imply a belief

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that the model is not a true representation but an exaggeration or perversion.

The common-sense nature of the stereotype is often its most powerful and persuasive element. If it is **known** that all nurses are kind, there is an expectation that any subsequent interaction with nurses will be sympathetic experiences. Equally, if it is **known** that all young black men are muggers then there is a corresponding expectation that any encounters with young black men will result in violence. In both cases, pre-conceived notions will encourage particular attitudes and behaviours to be adopted in the encounter, regardless of what the other party is actually like or what behaviour they might exhibit. Thus stereotypical thinking adversely affects the way in which individuals interact, often precluding the possibility of understanding and benefiting from new experiences. But what if a pre-conceived notion about a particular group does not fit with the actual experience of interacting with an individual from such group, what becomes of the pre-conception? Is the reality of the new experience evaluated and then incorporated within a synthesised re-definition of, say, Afro-caribbean people or is the experienced reality considered to be atypical of the group so that the original pre-conception remains intact? It is part of the internal character of stereotypes that once they become cultural fact, they are very difficult to dislodge, although they can become modified over time.

Dyer is one of the few commentators who has a good word for stereotypes in that he suggests they are variously immediate, economic, understandable and simple. He argues that stereotypes provide very useful short-hand

descriptions of what are often complex phenomena so that one picture of a black man can evoke the entire history of slavery, emphasising the power of visual image over written language. Stereotypes therefore serve a purpose in enabling complex ideas to be expressed simply. A similar point is made by Barthes when he attempts to explain the significance of making a semiological analysis of society, whereby the symbols and signs of such society are decoded. Commenting on a magazine cover of 'Paris-Match' he describes

> "a young Negro in a french uniform is saluting with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the **meaning** [original emphasis] of the picture. But whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this negro in serving his so-called oppressors" (Barthes, 1973, p.116)

Barthes registers both the innocent prima facie meaning of the image and also comprehends what he considers to be the underlying manipulative message. However, whilst the meaning, both overt and covert of images may be very clear to one person it could receive a very different interpretation by another viewer. Feelings of resentment and hostility could equally well be evoked in people by images which encourage more positive reactions in others, so that a straightforward appeal for semiological analysis can only provide a partial analysis.

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AFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Authoritarianism and Prejudice

Theories which seek to explain inter-ethnic relations in terms of individual pathology and prejudice are popular in both sociological and psychological disciplines. A brief examination of some of the key models associated with prejudice and discrimination are set out below.

The early work of Theodor Adorno and his colleagues on authoritarianism and its relationship with prejudice ("The Authoritarian Personality, 1950) has provided a seminal influence on subsequent work in this area. Adorno and his colleagues suggested that a person who was 'ethnically' prejudiced was also highly likely to hold fixed and rigid ideas on other aspects of social life. In other words, ethnic prejudice is only one of a range of prejudices resident within an individual, if that individual has that particular type of personality. The early background of individuals is of crucial importance for the development of authoritarianism and Adorno et al speculate on strategies which could be employed to reduce the tendency. Although the authors lay great stress on parental attitudes as primary stimulators of chilren's attitude formation, they reject programmes of modified child-rearing techniques. Whilst the authors suggest that it would indeed be possible to produce 'nonethnocentric' personalities, they argue that

> "few parents can be expected to persist for long in educating their children for a society that does not exist or even in orienting themselves towards goals which they share only with a minority" (Adorno et al, 1950, p.975)

Thus the authors recognise that the active pursuit of a nonethnocentric environment is only desirable for a minority of people and they finally conclude that in order for attitudinal and behavioural change to occur, the first step is to encourage individuals to confront themselves and their actions. This is in the belief that if individuals are challenged with their attitudes, then they might change them. However, this appears to be a rather optimistic hope and is perhaps indicative of the period in which it was written, that is, in the wake of the second world war.

In addition to childhood experiences as determining factors in the development of the authoritarian personality, Bagley et al argue that age and social class are other significant factors, but that the most important influence is the level of education (Bagley et al, 1978). The authors also suggest that much white hostility towards ethnic minority people is the result of what they term 'social chauvinism' whereby British colonial history actively promotes ethnocentric ideas. The most prejudiced individuals in their research study occupied intermediate social positions and the authors suggest that they were thus prone to 'status anxiety' and 'relative deprivation', so that such individuals transferred their feelings of inferiority and/or envy into prejudice against more disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority communities. However, the authors also contend that the most prejudiced are also the least well educated, which seems to contradict the assertion that they also occupy the middle strata of society's hierarchy.

For Cohen, the field of race relations is the locus for a variety of tensions which are extremely difficult to resolve. Can prejudice, for

example, be explained simply by using a domination model of society? To what extent do **ideas** about race influence the debate? Do academics by virtue of their concentration on the differences between ethnic groups further contribute to the problem? Cohen formulates a theory of plural society stratified by power whereby discrimination helps working class whites to assume authority over a less advantaged group than themselves, essentially a re-working of the 'scapegoat' theory. Cohen also suggests that "in all situations of ethnic differentiation, there is some degree of mutual stereotyping containing unfavourable characterisation" (Cohen in Bowker, 1976, p.24)

Thus **all** ethnic groups negatively characterise others, but what is important is the relative power of each group and the differential outcomes of negative characterisation for each affected group. In all instances of social ranking, Cohen argues, there is a tendency for the lower status groups to internalise some of the negative imagery that the dominant group has of them. But whilst it is probably true that the prejudices of the dominant group do have an effect on the minority group, it is more likely to be resentment than a real belief in their own inferiority.

As far as notions of inherently prejudiced individuals are concerned, Merton has distinguished four categories of prejudiced person and describes how the behaviour of these **types** affects the perpetuation of racism. The first type is the unprejudiced non-discriminator/all weather liberal who seeks out others of a similar persuasion and together they talk about the situation and do nothing. The second type is the unprejudiced discriminator/fair weather liberal who views expediency as more important

than personal values and will change sides if deemed appropriate in any given situation. The third type is the prejudiced non-discriminator/fair-weather illiberal who is basically prejudiced but like type two, will change allegiance in given circumstances. The fourth type is the prejudiced discriminator/all-weather illiberal whose tendencies are obvious (Merton cited in Milton & Yinger, 1973, pp.100-101)..

The thrust of Merton's argument is that there is no one specific type of person who has the propensity to discriminate, but rather that everyone tends towards such practice, either intentionally through overt discrimination or unintentionally by, say, not challenging racist assumptions and thereby colluding in their perpetuation. In other words, all individuals are prejudiced but some are more or less so than others. Such taxonomies of types have been a popular way of theorising about social action but like other typology theories, the categories are often more rigid than in reality. Sanford suggests however that

> "racist behaviour [can] depend upon a wide range of situational and social factors - what other people are doing at the moment, what propaganda is in the air, pressures to conform, economic insecurity, lowered social status, lack of education, membership in groups for which negative beliefs and hostile attitudes toward particular outgroups are common, belonging to organisations whose policies are explicitly or implicitly racist and so on" (Sanford 1973, p.59)

For Sanford, such behaviour signals the presence of a very specific type of personality, that is, the **authoritarian personality** as identified by Adorno et al, in 1950. Sanford argues that one significant aspect of prejudiced behaviour is its essential irrationality, where generalisations are inferred from specific experiences no matter how illogical. Sanford

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suggests, in concert with Adorno's ideas several decades earlier, that prejudice is not simply an illogical attitude towards a particular group or groups, but a way of thinking which influences all action. Individuals who display these tendencies are rigidly conformist and intolerant of any perceived deviation from social norms and are "susceptible to fascism" (Sanford, 1973, p.61). He argues that the rationale for behaviour of this kind is rooted in childhood experiences and results from too much discipline and/or too little love. The feelings of inadequacy engendered by these early years then manifest themselves in adulthood as irrational prejudice towards groups which are regarded as socially inferior. This argument finds support in the work of Harris, Gough and Martin who found in their studies that a positive correlation existed between ethnic prejudice in children and the extent to which they were obedient to and controlled by their parents (Harris et al, 1950).

However, Sanford does offer a solution for reducing the tendency to discriminate, which focuses on the value of education. This model is fed by Sanford's view that the tendency to discriminate reduces in direct relation to increases in education.

> "There is thus the possibility that education which succeeds in giving self-insight and building self-esteem and the confidence to criticise authority can effectively reduce racism" (Sanford, 1973 p.69)

This is rather a naive inference since the opposite is much more likely, that is, the more self-esteem and confidence, the more likely to claim

authority and superiority. However, Sanford also includes a more structural analysis of racism whereby

> "organisational processes are clearly of enormous importance in maintaining racial discrimination in education, employment, housing, medical care and the administration of justice" (Sanford, 1973, p.71)

For Sanford then, the elimination of racism lies both in the educational process but also in the hands of leaders and opinion-makers who can campaign against racism and encourage others to do the same. But he appears to be contradicting himself when he says that on the one hand discrimination is to be found operating within the education system, whilst on the other, that education reduces racist tendencies. He also makes it less than clear why leaders and opinion-makers should want to eliminate racism since they may be part of the same organisational processes which are actively promoting discrimination and whose interests are thereby served.

In a study carried out by Van Ijzendoorn to test levels of ethnocentrism and authoritarian behaviour, it was found that moral judgment was closely related to both concepts. Van Ijzendoorn found that higher degrees of moral judgment were related to lower tendencies towards authoritarianism and suggested that studying the "authoritarian personality as a stagnation in moral development" (Van Ijzendoorn, 1989, p.44) is a more appropriate concept with which to comprehend ethnocentrism, implying a moral reasoning as opposed to psychodynamic basis. In Billig & Cramer's study, the authors set out to identify which variables best predicted variations in racial attitudes in Britain and in particular, to compare attitudes towards

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authority with variables such as education, age, class and income analysing data generated by the 1986 British Social Attitudes Survey (Jowell, 1987). Having subjected the data to a variety of statistical tests, Billig & Cramer suggest that the highest levels of prejudice were located within the older, less educated, lower socio-economic status groups who also displayed high authoritarian tendencies (Billig & Cramer, 1990, p.207).

The key study finding, that 'authoritarianism' is the most reliable indicator of racial prejudice, reflects the work of Adorno forty years ago, although the use of the term 'authoritarianism' for Billig & Cramer describes an attitudinal tendency rather than a psychological one, implying right-wing attitudes towards authority and other related issues. Whilst the authors are keen to point out that their findings are, in themselves, inconclusive, they nonetheless maintain that the concept of authoritarianism as a significant if not exclusive predictor of racial prejudice is still worth legitimate consideration. They further maintain that such trait is not necessarily correlated with demographic factors such as education or class.

> "...the effects of education on racial prejudice should not be over-estimated. High levels of racial prejudice cannot be simply attributed to lower educational levels with the implication that the problems of racial prejudice are largely educational problems" (Billig & Cramer, 1990, p.210)

A much closer relationship exists, for Billig & Cramer, between authoritarianism and right-wing ideology, but therein lies the difficulty with this model since it assumes that authoritarianism is primarily a function of right-wing thinking. Thus the trait is a political rather than

psychological one, which cannot seriously be supported, still less proved. Work carried out by Stopes-Roe and Cochrane into the incidence of prejudice in the West Midlands found that age was a significant factor, where young respondents believed that more prejudice existed against Asian people than did older respondents (Stopes-Roe and Cochrane, 1986). The authors assert that the close contact which young white people had with their Asian counterparts encouraged greater sympathy and understanding in the former towards the latter.

Prejudice and the Black Psyche

One of the most authoritative black writers on the black pysche and the implications of empire, Frantz Fanon, suggests that the mastery of language is necessary before power can be attained. He argued that

> "in any group of young men in the Antilles, the one who expresses himself well, has mastered the language is inordinately feared; keep an eye on that one, he's almost white...to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (Fanon, 1968, pp.15-29)

For Fanon, power resides exclusively in the white domain and therefore all black groups strive to become 'white' since that is what society dictates as being normal and thus acceptable. Much of the meaning of relations between black and white people are, for Fanon, concerned with sexuality and evil. Early travellers' tales brought back stories of abnormal sexual appetites among the 'natives', fostering the view that the African male posed a threat to the chastity of the white woman. However, the hidden agenda of white male fear was likely to be the threat posed to white male

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sexuality, where they might be compared unfavourably with the African. Moreover that white women might actually like black men, a notion explicitly identified as a potential and actual problem in India at the turn of the century. Ballhatchet suggests that the problem of inter-ethnic liaisons was not the crude appetites of Indian men but rather the lust for such men by English women living in India. Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India between 1899 and 1905 is reported to have said that

> "...strange as it may seem English women of the housemaid class and even higher, do offer themselves to...Indian soldiers, attracted by the uniform, enamoured of their physique, and with the sort of idea that the warrior is also an oriental prince" (Lord Curzon writing to Lord George Hamilton in 1901, quoted in Ballhatchet, 1980, p.119)

Fanon argues that it is the double fear that the black man engenders, of sexual competitor and embodiment of evil, which is responsible for much of the tension in social relations. Fanon's model is an individualistic one and is concerned more with the psychology of the individual than with the implications of social and institutional racism. A theory which concentrates on the individual can only provide a partial analysis of social relations between ethnic groups, although clearly individual pathology can provide the basis for much irrational behaviour.

Ethnocentrism

The concept of ethnocentrism was probably first used by Sumner (Sumner, Folkways, 1906) and rests on the belief that one's own group, however it is constituted, is superior to all other groups.

> "Ethnocentrism is the technical name [when] one's own group is the centre of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders" (Sumner, 1906, p.13)

For Sumner, it is absolutely natural that an individual should hold ethnocentric attitudes towards his own group members and those of outsider groups. Thus, if a white Briton holds that white Britons are superior, as a group, to all other groups who are not white Britons, then such an individual is deemed to hold entirely natural, ethnocentric views. However, although the term implies that all group members must share at least one characteristic (ethnicity) if not more, a series of experiments conducted in the 1970s demonstrated how tenuous the links between individuals can be for them to nonetheless believe that they constitute a discrete and 'superior' group compared with others.

In social experiments conducted by Tajfel in the 1970s, subjects were randomly allocated to different groups labelled, for example, "Group X" and "Group Y". The experiments demonstrated that members of each group rated their own (in-group) members more highly on a number of indices than members of different groups (out-group members) (Tajfel, 1970; Billig & Tajfel, 1973). Not only do 'in-group' members favour each other over members of other 'out-groups' but they also **expect** out-group members to be

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less able or competent than their own members. Rothbart, Dawes and Park suggest that the expectation of inferiority becomes transformed into a concrete fact which then serves to justify the original feeling of superiority (Rothbart, Dawes and Park, 1984). The authors also contend that in terms of attributing (often negative) characteristics to out-group members, the process of stereotyping comes into force where in-group members perceive their group as variegated and heterogeneous whereas they believe the out-group to be homogeneous, encouraging stereotypical perceptions to emerge.

That individuals believe they share a common set of values and beliefs with others of their 'group' is evidenced by the degree to which they feel others share their own views. Granberg suggests that when individuals are asked to describe the views of other members of their 'group', they have a tendency to over-estimate the extent to which such other group members share their own personal views, a process which Granberg describes as 'assimiliation' (Granberg, 1984). Thus it is more acceptable (in conscience) to discriminate against, say, Asian people, if there is a belief that everyone else (that is, all other white people) are doing the same thing.

However, if the need for a group identity is weak or entirely absent, it is equally possible that individuals will under-estimate the extent to which others share his or her own views. There are a number of reasons which could explain why such under-estimation should occur including the desire to increase self-esteem by demonstrating 'enlightened' attitudes or simply providing whatever responses are deemed to be required. Banton, for

example, introduces the notion of 'pluralistic ignorance' whereby individuals believe that the majority of other people hold views contrary to their own. Thus an individual may say that everyone (except him or herself) is prejudiced so no anti-racist action is feasible since s/he is in a minority of one. Banton suggests that if individuals were made aware of the generality of attitudes then, because of the tendency to conformity, a decrease in discrimination would result. However, this view rests on the assumption that the majority of people believe in ethnic equality and are actively campaigning for such rights, which is not in fact the case. Thus the degree to which an individual over- or under-estimates the attitudes of other people will depend on the extent to which the individual wishes to conform or else be regarded as enlightened and liberal.

Linville argues that the tendency towards stereotyping out-group members is the result of simple as opposed to complex thinking patterns (Linville, 1982). If an individual has a restricted (simple) perception of a particular group, then that person's emotional or affective response to that group is likely to be more extreme than if they have a more complex view. Linville argues that if little information about an out-group is available on which to base feelings or evaluations, then "a group label may be used as an affective bias associated with group membership or status, resulting in prejudice..." (Linville, 1982, p.92).

Thus Linville's theory implies that more knowledge leads to a reduction in prejudice. However this does not seem to be the case at a practical level since ethnic discrimination has not decreased in multi-ethnic

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neighbourhoods, despite the obvious 'knowledge' that neighbours have about each other.

TELEVISION AND ETHNIC STEREOTYPES

Having briefly discussed the nature of stereotypes and prejudice, it is now appropriate to examine the relationship between stereotypes and television and to identify the ways in which ethnic minority people are typically characterised in television fictions.

The Nature of Television

Since the beginning of the 1950s when television sets became commonplace, researchers have tried to assess the influence and impact of television on the viewing public. Early research was commissioned by television companies to see how well programmes were being received, the number of viewers watching different programmes and the type of programmes watched, in order to plan schedules and attract more viewers to particular channels. With the arrival of independent commercial television in 1955 (and Channel 4 in 1982), research also began and continues to be carried out by advertising companies among others, to gauge the extent of television's influence on attitudinal and behavioural change.

At a more theoretical level, media research and particularly that concerned with television has followed two broad paths: one examining the links between the media and the powerful in society and the other looking at the relationship between the media message and the audience. The former

perspective is basically deterministic and suggests that television operates as a agent of social control, feeding the audience with propaganda, and assumes that the audience is a malleable mass, passively receiving and ingesting media material in an unmediated way, sometimes described as the 'hypodermic syringe' or 'stimulus-response' model. The theoretical influence for this view came from the Frankfurt school which comprised a group of German intellectuals including Marcuse, Adorno and Arendt who sought to discover the cause of the Nazi success in the early 1930s. One of the culpable agents they identified was the mass media and the way in which the Nazi regime used the media to widen their influence and indoctrinate the masses (Rosenberg, 1957).

When members of the Frankfurt School fled to America they found that it too was in thrall to the media and speculated that the mass culture which Americans were being exposed to would encourage the fostering of the type of attitude which preceded fascism, as had happened in their native Germany. The Frankfurt School theorists suggested that the vulgarisation of culture, loss of individual identity and liberal principles were all consequences of mass media consumption and the most corrupting of all the media was that concerned with entertainment. The mass audience lose their sense of self as they are seduced by the delights of film, soap opera and variety shows, becoming enslaved and lifeless, operating in a mode which Lazarsfield describes as 'narcotyzing dysfunction' (Lazarsfield, 1944).

This rather acute and passive view of the audience began to be seriously questioned during the 1940s and 1950s by researchers who could not accept the all-embracing power of television to manipulate and the viewer to be

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manipulated. Several research studies in that period found that the media had rather less influence than had previously been imagined in changing people's behaviour and/or opinions. Lazarsfield's study in the 1940s showed that the voting habits of the population were influenced slightly or not at all by media messages and propaganda (Lazarsfield, 1944).

What became received wisdom during that period was the idea that although the media did not overtly change people's attitudes, it did reinforce and perpetuate viewers' own beliefs and predispositions. Wirth suggests that it is precisely because a consensus on values exist within a society which make the media so effective (Wirth, 1969), whilst McQuail argues that it is the value system of the dominant group which dictates the terms for the rest of society.

> "The process [of the media] is guided by the prevailing laws and social norms and generally...turn the mass media themselves into agencies of control which reinforce dominant cultural and institutional patterns" (McQuail, 1969, p.13)

The Television Audience

As far as the television audience itself is concerned, efforts have been made to analyse and stratify the various constituent parts which make up the composite audience. What factors influence programme choice and enjoyment? Does socio-economic position affect the tendency to watch soap opera? Do men and women watch television differently? Attempts to find the the answers to these and other questions has prompted a great deal of interest in audience research and the nature of the television viewer and has provided apparently contradictory findings.

In the 1950s Katz postulated a theory which has become known as the 'uses and gratification' model. He suggested that instead of looking at ways in which the media attempt to manipulate the viewer, we should concentrate instead on how the viewer uses the media (Katz, 1959). His theory was predicated upon the notion that even the most persuasive message may have no effect if the viewer has no use for it because it is outside their frame of reference or opposed to their own way of viewing the world. The audience derives a variety of gratifications from television quite distinct from the acquisition of news and information about local and general environment, the provision of escape and/or release from anxiety, tension, loneliness or personal problems towards a fantasy world and support and reassurance leading to increased sense of self-esteem. Versions of this theory are still popular with more contemporary theorists (for example, Morley, 1980) and the notion that television programmes are watched for a variety of reasons by a range of people who make a number of different interpretations of the same material does not seem to be an implausible theoretical statement.

However, there are at least two significant weaknesses in the uses/gratification model which limit its application. The model suggests that the viewer will make whatever interpretation of the message that s/he thinks appropriate, contingent upon her/his own experiential range of perceptions. But as Morley argues, television programmes are imbued with particular and fundamental orientations, strongly encouraging the viewer to 'read' or interpret the programme in a specific and expected way, that is, in the way in which the programme makers would like the viewer to comprehend the media message (Morley, 1973, 1980). Morley puts forward an

'encoding/decoding' model for explaining audience reaction to television content, where he uses a tripartite schema for identifying different readings of the same material: dominant, negotiated and oppositional (a typology which he credits with originating with Parkin). Morley's research work in 1973 tested audience views to the news programme "Nationwide" and analysed their responses. A dominant reading suggested that the viewer agreed with the view being expressed/images represented and implicitly accepted the underlying encoding of the message. A negotiated reading meant that some aspects were not accepted and an oppositional reading meant that the viewer was hostile to the media message. The ways in which programmes were originally encoded, that is, their ideological bias, were analysed at the beginning of the survey.

Morley's model assumes that all programmes are inscribed with a particular ethos so that, for example, the programme makers of a documentary about drug addicts will be focussing on the problem in a certain way, perhaps suggesting that the solution lies with the drug dealers rather than the addicts. The programme's narrative and imagery may possibly try and encourage the viewer to sympathise with the addicts and condemn the dealers and if the viewer does sympathise and condemn in the way anticipated, then they are regarded as having made a 'dominant' reading. Although alternative readings are not proscribed, they are rendered less accessible because of the strength of the original encoding which significantly over-determines the reading of the programme for all but a few viewers. Morley clearly assumes that in general, the commonality of television programmes are encoded within the parameters of the dominant cultural framework. However, the above example of the drug addict programme would more likely constitute

a broadcast which had been encoded outside the normative structure and as such would perhaps elicit a contradictory reading from viewers who would condemn addict and dealer with equal force. Quite clearly working with only one programme has its limitations but the model should work equally well with programmes whose messages are rather differently encoded, for example, programmes whose production ethos is more radical, controversial or anti-establishment. It would be expected, in these circumstances, for oppositional readings to dominate, if viewed by a random audience, given the tendency towards conservatism on the part of the majority of viewers.

Elliott similarly suggests that a preferred reading is more likely than not, given the fact that the audience tends to watch those programmes which they feel comfortable with, both in terms of language and storyline (Elliott, 1974). Although Elliott credits the audience with rather low-brow tastes, and lacking in imagination, it is true that soap operas and other light entertainment material are the most popular television forms in terms of gross viewing numbers, with the more challenging plays and serials attracting very much smaller audiences.

Lang categorises the audience into high brow and low brow groups and argues that television programmes can be similarly stratified (Lang, 1986). This type of analysis hints at elitism, suggesting that personal taste and preference are fixed and immutable and intrinsically tied-in with intellectual and/or economic performance. However, Wilensky suggests that

from his own research

"there is little doubt from my data as well as others that educated strata - even products of graduate and professional schools - are becoming full participants in mass culture" (Wilensky, 1964, p.173)

In addition to examining the social make-up of the audience, research has also sought to differentiate between male and female viewers. Morley for example found that in his research study, men tended to watch news, current affairs and documentary style programmes (to be informed and educated), whereas women were more likely to watch drama and soap opera (to be entertained). It was also discovered that in most households it was the men who dictated what programmes were to be watched by the rest of the family (Morley, 1987).

McQuail argues that, in a survey looking at television plays, education and social class were insignificant factors in the decision to watch such television drama but that what was significant were the age and sex of viewers. When programme preference was linked with content, it was found that the traditional themes of romance, crime fiction and comedy were very popular whereas the more off-beat and controversial plays scored very low (McQuail, 1970). This would seem to indicate that viewers, as a whole, do not wish to have their views challenged and would prefer to see familiar and comfortable social values reinforced on the screen, values which have become embedded in national culture so that they come to be perceived as simple common-sense. It is common-sense that women should stay at home and look after the children. It is common-sense that homosexuals are dirty and

spread disease. It is common-sense that there are too many immigrants and they should all be sent home.

The other main weakness of the uses and gratification model is its emphasis on the needs and gratification of individuals which are fulfilled through television. Murdock argues that such an individualistic emphasis lacks a sociological application since it focuses on psychological rather than socio-economic circumstances. Murdock advocates a starting point which centres more firmly on the social setting of the individual and the way in which the television message is rendered meaningful through the experiences of the individual viewer (Murdock, 1974). Although it is clearly important to analyse the function of television within a more general socio-economic framework - its messages are not, after all, transmitted or received in a vacuum - Murdock seems to be providing a caution rather than criticising the model. Audience theory must by its very nature, focus on the individual, since television viewing is usually a discrete activity, even though other individuals may be watching the same programme in the same room.

The main theoretical model which attempted to look at the way in which television viewing affects people, rather than the way in which viewers interact with the screen, was probably originated in the 1960s and several scholars were active in the field at that time (see Klapper, 1960; Berelson & Steiner, 1964; Blumler, 1968). The contention of these **effects** theorists was that television has a number of influences on the viewer. It reinforces existing attitudes so that persuasive mass communication is more likely to confirm than change attitudes; viewers operate selective

perception, whereby they filter out messages which do not accord with their own views and ideals; and viewers are more persuaded by programmes/presenters which they feel have authority and legitimacy and are therefore perceived as being unbiased (McQuail, 1969).

Television and Influence

Although television can no longer be regarded as a manipulative tool whose sole purpose is to feed its audience with propagandist material, neither should it be seen as a scrupulously neutral oracle of information and entertainment. If television does not have a proven direct influence upon attitudes and beliefs, it is argued here that it does, at the very least, set the agenda in terms of generating and reinforcing what those attitudes and beliefs should be. The way in which certain topics are included and others omitted from television scrutiny, the type of individuals who are allowed to present their point of view and the language and imagery which are utilised to explore particular issues are all deliberately constructed by programme makers. The inclusion/exclusion decisions are not arbitrarily made and must therefore represent a deliberate policy of highlighting a particular issue from a particular perspective using a particular type of language and imagery.

In this sense at least television operates as the ultimate arbiter of values which members of society should uphold and share in. The ways in which television chooses to focus on this or that topic contributes towards the audience being exposed to a very specific view of the social world, such a view being privileged since it is the only one which is legitimised through the action of being broadcast. Allowing controversial or radical

perspectives on social issues to be broadcast on television is a recent innovation (for example, "Split Screen", "Right to Reply", "Rough Justice") which in any case constitute a fraction of the time given over to programmes which espouse more orthodox views.

In recent years there have been numerous examples of certain programmes being refused permission to broadcast, particularly those concerned with the IRA and British counter-strategies, as well as British security breaches or alleged spying cases and any other programmes which allegedly compromise national security. Such interventions by authorities outside television establishment would seem to run counter to the the notions of either public service broadcasting or laissez-faire, consumerist television.

Even the most ostensibly neutral of programmes such as news broadcasts are deemed to incorporate a particular production ethos which ensures only a partial consideration of events (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976; 1980). David Smith comments that whilst television news programmes encourage a mass audience to engage with their world and share in some sense of history, it is not absolutely neutral.

> "It [television] is inherently deceptive; it pretends to do much
> more than it actually does; and it inevitably smuggles in views,
> priorities and interpretations, probably those of the ruling
> group, under the cloak of objectivity" (Smith, 1989, p.28)

Whilst clearly it is impossible to report on every national and international occurrence, the orientation of news reporting is more problematic than a simple technical editing process. Smith comments that

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the interpretation placed on news items are **probably** (author's emphasis) those of the ruling group, but does not discuss who are included in the ruling group, why they have such authority and the ramifications of such control.

It is the way in which some items are selected for broadcast over others, and the way in which language and images are chosen to convey and interpret such events, which are the source of controversy and concern. As Hood argues, broadcasters present images to the audience with the expectation that such images will be understood by everyone in the same way, that is, that the audience will make, to use Morley's term, a dominant reading. Hood suggests that there are a variety of strategies employed by television producers and directors to influence television readings, including who is allowed access to speak directly to the viewer, who is allowed to put their point of view across, if and how an event will be covered and so on. Although Hood does not explicitly accuse television of deliberately manipulating the viewer, he does suggest that the pictures on the screen are not unmediated images representing an impartial analysis.

> "Even in a society where plurality of expression would be a manifestation of true freedom it is inconceivable that the State or its organs...would not wish to ensure that some basic view of social values and aims was propagated and supported" (Hood, 1980, pp.117-118)

The Treatment of Ethnicity on Television

It has been suggested that a shift in emphasis occurred in the media's treatment of ethnic minority communities from a concentration in the 1960s

on the problems of immigration, towards looking at the problems 'caused' by the communities themselves in the 1970s.

> "The emphasis of the media in the area of race relations changed substantially from a habitual concern in the 60s with the number of black people entering the country to the problems associated with their presence..from being an 'external threat' to becoming 'the outsider within'" (Verma, 1988, pp.127-128)

Research carried out in the 1970s attempted to ascertain whether or not television contributes to the formation and shaping of attitudes towards ethnic minority people and, if such contribution existed, whether it was a distinctive contribution or merely reiterated and reinforced prevailing ideas. An effort was also made to identify whether knowledge about minority groups came from personal experience and/or the media (Hartmann & Husband, 1974). Researchers constructed an hostility index (the 'H' test) to measure levels of racial prejudice amongst their respondents who were mainly children between the ages of 11 and 13. It was found that there was a link between high 'H' scores and a preference for watching stereotyped television material; that the more hostile children tended to view the media as being too favourable to minority groups; reactions to mass media material were consistent with pre-existing attitudes; and that television was seen as fairer in its treatment of black people than newspapers.

> "The indications are that people tend to notice and recall information that is consistent with their existing attitudes...thus the less hostile appear more likely to learn from the media about the discrimination and disadvantages suffered by the coloured population while the more hostile are more aware of their association with crime and rioting" (Hartmann & Husband, 1974, p.94)

If it is accepted that television **can** impact upon attitudes, then the potential exists for television texts to challenge and change beliefs and assumptions. In the context of improving inter-ethnic relations, how does television contribute to an understanding of the differences and perhaps more importantly, the similarities between different ethnic groups? For the majority of television fictions and images, the answer to this question can be comprehended by the term **stereotype.** It is argued here that the majority of ethnic characterisations on British television are stereotypical in form and content and that the origins of such visual imagery are rooted in cinematic representations which, in turn, can be traced back through the history of black-white relations. Iscarbo for example suggests that

"the media plays a part in children's early attitudes and also long term adults' attitudes. Therefore we cannot claim that the influence of television is absent in the formation and maintenance of racial attitudes" (Iscarbo, 1990, Voice, no. 388)

Iscarbo further argues that black people are still cast mainly as servants, sports stars and entertainers and when they do appear in factual programming it is often as a 'problem' in some way.

Where images of minority groups are scarce and those which do exist are stereotyped then it is likely that such images will be seen as being representative of such groups. Booth suggests that the way in which television provides simplifications of the social world precludes the medium from being able to present formulations which are anything but stereotypical. He argues that the time constraints which exist in the production of programmes encourage the use of simplistic notions of

good/bad, hero/villain, so that such characterisations are presented in simple two-dimensional schemas (Booth, 1987). Equally, the constant competition for audiences must inevitably mean a dilution of complex ideas for the sake of more popular programmes, so that the less challenging and more familiar material is more often broadcast.

However, it is the limited variety of role characterisation which is as much a problem as the lack of minority actors in cast lists. Freeth suggests that television does not provide an overtly racist presentation of the black community but instead includes negative imagery within the mainstream narrative so that their effect is often subliminal but forceful.

"The image and commentary constantly reinforcing racist ideas [is] woven seamlessly into the continuous flow of TV images. They're a powerful learning process for white audiences who, through lack of alternative information, have few critical ways of looking at television about black people" (Freeth, 1982, p.25)

Mercer argues that popular genres such as soap opera, sit-com and drama still depict black people in mainly stereotypical forms (Mercer in Daniels & Gerson, 1969). Mohyeddin suggests that the difference between British and American programming lies in the higher degree of integration of black Americans into society which enables both janitors and psychiatrists to be played by black people. In Britain, "it is a question of, if the part of a janitor becomes available, we give it to the black chap" (Mohyeddin, 1989). Another possible reason for these limitations in British television is the marked absence of black producers, directors and writers in significant numbers, or at least their inability to penetrate the television industry. Davies et al are in agreement with Mercer when they say that the way in

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which minority groups are portrayed is bound up with the personalities involved in the production process, that is white people, usually men. However, they also argue that the representation of black people is differentiated by sex.

"Most image-makers are men, and their treatment of black men and black women differ. In the reporting of riots, street crime, job competition or drugs offences, black men tend to be shown as a threat. Black women on the other hand tend to be represented as victims - of parental or marital abuse, arranged marriages, even famine - and therefore in need of paternalistic intervention" (Davies et al, 1978, p.38)

Although it is clear that the characterisation of black men and women is different, so too is that of white men and women. Although the point is taken, this current work does not allow for a more lengthy analysis of this related sub-issue of the sex stereotyping of black characters.

Hall argues that institutions such as the media are, in any case, constituent parts of society's ideological production, that is to say, that they are used by the powerful as the vehicle for representing what the real world is, from the perspective of the dominant view.

"What they [the media] 'produce' is precisely, representations of the social world...the media construct for us a definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries and what the 'problem of race' is understood to be. They help to classify out the world in terms of the categories of race" (Hall, 1981, p.17)

The idea of representation and representativenes are the two main problems which can be observed when discussing minority characterisation on television. Hall argues that the traditional representations of black

people as slave, native and entertainer are part of a 'grammar of race' which has a long and distinguished provenance, and questions whether these 'base images' are actually that far away from contemporary ethnic characterisations. He argues that recognition has to be made of the diversity of black experience before credible roles can be created for black actors.

> "What is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences and cultural identities which compose the category 'black'" (Hall, 1988, p.28)

ETHNIC STEREOTYPES AND TELEVISION: THE RESEARCH RATIONALE

Despite the differences in theoretical standpoints concerning the influence or otherwise of televisual material, what is not in dispute is the fact that watching television is an extremely popular past-time where average viewing in 1989 was estimated at 3.5 hours per day (BARB, 1989). If it is assumed that audiences do not simply sit passively on, allowing images to gently wash over them but instead positively interact with the material, then television does have at least the **potential** to impact upon attitudes and change behaviour. How then does television depict ethnic minority people? To what extent are their characters integrated into the main narrative themes or are they simply tokenistic? Are they stereotyped in the roles with which they are provided or is their skin incidental?

Having examined the existing literature in the fields of both race and ethnicity and also media theory and noted their respective strengths and

weaknesses, this study set out to explore an element within the more general field of enquiry which seemed to have been neglected in recent years. In a multi-cultural environment which is becoming increasingly reliant on television-centred sources of information and entertainment, how does the adolescent white viewer comprehend the ethnic image and what preconceptions does s/he bring to bear when watching ethnic characterisations in television fictions?

The explicit hypothesis of this study is that the white majority's assumptions about the black minority exist as fixed although not completely immutable ideas which have been and are still being transmitted through cultural media and that one highly significant vehicle through which such assumptions are regularly reinforced and reproduced is that of television. The hypothesis rests on two assumptions, that is, that:

a)   the majority of people now use television as one of their primary news and information sources and regard such broadcast material as an accurate statement about the world; and

b)   social relations are affected and influenced by the perpetuation of negative and racially stereotyped views and, given at least the potential of television to change opinion and behaviour, the narrative themes and iconography contained within television programmes could play a significant role in encouraging or restricting attitudinal change over time.

In order to test the accuracy of this general thesis, that is, that ethnic stereotypes exist both in the popular consciousness and, as a consequence

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of their consensual popular acceptance, are regularly utilised in television fictions, a research framework was formulated and designed. It was anticipated that the extent to which the viewer's personal experiences filter media messages would be capable of measurement and assessments made as to how the viewer treats with television messages which run counter to experiential understanding and belief. The way in which the research project was conducted provides the subject matter for the following chapter.

INTRODUCTION

The research programme was formulated to include four main elements. The first part involved carrying out a literature review of scholarly works in the fields of both race and television theory. The second part was to design and implement a research model with which to test the hypotheses with a sample population using standard questionnaire techniques together with informal group discussions. The third element focussed on the attitudes of television professionals, those people concerned with the making and selection of programmes for broadcast. The fourth and final section was intended to re-examine the main hypothesis in the light of the preceding three elements.

A discussion and evaluation of the various theoretical models within the general field of enquiry is obviously an important aspect of any research project and for this reason, such discussion is not confined to a particular section but rather provides reference points for the thesis as a whole. This chapter looks at the way in which the hypothesis was tested amongst a specific sample population, how the sample was chosen, provides a profile of the survey respondents and describes how the survey was conducted.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are several issues with which the study is not concerned. The study is primarily concerned with ethnic stereotypes and representations of ethnic minority people in television fictions and does not therefore address itself to non-fiction programmes such as news, current affairs or documentary-style programmes. Analyses of factual programming and reporting have in any case been well documented elsewhere (see particularly Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, 1980). The research also focuses exclusively on the attitudes of the white majority towards ethnic minority peoples and does not therefore treat with the attitudes of ethnic minority people themselves. Again, the rationale for the study is concerned with the majority's propensity for defining the minority(ies) in their own terms and for this reason the study only concerns itself with white attitudes.

THE SAMPLE POPULATION

The sample population chosen to test the hypothesis were young, white people following full-time further education courses in six midlands colleges. This particular sample population was chosen for several reasons. They constitute the 'TV generation', brought up on a staple diet of televisual material and could be expected to have watched a great deal of television in their formative years and to have learnt about the world from this primary source. Young people in the midlands could also reasonably be expected to have been educated in schools which included

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significant ethnic minority populations and/or to have personal experience of ethnic minority people either as friends or neighbours or both, given that the midlands has a well-established ethnic population. Thus young white viewers could be expected to use television as a major information and entertainment source and to be personally knowledgeable about ethnic minority people. It was therefore expected that it would be possible to discern the extent to which young people's attitudes about ethnic minority people were influenced by personal experience as discrete from televisual information and images.

The six colleges which took part in the survey had different ethnic populations both in their local area and college populations. It was anticipated that those college students who had inter-ethnic friendships would respond differently to those students who had no such friendships and had little contact with ethnic minority people. It was hoped that it would thus be possible to assess the influence of factors other than personal experience, such as television, on white attitudes towards ethnic minority people.

THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The design of the questionnaire went through several drafts before the final version was developed and implemented. The questionnaire contained two different but related sets of question, those relating to stereotypes and television, and those which asked more general questions about ethnic minority people. The two different but related sets of questions were

included since it is argued here that the viewer comprehends televisual material within a more general framework of personal experience and belief. That is, in order to make sense of what a viewer believes about television's representations of ethnic minority people, it is first necessary to examine how s/he regards ethnic minority people at a personal and general level. The questionnaire therefore included a deliberately random mix of questions which were both specific and general. It encouraged students to describe different ethnic groups using 'typical' classifications but also to identify whether these same stereotypes were present in television characterisations. Students were asked whether they had black or Asian friends and/or neighbours in order to ascertain whether such friendships and/or knowledge were significant variables in response differences. Are young people's own perceptions and experiences of ethnic communities reinforced or challenged by television? Does the medium present an accurate and credible portrait of the ethnic community itself and the way in which ethnicity impacts upon social relations?

Whilst the study was exclusively focussed on young white viewers, the ethnically mixed nature of many college groups resulted in 48 questionnaires being completed by ethnic minority students and 37 forms completed by mature students (age 25+). It was anticipated prior to the survey taking place that ethnic minority students might form part of some of the student groups who were to be interviewed and this was taken into account when the questionnaire was being designed. The main impact of their involvement was on the language used in the form, where it was necessary to ask students, for example, if they had any friends "whose ethnic background is different to your own" (Question 8a), rather than

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asking simply about "black or Asian friends". Although this meant that some of the language used in the questionnaire is rather clumsy, this is still far preferable than the alternative which would have necessitated asking any ethnic minority of mature students not to participate in the survey. The questionnaires completed by these two groups have not been incorporated into the research analysis and do not form any part of the study.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Once it had been decided to use further education students as the sample population, it was intended that as wide a geographical area as possible should be covered in order to interview students who had varying experiences of ethnic minority people either as neighbours or friends. Four principal further education colleges in the midlands were targeted as well as two others, one in a rural location and the other in an inner city area.

The principals of five of the six targeted colleges were contacted in writing with an outline of the research project and a request for their **in principle** agreement to participate in the research project. The vice-principal of the remaining college was contacted by the author personally since she was already working there at that time, as a part-time lecturer, and agreement was gained at that time. As far as the other colleges were concerned they all responded to the initial request in different ways. One college requested an immediate meeting in order to

develop the research idea with staff in more detail. The staff members met on that occasion held quite senior positions in the management hierarchy and were very keen to see the research take place, a view not shared by the majority of tutors who were subsequently invited to co-operate at that particular college.

Having received the agreement of all the colleges, the questionnaire was then piloted with a group of students who shared the same characteristics (for the purposes of the survey) as those of the intended sample population, but who were leaving college that term and so would therefore be excluded from participating in the survey proper. This was a useful exercise and resulted in some significant alterations to the format of the questionnaire, in particular, changing the phrasing of some of the open questions to provide multiple-choice type questions. These changes resulted from the very poor response to the open questions in the pilot study, most students leaving all these type of questions unanswered. It is argued here that changing the question format from open to closed was a legitimate change since it enabled students to make positive (and negative) distinctions between people based on ethnicity, using a range of descriptions with which they were familiar, although it is accepted that such descriptions are necessarily subjective. However, if ethnic stereotypes did not exist, then it could be expected that questions which rely on such concepts for their internal validity could not work and would not achieve responses. As the survey findings show, a significant minority of students did not in fact feel able to categorise people in the ways suggested, but for the majority of their peers a willingness to use the stereotypes provided was observed.

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THE PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

College A

College A is major further education establishment in the midlands and is situated in an area which has a significant and established Asian community, although members of such community are under-represented amongst the student population. In the 1989/90 academic year, the college was not carrying out ethnic monitoring of its new or existing students.

Initial negotiations were conducted with the vice principal and a senior member of staff at this college whereby it was agreed that the survey could take place. As the author was already teaching at the college, she was asked to make her own contacts with tutors in order to seek their co-operation in interviewing students. On the one hand this was very unsatisfactory because it meant subjective decisions had to be made about which groups to interview, thereby reducing the randomness of group selection and, having decided to interview BTEC students, much time was spent in making contacts. However, once contact had been made and the survey aims discussed the full co-operation of tutors was gained and the actual survey process was conducted satisfactorily.

College B

College B is also a major further education establishment in the midlands, has a relatively small ethnic minority population in the area and a correspondingly small number of ethnic minority students. A preliminary meeting with the principal of this college was arranged at the beginning of the academic year 1988/89, together with the senior creative studies tutor.

At this meeting it became clear that the college wanted to pursue a democratic line where students would be asked to volunteer to take part in the study. It was arranged that the author would design a poster explaining something about the research project and inviting students to meet her in one of the common rooms to participate in the survey. Although there was no other option but to agree to this arrangement, it was not satisfactory. People rarely volunteer for anything unless there is something in it for them, and even then, not in the lunch hour. The author suggested that perhaps there would be insufficient students coming forward to participate in the survey and requested that some students be interviewed in tutor groups as a supplementary exercise. This suggestion was not greeted with any enthusiasm but staff did agree to think about it. It was resolved that the day interviewing was due to commence at this college I would be introduced to some tutors who had agreed to their students being interviewed. Despite the initial difficulties, the survey at this college proved to be very successful, both in terms of student discussion and also with regard to tutors' enthusiasm for the study.

College C

College C has the smallest student population but the largest catchment area. Although it has a distinctly rural location, its students are predominantly from more urban environments. Less than 1% of its student population are from ethnic minority communities. At the preliminary meeting with the principal, there appeared to be little real enthusiasm with the project and a definite concern with confidentiality. The principal wanted assurances that in any written report, the college would

be anonymous. However, other staff at the college did not seem so negative although there was a tendency to think of racism and discrimination as being of no concern to the college because they had so few black students. The Equal Opportunities Officer suggested that "coloured folk" weren't interested in the type of training that the college provided - it was only "normal" (white?) students who were interested in the particular career areas in which the college specialised.

Conducting the survey at this college proved to be rather unsatisfactory because the only way the college could find the time to participate in the survey was by assembling all the students in the hall at the same time and carrying out the survey then. There was no alternative but to agree to this proposal, but this method obviously precluded having any reasonable discussion afterwards since there were so many students.

College D

College D has the the largest student population, is located in an area which has the largest ethnic minority population and has significant numbers of ethnic minority students. It was the only college which carried out ethnic monitoring of the student population at the time of the study and in the 1988/89 academic year there were: 13.6% Asian students, 2.4% Afro-Caribbean students and 1.6% other ethnic minority students attending the college.

All survey negotiations were carried out with the college administration section, and if for no other reason, the conduct of the survey was not very

easy. Because there was no direct contact with tutors, there was a certain amount of resentment amongst tutors when presented with a directive to participate in the study. The main problem in conducting the survey at this college was the inappropriateness of some of the groups chosen to participate. During the initial meeting with college staff, the nature of the study was outlined as it had been at all the other colleges, and a description of the type of groups which would be suitable for interview. However, on two occasions, interview groups included significant numbers of ethnic minority and mature students who were extremely hostile towards the questionnaire and its content.

Although there was no appreciable difference in general attitude between younger and more mature white students, mature black students perceived the questionnaire as racist and provocative and became very angry. On the two occasions where this happened a very careful path had to be negotiated between letting the black students know that the questions were designed to draw out the intolerant (and tolerant) attitudes of white students, whilst also encouraging the white students to complete the questionnaires honestly.

College E

College E is a major further education establishment in the midlands and has significant minority ethnic communities in the area, members of which are under-represented in the student population. Senior staff at this college were very interested in the research project because they had been involved in various ethnic monitoring strategies during the previous year

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and wanted to do more work on anti-racist and anti-sexist teaching. However, although this sentiment was strong at senior management level and amongst certain tutors, it became apparent that some staff felt that combatting racism was not part of their job. The author had a meeting with senior staff in the summer, prior to carrying out the survey and had been pleased with the enthusiasm shown then. However, these staff members also said that trying to put racism 'on the agenda' was proving very difficult because of tutor resistance and apathy.

The survey at this college was satisfactory, and tutors were evenly divided between those who thought it was an issue worth talking about and those who did not. The former encouraged students who took part in the survey to talk about some of the questions and their reactions to them and thereby generated some lively discussions. The latter group of tutors were not so forthcoming, and clearly saw the author's presence in their classrooms as an uninvited interruption in their class so that when the last person had completed the questionnaire, she was then asked, politely, to leave.

College F

College F is a major further education establishment in the midlands, has a neglible minority ethnic population which is reflected in the ethnicity of the student population. The initial meeting with the vice-principal at this college, together with another senior staff member was extremely encouraging since it appeared that work was already being done in the college on multicultural education issues and this research would tie-in well with existing initiatives. It was agreed that it would be easier,

administratively, to interview students who were all following a new course, but who had varying backgrounds and ages. Two weeks before interviewing was due to start at the college the author was informed that there were serious problems in the co-ordination of the survey and an immediate meeting was arranged with the college contact. It transpired that a meeting had been arranged for all the potential participating tutors to discuss the survey, to decide which groups would be interviewed, and discuss how to co-ordinate the survey with the least amount of disruption. However, at the meeting, **all** the tutors had refused to participate providing a variety of reasons. The main problem appeared to be that tutors did not feel able to deal with the possibility of a "racist backlash" as a result of their students completing the questionnaires and, as one tutor put it, "have to argue the anti-racist standpoint". It was also pointed out that there were some highly leading questions contained in the questionnaire and tutors felt that these would have to be removed before any further arrangements could be made for the survey to take place.

The author then arranged to meet some of the less antagonistic tutors and hoped that since several hundred students had already been interviewed by that time, their fears could be allayed by an account of the reality of conducting the survey. However, the tutors were adamant that their students were so reactionary that the questionnaire would inevitably encourage racism and tutors were unwilling to deal with the issue. One tutor said that all her students were intolerant and one female student was a member of the National Front. She felt that asking these students to complete the questionnaire would bring racist ideas to the fore and bring the issue of racism "into the limelight". She was unwilling to treat with

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what her students might say about ethnic groups and felt ill-informed about race issues and the associated arguments. It was never clear whether tutors were suggesting that discrimination was not a problem - because of the dearth of minority ethnic students - and therefore not worth talking about, or whether they were unsure of their feelings on the issue. What was clear and articulated by several tutors, was that they did not think that discussing racism was part of their working responsibility.

Despite my own personal views as to the attitudes of these tutors, I realised that they themselves had to make the final decision to participate or not. Four tutors did finally agree to participate but the conduct of the survey at this college was rather disappointing. The four groups who were finally interviewed were no more or less hostile than any other college group, and the tutors agreed that their fears had been groundless. When students did discuss some of the questions, tutors found that they could argue the "anti-racist standpoint" simply because the alternatives offered by some of the students were so obviously prejudiced and unfair.

CONDUCTING THE SURVEY

The survey was carried out between October and December 1988 and 729 students, including 48 ethnic minority students and 37 mature students, from six further education colleges in the midlands were interviewed. The actual interviewing process was broadly the same in each college, with the exception of College C as already stated. However, there were significant differences in a) the way in which tutors had been approached to

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participate in the research; b) interest in and awareness of the research topic; and c) levels of co-operation and general ease of survey process. In colleges where teaching staff with an interest in social issues had been delegated to set up interviews, the survey process went well, with the exception of College F. In College D where the interviews had been set up by administrative staff, the survey was more difficult and haphazard, with participating tutors knowing very little about the research, apart from having to suffer intrusions in their classrooms.

In general, the survey was highly successful and although it had been originally envisaged that 200 students would be interviewed at each institution, it was soon clear that this number was unfeasible. Because of time constraints - on the part of the college co-ordinators - whater timetable was provided by colleges had to be accepted, even though this meant a much reduced sample than originally anticipated. For the majority of groups, the procedure was straightforward, apart from Colleges C and F. A timetable was provided to cover the relevant weeks during which the survey was to take place and tutors were informed of the day and time that their students would be requested to participate. Tutors were either enthusiastic about the research, asked a lot of questions and encouraged discussion with students or would take the opposite approach, restrict conversation and make it clear that they regarded the survey as an invited intrusion.

Student Groups

For most of the groups interviewed , there seemed to be an internal consensus as to whether the students, as a group, were hostile or friendly towards ethnic minority communities. In each group interviewed there would be an implicit 'group norm' with which the majority of members would agree with perhaps one or two dissenters in each group. Although with most groups there was a certain amount of conferring, whispering and talking about what friends were writing down, it was clear both from observation and later questionnaire analysis that students had put down their own thoughts for most of the questions. The exceptions to this were the responses to Q.30 - Q.33 which are the main factual questions, where students were asked to name black, white and Asian politicians, singers, comedians and news presenters. Particular names would be present in clusters from the same group and suggested an amount of discussion among students. However, further analysis confirmed that this kind of 'copying' was restricted to these few questions. After each group had been interviewed I briefly assessed the questionnaire responses to identify the level of collusion, if any, and as discussed above, it seemed to be limited to this group of questions. Although there is always the problem that students will say or write things to impress their friends or, equally, impress the interviewer, the way in which the questionnaires were answered, in a generally sensible way, led to the belief that the replies reflected genuine and personal sentiments.

The way in which students completed the questionnaire seemed to depend on the teaching style and interest of the class tutor. Some tutors were keen to discuss the questionnaire and its general implications whilst students

answered the questions, allowing a reasonable level of conversation among students. Other tutors were completely uninterested in the subject matter, sometimes obviously discomfited, and tried to stop students discussing the questionnaire at all.

Students had no difficulty in making quite outrageous racist comments in response to questions and although male students, as a group, tended to be more likely to make overtly racist and intolerant statements, there were significant numbers of female students who also made these type of comments. All student groups were told that the questionnaires were completely anonymous and the extent to which they believed this was clear from the type of comments which many students made on the forms. About half the student groups took part in discussions after the questionnaire had been completed, initiated either by the author or their class tutor, starting with what the group thought the questionnaire had been about. For the generally hostile groups, the first replies were usually that it had been about racism and about whether or not you liked black people. Some students felt that the preamble to the survey had been dishonest when it had been explained that the questionnaire was about race and television. These students thought that it should have been made clear that it was really about "whether you were racist or not" and with these students it was very difficult to encourage them to talk about the questionnaire. Students generally were quite reluctant to talk about the issues raised by the questionnaire and when they did, it tended to be in a very non-committal way. Invariably students would make egalitarian statements about the iniquities of racial discrimination and the fact that many of them had black friends. After demonstrating how fair-minded these students were,

they then felt able to articulate comments relating to 'loony left councils' financing minority groups and comments concerned with the unfairness of positive action. It was also suggested many times that racism had been blown out of proportion by the media and it certainly wasn't a problem in the area where students lived. There were also comments about how they, as white people, had been physically and verbally abused by black people, comments about how racist some black and Asian people are and how difficult it is to get a job now as a white person because all the jobs go to "coloureds".

Although I became inured to the racist arguments which were constantly articulated by students, I feel that the discussions were a salutary lesson for those class tutors who had never raised the issue of discrimination with their students. Whether or not there were ethnic minority students in a group made no difference to the way in which students would refer to black and Asian people as "coloureds", "pakis", "them" and so on. In mixed groups, there tended to be less expressed intolerance, but the questionnaire responses from these groups identified quite different sentiments. It is interesting, though hardly original, to note that students understood what attitudes they **ought** to express with regard to equal opportunities, and would be very egalitarian when they felt that it was required. The fact that many students neither hold these views nor believe in their validity is highlighted by the way in which questionnaires were completed. Often, after a discussion with students, the author then read the group's responses and be surprised at the disparity between what the group had just said (generally tolerant) and what they wrote (more intolerant). At the very least it is encouraging that the message of

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equality has filtered through so that people understand that prejudice is at least unacceptable in polite conversation even if they personally subscribe to racist dogma.

Many students, whilst accepting in principle that racism exists and that it is undesirable, expressed hostility towards any effort to circumvent discrimination such as positive action strategies, because of the 'unfairness' to whites which such devices imply. There was also a strong feeling that not only was the extent of racism wildly exaggerated, but that the more groups were told they were being exploited and discriminated against, the more they would feel this was the case. Many of the students interviewed felt that racial discrimination was actually on the wane and that if only the status quo was maintained, without any positive action interventions, then discrimination would eventually disappear of its own accord. Not only was this view expressed by students, but tutors too argued for this course of action.

One tutor illustrated the validity of the natural assimiliation argument by using British Jews as an example. He suggested that the Jewish community decided from the outset that they were going to be maltreated and therefore determined that they must make their own opportunities without special pleading. The result, follows this argument, is full integration into British society and if only black people followed this example then within a couple of generations, they too could achieve full integration. The same tutor went on to suggest that positive action strategies were bound to fail because of the antagonism engendered in the majority white population where

an increase in anti-racist initiatives could only lead to increased levels of racial attack.

The above anecdote serves to put into context the attitudes of many students given the attitudes of some teaching staff. This is certainly not to suggest that the latter have a strong influence on the former, but simply to comment on the general levels of awareness of both students and tutors and to speculate as to how either or both groups could critically discuss issues such as racism in an informed manner.

Typical Student Groups

Although each student group was different and unique, there were several 'types' of group which can be usefully identified as sharing certain vocational and attitudinal characteristics which remained constant across the six colleges. The basic characteristics of four identifiable 'types' are briefly examined below in order to demonstrate common themes within and between different student groups. It is clearly unfeasible to discuss each student group on its own and it therefore seems sensible to aggregate groups which share similar characteristics.

A. All-male craft-based

This group would typically contain a hard core of 'macho' young men some of whom would enunciate questions loudly and then suggest possible responses. Quite often these would be noisy sessions with questions and answers being shouted across the room. I never made any attempt to stop this interaction except to say that I would like the views of students themselves rather than their neighbours. These student groups were the most likely to use

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racist language in the classroom and most likely to be intolerant in their responses.

Students from these groups were the most likely to say that white people are good at everything, never cause trouble and that the immigration laws are not strict enough. In discussion afterwards, the more confident members of these groups would tend to reiterate the views which they had already recorded on their questionnaires and were not embarrassed to say exactly how they felt. This is presumably because they felt safe in their group environment and also because they were expressing sentiments which were part of the group's own internal value system. These students were not persuaded by reasoned argument against discrimination - they could always cite an instance where they had been abused by a black person in some way, or else knew someone who had. In one group I interviewed, one young man said that "they should go back where they came from because they aren't British". Another member of the group called him a "racialist" and the first young man replied that he had been joking and so it went on.

With most of the students in these groups, attitudes are very strong and the media seem to play an important part in the formation of these opinions. Students were much more inclined to believe what they read in the newspapers or saw on television as being truthful, supporting the old dictum that there is no smoke without fire. In one all-male group which included an Asian student, one of the white students said that although he laughed at racist jokes, he wasn't a racist, it was just that the joke was funny. He then proceeded to tell a joke which depended on the concept of the alien immigrant for its humour. When it had been related and all the

students had laughed, the author asked the Asian student what he thought about it. He said he didn't mind because the joke had a go at "Pakis" and he was an Indian. This then encouraged some of the white students to point to the inter-ethnic hostility both within the Asian community itself and between the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities, the students then deciding that "blacks hate Asians more than they hate whites". This sentiment served to justify, in a perverse way, the discrimination against minority groups by white people, because inter-ethnic conflict was allegedly far worse than any behaviour exhibited by white people against black. One student in this group asked me if there were any black people doing this type of research. His point was that it seemed to be only white people who attempted to improve relations between groups, whilst the black and Asian communities - the people who **cause** the problems - sit back doing nothing. Again, this was a common view amongst students, particularly male students.

B.   All-female craft-based

These groups, typically, would be quite cohesive and more than willing to complete the questionnaires. Young women, as a group, were significantly less hostile than their male colleagues. The conversations during the completion of questionnaires were much less rowdy and centred round the more 'factual' questions, for example, Questions 30-33 as discussed above. Although young women were as likely to stereotype people as their male colleagues, it appeared that they viewed it as a kindness to suggest that Asian people are good at business and black people good at sport. They saw these characteristics as very positive attributes, often endowing white people with bad tempers and unfriendliness. Some young women in discussion

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suggested that racism was caused by gangs of male youths fighting each other, whilst the young women themselves had many 'coloured' friends. All these groups were much more willing to discuss the questionnaire afterwards than male students. Interestingly a significant minority of female students asked what 'ethnic' meant, or what the difference was between black and Asian people whereas young men rarely asked such questions.

C.   Groups mixed by sex and ethnicity

These groups tended to be the most internally divided, usually between young women and men.   In mixed groups, Asian boys would seldom make a contribution in discussions, whereas Asian girls were much more likely to give vocal support to minority groups by using anecdotes to illustrate instances of overt discrimination.   White students in mixed groups would often talk about "coloureds" and "Pakis" as if their own colleagues sitting in the same classroom were either invisible or simply seen as classmates rather than black or Asian.   In one mixed group session, a hard core of reactionary white males were complaining about ethnic minority broadcasts and suggested that all those "Paki programmes" should be on a separate channel so they didn't have to watch them or tune into them by mistake. The illogicality of their argument was highlighted by the single ethnic minority student, a young Asian woman, who pointed out that there was no compulsion to watch such programmes. This was especially the case for most minority interest programmes which were broadcast either very late at night or in the afternoon. She suggested that she didn't like watching sport or religious programmes and that perhaps these programmes should also be on a separate channel. One of the young men then said that the "BBC stood for British Broadcasting", obviously implying a direct relationship between

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'British' and white. When challenged, he said that British did mean white at which point most of the other members of the group starting berating him and calling him a racist. The Asian student was quite upset at the white student's racist outburst and all the other young [white] women rallied round her and starting abusing the original male student. This particular session got rather heated and the tutor had to calm the atmosphere before we discussed the questionnaire further. The tutor said that as a result of the discussion, he was going to do some work in devising materials based round racism to use with his group, which was a very positive outcome to the discussion.

D. Groups with significant ethnic minority or mature students

These groups, although few in number, were the most unco-operative and difficult groups to interview. Because all students were asked to complete the questionnaire, rather than told to do so, there was an implicit notion of voluntarism. The younger student groups simply understood that they were being told to complete the questionnaires and did so without argument. The older students, however, would often ask if they had to complete the forms, to which they were told no. Whilst the majority of students in these groups would make a start on their questionnaire, as soon as one student refused, some of the 'starters' would stop because they perceived that there must be something wrong with completing the form.

Although I could not insist that students take part, on a couple of occasions I asked non-participants why they did not want to complete the form. For white students, reasons ranged from the narrowness of the topic, with an over-emphasis on "the problems for black people - what about

minority white people like gays and the elderly", to a feeling that
students were being manoeuvred into making racist statements. Black
students said that they felt they were being picked on as being different
and having or causing special problems.

THE TELEVISION PROFESSIONALS

In addition to gaining the views of the television audience with regard to
ethnic stereotypes, the research model intended to examine the attitudes of
individuals who are responsible for much of what is broadcast on
television, that is, television professionals who select, direct and edit
programmes. It is important to identify the way in which such individuals
comprehend issues such as ethnicity and stereotypes since such
understanding will necessarily inform the way in which the treatment of
these issues in television will be viewed by the 'objective' eye of media
professionals.

Twelve personalities working in the television industry, including heads of
departments and programme producers were initially contacted and half of
those contacted agreed to be interviewed. The initial selection was
intended to include individuals from the BBC, Central Television and
Channel 4 as well as producers of specific ethnic minority broadcasts such
as "Network East" and "Here and Now". Three programme selectors (Jim Moir,
Head of Light Entertainment at the BBC; Farrukh Dhondy and Peter Ansorge,
Commissioning Editors for Multi-Cultural Programming and Drama respectively
at Channel 4) were interviewed in addition to a freelance producer (Bernard

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Clark) who was producing an investigative news programme ("Hard News") at the time of interview. The producers of two ethnic minority programmes (Narendhra Morar for BBC's "Network East" and Zia Mohyeddin for Central TV's "Here and Now") were also interviewed during this time. The meetings were conducted over a three-month period during the summer of 1989 and took the form of semi-structured interviews. The interviewees all responded to the initial request for meetings very promptly and seemed to be pleased that their pursuits were to be the subject of an academic enquiry. The issues raised by these discussions and the comments made by the respondents have been integrated in the text as appropriate and do not therefore constitute a separate section within the main body of the thesis.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Breakdowns of all the questionnaire responses are to be found in the Appendices. However, discussions of the main survey findings and data collected from respondents provide much of the subject material for Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Unless otherwise stated, all tabulated data has been generated from the survey and findings are referred to throughout the thesis as being taken from the "1988 survey". All such tables have the 1988 survey as their original source. Where direct quotations are used in the text, these are verbatim responses taken from the completed questionnaires and changes have only made where mis-spellings detract from the sense of the quotation. The age and sex of respondents is given in brackets after each direct quotation.

INTRODUCTION

Since the very beginning of the film industry, racial and racist imagery has been a constant theme pervading and persuading the film narrative, particularly imagery representing African and Afro-Caribbean peoples. As will be clear from preceding chapters, it is the contention of this thesis that the type of imagery utilised both in television and cinematic characterisation is borrowed directly from the stereotypical assumptions which were already available in the cultural repertoire of white Britons. This chapter briefly explores the ways in which the cinema has traditionally represented ethnic minority people and discusses some of the filmic genres which have particularly featured ethnic minority actors and actresses. For the purposes of this chapter, references to "black" people are taken to mean people of African or Afro-Caribbean descent.

CINEMA AND ETHNIC PORTRAITS

When the film medium was in its infancy, Thomas A Edison and his associates were producing films such as "Pickaninnies" (1894), "Negro Dancers" (1895) and "Dancing Darkies" (1897) (Pines, 1975, p.7). Pines argues that the attraction of using black groups in these early film attempts lay in the vitality and mystery that surrounded these exotic creatures,

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characteristics which were missing from white subjects. Thus, the differentness of black people was deliberately contrived to demonstrate their essential dissimilarity with white people, lack of sophistication as exemplified by their enjoyment of singing and dancing,implying a more primitive and uncivilised nature. This type of imagery offered nothing new, it merely reiterated and confirmed the traditional view of black people which had become embedded in white culture since the early slave trade period and Pines defines three distinct roles for early black film characters. "The Uncle Tom derivative, the faithful servant type; the slapstick buffoon type; and the knife-carrying savage type" (Pines, 1975, p.30)

Although these stereotypes were certainly not invented by cinema, the exciting visual style of film enabled a much fuller exploitation and exaggeration of these types to be demonstrated. Films such as "The Wooing and Wedding of a Coon" (1905), "How Rastus Got His Turkey" and "Rastus in Zululand" (1914) were among the first racist 'comedies' and relying on an audience understanding of black as fool.

As film-makers began to search, from about 1910 onwards, for subject material that was more interesting than the rather studied 'black fool' comedies, films began to appear which rehearsed topical problems and provided moral guidance on issues as varied as miscegenation and insubordination. Many of the plantation films of this period, particularly the numerous versions of Harriet Beecher Stowe's classic "Uncle Tom's Cabin", celebrated white supremacy and applauded the faithful black servant. The unfortunate progeny of miscegenation were either roundly

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condemned as evil and despicable or else given sympathetic treatment because of the presence of at least a few drops of white blood (Pines, 1975, p.94). The overridingly negative characterisation of black people in early silent films as variously stupid, frightened, lazy or savage set the popular tone for subsequent cinematic portraits in succeeding decades.

In 1915, D W Griffith made the film "Birth of a Nation", adapted from a novel by Thomas Dixon entitled "The Clansmen". It marked a turning point in cinema history for several reasons not least because it was heavily publicised as being a momentous event. The film was several hours longer than any previous film, used the latest technology in film processes and, most significantly, was more racist in its language and imagery than any which had gone before (Cripps, 1977). The film dealt with the Civil War period and subsequent reconstruction and contrasted the civilised, ante-bellum period where master and servant lived happily and contented lives, with the post-war years where black people were given and, necessarily for this type of film, abused power. It was yet another indication of the unwillingness on the part of white producers (and others) to allow of the notion of responsible authority in relation to black people. In film language at least, if black people are given power they are immediately corrupted by it and usually come to an untimely end, often at the hand of a white hero. "Birth of a Nation" used the inevitable corruption of black people by power to justify the consequent rise of the Ku-Klux Klan to contain and control them. A theme running through the film is of the 'uppity' black man desiring the white woman - a desire frowned upon then as now. However, in the film, desire is transformed into brutality since the only way in which a white woman can be allowed to have any contact with a

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black man is through the forced attentions of the latter. This situation must be resolved by the rescue of the scared woman by her true white amour, in life as in art.

Cripps argues that whilst black men in early films were usually relegated to the faithful servant/wily villain/loveable fool roles, women were allowed more variety and were often portrayed as wise-cracking and smart. Black women were also often cast as very dominant personalities, particularly with regard to their relationships with men which served the purpose of reducing the real-life threat of the black man as imagined by the white majority. Cripps argues that women posed much less of a threat in society generally and could therefore be seen as quite tough because this would be humorous, provocative perhaps, but not real.

With the arrival of talking pictures in the 1920s a more realistic dimension was added to the existing imagery whereby the black caricatures which had been developed visually on film were further enhanced by a specific idiomatic interpretation of black speech patterns providing further evidence of differentness by exaggerated and contrived modes of speaking. It was also during the fledgling sound film period that the device of black-face was at its height; personalities such as Al Jolson epitomised the archetypal minstrel figure and was well-known for "The Jazz Singer" (1927) and "The Singing Fool" (1928) (Pines, 1975, p.16).

Actors such as Jolson were highly successful in their black-face make-up and it should be remembered that despite the current climate which now eschews such imagery, it is little more than ten years since "The Black and

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White Minstrels" show was taken off the air after twenty years of popular broadcasting. The civil rights movement in America raised awareness of race issues and in 1968, 22 years after the original opening of "The Jolson Story", protestors marched in Oregon against the re-showing of the film on television. McClelland points out that few Americans were offended by the depiction of blacked-up whites when the film was originally broadcast in the 1940s (McClelland, 1987) but then again, black Americans had no legitimate voice at that time, still less the vote.

The black-face minstrel character was extremely pervasive and very popular in films during the pre-war period and the influence of this characterisation can be seen in shows such as "The Black and White Minstrels" (BBC, 1958-1978) which enjoyed continued success both on the British stage and on television for a number of years. Once again, the comic black figure provides a constant source of amusement for the white audience. The black-face technique was usually deliberated overdone and obvious and, in the case of "The Black and White Minstrels", allowed 'black' men and white women to share each other's company, and purport to be romantically involved which in real life would have been absolutely proscribed.

During this early film period very little changed in the way of stereotypes. Popular films such as "Gone with the Wind" (1939) and "Swanee River" (1940) retained the traditional racial motifs of faithful servants and friendly black folks. Butterfly McQueen, who played Scarlett O'Hara's maid Prissy, recalls that her role as the flighty and unreliable Prissy was the best that a black actress in the 1940s could expect in terms of

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characterisation, but she soon fell foul of typecasting efforts and comments that "when I wouldn't do Prissy over and over, they wouldn't give me any more work" (Butterfly McQueen in interview with Johnston in The Independent, 25.9.1989). In the early 1940s the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and some of the major Hollywood studios met together in an attempt to ameliorate the problem of racist stereotyping in film.

"The studios agreed to abandon pejorative racial roles, to place Negroes in positions as extras they could reasonably be expected to occupy in society, and to begin the slow task of integrating blacks into the ranks of studio technicians" (Cripps, 1977, p.3)

Miller suggests that Hollywood movies became a major transmitter of assimilationist values and further assisted in reinforcing an extremely narrow conception of American life which all ethnic groups were expected to embrace and emulate.

"Hollywood themes and images of race and ethnicity collectively must work to reinforce viewers' conceptions of the world...movies help to define and direct American values and behaviour ... the very persistence and ubiquity of ethnic stereotypes in movies created an aura of 'truth' about them" (Miller, 1980, p.12)

The particular theme of sexuality ran through many of Hollywood's efforts to treat with ethnic characterisation and often centred on the myth of overt sexual appetites attributed to black men and women, a perception which probably finds its roots in the psyche of the white male (Cameron Bailey, 1988). Although the preoccupation with sexuality comes in different guises - the difficulties associated with miscegenation, the sexual proclivities of black men, the easy virtue of black women - the underlying

theme is one of white fear, often of the unknown. Unable to cope with the notion of 'normal' sexuality, the black male is often cast by the white producer in the role of sexual villain, as rapist. Equally, the use of power, as applied to black groups is usually shown as despotic, the notion of power **with** responsibility being apparently impossible to attribute to black characters. The post-war years witnessed a change in perception on race issues and as black people were being encouraged to participate more actively in social and economic life, so this new 'status' was reflected in films of that period (Miller, 1980). However, although public perceptions might have been changing, quite often old stereotypes which were no longer valid were simply replaced with new ones. Cinema is an industry after all, and needs to make a profit and there is a great deal of comfort and contentment to be gained from films which reflect and reinforce preconceptions rather than challenge them.

> "The **leitmotif** of the New Hollywood, like that of the Old, is
> entertainment; not the construction of a brave new world"
> (Miller, 1980 p.14)

The 1950s and 1960s saw subtle shifts in ethnic characterisation, especially with the general liberalising of attitudes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Film action was often contexted in environments other than the plantation and allowed both black and white characters to demonstrate empathy and levels of understanding which had hitherto been denied. At a time when the black civil rights movement in America was active, discussion of the issues were taking place, but in the less threatening arena of the cinema rather than in open and public debate.

The 1960s was the decade for the black actor Sidney Poitier, who played a range of basically 'good' black characters in films such as "To Sir With Love" (1966), "In the Heat of the Night" (1967) and "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" (1967), in which white racist bigotry is exposed by the sensible, non-violent and professional black. Poitier is credited with saying that as one of the few black Americans on film, he was duty-bound to portray only positive images (Cripps, 1978). Leab suggests that in relation to Poitier's many roles in 1960s films, his presence alone set a precedent, even if his saintly image was forced upon him by an industry indifferent or hostile to black concerns (Leab, 1975). Diawara argues that the fear which operated at the root of much racist myth was defused by the domestication of black customs and culture - a process of deracination and isolation - or else by stories in which minority groups are depicted playing by the rules of white society and losing. Hollywood requires that disaster must strike a black character who has behaved like a hero (Diawara, 1988).

However, in the 1970s, the non-violence exemplified by Poitier was thrown over in favour of the more aggressive black 'macho' image typified by Richard Rowntree's portrayal of 'super-cop' "Shaft". The character of Shaft was popular with both white and black audiences, and unlike white super-hero characters such as "James Bond", Shaft relies on his own intelligence rather than technical gadgetry. His sexuality also appears more real than Bond's almost mechanical sex scenes and again, this implies a more basic level of operation, even primitive, in contrast to the cool, rather ascetic white performer. Cripps considers that what could be described as 'black genre' films, that is, aggregating into a particular cinematic 'type' those films which are linked by their effort to

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comprehend and illustrate aspects of the black experience

"..choose hyperbole as a mode of celebrating the combination of triumph over adversity, fellow feeling and moral superiority of the oppressed known most recently as 'soul' ......no other genre except perhaps the American western, spoke so directly to the meaning and importance of shared values embraced by its audience" (Cripps, 1978, p.12)

However, at the same time as 'black genre' films were establishing themselves as serious attempts to capture and explore the diversity of black experience, a series of 'blaxploitation' films were simultaneously released, targeted specifically at a poor black audience, offering a range of violent heroes (Miller, 1980). These films were given the label of 'blaxploitation' because of the exploitative nature of their content which presumed that black people would watch other black people in films, no matter how poor the script, acting or production, such exploitation relating both to the actors and the audience. Such films were written and usually produced by white film units with a cynical eye on filling the downtown cinemas vacated by the migrating white population. They were cheaply made and produced where

"...their principal legacy was stylised, choreographed violence and a new set of stereotypical images of blacks who lived by their fists and loins and whose vocal utterings were intended to outrage rather than inform" (Miller, 1980, p.61)

Unlike the black genre films which attempted to explore the authentic black experience, blaxploitation films of the 1960s and 1970s were simple re-workings of the popular white 'macho' themes, where only the skin tone changed. A recent revival in the fortunes of the blaxploitation film industry has occurred in South Africa, mainly due to the endeavours of

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Gary Van der Merwe who has made almost 100 films since 1982. The formula of minimal scripts, brief shooting and editing times and inserting old footage has proved extremely lucrative for him and other producers who have joined in the business. There is little mistaking the attitude that Van der Merwe holds towards the typical black audience.

> "The blacks aren't fussy, most of our audiences are rural. Some of these people have never seen a motor car before, let alone a movie. They'll take anything you give them" (G Van der Merwe in interview with Powell and Fisher, The Independent, 27.5.1989)

Dyer argues that studios which focus on groups which are defined as "oppressed, marginal or subordinate" actually become part of the very process of such groups' oppression, marginalisation or subordination. The very act of studying these groups as discrete units has the effect of reinforcing their differentness from the wider society. The assumption then, that minority groups are the exception leads obviously to the conclusion that the dominant group is the norm (Dyer, 1986). When black people are described, part of the description includes their ethnicity; when white people are described, attributes other than whiteness are more usually indicated such as occupation, marital status or physique. Ethnicity in this case is taken for granted, reference to it unnecessary since it constitutes the normal state of affairs.

Cripps is highly critical of black actors such as Poitier, Harry Belafonte and Sammy Davies because of the way in which they traded in stereotypes, making careers of caricaturing the black experience and giving rise to 'conscience liberalism'. He accuses them of diminishing their own authentic personalities by portraying what are essentially white

characters with brown skins. Nonetheless he suggests that their success was significant in any case, if only because they allowed stereotypes to become the weapon of liberals (Cripps, 1980). In other words, even though such actors could be reproached for their particular representations, their presence forced the issue of stereotypes and type-casting to at least be acknowledged and discussed.

Although much of the foregoing is concerned with the portrayal of black characters, Dhillon-Kashyap argues that an Asian influence in the cinema can be found as early as 1924 when Herman Surayi, with Franz Osten, made "Light of Asia", a British-German co-production with an all-Asian cast (Dhillon-Kashyap, 1982, p.121). Since that early collaboration, although there have been numerous Asian film-makers, Dhillon-Kashyap suggests they have tended to work in mainstream cinema, not necessarily addressing "the Asian experience". In fact many contemporary films which include significant Asian characters are mere re-workings of the 'glories' of the colonial past, for example "Gandhi" and "Passage to India".

> "These nostalgic tales of the Raj reiterate and intensify the
> same colonial images - of the 'other', the 'darkie', the 'alien'
> - which were created and used to justify colonialism, while
> making a pretence of questioning the morality of
> imperialism"....they distort and misrepresent colonial history by
> creating white central characters whose stories are the only ones
> that matter" (Dhillon-Kashyap, p.122)

With the increasing primacy that television started to play in the cultural life of Britons from the late 1950s, the popularity of the cinema as an important cultural experience has reduced substantially. The availability and relative cheapness of video cassettes, quite often offering of feature

films which have only recently been released at the cinema, has further hastened the perilous fortunes of the cinema industry as a whole. However, cinematic portraits of ethnic minority peoples have at least provided a visible legacy of the role of film in reinforcing ethnic stereotypes through film portraits. A discussion of the transference of the same stereotypical forms from the cinema to the television screen forms the basis of Chapters 6 and 7.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the way in which ethnic minority people are most usually characterised in television fictions and suggests that the majority of ethnic representations are stereotypical in nature and limited in range. The first section discusses the early representations of ethnic minority people on television and outlines the predominant portraits of ethnic minority peoples. The second section discusses the outcomes of a television monitoring study which was carried out as part of the research study. The third section deals with the way in which the white majority audience perceive the variety of ethnic characterisations on television and explores what constitute the 'typical' roles available for ethnic minority actors. In order to distinguish between different ethnic minority characters and ethnic representations, the categories of "black" and "Asian" have been used throughout this chapter.

STEREOTYPES ON THE BOX

Having looked briefly at the way in which minority groups have been characterised on film in the previous chapter, this chapter progresses to an examination of what influences such cinematic iconography have had on

the representations of black people in the more recent broadcast medium of television.

In the early years of commercial television in the 1940s and 1950s, the film stereotypes identified by Miller as the 'sassy mammy', the rascally 'coon' and the 'Uncle Tom' types very easily made the transition from cinema to small screen, although some black actors played themselves in early variety shows (Miller, 1980). However, nascent television also promised a greater diversity of characters for minority actors where serious dramatic roles were written for them, as well as the more usual singer, dancer and musician roles. MacDonald suggests that a significant aspect to the early demise of more positive images of minority groups, at least in America, was the preference of white audiences for the familiar stereotypes (MacDonald, 1988). Miller argues that the early promise for realistic representations was short-lived because the formulae used in cinema were irresistible to the new industry.

> "The structure of television simply could not prevent older images from spilling over into the new medium..television adopted many of the storylines and stereotypes already successful in radio and film..stereotypical and demeaning roles entered the medium and compromised the many positive images of blacks in early television" (Miller, 1980, p.70)

The American programme which provided the focus for a deal of hostility on the part of black Americans was "Amos 'n' Andy", a programme which had transferred from radio to television with relative ease, the main difference being that the television version featured black actors whereas the radio show stars were white. James Edwards, a leading black actor in the 1940s and 50s wrote in the "New York Age" that

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"...for the sake of 42 jobs which Negroes hold down with the
'Amos 'n' Andy' show, fifteen million more Negroes are being
pushed back 25 years by perpetuating this stereotype on
television; we don't have to take it, not today" (J Edwards
quoted in New York Age 1951, in MacDonald, 1988, p.288)

The stereotype referred to in the above quotation was that of the lazy,

bumbling and essentially stupid Afro-American as represented by the leading

actor. However, as with many other programmes which had a serious racist

undertone - for example, "The Black and White Minstrels" show, "Til Death

Us Do Part" and "It Ain't Half Hot, Mum" - the criticisms levelled against

the show were largely ignored since it was extremely popular with the

predominantly white audience. In Britain however, significant minority

characters did not really begin to emerge on television until the 1970s

with programmes such as "Mind Your Language", "Love Thy Neighbour" and

"Mixed Blessings". Such characterisations were invariably located within

the genre of situation comedy and usually portrayed both black and white

people acting in rather silly and petty ways, implying perhaps that racism

is reducible, in the end, to pettiness.

"The mature comedic series which typified the late 1960s now gave
way [in the 1970s] to bolder situation comedies purporting to be
racial satires but actually reviving chronic racist stereotypes"
(MacDonald, 1988, p.159)

When black actors did appear in drama productions, such appearances were

likely to be very minor and even on American television, where black actors

had started to make a bigger impact on the small screen, such roles were

often token and unrealistic.

"In the early 1980s one or two blacks integrated into the casts
of television shows was the order of the day. Nearly every time

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blacks appeared they were part of a group. Obviously this caused white America to believe that blacks had it made...despite the fact that most whites knew they didn't work with, live in the same neighbourhood or perhaps even see anyone who was black except on television" (Hill & Hill, 1985, p.5)

WATCHING FOR DIFFERENCE

In an effort to ascertain exactly what kind of images were being broadcast and internalised by the viewing public, in the autumn of 1988 the author conducted a brief television programme survey, whereby as many television programmes were monitored as possible over a four-week period. The purpose of this rather limited study was to identify both the incidence of ethnic minority actors and the roles which they commonly play on television, with a particular focus on the type of programmes which score consistently highly in the network ratings.

This small study was concerned with imagery and characterisation of ethnic minority actors and was exclusively directed towards television programmes which had auditioned casts: non-fiction programmes of all types were not part of the study. No distinctions were made between British and non-British television nor did the study treat with programmes which were unlikely to include ethnic minority characters, for example, those which had farming or country life themes and those which were historical. The study also disregarded feature films which were first broadcast to a cinema audience.

Although as many television programmes were watched as possible, bearing in mind the above qualifications, quite obviously it was impossible to watch television all the time. Programme viewing was thus restricted to peak-time viewing, between 7.00pm and 11.00pm, since the programmes broadcast during this time arguably constituted 'popular' television. The only exception to these viewing times was the Australian soap opera "Neighbours", which has consistently achieved the top rating slot on BBC1. Because it was the most popular programme both nationally and as far as the survey respondents were concerned at the time of the study, it seemed appropriate that the programme should be included in the study.

During September 1989, the 50 most highly viewed programmes included three 'soaps', ("Coronation Street", "EastEnders" and "Neighbours") which together claimed the top 36 positions. The remaining 14 positions were taken by comedy (nine positions), medical drama (quasi-soap - three positions) with film and news programmes claiming one position each (BARB, 1989). It has to be said that the high viewing figures for soaps - Coronation Street: 19.78m viewers; Neighbours: 17.4m viewers and EastEnders: 16.52m viewers - are comprised of viewers for a particular weekday programme plus the saturday and sunday omnibus editions (in the case of EastEnders and Coronation Street) and the combined figures of the twice daily broadcast of Neighbours. For example, in the week ending 5 November 1989, BBC1 had Neighbours in the top 5 positions followed by EastEnders in 6th and 7th place. The 9'o'clock news presentation came in at position nine. What is interesting about the way in which audience viewing figures are collected is the way in which the practice of aggregation distorts the alleged popularity of a programme - the early

evening broadcast of Neighbours, for example, attracts an average audience of 11.8m whilst a single programme of the 9'o'clock news attracts 12.2m viewers.

During the period of the study, a new comedy series (of a previously broadcast series) of 'Desmonds' was shown on Channel 4. This particular show is set in a barber shop and features an almost exclusively black cast and for this reason, 'Desmonds' was not included in the study, since it would distort the findings. It was not a particularly high-rated programme, attracting 2.17m viewers for the broadcast in the week ending 5 November 1989 (BARB, 1989).

For the first two weeks of the study, programmes were viewed mostly on BBC1 and Central Television, with the second two weeks concentrated (although not exclusively) on BBC2 and Channel 4. A video recorder was used where programmes on two channels overlapped.

A total of 83 programmes (62 hours) were watched over the four week period from 16 September 1989 to 13 October 1989. A breakdown of programme type is shown below:

Soap operas	31	(37%)
Drama	22	(26%)
Comedy	22	(26%)
Police series	8	(10%)

For the purposes of this study, the term 'soap opera' includes all those programmes which are broadcast on a regular basis and usually at least twice per week, and which purport to represent real life. The term 'drama' includes all those programmes, including one-off plays and drama serials, which do not fall into any of the other categories.

Of the above programmes, 36% were broadcast on BBC1, 8% on BBC2, 46% on Central Television and 10% on C4. The concentration of programmes within the BBC1 and Central channels reflects the more fiction-orientated composition of their programmes, in contrast with BBC2 and C4 which tend to include more non-fiction programmes in their schedules.

Whilst programme were watched, a note was made of the number of characters who had speaking parts, and the proportion of such characters who were not white. A total of 902 characters were identified out of which 853 (94.5%) were white, 3.5% were black, 1% were Asian and 1% were Turkish or Chinese. Table 6.1 shows how ethnic minority characters were distributed amongst the various programme types. As Table 6.1 demonstrates, 5% of all actors identified in the study were ethnic minority actors, with drama programmes involving the largest number (7%) of ethnic actors.

Table 6.1

Television Programmes and Ethnicity

	White	Black	Asian	Other Minority	Total Minority	% of All
Soaps	341	10	5	7	22	6
Drama	255	13	5	-	18	7
Comedy	172	7	-	7	7	4
Police	85	2	-	-	2	2
Total	853	32	10	7	49	5

Note The 49 appearances of ethnic minority actors in Table 6.1 include repeat appearances in regular programmes: there were 35 separate characters noted. For the purposes of this small survey, the term 'black' denotes people who are of Afro-Caribbean or African descent.

These findings are consistent with those of Anwar and Shang who carried out a similar monitoring study in 1978/79 with a follow-up study in 1982. In the earlier study it was found that 78% of all actors in British-originated programmes were white, the balance being made up of 5% "West Indian"; 1% Asian; 2% Black African; 2% Black American; and 12% other minority groups, for example, Greek, Chinese or Arab. The latter study showed a decrease in the incidence of black and Asian actors from 10% in 1978/79 to 7% in 1982 (Anwar & Shang, 1982). Anwar & Shang conclude that many of the characters which minority actors portray are negative in tone and thus perpetuate specific stereotypes.

"Unless more ethnic minority actors are cast in everyday situations, those cast in negative roles are likely to feature prominently and thus reinforce existing misconceptions" (Anwar & Shang, 1982, p.104)

In America the incidence of minority actors very closely mirrors the British findings and Greenberg & Atkin suggest that the reason why black actors feature at all in significant numbers is because of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

"The growth of the civil rights movement during the 1960s was eventually accompanied by a trend toward more frequent and positive media representations of minorities and since that time, about 6-9% of all characters in television shows have been black" (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982, pp.216-217)

Greenberg & Atkin found that although the actual number of minority appearances was relatively small, nonetheless 53% of all shows surveyed in the monitoring period (1977-1978) included one or more black characters, although at least half of such appearances were confined to 6 programmes, leading the authors to contend that a "distinct black ghetto" exists in American television (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982, p.218). Only a third of the black characters had identifiable jobs, compared with half of the white characters, with the latter being more likely to be cast as profesionals, administrators and managers.

In addition to the programmes already identified in Table 6.1 above, 4 music programmes and 15 game shows were also watched. Of the 31 groups which were featured in the music programmes, 45% were either all-black groups or featured at least one black band member - there were no Asian groups or group members. Of the 93 game show contestants, 91 (98%) were white with one Asian and one black contestant.

Notwithstanding the actual percentage of black and Asian characters which featured in the television programmes watched, 35% of programmes included at least one black or Asian character. The distribution of ethnic minority characters by programme type is shown in Table 6.2

Table 6.2

Distribution of Ethnic Minority Actors and Programme Type

	Number of programmes	Number including minority characters	%
Soaps	31	14	47
Drama	22	8	36
Comedy	22	5	23
Police	8	2	25
Total	31	29	35

As far as the type of characters portrayed by minority ethnic actors is concerned, there were no leading characters: some were support and some were walk-on. As there are relatively few ethnic minority roles to consider, it is perhaps useful to examine the characters individually, although briefly.

SOAPS

Eastenders

During the period of viewing, five minority ethnic actors were featured. Mr Karim and his son are Asian and the Karim family own the local grocery shop. During the period of viewing Mr Karim ("Ashraf") and his son

("Sohail") are shown arguing about friendship, where the elder Karim advocates keeping a distance between his family and the white community whereas Sohail argues that interaction will encourage understanding. Discussing racial themes in this way is a common device utilised in Eastenders. The Karim family are not popular characters in the soap and only featured once in the cast lists in the Radio Times during the four-week viewing period.

A Chinese primary school teacher was featured in one episode but only said a few lines. This was a one-off appearance.

The character of Ali Osman has been part of the main cast of EastEnders since the beginning of the series, although during the viewing period the character was effectively written out, with Ali departing from Albert Square accompanied by his Turkish cousins, having lost everything he owned through gambling. His (white) wife had already suffered a mental breakdown and his young son taken into care. Ali has often been heard to remark that, among other things, his wife's lack of understanding of Turkish culture was a significant factor in the breakdown of their marriage.

The character of Vince is quite a new one in the series and appears to be a replacement for Darren Roberts who was the previous incumbent of the position of criminal black. Vince had just begun to rent Carmel Roberts' empty flat (Carmel is Darren's sister and casual guardian of his two children) Darren dropped out of the series under a cloud of petty crime and Vince has now replaced him as the person in the series who is most likely to be selling stolen property. During the viewing period Vince

featured in two episodes setting up and running a disco at the local community centre. Like Darren, it has never been made clear what Vince actually does for a living, and it is assumed that he lives on his wits and possibly has something to do with the music business.

Neighbours

The only black character in Neighbours is Pete Baxter, a young black man who works at the local bank and who has hopes of becoming an Olympic champion. Since his introduction into the series some time ago he has rarely featured. However, during the viewing period, one storyline cast Pete's friends, that is, the rest of the cast of Neighbours, fund-raising to allow Pete to train at the national sports institute. Because of the fund-raising activity, Pete featured in six episodes of Neighbours during the viewing period which accounted for 27% of **all** appearances of minority ethnic characters in soaps. Despite the laudable efforts of the good citizens of Erinsborough in providing Pete with sufficient funds to train at the sports institute, Pete injures himself because he doesn't want to be told what to do by the (white) teachers, and has not featured in Neighbours for several weeks.

Brookside

This soap included three Chinese characters during the viewing period, Michael Choi, his daughter Jessica and his father, Mr Choi senior. The Michael Choi character probably had the most significant role of all the minority ethnic actors in any of the programmes watched during the study period. This character plays a doctor in general practice who is romantically involved with a (white) career woman. This relationship is

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the focus of much hostility between Michael and his father since the latter insists that such a cross-cultural relationship can only end in disaster. Michael, on the other hand, plays a thoroughly anglicised character who wishes to shake off the more restrictive aspects of his traditional culture whilst still maintaining those elements which he feels important. In similar vein to EastEnders, problems of interaction between people of different cultures is rehearsed through the arguments between one generation and the other, with the younger generation putting forward the more 'enlightened' view. In one episode a minor white character is seen talking to an Asian friend. This was a one-off appearance.

Thirty Something

This American soap featured a black man and woman in two separate episodes, one cast as a community worker (female) and the other cast as an advertising agency copywriter (male). Both roles were minor with few lines.

DRAMA

Nice work

This four-part adaptation of David Lodge's novel was set in an industrial townscape where some scenes took place in a foundry. It was here that the ethnic minority characters were to be seen, all of whom were Asian (4 in total), one of whom was the focus for a walk-out when it was discovered that the factory bosses were about to dismiss him for incompetence. The character did not have a very large speaking part and gave the impression of being rather simple.

Paradise Club

This ten-part serial is set in and around a nightclub which had hitherto served as the headquarters of a local family of criminals. One of the gang members is black and has an undeveloped and minor character role which mainly consists of looking threatening. The demands of the role do not include any real acting ability. In one episode of the serial, in a courtroom scene, the clerk of court is played by a young black woman. This was a one-off appearance.

Casualty

This medical series set in the casualty department of a large hospital regularly features a black female receptionist and a black male nurse. Both characters are minor but well developed and credible. In one episode two members of the public waiting for friends who have been taken to the hospital are played by black actors.

In a television film and an American hospital drama watched during the viewing period, a policeman, two doctors and a nurse were played by black actors.

COMEDY

Of the six appearances of ethnic minority actors in comedy series, two appearances were of the same character, a black female receptionist who is exploited by her white female boss in a typical British sit-com. "In Sickness and In Health", the follow-on series from "Til Death Us Do Part", features "Pele", a black youth who often features in the series as the

exposer of some of Alf's more lunatic flights of fancy. However, he is not a fully serious character. A bizarre science fiction comedy, Red Dwarf, features two black space travellers and in the viewing period, two black characters featured in the comedy, "Only Fools and Horses".

POLICE SERIES

During the viewing period, both "The Bill" and the American police series, "Cagney and Lacey", featured black policewomen in separate episodes.

ETHNIC MINORITY ROLE TYPES

The characters which were portrayed by minority ethnic actors in the programmes watched during the viewing period included

doctor (Chinese)
grocer (Asian)
possible villain (black)
actual villain (black)
foundry worker (Asian)
receptionist (black)
clerk of court (black)
policewoman (black)
community worker (black)
advertising executive (black)
bank worker (black)

Although there is some diversity of occupation identified above, none of the characters played leading roles in any programme, none of them portrayed a strong character or leader and few feature regularly in their respective series. Many of the characters operate on the periphery of their particular social environments, often cast as the outsider. Black American characters seem to be more integrated into the casting as a whole,

whereas ethnic minority characters in British programmes often appear to be overly aware of their blackness as if it is always a relevant if sometimes hidden feature of their relations with other characters. Research undertaken by Barry in 1986 to ascertain whether the three black myths which she had identified (trouble-maker, entertainer and dependant) had any currency in terms of television images, concluded that

> "..on occasion [the myths] were..traces, but elsewhere they continued to flourish just beneath the new skin of change" (Barry, 1986, p.101)

Barry states that the most significant aspect to emerge from the research was the tension between whether black people should be portrayed positively, as their best selves, or realistically, as they actually were. The difficulty with any black characterisation is the fact that it is burdened with the responsibility of representation so that the character can never be explored or developed for and in itself, but always in relation to its skin. The way in which ethnic minority groups are actually portrayed in current television programmes is explored in the next section.

It would appear from the brief study undertaken by the author, that the ethnic minority characters which feature in much of popular television do not reflect the diversity of experiences to be found in the real world. Many of the roles played by ethnic minority actors are stereotyped, for example, the black villain, the Asian shop-keeper, the black athlete, and simply perpetuate the orthodox imagery which already exists about ethnic difference. Whilst this is not to say that some Asian families do not run grocery shops or that some black men and women are not good athletes, it is

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argued that such portrayals, in the absence of any complementary imagery, tend to be all that appear and are therefore regarded as typical and representative. If only 5% of television characters are black and Asian and those that are featured are villainous or poor or weak, then it is likely that, without other experience, the viewing public could expect that all black and Asian people are like the characters they see on television.

Whilst programmes such as "Desmonds" which features an almost exclusively black cast and written by a black playwright (Trix Worrell) are to be welcomed, it is suggested here that one way in which black and Asian people can be represented in more realistic ways is through the device of integrated casting whereby good parts are written which do not rely on a particular ethnicity in order to work. It is only by eliminating tokenism in programming that more credible roles for black and Asian actors can emerge.

> "The beneficial effects of the regular and unselfconscious casting of Afro-Asian artists in non-racially-defined parts would make a tremendous contribution towards the establishment and maintenance of racial harmony in what is now a multi-racial country" (Peter Plouviez, General Secretary of Equity, quoted in the Daily Telegraph, 7.3.1983)

THE WHITE AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVE

How then do the white viewing public regard ethnic minority characters in popular television? In the 1988 survey, students were asked whether there were too many or too few appearances of black and Asian people in television programmes. Nearly three-quarters of students believe that the

frequency is "about right", with 16% stating that there were too few appearances and the same number again stating that there were too many. Of those students believing that there are too few appearances, 84% have black or Asian friends. A little over a third of students believe that television is inaccurate in the way in which it portrays black and Asian people (41%). Of these students, nearly two-thirds (60%) have black or Asian friends and the majority live in multi-ethnic areas (75% had Asian neighbours and 60% have black neighbours. Young men were more likely to perceive television as inaccurate in its portrayal of black people than young women, 45% compared with 36%, although there was little difference in response across the college range

More appropriate ways of representing ethnic groups were suggested to students with which they were asked to agree or not and Table 6.3 provides a breakdown of student responses to these suggestions. The fourth category was provided by students under the "other - please specify" option.

Table 6.3

Preferred ways of representing ethnic minorities on television

	AGREE		
	Female	Male	All
As ordinary people in ordinary situations	82%	60%	70%
Living and working with whites naturally	58%	42%	50%
As separate and different from whites	7%	20%	13%
Not so hard done by	*	-	*
**Total Respondents	99% (189)	99% (166)	99% (355)

[* less than 1%]
[** of those respondents who believe that television is inaccurate in its representation]

Comments made by students in response to the "other - please specify" option include the following:

"For West Indians and Pakistanis as they are - several generations behind whites" (M, 20)

"Sometimes putting a token black is just an insult. If a black person would be there then put them [in] otherwise don't. I feel this situation is getting out of hand" (F, 16)

Gordon & Rosenberg comment that many media studies conducted during the 1970s showed how media images of black people invariably stressed ideas which suggested that the presence of black people themselves constituted a problem, as well as ideas that black people cause trouble. Where black people were portrayed in more positive ways, the context was always restricted to areas where it was legitimate for black people to be involved, for example, in entertainment or sport (Gordon & Rosenberg, 1989).

Television programmes, mainly in the documentary genre, have attempted to analyse the position of black people in society and treat with aspects of discrimination in a way designed to show the general viewing public the reality of racism. In 1982 for example, BBC's "Brass Tacks" investigative programme broadcast "It Went Yesterday" which described a monitoring exercise conducted by the Commission for Racial Equality, where 100 job-seekers with fitted with body microphones so that their efforts to obtain work could be recorded. The programme demonstrated that at least half the prospective employers who were covertly recorded discriminated in their treatment of interviewees from different ethnic groups, so that a job which

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had already gone for a black job-seeker suddenly became available for a white applicant later in the day. David Henshaw, an investigator with the series reported that a discriminating employer would be more likely to get into trouble by parking on a double yellow line than by violating the present anti-discrimination legislation (Henshaw in the Coventry Evening Telegraph, 1.7.1982).

A similar exercise was carried out in April 1988 where two male journalists, one black and one white, posed as potential employees and tenants, carrying a hidden camera in a travel bag. They lived undercover in Bristol for a month and used the two-step tactic of one then the other attempting to find work and accommodation both carrying hidden cameras. The two journalists, Geoff Small (black) and Tim Marshall (white) reported that approximately one-third of people who were filmed practised observable discrimination but as Marshall pointed out

> "...what Geoff and I did was merely go to the first hurdle. We do not know how many landlords threw Geoff's address away as soon as he left. We can never know how many people who showed him their flat to rent mentally crossed him off their list" (Tim Marshall, The Listener, 14.4.1988)

Geoff Small commented that prior to his agreement to become involved with the programme, he was keen to ensure that the material would not simply rehearse the view that black people are the victims of their own inadequacies but would identify the existence of prejudice at an everyday, mundane and pervasive level. On completion of their covert activities, Small commented that

> "My natural optimism about human nature and straightforwardness was shattered: I never doubted that I would be discriminated

against, but I did not know how bad it would be" (Geoff Small, The Listener, 14.4.1988)

In an extensive study carried out between 1979 and 1982 for the Commission for Racial Equality, it was found that when black actors appear in television programmes, the roles are limited and often stereotyped, such stereotypes being broadly classified as: "comic, villainous or depicting a social problem" (Anwar & Shang, 1980). Also in 1982, Anderson and 14 colleagues were asked by the then Education Secretary, Keith Joseph to monitor children's television programme and report on, among other things, the depiction of black groups in such programmes.

> "We found that the coverage was minimal. Few positive or realistic images were available, with little suggestion of the part these groups played or might play in society. What treatment there was, tended to reinforce stereotypes or link members of these groups to a problem" (Anderson, 1988, p.20)

Withall suggests that part of the problem associated with efforts to tackle racism on television lies in the overt and misguided focus on the individual. It is the individual's propensity for discrimination which is confronted rather than exposing the more pernicious and powerful affects of institutional racism (Withall, 1990). Withall criticises programmes such as "The Black and White Media Shows" for their superficial self-criticism and their failure to

> "....challenge the underlying ideology of the television institution, and thus, while presenting a list of criticisms...they failed to get to the heart of why television in Britain so consistently insults or ignores black people and other minorities" (Withall, 1990, p.51)

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For Withall, the "heart" is to be found in the class-ridden nature of society where the state-appointed governors of the BBC and ITV cohere in the perpetuation and support of specific ideological positions which exclude programmes which do not conform. Utilising what could almost be termed a conspiracy theory of television representation, the deliberate inclusions or exclusions of sensitive issues such as police harassment can thus be neatly explained. Withall argues that the racism which exists within television must be understood in terms of organisational power rather than individual pathology. Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that the right of veto enjoyed by television's senior executives is an important part of the image distortion, it is not the only significant factor. If the viewing public did not appreciate and enjoy the diet of programmes they are fed, they would not watch and so perceptions of audience preference is a crucial factor in programme schedules.

As far as ethnic characterisation on television is concerned, students in the 1988 study were asked a series of questions relating to the most usual types of roles which black, white and Asian people play in television programmes. A list of character types was offered to students who had to specify which ethnic group most often played particular types of role. Table 6.4 provides a breakdown of student responses and shows that students believe white people tend to play positive roles and characters, for example, detectives, strong and leading role characters, whilst black and Asian people tend to play more negative, subordinate roles such as slaves, criminals and poor people.

Table 6.4

Role Types and Ethnicity

Legend:
- All Same
- White
- Black
- Asian

Role Types (top chart): Major, Minor, Servant, Detective, Poor, Criminal

Role Types (bottom chart): Ordinary, Victims, Strong, Weak, Rich
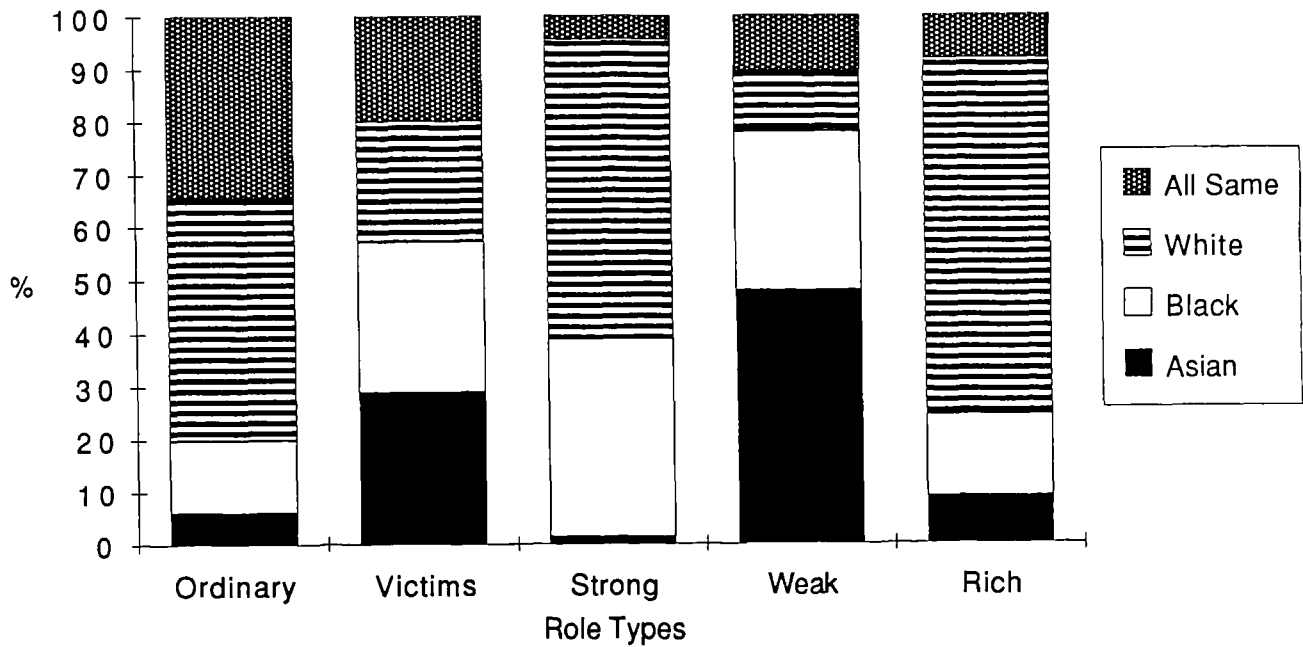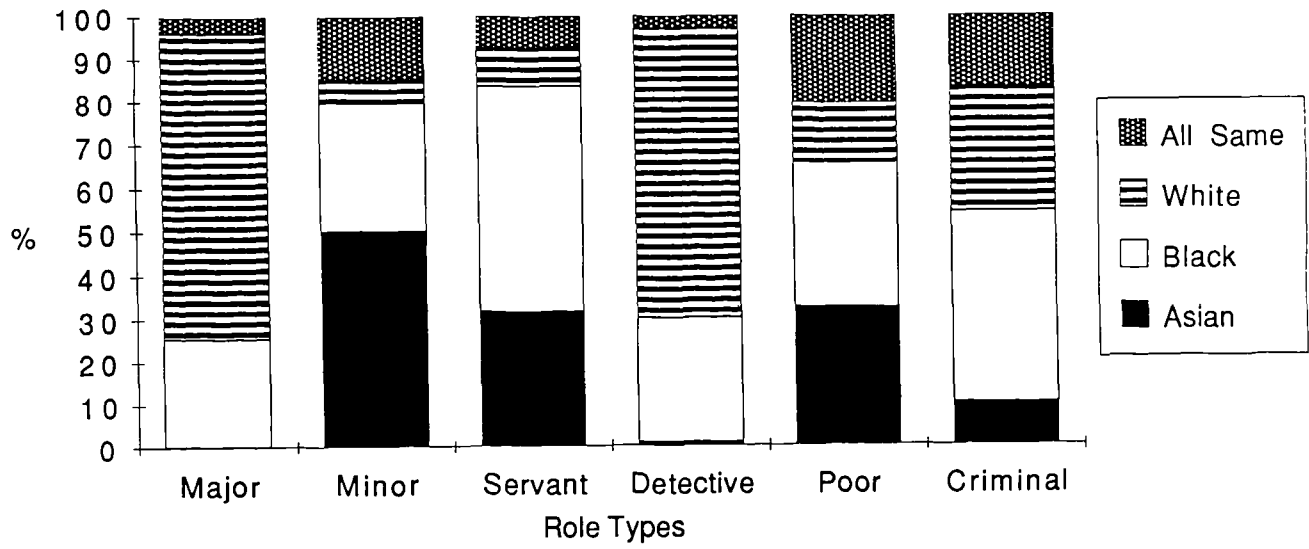
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

There was little difference in response between young men and young women, nor across the range of colleges. The characteristics which students held to be typical of black and Asian people generally were reflected in their perception of minority characterisation in television programmes. In the same way that black people are regarded as violent and troublesome, so they are deemed to play strong and criminal roles on television. Black people were nearly twice as likely to be regarded as portraying criminals than white actors, whereas Asian actors were 4 times less likely to play such characters than their black counterparts. Similarly, three-quarters of students believe black people often play servants and slave roles, compared with 13% of students who believe that white people often play these roles. Although this is perhaps not a surprising finding, given the ethnic-specific associations of slavery with black people, it is nonetheless interesting that white people are not regarded as often playing servants. With popular television's fascination with the past glories of the aristocracy (for example, "The Forsyth Saga", "Upstairs, Downstairs" and "The Pallisers") and the frequent serialisations of historical fictions, servant characters are rarely played by other than white artists. However, it may well be that students took a broader view of the description and believe that black people often play servile as well as servant and slave roles, since the roles of caretaker, cleaner or factory worker are often played by black and Asian actors. Asian and black people were more than twice as likely to be regarded as playing poor people than their white counterparts and Asian actors were popularly regarded as playing weak characters.

It would appear from these findings from the 1988 survey that young white viewers have very clear ideas about how ethnic minority people are habitually portrayed and what role types are most commonly associated with particular ethnic groups. The following chapter explores more fully the nature of the **typical** ethnic character by examining specific ethnic characterisations which are and have been regularly broadcast in contemporary televisions fictions.

INTRODUCTION

The roles and character-types which are available to ethnic minority actors are often but not always dictated by the script. This chapter seeks to examine the characters which ethnic minority actors portray in contemporary television fictions. It seeks to ascertain whether such roles are ethnically specific and stereotypical or whether, conversely, characterisations across the range and diversity of human experience are available to ethnic minority and white actors alike. A discussion of role-types and characters is framed within a set of particular television 'genres' including comedy, soap opera and crime series.

TELEVISION AND COMEDY

The nature of humour and how comedic artifices actually operate with any given audience to make them laugh has been the subject of much academic study. Why do some individuals find certain things 'funny' while a different set of individuals are unable to see the joke? Are jokes and humour culturally specific, so that an American or Frenchman is unable to share in the joke of a British comedian? Does the audience have to share the same cultural history in order to make sense of humour or can jokes be inherently funny?

Zillman and Cantor suggest that all individuals have a tendency to 'enjoy' the misfortunes of others. Humour, and jokes in particular, act as a legitimating valve through which negative feelings about others can be expressed through the alleged humour of jokes (Zillman & Cantor, 1976). Thus so-called humorous situations, however they are constructed

> "permit us to vent negative sentiments with dignity [which] may well characterise what, precisely, humour can do for us" (Zillman & Cantor, 1976, p.111)

The authors also suggest that humour appreciation is influenced by the degree to which sympathy or resentment is felt towards the objects of humour, when the object is being denigrated so that

> "the more intense the negative disposition towards the disparaged agent or entity, the greater the magnitude of the humour response" (Zillman & Cantor, 1976, p.100)

This model could certainly provide a partial explanation for much of the success of 'ethnic' jokes. Giles et al suggest that humour serves at least four clear functions (and perhaps more) which are distinct but not mutually exclusive:

a)   creation or maintenance of in-group solidarity where humour is used either to break down tension at the beginning of a relationship/group formation or as a device to maintain in-group solidarity against an out-group;

b)   attack or superiority where humour is used as a strategy to enhance self-esteem by attacking others, possibly attempting to make the focus of humour appear as inferior;

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c)   need for approval where approbation is sought of another party via the mechanism of humour; and

d)   removal of attention where efforts to disguise own actions or behaviour take the form of diversionary humour (Giles, 1976, pp.141-142).

It is likely that one or more of these functions operate in most humorous scenarios.   Medhurst invites us to consider what makes society laugh in order to understand the preconceptions and power structures which exist in any given society.

> "One of comedy's chief functions..is to police the ideological boundaries of a culture..to keep the power of laughter in the hands of the powerful" (Medhurst in Daniels & Gerson, 1989, p.16)

However, humour can also be used by the powerless to parody and challenge the authority of the powerful, as the burgeoning 'alternative comedy' style of humour will testify to, where quite explicit anti-establishment points can be made in the name of comedy. However, although most alternative comedic material would not now include racist references or rely on racist imagery for its humour, it still permits sexist and ageist references and has originated a new lexicon of caricatures and stereotypes to replace those which it deems outmoded.

Jim Moir, Head of Light Entertainment at the BBC suggests that in the field of light entertainment and comedy, there has always been a sense of exaggeration and a utilisation of both ethnic and social categories as foci for humour (Moir, 1989).   Similarly, Medhurst argues that comedy cannot function without resort to stereotype since jokes need victims, where such

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victims must be known to the audience in some way, as being identifiable as an appropriate butt.

> "Comedy can never be inoffensive. Attack and hostility are built into its very structure and the skill in producing good, successful political comedy lies in finding the right targets" (Medhurst in Daniels & Gerson, 1989, p.17))

In other words, stereotypes are acceptable, provided they are rooted in the correct ideological background. At one level, Medhurst's argument seems quite plausible, but it is arguable whether a consensus exists on what constitute 'the right targets'. Palmer argues that the predispositions of the audience will influence the way in which they interpret jokes, where the same material can take on entirely different meanings for different listeners and uses the following story to illustrate his point.

> "A civil rights worker goes to Mississippi to investigate reports of racial assaults upon blacks there. One day he is taken by a sheriff to observe the investigation into the death of a black man found drowned. When they get to the river where he was found, it turns out the body is wound round with an enormous weight of steel chain. 'There you are!' says the civil rights worker. 'Try and deny that he was murdered and thrown in the river!' The sheriff replies 'Damn fool, trying to swim the river with all those chains he's stolen'" (Palmer, 1987, p.183)

Palmer suggests that if the 'joke' is told as part of a repertoire of other racist and/or sexist material then it works because of the popular association (stereotype) of black people with crime, in this case, theft. However if it is told by a black comedian, it takes on an entirely different meaning since the sheriff's story is patently racist and absurd. Much that purports to be humorous relies on a notion of shared culture and imagery for its meaning. The stupidity of the Irish, the meanness of the

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Jew and the overt sexuality of the African are all commonsense 'facts' and can therefore be legitimately (in the appropriate context and with an appropriately receptive audience) incorporated into 'jokes' because the audience will understand the implicit cultural references contained within the narrative. The audience is asked to collude in the identification and perpetuation of such racist stereotypes and accepts such invitation by joining in the laughter.

One of the first, and perhaps most popular, programmes to treat with racial themes was "Til Death Us Do Part" which was originally broadcast from 1966 to 1974 on BBC1. As well as constant repeats since the mid-1970s, the programme's main character, "Alf Garnett" (Alf) has recently seen a revival with a follow-up comedy series "In Sickness and In Health". Although the creator of Alf, Johnny Speight, argued at the time and since that his intention was to expose racist bigotry through the exaggerated utterances of Alf, such intention is deemed to have back-fired by many commentators. The enormous popularity of the show signifies that there was and still is something about it which appeals to a large proportion of the viewing public and it is likely that anyone who found the programme particularly offensive, in its language or its imagery would not have continued to watch the show.

> "Wherever the series has been shown - in Great Britain or in the United States or Germany (the last two in local adaptations) - the effects have by no means been what the author intended. If racism is widely spread in a society, as it is in ours [Britain], such shows will be seen by a considerable part of the audience as validating their views" (Hood, 1980, p.26)

Commentators have argued, in concert with Hood, that many viewers found their own views being expressed by Alf, views which they perhaps kept hidden, even from themselves. The attitudes of ordinary men and women, frightened by the media treatment of the 'immigrant avalanche' found a certain resonance in the racist bigotry espoused by Alf.

> "A whole repertoire of anxieties and prejudices was being expressed for the first time and with such bravado and forcefulness that the response was instant and massive" (Medhurst in Daniels & Gerson, 1989, p.18)

Although Alf was challenged in his more ludicrous diatribes by his daughter and son-in-law, there was a degree of complicity with his views on the part of the audience, observing the old maxim of "no smoke without fire". Medhurst argues that the language of racism contained in the show has not been rivalled and has in fact been toned down for more contemporary audiences.

> "The sheer virulence of Garnett's prejudices (racial and otherwise) was startling and far stronger than anything heard on television today" (Medhurst in Daniels & Gerson, 1989, p.17)

As Hood points out, the American version of the show, "All in the Family" was also very popular and Woll & Miller suggest that research studies made of the programme demonstrated that

> "...Archie's [Alf's] behaviour actually reinforced prejudice, for racist viewers could not see that the show was intended to satirise prejudices...hearing the words "coon", "jungle bunny" and "spade" regularly on network TV gave such slurs a currency of legitimacy no amount of disclaimers and counter humour could match" (Woll & Miller, 1987, pp.78-81)

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In Vidmar & Rokeach's survey in 1974, they found that 62% of their adolescent respondents admired Archie, with 35% unable to see anything amiss with his use of racist language. The authors suggest that the operation of selective perception occurs so that 'prejudiced' people view Archie as "telling it like it is", whilst non-prejudiced people perceive the programme as satire with Archie regarded as the bigoted fool (Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974). At the end of the first year of broadcasting, "All in the Family" had attained the top rated position in the audience ratings and moreover remained the highest-rated series, in terms of gross audiences, for five consecutive years (Marc, 1989). Whilst it is arguable whether or not watching such programmes actually encourages the viewer to be racist, it does seem likely that hearing, albeit fictional, people refer to minority groups in derogatory terms on television does give such actions a certain legitimacy. It also confirms to some viewers that their own private opinions are shared by others who are more willing to articulate them than they are themselves. However, Greenberg & Atkin argue that only a small percentage of viewers believed that Archie's views are valid and a substantial number of viewers felt that the programme helped them to identify their own prejudices (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982).

Although "Til Death Us Do Part" did not contain a permanent black cast member, its successor, "In Sickness and In Health" regularly features a young black man cast as Alf's homosexual home-help, "Marigold". It is difficult to understand the reasons behind this particular characterisation, except perhaps to enable Alf to rehearse both his racist and homophobic rhetoric on a single, all-purpose target. Although Marigold does his best to show Alf the error of his ways, it is open to question

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whether Speight's explicit intentions for the viewing public - to expose racist bigotry - have been realised.

Three comedy series of the 1970s which did feature ethnic minority characters were "Love Thy Neighbour" (Thames Television, 1972 - 1975); "Mind Your Language" (BBC1, 1976); and "It Ain't Half Hot, Mum" (BBC1, 1973-1981). "Love Thy Neighbour" utilised the standard sit-com formula of squabbling neighbours, but incorporated a new twist where one family is black. That the black couple were younger, more attractive and more wealthy than the white pair was an obvious and deliberate piece of characterisation and provided the various foci for the white male neighbour's aggression. The two women were the best of the friends usually, commiserating and laughing at their husbands' pettinesses and the series seemed to imply that if only whites and blacks could tolerate each other, then tension would disappear. Racism was thus reduced to squabbling with the underlying message that a little understanding was all that was needed to make the world a better place.

The show tried to demonstrate that blame existed on both sides, with what could be described as 'the chip on the shoulder' syndrome attributed to black people, so that the two husbands were constantly jibing at each other in derogatory language - taunts of 'nig-nog' and 'sambo' were met with cries of 'honky'. However, in the language of racism, honky does not connote the same casual prejudice as do the terms nig-nog and sambo, where both the latter two have long and established histories as terms of abuse. As well as stereotypical language, the series also traded on stereotypical imagery, where the middle-aged white woman was envious of the younger black

woman's husband, engaging with the white woman/black man motif together with its dangerous undertones. This aspect of the neighbourly relationships was never explored but was often alluded to in taunts by the white woman to her husband or else in mock-envious tones by the woman to her black friend over the garden wall.

"Mind Your Language" was set in a classroom where the students were ostensibly attending night school to improve their English. Any attempt to incorporate an ongoing storyline into the narrative was entirely absent since the series derived all its interest and 'humour' from the amusing efforts of 'foreigners' trying to speak English. Each week, the long-suffering white male teacher (main character) welcomed old and new members of the group into the classroom where he would then correct their linguistic and written efforts amid much head-shaking and laughter from the more practised students. A number of minority characters featured in the series, both black and white, all of whom had difficulties in grasping grammar and syntax but made humorous efforts with idiomatic english. It was rare to see an episode which included even a pretence at actual teaching since students were usually seen sitting on desks, haranguing the teacher, shouting to each other, or, in the case of some of the female students, trying to seduce the hapless lecturer. Anwar & Shang, commenting on situation comedies in the style of "Mind Your Language" and "Love Thy Neighbour" state that

> "...instead of breaking down misconceived stereotypes [such programmes] actually reinforce and legitimise racial prejudice by portraying ethnic minorities as silly and stupid" (Anwar & Shang, 1982, p.20)

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"It Ain't Half Hot, Mum" was a comedy series set in India during the second world war. Its main characters were white army staff (entertainment corps), most of whom were rather stupid, presided over by a bullying sergeant major. The main Asian character (servant) was played by a white actor (Michael Bates) until he died and was then replaced by an Asian actor. The Asian characters were usually portrayed as wily and clever, often exposing the stupidity of the army staff. The significant difference in style between this series and those previously discussed was the more patronising tone which pervaded the text, partly due, it could be argued, to the colonial history of India and the implications for social relations between British and Indian peoples. In addition to the stereotyped portraits of Asian people contained within the show, the other significant 'comic' theme was the overt homosexuality of some (but implicitly all) the members of the entertainment ranks.

In 1976, London Weekend Television launched "The Fosters", the first comedy series to feature an all-black cast with a second series broadcast in 1977. More all-black humour was broadcast in the 1980s with "No Problem!" (London Weekend Television, 1983/84/85), "Tandoori Nights" (Channel 4, 1985 and 1987) and "Desmonds" (Channel 4, 1988 & 1989). Although all these series have been quite popular and have run for a second series in most cases, none of them have approached the phenomenal success of "The Cosby Show", America's most popular programme for the past four years and now shown in Britain on Channel 4. "The Cosby Show" features a very ordinary, very middle-class black family (the Huxtables) where nothing of any consequence ever happens in their smooth lives. Mother and father are both successful professionals (doctor and lawyer respectively), their children are well

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behaved and not prone to anything which requires more than a gentle ticking off from their parents. Despite the marked absence of any requirement to act, Bill Cosby who plays the major character is reputed to earn $1m a week and is worth $250m per annum to his programme company, NBC. Bernard Clark, an independent television producer, suggests that "The Cosby Show" is a good example of a minority group living in its own community - most of the Huxtables' friends are equally affluent black people living out the fantasy life of middle-class America but with black skins. Clark contends that only positive representations of black people should be broadcast, demonstrating that middle-class values are shared by both black and white people. He argues that any more realistic portraits would have the negative affect of providing evidence of differentness to white racists.

> "I think that we should recognise that the black middle class has the same family values as ours, the same love and concern and cohesion [but] it is clear by looking at the illegitimacy rates in certain of the West Indian cultures of that you realise that they don't have the same attitude to family life" (Clark, 1989)

However, in Clark's world even those poor unfortunates who do not have middle-class aspirations can be redeemed because once they "come over here", they "pick up" our ways and, over time, learn to adopt the more acceptable, British modus operandi. Mercer argues that the key to the success of "The Cosby Show" lies in its espousal not just of normative values, but of idealised values, and the fact that the Huxtable family is black is incidental; everyone can reach those heights, if only they tried.

> "Even though there is a hugely visible black middle class in the United States, the universal message implied by The Cosby Show is that the 'American Dream' of well-earned affluence is alive and well and easily obtainable through hard work and parental discipline" (Mercer (b), 1988, p.6)

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Thus the aspirations of both black and white Americans coincide with the portrayal of the Huxtable family, possibly accounting for the widespread popularity of the series amongst both groups in America. Batra argues that with "The Cosby Show", the hitherto over-determined bonds of type-casting were finally severed and black actors were recruited to play ordinary, if very wealthy, people.

"Bill Cosby's comic vision is a re-enactment of the beliefs of the founding fathers that all men are created equal and that the family of man can live on love and understanding. His sitcom is devoid of racist slur, ethnic jokes or any kind of derogatory insinuation against any community or group" (Batra, 1987, p.12)

In other words, the Huxtables are sanitised and safe, providing no threat and issuing no challenge. Hoggart comments that although the blackness of the family is never mentioned, the fact of their ethnicity is often incorporated into the storyline as background. When the eldest daughter is considering going to college, only black colleges are discussed; when the children are seen reading books, they are usually by black authors. Thus there is no threat of black people actually invading or competing in the white domain. Hoggart argues that the reason the family are allowed to be black is because they are simply emulating a wealthy white lifestyle (Hoggart, The Listener, 31.3.1988). Although there has been some media criticism levelled against the series, in that it glamorises the way in which black people live, such criticism is far outweighed by the praise that the show has attracted, particularly from black Americans. Hoggart comments that the widow of Martin Luther King said of the programme

"[it is] the most positive portrayal of black family life that has ever been broadcast...it is inspiring to see a black family that has managed to escape the violence of poverty through

education and unity" (Coretta Scott King cited in The Listener, 31.3.1988)

Clearly then, for the black audience, the show operates as a counter to the negative images which exist in the white imagination, although the world inhabited by the Huxtable family where no real problems exist and certainly none that smack of racism, cannot be presented as an approximation of real life. Speculating on the programme's relative lack of success in Britain, Hoggart argues that British audiences prefer to have more reality, that is, more pain and disappointment, in their television diet. Although "The Cosby Show" is a well-crafted, witty and humorous series, its failure to treat with real or at least realistic problems ultimately limits its potential for success with British audiences.

However, such alleged desire for and appreciation of reality seems to have been abandoned by the mass British audience when confronted with other American imports such as "Dallas" and "Dynasty", not to mention the equally popular Antipodean fare of "Neighbours" and "Home and Away". None of these programmes can arguably be said to reflect the lived experiences of the average British viewer and yet they all achieve consistently high viewing figures. However, whilst the American audience understands the Huxtables to live a charmed and fanciful life and therefore comprehend the show in terms of straight-forward situation-comedy, the same knowledge is not enjoyed by the British viewer. It is perhaps more likely that the show's lack of success is due to the fact that the British audience is not yet ready to confront the idea of a successful black family enjoying the

volume and quality of material benefits which they themselves could never hope to achieve.

In 1978 the BBC broadcast its first black soap opera, "Empire Road" (a second series followed in 1979). The series had a predominance of black and Asian characters and included storylines which were concerned with such issues as parental discipline and difficult relationships. North suggested that the main strength of the series lay in the fact that black people were portrayed as ordinary and normal, with the same number of capitalists and tearaways as the white population. He also argued that the trivialisation of the black community had finally been achieved (through its celebration as soap) whereby the minutae of life could be explored without constantly relying on the play of black-white tensions (North, The Listener, 16.11.1978).

Where comedy has been most successful in challenging stereotypical images has been in the area of alternative comedy with personalities such as Lenny Henry, Ben Elton and Harry Enfield and programmes such as "Spitting Image", "Friday/Saturday Night Live" and the "Comedy Store" having done much to highlight and explore the issue of racism. Although, as argued above, new stereotypes have emerged as a consequence, they do not carry the same weight of invective and hostility with which their predecessors were burdened. Lenny Henry in particular has been a controversial figure in television since his detractors claim that he often reinforces negative stereotypes of black people by the various caricatures which provide his stock-in-trade. The character of "Delbert Wilkins" as a loud and brash entrepreneur has angered critics who suggest that Henry is simply pandering

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to the stereotypical images that white people have of the black community, with its associations of criminal activity, sharp clothes and a pseudo-creole linguistic style. Henry has countered this criticism by saying that he is attempting to show, by caricature, the ludicrous nature of such stereotypes. However, as with Johnny Speight and his "Alf Garnett" character, such intention is not always understood correctly by the audience, and with Henry the danger is greater since he is a black comedian parodying himself.

TELEVISION AND THE SOAP OPERA

The most popular (in terms of viewing figures) genre in television is, without doubt, the soap opera. Every week, the ten most highly-rated programmes are dominated by soaps, particularly "EastEnders" and the Australian "Neighbours", although longer-running soaps such as "Coronation Street" (Central TV) and "Emmerdale Farm" (Central TV) still retain a loyal audience. However, with the exception of EastEnders, no British-produced soap has ever introduced a black family into its cast and even EastEnders has now written out all its original black and Asian characters. Ethnic minority characters are discussed below in the context of the programmes in which they appear.

Coronation Street

A producer and writer for 'Coronation Street' explained that the reason the series has hitherto excluded significant black characters has been because of the problems which would otherwise be created in storylines.

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"We would..be forced to put unhelpful comments into the mouths of fictional men and women who command a wide following among the serial's millions of viewers with potentially dangerous effect" (Harry Kershaw quoted in Daniels & Gerson, 1989, pp.121-122)

It is difficult to imagine what dangerous effects might be envisaged unless the assumption is that "Street" characters would, by their very nature, make racist and/or derogatory remarks about minority groups. In fact Coronation Street did feature a young Afro-Caribbean woman who worked in the local factory and became romantically involved with a young white student. It is often the fate of young black women to be accorded legitimacy in television series by the device of being romantically involved with a white male actor, such relationships usually ending in disaster as in Coronation Street where the black character Shirley has now disappeared after a row with her boyfriend and walked out.

EastEnders

EastEnders began broadcasting in the autumn of 1984 amid a welter of publicity for this new, home-grown soap which was the BBC's answer to the successful "Brookside" broadcast by Channel 4. The producer of the show,

Julia Smith suggests that the series was specifically designed to include a variety of minority characters and treat with controversial topics.

> "..drama which could encompass stories about homosexuals, rape, unemployment, racial prejudice, etc. in a believable context...we had a Bengali shopowner, a Jewish doctor and Caribbean father and son, a Turkish Cypriot cafe-owner married to an English girl" (Julia Smith quoted in Buckingham 1987, p.16)

Five years later, all the original minority characters had left the series, some in the glare of publicity, enthusiastically taken up the tabloid press under banner headlines proclaiming, for example, "IF I'M A SOOTY YOU'RE A JAILBIRD - EastEnders Rasta Carmel lashes out at Dirty Den jibes" (News of the World, 19.6.1988). The story concerned allegations that actor Leslie Grantham ("Dirty Den") had referred to black people as 'sooties' and in retaliation, Judith Jacob ("Carmel") had referred to Grantham as a jailbird because of his criminal record. Whatever the reality of such references, the terminology is given credence by the celebrity involvement. The series itself has been criticised by many of its outgoing minority characters for its racist undertones. Judith Jacobs is quoted in the News of the World newspaper as saying

> "I've been so deeply offended and angered by the way EastEnders scriptwriters have treated black people that I was prepared to pack my job up if they refused to make the changes I asked for" (News of the World, 19.6.1988)

The character that Jacobs played was a health visitor, sister of "Darren" and recently married wife of "Matthew". Carmel has been reasonably well integrated into the cast and was often seen chatting to various regular characters in a relatively relaxed, ordinary and informal mode. She was

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often asked to account for the whereabouts of her brother Darren, whose two children she has cared for, since he disappeared from "the Square". The character of Darren, the only significant black male role since the departure of the Carpenter family in 1986, was cast as a petty criminal, always ready with sacks of illegal property to tout. He left the Square mysteriously after, one assumes, a villainous escapade went wrong. When Carmel begins a romantic relationship with Matthew, a white record-shop manager, she is counselled about the wisdom of such a liaison. Despite protests from friends and family, the happy couple get married, but television cannot allow of such a relationship being successful. Although there are references to the differences in culture and the resulting problems which can and do arise, the crucial problem in this relationship is Matthew's jealousy and subsequent violence towards his wife. After yet another beating where her niece and nephew are also involved, Carmel or her nephew (it was never made clear exactly who was responsible) wounds Matthew with a kitchen knife and he is taken to the local hospital. This is the signal for the destruction of the marriage and the disappearance of the unhappy couple from the screen. However, the family involvement with the soap is continued with Darren's son "Junior" taking up the role of token black and his character, although only a school-boy, has already been in trouble with the police and is constantly seen truanting from school and being generally disruptive, usually accompanied by his Turkish-Cypriot friend, "Melody".

Although the production team on EastEnders intended to treat with current social problems, racism has actually been dealt with using a rather oblique, third-person narrative device. A character may say that racism is

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evil or suggest that discrimination is rife but without referring to anything specific. Although there are black and Asian actors currently in the series, there is never a discussion, in character, about the experience or effects of racism at a personal level. How, for example, does Carmel cope with white hostility when she carries out her duty visits? Is Junior ever the recipient of racist taunts, and if so, how does he deal with them? Such issues could reasonably be incorporated into particular storylines and provide the focus for narrative themes which treat with ethnic tension. Buckingham argues that

> "...in dealing with it [racism], EastEnders has adopted a didactic approach. The few characters who are consistently seen as racist have tended to be the more unsympathetic ones...thus in a typical exchange Kathy informed Dot that she should not refer to "nigger brown", since this was "rude to black people". In this respect the programme would appear to imply that racism is simply a question of individual prejudice" (Buckingham, 1987, p.85)

The original Bengali characters who owned the local supermarket left the series in 1987 after the husband, "Saeed" started acting rather strangely and eventually left home . His wife, "Naima" managed on her own for a few months but then had to fend off the advances of her cousin and she too left the series in October 1987. When the series was launched, producer Julia Smith said of the Asian characters

> "We have got a lot of very nice Bengali characters whom I think everyone will like, and I hope that people won't even realise they're Bengalis" (Buckingham, 1987, p.103)

It is difficult to imagine exactly what Smith means by the latter part of the quote: if they are so nice then surely that positive aspect should be emphasised. Or does she mean that they are so nice that their ethnicity

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could be forgotten or that they could perhaps be taken for whites? Naima and Saeed have now been replaced by the "Karim" family, "Sufia" and father "Ashraf" and teenage son and daughter "Sohail" and "Shireen". Storylines which include the Karim family are either incidental, where members of the family are part of the general backdrop of characters with a few or no words to say, or else explicitly ethnically-based. While the family were still quite new to the Square, Shireen became the girlfriend of "Ricky", the son of the new publican, "Frank". Whilst Ricky's father is unconcerned about the relationship, Shireen's father is very hostile and eventually sends Shireen to boarding school in an effort to end the romance. Some time later Shireen is again seen in the Square and appears philosophical about her relationship with Ricky, realising that the culture gap is too wide and she must stick to her own kind. The viewer is left in no doubt that it is the Asian family rejecting the white overture rather than the other way round.

Sohail is a very integrated character, who has black and white friends and is often in dispute with his father over his friends and his behaviour. Sohail is the product of multi-cultural Britain and is provided with dialogue which states that barriers can only be broken down by understanding and tolerance, or words to that effect. His father is portrayed as being more traditional in his outlook and highly suspicious of white people, seeing devious motives in even their most innocent actions. Ashraf Karim is not presented as a friendly or likeable character but as a domineering father and husband, intent on protecting his family from the excesses of the white man. His wife, who is seen only occasionally and never outside the house/shop environment, is an entirely submissive

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character who understands her children's desire to be western but must defer to her husband's better judgment.

However, in an interesting narrative turn, Ashraf has recently become romantically involved with "Stella" a young white woman, such relationship threatening the stability of Ashraf's marriage when his wife finds out about the clandestine relationship. It transpires that Ashraf has always been a womaniser and implicit in his general attitude is the view that there is nothing really wrong with conducting an extra-marital affair. Sufia herself berates Ashraf for his behaviour and argues that although it might have been permissible "back home" where she wouldn't have been able to complain, it certainly was not acceptable in Britain and she wouldn't tolerate the continuation of such behaviour. Having already left home once as a protest, Sufia has now secured an admission of guilt from Ashraf and a promise that he will end the affair. At the time of writing he was still conducting his illicit relationship.

The Turkish-Cypriot cafe-owner, "Ali" and his white wife, "Sue" have both left the series as a result of their marriage breakdown. Once again, references were made as to the unsuitability of Ali and Sue marrying outside their respective cultures. Sue has suffered a mental breakdown and is understood to be recovering in a local hospital. Ali was left to look after their small son but finds himself unequal to the task. The child is taken into care and Ali turns to gambling, a propensity for which has always been alluded to in the past but apparently kept under control. Ali finally leaves the Square as a a broken and penniless man, flanked by assorted relatives and driven away at high speed in a dark car.

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The Jewish doctor is still occasionally seen around the Square and is still talked about by some of the older residents. His nephew "Doctor David" spends some time in the series acting as Dr Legg's locum but finds that he is unable to feel comfortable in the Square. He is rescued from his predicament with the arrival from Israel of his abandoned girlfriend, "Ruth", who shows him the error of his ways and suggests that what he really wants is to go back to his people in Israel. He agrees that he didn't really belong in the Square - perhaps an allegorical reference to Britain - and happily prepares for domestic and professional fulfilment abroad.

Although EastEnders is only a television programme there is no doubt that the series does purport to reflect real life, with real problems and real solutions (and sometimes without). As Buckingham points out, the genre of soap dictates that relationships flourish and fail, marriages begin and end, characters come and go, because soaps demand an internal dynamic which constantly confronts the viewers with new situations and new people. Flagging interest can be revived with a judicious injection of disaster, intrigue, marriage or murder. However, the dynamic of change is only really successful when viewed against a background of constancy. Although some characters, even significant characters like "Den" and "Angie" have left the series, they are often remembered and talked about by those who remain and are in any case soon replaced by other, similar characters. The white characters are mostly ordinary and often dull, and sometimes disastrous things happen to them - Michelle's teenage pregnancy, Kathy's rape, Angie's alcoholism and Den's murder. But these events are countered by the otherwise ordinariness of their existence and by the stolid presence

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of other cast members. The occasional forays into abnormal behaviour by some characters are overwhelmingly compensated by the uneventful lives of the majority of the cast. Such diversity of behaviour and even occupation is not the lot of the minority characters.

The original Afro-Caribbean family, the "Carpenters" included father, Tony Carpenter as a builder, mother, Hannah Carpenter as a social climber and children Cassie and Kelvin. Tony and Hannah's marriage breaks down with Hannah berating Tony for his humble aspirations. The audience is left in no doubt who is to blame for the marital split where Tony represents the traditional old values and Hannah those of the grabbing entrepreneur. The character of Cassie was never developed. Kelvin was the last to leave the series as his character developed from school-boy to proto-revolutionary with romantic attachments with both Michelle and Carmel. The black family unit of mother, father and two children has not been replaced in the series but has instead transmuted into an assortment of misfit characters. A single parent family where the remaining parent eventually abandons his children to their grandparents; a health visitor turned battered wife (party to a mixed marriage); and two petty criminals and a juvenile delinquent provide the sum total of black characters in the series which can scarcely be said to reflect the diversity of black experience in Britain although they probably accurately reflect the assumptions that the white majority (including scriptwriters) make about black people. Similarly, the two Asian families in the series have both managed the local supermarket and both have experienced difficulties in adapting to 'British' ways.

As far as the American audience is concerned, Intintolli suggests that the introduction of a minority character in a soap, in a role which includes a romantic involvement with an existing white character could adversely affect a programme's ratings due to the hostility such a relationship would engender in the white viewing public (Intintolli, 1984). Cantor and Pingree, also commenting on the American audience suggest that the actors in soaps differ significantly to those in other prime time genres in that they are more likely to portray middle-class and predominantly white characters (Cantor & Pingree, 1983). It is thus clear that British and American television programmes parallel each other closely in terms of black characterisation and their mutual fear of alienating the majority white audience by introducing controversial narrative themes into popular series, such as mixed marriages and other types of romantic involvement between white and black people. When such liaisons are allowed, they must end in disaster, preferably with admissions of cultural incompatibility.

TELEVISION AND DRAMA

Peter Ansorge, Commissioning Editor for Drama at Channel 4 argues that the main complaint about the way in which black people are represented in drama is that minorities are usually placed in ghettoes.

> "The Asians are always in shops and the daughters have always got
> arranged marriages and the blacks are always about to mug people
> in Brixton and there is very little sense of black life being
> part of the normal English life" (Ansorge, 1989)

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However, the simple exercise of exchanging positive characters for negative ones will not necessarily achieve a better level of understanding since Ansorge also argues that the audience has to believe in the character before it can be influenced by it. He suggests that the dramatist has a role to play in suggesting how things ought to be but must at the same time acknowledge how things actually are.

The 1980s have seen a number of ethnic minority characters in serious plays and drama series playing significant and sometimes leading roles. There have been black and Chinese policemen ("Wolcott", Thames Television, 1981; "Chinese Detective", BBC1, 1981/82), a black female private detective ("South of the Border", BBC1, 1988), and a black male barrister ("Black Silk", BBC1, 1985). However, many appearances of minority characters are in the more mundane roles of petty criminals and occasionally policemen. Pines points out that whilst black villains are very much in evidence in the ordinary crime series, when a black policeman is featured, he (and it usually is a he) is usually drafted in to deal with the villainous black community as in the case of "Wolcott". The criminalisation of the black community thus undermines any positive image which might have accompanied the portrayal of a black person as law enforcer.

> "The 'realism' invoked in such drama of the black criminal milieu, relies heavily on popular racist imagery of 'black crime' which is represented in an unquestioned manner for dramatic effect" (Pines in Daniels & Gerson, 1989, p.64)

The producer of "Wolcott" (Wolcott was a black detective character who seemed to spend most of his time dealing with black criminals), Jacky Stoller, suggests that the dramatic portrait can often influence attitudes

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to a greater extent than the more straightforward factual piece.

> "I think that sometimes drama can educate more effectively than documentary. Certainly it has the opportunity to educate more people because its audience is wider. But it also has the facility to make people identify with characters from an alien and previously misunderstood group and that can lead to sympathy for the group" (Stoller, The Guardian, 31.1.1981)

Whilst Stoller is no doubt correct to suggest that fiction reaches a larger audience than fact and therefore has the greater potential, it is arguable whether the white audience will realistically identify with a black actor, hero or not. Her use of the word "alien" is also quite interesting as it is such an emotive word to describe the everyday fact of black Britons. It is also ironic that if the black community were misunderstood before Wolcott appeared on television, then they are now better understood as typified by villains and occasional policemen. Banks-Smith at least makes no pretence of analysing the content of the Wolcott series but concentrates on identifying the various physical attributes which the main character possesses.

> "[He] is a very healthy man, never an hour passes but he peels off his shirt to lift weights...his inner and outer cleanliness together with a positive passion for oranges should do wonders for the West Indian image and the sale of navels" (Nancy Banks-Smith, television critic for the Guardian, 16.1.1981)

Whilst Banks-Smith is not writing in a serious style, her preoccupation with the physical rather than the intellectual is a telling indictment on the perception of many black heroes. As in other programme types, the main difficulty with drama and specifically crime and police series is that of representativeness. Whilst it is not denied that both black and white

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people commit crime, it is the habitual casting of black people as villains in television fictions which perpetuate the criminal stereotype. Many series in the crime genre also utilise a variety of white stereotypes but for the predominant white audience these stereotypes are recognised as caricature, a recognition which is not afforded minority characterisation.

> "We don't have to be...concerned about these [white] misrepresentations...because the majority of white viewers won't be fooled by them as easily. They have a wealth of certain knowledge that all whites are not like that. About blacks they know nothing but what they are told and what the camera shows them, interpreted through their ignorant fears and their racism" (Caesar, 1981, pp.82-83)

Although Caesar's remarks are rather extreme and generalist, the main point is crucial. It is precisely the way in which the diversity of black experience is proscribed by the limited imagination of (white) writers which encourages the continuation of racist imagery. However, the ethnicity of writers is no guarantee of acceptability as many minority writers and production teams have discovered. Hanif Kureishi has been heavily criticised by minority audiences for his portrayal of homosexuality and corruption in the Asian community in two of his films which were later broadcast on Channel 4, "My Beautiful Launderette" and "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid". Farrukh Dhondy, Commissioning Editor for Multi-Cultural Programmes at Channel 4, attracted considerable hostility for his television drama series "King of the Ghetto" (BBC2, 1986). Protests against the series culminated in a demonstration outside BBC Television Centre by angry Bangladeshis claiming that the drama reinforced racist stereotypes by its portrayal of corrupt Asian businessmen. Again, the difficulty with programmes of this kind lies in the tension between positive versus

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realistic characterisation. Programmes which explore those aspects of community life which fall outside what is considered to be legitimate codes of behaviour are condemned by the conservative audience. When the community under scrutiny also happens to be black or Asian then such programmes are doubly criticised both for promoting (at least covertly) deviant behaviour and also fuelling the fires of racism whereby all black people are regarded as perverts/homosexuals/criminals and so on. The burden of representativeness unhappily afflicts much of the work originated by black authors and playwrites but it cannot be artistically desirable, still less realistic to expect black writers to proscribe or limit the activities of their characters in order to present them as always good, honest and conformist.

The notion of inter-ethnic friendship has been interestingly explored in two recent drama series, "South of the Border" (BBC1, 1988) and "Shalom Salaam" (BBC2, 1989). In the former series, "Pearl", a black female private detective and her young white female assistant "Fin", attempt to solve various small crimes and disappearances and occasionally get into difficult situations. The relationship between the two women is often stormy, where Pearl tries to persuade Fin out of her criminal proclivities, but essentially they are good friends. Ethnicity is never a central or even minor aspect of the narrative and only becomes obvious when Pearl's friends are enlisted to help, since they are predominantly black. Although the series was not an especially serious one, with many light-hearted moments, it is still rare on television to have a leading character who is black, and moreover a woman, who is at the same time strong, determined and on the right side of the law. South of the Border did incorporate these positive

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attributes and was still successful, perhaps serving as an encouragement for future multi-ethnic series where white and black characters participate in a more equal relationship.

"Shalom Salaam" considered the parallel lives of a Jewish and a Muslim family, both working in the clothing industry, whose lives are forcibly brought together by the romantic involvement of the Jewish son and the Muslim daughter. Although it was clear from the beginning that the romance was ultimately doomed - fictional romance at least being unable to allow successful inter-ethnic liaisons, for example, "South Pacific", "Othello" or "Madam Butterfly" - the series served to highlight the similarities between two cultures, as well as the differences which in itself is an important contribution to the continuing ethnic relations dilemma.

The 1980s has also seen a revival of things Indian with serialisations of a variety of Raj-inspired series such as M M Kaye's "The Far Pavilions" and Paul Scott's "The Jewel in the Crown" together with films such as David Lean's "Passage to India" and Richard Attenborough's "Gandhi". The romanticising of events in British India and the casting of white actors in key roles encourages a perception which is imbued with historical distortion. Rushdie, in characteristically caustic style suggests that

> "...the recrudescence of imperialist ideology and the popularity
> of Raj fictions put me in mind of the phantom twitchings of an
> amputated limb. the continuing decline, the growing poverty and
> the meanness of spirit of much of Thatcherite Britain encourages
> many Britons to turn their eyes nostalgically to the lost hour of
> their precedence...the jewel in the crown is made, these days, of
> paste" (Rushdie, 1984, p.129)

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A review of contemporary programming featuring minority groups would not be
complete without a brief look at "The Black and White Minstrels" show, one
of the BBC's most popular series which ran for 21 years, between 1958 and
1978. In today's more enlightened social climate, it would be unthinkable
to broadcast such blatant caricatures but even in the show's infancy
dissenting voices were heard.

> "The Black and White Minstrels might as well abandon its ebony
> pretences...I can see no point in white singers putting on a
> grotesque make-up which has nothing to do with the natural good
> looks of an African, in order to sing popular songs which have
> nothing to do with the coloured world" (Ivor Brown, television
> critic in The Listener, 19.3.1959)

In May 1967 a petition backed by the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination
(CARD) and signed by white and black people alike was taken to the BBC
asking that the show being taken off the air. However, the BBC had to
weigh its social conscience against its millions of satisfied viewers and
licence payers (the show had a peak viewing rating of 18 million viewers at
the height of its popularity). It was also obvious that if the show was
tasteless and offensive in 1967 then it must have been equally tasteless
and offensive from the beginning. It would be heartening to imagine that
the bad old days of deliberate racist stereotyping - as opposed to the
'unintentional' stereotyping of today - are in the distant past but even as
late as 1961, the BBC broadcast "Little Black Sambo and The Snow Mountain",
a cautionary tale about a black child wishing to become white. The
anonymous critic for The Listener, the "Critic on the Hearth" said of the
boy's desire, that

> "...the only way in which he can achieve his desire is by art, by
> deceit. Such falseness must lead inevitably to loneliness, since

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the world cannot tolerate two-facedness" (The Listener, 15.6.1961)

Jim Moir of the BBC talks with pride about "The Black and White Minstrels" show winning the Golden Rose of Montreux award in 1961 and reports that his postbag is still full of letters requesting repeat showings of those "wonderful" programmes although he now says that it is "absolutely out of the question" that the show would ever by broadcast again (Moir, 1989). But the new sensibilities which television has apparently acquired during the 1980s appear to be nothing more than cynical pragmatism where programmes are abandoned because they don't fit the current image, not because there is a genuine belief that they are and always have been racist. When the BBC celebrated 50 years in broadcasting in 1986, "The Black and White Minstrels" show was left out of the reminiscences and there was some hostility towards Bill Cotton, then Director for taking such decision. The great popularity that the series commanded and still commands is difficult to understand until Robert Luff, former Impressario at the Minstrel shows suggests that the show

"...was - and still is - incredibly successful and popular. It is not racist and never has been. We have just completed a 14-week sell-out tour around Britain and no one came out of a theatre complaining about it" (Robert Luff quoted in the Daily Mail, 23.10.1986)

Using their own reason for the omission of the show from the golden anniversary, the Daily Star carried a banner headline proclaiming

"Minstrels blacked in Golden Oldies Bonanza.....the Black and White Minstrel show has been banned for fear of upsetting immigrant viewers" (Daily Star, 23.10.1986)

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It is disheartening, if not surprising, to realise that although many ethnic minority people have been born and educated in Britain, there is still a popular view that all ethnic minority peoples are immigrants. This thesis argues that such a view is perpetuated and reinforced by the language and imagery used to describe events which include an ethnic dimension as quotations such as the one above clearly indicate. An examination of the white majority's attitudes towards minority communities and a discussion of the possible sources for such attitudes forms the subject matter of remaining chapters.

INTRODUCTION

The attitudes of the white majority towards ethnic minority groups have traditionally been the locus for tension where the 'otherness' of such groups provided the basis for differential treatment and perception. It is argued here that as ethnic communities became more visible and more vocal in the 1980s, so white hostility increased. Hill's study in 1964 found that more people objected to a "coloured" neighbour (49%) than a "coloured work colleague" (22%) and argued that such differences were due to the more personal relationship of neighbour.

> "If a coloured immigrant lives in close proximity to an Englishman's home there is a strong possibility that his behaviour may in some way intrude into the Englishman's social and domestic life" (Hill, 1964, p.35)

His choice of language indicates clearly that Hill believes "Englishness" is synonymous with whiteness. Hartmann and Husband found that the extent of hostility towards ethnic minority neighbours was directly related to the perceived number of such neighbours, although they also found that inter-ethnic friendship mediate, to some extent the propensity for hostility (Hartmann & Husband, 1974, p.85). The authors concluded however, that "area norms" informed the atmosphere of neighbourhoods so that even if individuals were not prejudiced, the "normative hostility" confounded their sympathies. Gallup Poll results for the years between 1964 and 1981

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suggest that levels of hostility towards minority ethnic groups declined over that period (Banton, 1988). The number of people who said they wouldn't mind a 'coloured' person as a neighbour went up from 49% to 59%; as friend, from 45% to 78%; as fellow worker from 61% to 82% and as son or daughter-in-law, from 15% to 35% However, PSI research contrasted the years 1974 and 1982 and asked Afro-Caribbean and Asian people if they felt that life in Britain was better for them than 5 years ago. The proportion of respondents saying life had got worse was 16% and 18% respectively in 1974 rising to 53% and 51% respectively in 1982. The main reasons put forward for this decline were economic recession, unemployment and inflation (Banton, 1988, pp.110-112).

ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS

The 1988 survey sought, among other things, to identify the ways in which young white people differentiate between different ethnic groups, in terms of what they believe to be typical of this or that group. Participating students in the study were asked a series of questions concerning the characteristics of "black, white and asian" people, where respondents were asked to specify which ethnic group was variously "most intelligent", "most likely to cause trouble" and "most hardworking" and Table 8.1 represents student responses to the first of these questions. The last two column categories of "Hi" and "Lo" refer to the two sets of college respondents which had the highest and the lowest reported number of inter-ethnic friendships. The categories have been used here in order to explore the influence of inter-ethnic friendship.

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Table 8.1

Which ethnic group is the most intelligent?

Ethnic group	Female	Male	All	Hi	Lo
Asian people	*	1%	*	2%	2%
Black people	*	-	*	-	1%
White people	10%	25%	17%	17%	26%
All the same	88%	71%	80%	80%	71%
Total Respondents	99% (319)	98% (319)	98% (638)		

[* less than 1%]

It will be seen from Table 8.1 that nearly a quarter of male students believe white people to be the most intelligent, whereas only 10% of young women believe this to be the case. Across the college range, students with less reported ethnic friendships were more likely to state that whites are most intelligent than those without such friendships, suggesting that personal experience of ethnic minority peoples does affect, to some extent, the way in which such groups are regarded by the white majority. The debate surrounding the relative intelligence quotients (IQs) of black and white people is nothing new and much of the nascent scientific racism of the eighteenth century rested upon notions of inherited mental as well as physical characteristics and aptitudes. In the twentieth century the theory of heritable intellectual traits was given a certain legitimacy by the work of Eysenck and Jensen in the 1970s. Although they both carried out different studies and experiments, they reached very similar conclusions. Eysenck suggested that it was futile to claim that IQ

differences did not exist between black and white people because the opposite could so easily be demonstrated. Insteadhe suggested that reasons for such differences should be sought and he suggests that the most appropriate place to look is in the realm of genetics.

> "Negroes in the USA show some genetic influence on their low IQs...this may very well be due to the after-effects of some of the crimes committed on their ancestors" (Eysenck, 1971, p.142)

Eysenck argued, as did Jensen, that even when environmental, educational and socio-economic factors are taken into consideration, there still remains a consistent IQ gap of 15 points between black and white Americans. It is the constancy of the gap which prompted Eysenck to suggest genetics as providing the causal link. However, although Eysenck believed the black American to be genetically inferior to the white American in terms of IQ, he did not suggest that IQ measured human worth, nor that such 'inferiority' should support notions of segregation and discrimination.

Jensen had apparently laudable aims in initiating his research - to rectify the results of previously misused IQ testing which classified many black children as retarded (Flynn, 1980) - but he still believed that

> "...all the major facts would seem to be comprehended quite well by the hypothesis that something between half and three-quarters of the average IQ difference [between black and white people] is attributable to genetic factors and the remainder to environmental factors and their interaction with the genetic difference" (Jensen, 1973, p.363)

However, the IQ debate is itself the locus of much controversy since it begs the question that IQ testing is an appropriate measure or predictor of

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anything at all, let alone a scientific indicator of intelligence, whatever that means. The obvious criticism of any theory which treats seriously with the issue of IQ differentials is that it automatically gives legitimacy to a notion which does not enjoy wholehearted conceptual validity. The cultural biases embedded in the questions and puzzles utilised in IQ testing reflect the cultural repertoire of the (white) test devisors and will thus be more easily understood by people who share such cultural background, that is, white people. Flynn argues that the way in which Eysenck and Jensen's conclusions can best be refuted is not by radical rhetoric but by empirical and rigorous research which demonstrates the opposite thesis, that environmental factors of one type or another, are exclusively responsible for IQ differentials between black and white people. But the debate is still firmly rooted in the IQ tradition and, since there is little evidence to support the notion that IQ testing serves any real purpose, other than further encouraging ethnocentric beliefs among the white majority, it is difficult to comprehend the rationale which perpetuates the debate. For some people to believe that white people are more intelligent than black or Asian people, there must exist an external notion of white superiority with which they identify. In the 1988 survey, students were asked to identify which ethnic group cause the most trouble

and Table 8.2 provides a breakdown of responses.

Table 8.2

Which ethnic group causes the most trouble?

Ethnic group	Female	Male	All	Hi	Lo
White people	8%	15%	11%	12%	7%
Black people	14%	27%	18%	21%	30%
Asian people	5%	14%	10%	7%	23%
All the same	75%	55%	64%	64%	58%
Total	99%	98%	98%		
Respondents	(317)	(319)	(636)		

The breakdown of student responses provided in Table 8.2 shows that although nearly two-thirds of students believe that all ethnic groups cause trouble equally, more students believe black people to cause the most trouble (18%) than white (11%) or Asian people (10%). Of those believing white people cause the most trouble, 70% have inter-ethnic friendships. Across the college range, students with fewer reported ethnic friendships were more likely to suggest that black and Asian people cause more trouble than white people and the sex of respondents was also a significant variable. Solomos argues that popular perceptions of ethnic minority groups are inscribed with fixed beliefs about how such groups are constituted.

"Common images of black people include assumptions about differences between the culture, attitudes and values of black people...additionally the attempts by black groups to assert their rights and claims to social justice have often been presented in the media as a sign of the failure of the minority communities to adapt to British society, and not as a sign that racial injustice is deeply embedded" (Solomos, 1989, p.127)

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Students in the 1988 survey were also asked to identify which ethnic group was the most hard-working and Table 8.3 provides a breakdown of responses.

Table 8.3

Which ethnic group is the most hard-working?

Ethnic group	Female	Male	All	Hi	Lo
Black people	6%	7%	6%	2%	7%
White people	9%	21%	15%	16%	26%
Asian people	10%	21%	16%	23%	15%
All the same	75%	56%	66%	63%	58%
Total	99%	99%	99%		
Respondents	(319)	(321)	(640)		

Table 8.3 shows that just under one-fifth of students believe that black and Asian people are more hard-working than their white counterparts and across the college range, students with fewer reported ethnic friendships were more likely to suggest that white people were the most hard-working group. Asian and white people were viewed as being equally hard-working, but only 6% of students believe black people to be more hard-working than Asian or white people. Nearly two-thirds of students who believe black or Asian people to be the most hardworking have inter-ethnic friendships.

The 1988 survey found that not only did young white people regard certain characteristics as being 'typical' of particular ethnic groups, but that they also regard some ethnic groups to be better or worse at certain skills than other. Students were asked to state what "black, asian and white" people were good at, and were given a range of possible abilities with which to agree. Table 8.4 provides a breakdown of student responses to

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Table 8.4

Ethnic Abilities

Legend:
- All Same
- Asian
- White
- Black

Y-axis: % (0 to 100)

X-axis (Abilities): Politics, Sport, Music, Dancing, Acting, Business, Talking
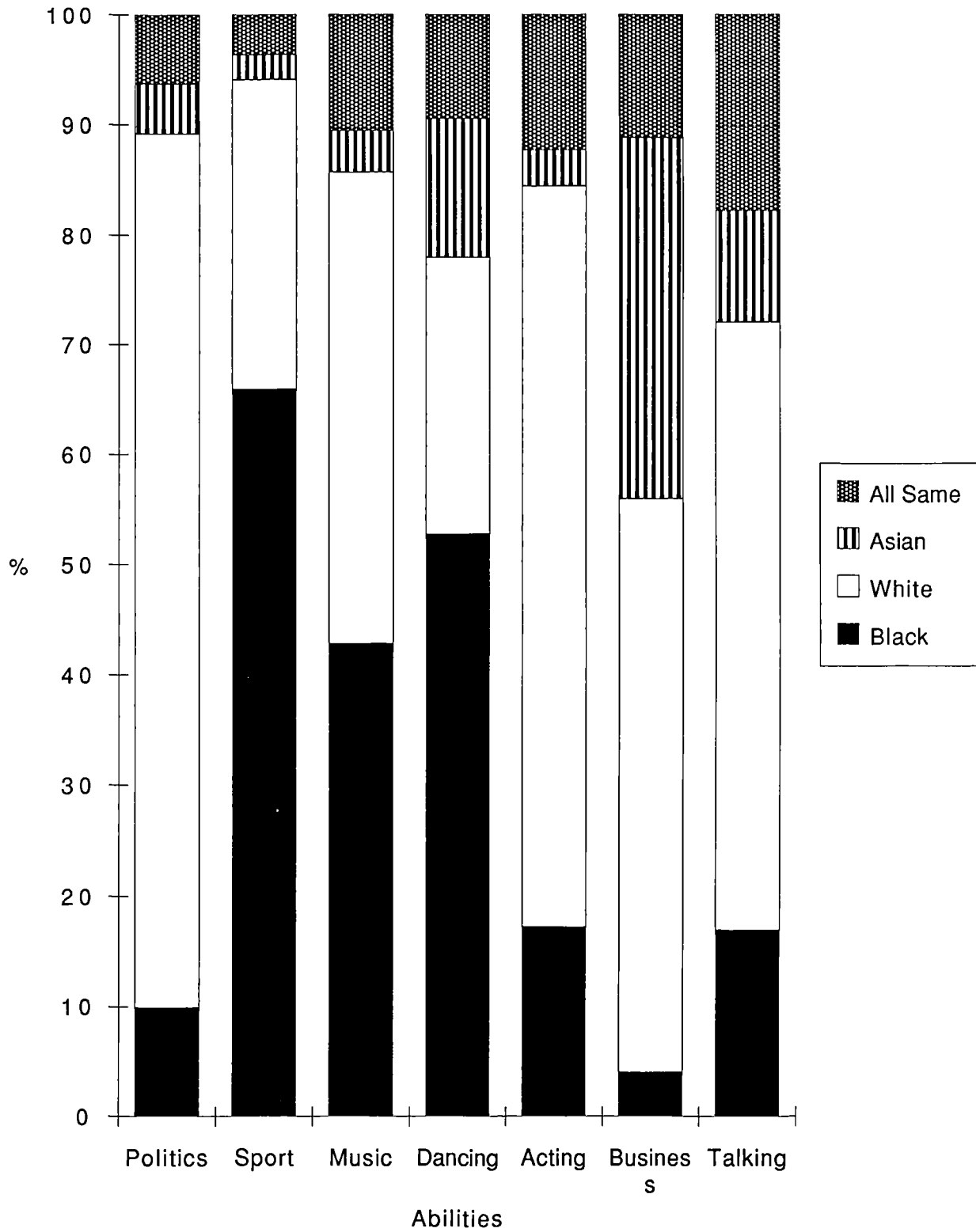
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

this question. There was little significant difference in responses between young men and women nor across the college range, and the question achieved an average 70% response rate. A little over a quarter of students (26%) refused to make distinctions based on ethnicity, including 17% who stated that all groups were good at everything and 9% who left all aspects of the question uncompleted. However, nearly three-quarters of students (73%) made distinctions based on ethnicity in one or more parts of the question. Black people are regarded as being good at sport and dancing and rather less good at more cerebral pursuits such as politics and business. Asian people on the other hand, are regarded as being good at business (not as good as white people but better than black people) and very little else. White people are regarded as being reasonably good at everything but less competent at physical activities.

The physical and intellectual competences with which students endow black and Asian people are extremely unlikely to be based on personal knowledge of such people. Thus the traditional musical traditions of India, resonant with sophisticated dance techniques, rhythmic patterns and textures are signally unknown to the white majority; the enormous appeal and established story genres of both orthodox and more contemporary Hindi film, and the wealth of Indian film stars is not comprehended or observed by mainstream white society.

That black people, that is, Afro-Caribbean people, are deemed to be inherently good at sport is, at best, a partial truth since although black sportsmen and women are a feature of British sporting life, they tend to be concentrated in a very small number of sporting events. In 1988, 30% of

the 600 professional boxers were black and in the last Commonwealth Games, a third of the English team were also black (Mason, 1988). Given that black people constitute approximately 1.2% of the British population (OPCS, 1989), it is clear that they are hugely over-represented in this sporting pursuit. Whilst this would appear to indicate that sport is indeed 'colour blind', there are a variety of other factors which explain the prominence of black men and women in the sporting field. Mason suggests that a brief analysis of the American sporting scene - where black people have featured strongly for more than 100 years - demonstrates that black sporting success is severely restricted, black stars rarely achieving prestigious or prominent positions in most sporting activities. Similar patterns can be found in Britain where, for example, 7% of British football players are black and 74% of professional clubs include black team members (Observer, 1.10.1989), but the Secretary of the Football Association was only able to name one black captain (Keith Curle, Wimbledon FC) from a total of 96 clubs (personal enquiry, 20.12.1989).

However, it is in the particular sport of boxing where black men have traditionally been successful, with a number of black boxers achieving almost cult status among young black and white men alike, for example, Mohammed Ali, John Conteh and latterly, Mike Tyson and Frank Bruno. Kirson & Weinberg observed that in 1960s America, boxing offered young black men an appealing opportunity for advancement with a host of role models available with which young black men could identify.

> "Since he [the young black man] has otherwise little hope of any but unskilled, disagreeable work, the boxing way to money and prestige may appear very attractive" (Kirson & Weinberg, 1969, p.440)

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As early as 1948, nearly half the prominent American boxers were black, having supplanted both the Irish and the Italian boxing fraternity in performance and ability (Kirson & Weinberg, 1969, p.441). However, although boxing was dominated by able black athletes, ethnicity was still a major influence in the promotion and consequent success of aspiring boxers, where "a good white fighter is preferred to a good Negro fighter" (Kirson & Weinberg, 1969, p.450). Boyle too suggests that sport, far from breaking down ethnic prejudice and barriers, actually accommodates itself to whatever structural divisions exist in the society in which it operates (Boyle, 1971).

The Olympic Games at Seoul in 1988 saw a number of black participants competing for Britain, including athletes specialising in sprinting and long-jump events. Mason comments that the narrow range of events in which black people compete is related both to tradition but also to assumptions made by non-playing sporting professionals.

> "It has almost certainly got something to do with the stereotypes
> which live in the minds of trainers, coaches and managers about
> 'natural ability' and what black athletes are able to do. Nearly
> all those trainers, coaches and managers are white" (Mason, 1988,
> p.16)

Such stereotypical views can be confounded however, when black athletes achieve success in areas which are outside their alleged biological capabilities. Stamina and endurance events are regarded as inappropriate for black athletes because of traditional assumptions about excessive muscle weight and lung capacity. But at Seoul, a Kenyan runner set new records in long-distance running events and even as early as the 1960s,

African athletes were winning gold medals at international competitions. There has also been a belief amongst trainers that black people are not physically suited to swimming events, a belief that was demonstrably crushed when Anthony Nesty from Surinam won the gold medal for the 100m Butterfly at the Seoul Olympics.

> "The belief in the existence of an invariable 'character' was supposedly held by scholars decades ago. Its persistence only indicates the difficulty with which racial stereotypes and caricatures are destroyed or altered to comply with prevailing scientific knowledge...by asserting that blacks are physically superior, even well-meaning people at best may be reinforcing some old stereotypes" (H Edwards cited in Cashmore, 1982, p.42)

Cashmore agues that it is not an inherent athletic tendency within black people that impel them towards sport but rather a realistic assessment of their career possibilities. Due to their disadvantaged position in the market, they look to those black people who have succeeded, and seek to imitate that success. Since the two main areas of black achievement are music and sport, Cashmore suggests that this is one of the main reasons why so many young black people pursue careers in these two narrow fields.

In the 1988 survey, few students regarded ethnic minority people as being competent in the political arena. Whilst it is true that there are only four ethnic minority MPs, there are rather more ethnic minority people involved in local government at a variety of levels. In Leicester, for example, nearly one-fifth of the City councillors are from ethnic minorities, including one Asian woman councillor, most of whom are also members of the local Labour group (personal enquiry of Leicestershire City Council Race Relations Unit, 20.12.1989).

In the 1988 survey, those questions relating to ethnically-specific abilities achieved an average response rate of 70% for each part. In other words, the majority of students were willing and able to categorise different ethnic groups against an index of possible abilities, that is, to stereotype. The majority of students who refused to make ethnic distinctions had inter-ethnic friendships. Of those students who refused to categorise people in the way suggested by the question, 9% made comments on their questionnaires criticising the way in which the question encouraged respondents to stereotype. For example:

"Every individual in their own race will differ from each other.
I don't think their race has anything to do with what they are
good at" (F, 18)

"Can't define, each good in their own right" (F, 21)

"If given a chance, all can be equal" (M, 17)

Students were then asked a second series of questions relating to ethnic characteristics where they were asked to describe "white, black and asian" people against a possible index of attributes. This question achieved an average response rate of 51% for each part of the question, suggesting that respondents were less willing to ascribe characteristics, both positive and negative, than they were to ascribe abilities. Nonetheless, at least half the students did complete this question. Table 8.5 provides a breakdown of student responses.

For most students in the 1988 survey, discernible differences exist not only between white and non-white people, but also between black and Asian people which have nothing to do with phenotypical characteristics. For example, black people are seen as flashy, violent, lazy and bad-tempered.

Table 8.5

Ethnic Attributes

Friendly
Lazy
Difficult
Hardworking
Neighbourly

Legend:
- All Same
- Black
- Asian
- White

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
%

Weak
Kind
Bad-tempered
Flashy
Violent

Legend:
- All Same
- Black
- Asian
- White

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
%
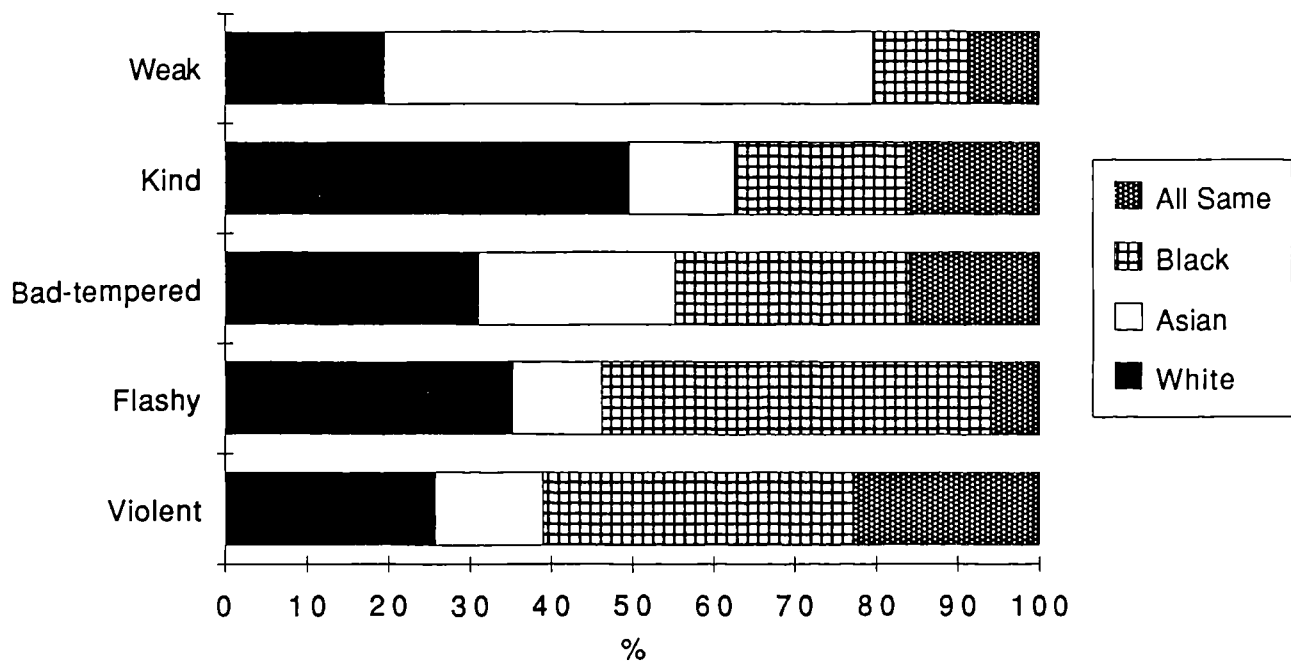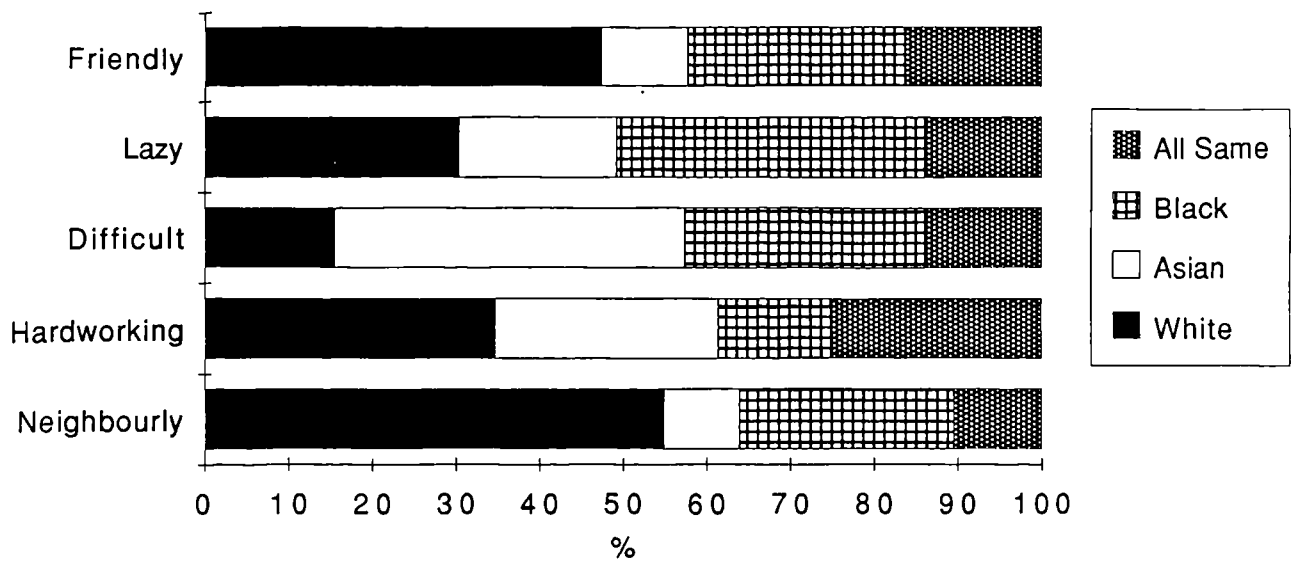
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

Asian people, on the other hand, are regarded as weak, difficult, bad-tempered and hard-working. White people are neighbourly, friendly, kind and flashy. In other words, white people are regarded as possessing predominantly positive traits, whilst black and Asian people are regarded in much more negative terms, although such negative terms seem to be ethnic-specific. In group discussion there was a pervasive view that whilst black people were often viewed as violent, such fear was tempered by respect. But attitudes towards Asian people were very different in that they are often held in contempt by whites, perhaps because of their capacity for hard work and success in business.

More than one-third of participating students refused to make attribute distinctions based on ethnicity including 22% who stated that all groups had all attributes and 16% of students who refused to complete any part of the question. Of those students who refused to make distinctions, 13% made comments criticising the way in which the question encouraged respondents to stereotype ethnic groups. Overall, more than half the students (58%) made distinctions based on ethnicity in one of more parts of the question. There was very little difference between the responses of young women and young men, although young women were slightly more likely than male counterparts to state that white people had negative attributes. Across the college range students were more likely to attribute negative characteristics to black and white people equally if they had reported ethnic friendships. Of those who believe black people to be difficult, less than half have black friends. Similarly, of those who believe Asian people to be bad-tempered, less than half have inter-ethnic friendships. Over

three-quarters of those who believe that white, black and Asian people are all equally lazy also have inter-ethnic friendships.

PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCE

In what terms do white people perceive differences between themselves and other ethnic groups? In the 1988 survey, students were asked to agree or disagree with a range of statements relating to the possible differences between black, white and Asian people. Table 8.6 provides an analysis of student responses and it will be seen that religion was the most popular difference (75%) followed by culture (73%), colour (61%) and attitude (42%). In addition to the categories provided to students, 1% of male students reported that "smell" was a significant difference and 2% of male students also reported that "language" was a difference.

Having ascertained that differences do exist between ethnic groups, students were asked what (if any) problems arose from such differences. For a majority of students, a lack of understanding and tolerance was the most important problem to arise (38%), closely followed by racism (34%) and tension and/or conflict (24%). A small minority of students (4%) suggested that the wish to retain separate communities was also a problem. This question was open-ended and the following comments are typical of the responses elicited by the question "What problems (if any) are created by these [ethnic] differences?"

"Many short-sighted people are prejudiced against these people because of different religion and culture" (F, 23)

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Table 8.6

Ethnic Differences (%)

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42

75

61

73

Legend:
- Religion
- Culture
- Colour
- Attitude
- Intelligence
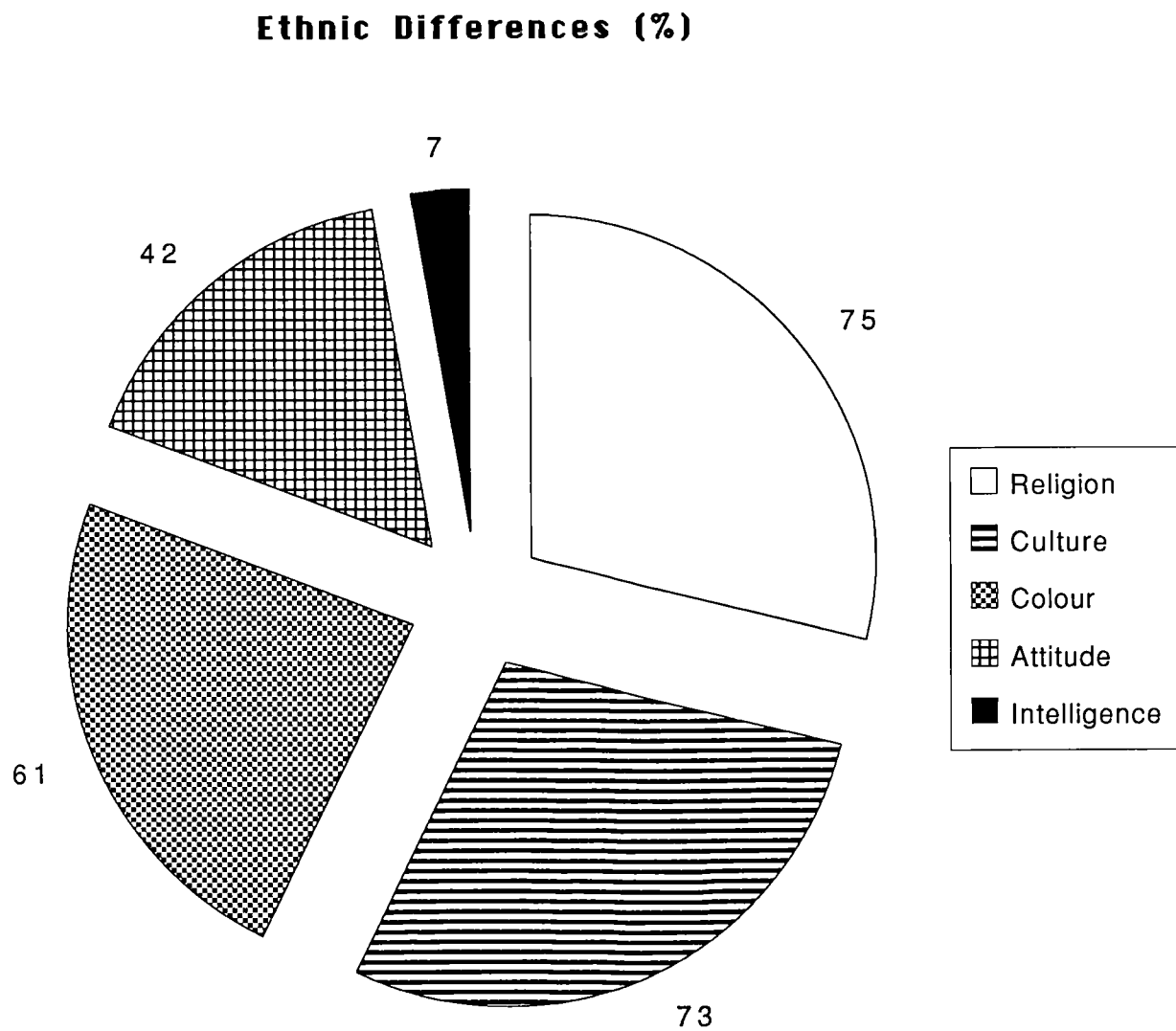
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

"Violent outbreaks, they are intruding on our culture with their ways, religion, temples, attitudes, etc." (M, 20)

"Social integration, resentment with living space and employment - dislike of the unlike" (F, 23)

"Blacks always consider themselves to be badly treated" (M, 16)

"They all have a chip on their shoulder, also if they come to the UK they must learn to speak English. Good old rural Britain's going downhill because of this" (M, 17)

"Cultural imbalance ie blacks wearing turbans on motorbikes with no helmets and whites not being able to consume alcohol in some black countries" (M, 20)

"People don't fully understand each other's cultures, the colour and religion of people - causes differences in viewpoints" (M, 17)

"Black people reluctant to change to white beliefs and attitudes" (M, 21)

"Other cultures trying to impose their way of life into England" (F, 19)

The comments made by students reveal a telling perception of ethnic difference and once again provide an indication of the type and strength of hostility expressed towards ethnic minority communities by the white majority. There is a pervasive tendency to indicate and emphasise perceived 'problems' caused by 'the other' but also an awareness of the problem of white racism. However, there is also a recurring theme of blame, that ethnic communities are at fault BY not immersing themselves completely in Britishness and thereby encouraging feelings of resentment and hostility by their deliberate isolation. Students were asked whether or not black, white and Asian people should make more effort to get to know each other and the majority (84%) felt that this should happen. Over a quarter of students believe that white and Asian people make the least

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effort (31% and 33% respectively) whilst 27% of students believe that all ethnic groups are equally remiss in their efforts to understand each other.

Ethnic Friendships

Nearly two-thirds of students (64%) in the 1988 survey stated that they had black or Asian friends, with slightly more recorded friendships among young women (68%) than young men (60%) Across the college range, the incidence of such friendships varied from 81% to 43%, with the greater number of friendships amongst students who live in the most ethnically mixed college location. Students were asked whether or not such friends were "typical" or "nicer" than other white/black/Asian people. This question was asked in order to ascertain whether or not white students privilege such friendships so that such friends are not viewed as typically black or Asian but as special. A quarter of students believed that these friends were "nicer or more friendly" than other white/black/Asian people, although there was a certain ambiguity in the phrasing of the question. It was not completely clear from the question whether students were answering that their black and Asian friends were nicer than **all** other people, or simply nicer than other black and Asian people, although it is most likely that the latter interpretation was made by students, given the type of comments elicited by this question. For example:

> "I don't see them as "nicer". They are individuals who I like - their colour has nothing to do with it" (F, 22)

> "Neither, there is no typical black person" (F, 17)

Students were asked to assess how their friends felt about people with ethnic backgrounds different to their own. The question was phrased so

that all respondents, including ethnic minority students, would be able to answer it, although the language is necessarily clumsy and imprecise. Previous research studies have demonstrated that individuals have a tendency to project their own views onto their friends (for example, Jackson & Sullivan, 1989; Linville, 1982), particularly if they are unwilling to openly admit to feelings which may be regarded as anti-social. Thus it was anticipated that those students who were hostile towards ethnic minority groups would also attribute such attitudes to their friends. Even without consciously projecting personal attitudes onto others, it would be expected that students would tend to mix with other individuals of like mind.

The survey showed that a quarter of students thought that their friends were hostile towards ethnic minority people, 10% thought that they had both racist and tolerant friends and just over a quarter thought that their friends were "OK" towards minority ethnic peoples. Table 8.7 provides a breakdown of student responses and indicates that rather more young men

than young women have hostile friends.

Table 8.7

How do you friends feel about ethnic minority people?

Attitude	Female	Male	All	Hi	Lo
Racist/hostile	14%	33%	24%	25%	46%
Racist/OK	12%	8%	10%	16%	-
Not interested	27%	27%	27%	29%	21%
Open-minded/OK	36%	15%	26%	7%	31%
Same as me (hostile)	1%	4%	2%	12%	3%
Same as me (tolerant)	1%	4%	2%	7%	4%
Entitled to own opinions	6%	5%	5%	-	-
'Pretend racists'	-	1%	*	-	-
'Pretend tolerant'	-	1%	*	-	-
Uncomfortable/wary	1%	1%	1%	-	-

Total	82%	78%	80%
Respondents	(262)	(254)	(516)

[* less than 1%]

The third category "not interested" is rather ambiguous - a significant minority of students responded simply with "not bothered" or "not interested" and it was often unclear as to whether they were not interested in ethnic difference or whether they meant that they were not interested in (ie hostile towards) black and Asian people. However such comments, read in the context of the individual questionnaire usually implied the latter interpretation. Nearly twice as many students with low reported ethnic friendships stated that they have racist friends than the average student response and in general, 58% of those reporting racist

friends reported no ethnic friendships. Some male students believe that their friends pretend to be racist because it is expected of them, whilst others pretend to be tolerant for the same reason. These were quite interesting insights, suggesting in the first case that 'macho' considerations take precedence over more egalitarian concerns such as equal treatment. In the second case, pragmatism also comes into operation, in circumstances where peer group norms encourage a style of behaviour which is contrary to personal belief. What both these cases indicate is an awareness of the existence and implications of white racism and an appreciation of when it is appropriate and when inappropriate to express racist sentiments.

The question relating to the attitudes of friends was an open one and student responses have been categorised by the author. Comments which were elicited by the question are reproduced below.

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. Obviously one can be racist and the other totally the opposite. I feel that most of the people I know are half/half in their feelings" (M, 17)

"Don't really want to know because they don't understand" (F, 17)

"Most of my friends don't think foreign people should live in our country and are very racist" (M, 17)

"Hatred", (M, 17)

"There is good white and good black, so it is hard to describe their feelings, most don't like the way the asians plead poverty and racial discrimination all the time [even] if they are not happy, they should be grateful of what they have got" (M, 21)

"Couldn't care less, thank you" (M, 18)

"My friends are all of different races and don't care about backgrounds. It's the person who matters not the background" (F, 17)

"Don't mind them, but enjoy using racist comments against them for a laugh" (M, 17)

"Varies, many are very prejudiced and treat them as 2nd class citizens" (F, 19)

"Most of them are the same as me [hostile] but not all would admit to it!" (M, 24)

"Alright if they try not to influence or take over" (M, 24)

"I don't think they like them, I certainly don't" (M, 17)

"On the outside they make racial comments to "be one of the lads" but mostly inside would prefer equality and racial harmony" (M, 16)

It would appear that inter-ethnic friendships reduce the tendency to stereotype although they do not eliminate the propensity in all cases. More than half the students were able to specify which ethnic groups are endowed with which attributes and it is argued here that such assumptions are culturally rather than experientially based. Students cannot 'know' from experience that all black people are good at sport, or that all white people are good at politics or that all Asian people are good at business. Such 'knowledge' must be learnt from external sources and this thesis argues that one such external source for the transmission of ideas about ethnicity is that of television.

INTRODUCTION

Britain has for some time been described as a multi-cultural society where a multiplicity of different ethnic groups live in greater or lesser harmony with each other. How has the indigenous white community responded to the changing cultural balance which has resulted from the migration of ethnically diverse peoples to Britain? Although, as has been discussed elsewhere, ethnic minority communities have a long history in Britain it is argued here that post-war immigration marked a turning-point in the number of people wishing to live in Britain. This chapter briefly examines Afro-Caribbean and Asian migration patterns in the post-war period and looks at the ways in which the host population have responded and continue to respond to ethnic minority communities in Britain.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN AND ASIAN MIGRATION PATTERNS

Although ethnic minority communities have been established in Britain since at least the sixteenth century, it was arguably during the post-war years that ethnic communities began to grow significantly, mainly as a result of extensive recruitment drives overseas by companies such as London Transport to fill the labour shortages caused by the war. Little suggests that

"..in attempting to describe the Englishman's impression of
coloured people in Britain and his reaction towards them, it is
important to realise that so far as something like 95% of English
people are concerned, they are based on some stereotyped idea
rather than on first-hand personal knowledge" (Little, 1947,
pp.218-219)

Although ethnic minority populations were increasing in size as emigrants
from the old 'Empire' came to Britain looking for work, most of the work
which was available was located in large seaport cities or else in
industrial conurbations.   Little identified a lack of fit between the
official and the private view towards the new labourers.

"It is evident that there is a wide gap in several respects in
this country between the professed and official attitude towards
the colonial and coloured peoples of the Empire as an abstract
concept and the attitude towards them in terms of social and
personal relationships" (Little, 1947, p.225)

Although the language is that of 50 years ago, the problem which it
described is completely contemporary.

However, whilst the new migrants had been trying to sustain each other with
networks of support and friendship, the attitudes of white Britons towards
them were less sympathetic. Little suggests that much of the hostility
expressed by white people was rooted in a dislike and/or fear of
phenotypical features such as skin tone and the possibility of sexual
liaisons between black men and white women. Again, the stereotypes which
have by now become familiar are used in justification for irrational
prejudice. Little comments that the overt justifications often concealed
more fundamental concerns of individuals to deny their personal lack of
status.

"The Negro stereotype provides a small section of English society with a convenient scapegoat and symbol into which various repressed desires and longings and sometimes irritations can be injected with inpugnity" (Little, 1947, p.230)

The arrival of migrants from various parts of the old empire not only had effects upon white British society, but also on minority people themselves, both in established communities and new migrants. The docking of the SS Empire Windrush in 1948 brought 482 Jamaican settlers (all male except one) and was greeted, mostly, with celebration. This euphoria was short-lived as the new settlers soon found that conditions in the mother country were scarcely better than those they had recently left.

"The West Indians had arrived in Britain ebullient and enthusiastic to share the British dream. But within a decade the dream had turned sour. They found themselves downgraded in jobs, performing menial and unpopular tasks, overcharged in renting and buying houses; and through an unwritten but pervasive code of conduct, slowly, but definitely, segregated in 'Coloured Colonies'" (Hiro, 1971, p.54)

One of the most significant studies of West Indian migration was undertaken by Peach in the 1960s where he concluded that the major factor in the migration decision of West Indian people was the labour demands of Britain and that the specific nature of the work available was its low-status and pay and its relative rejection by the indigenous white population.

"The expansion of the British economy has created gaps at the lower end of the occupational and residential ladder to which West Indian and other coloured immigrants have been drawn in as a replacement population" (Peach, 1968)

In Thompson's study of Jamaican migration to the West Midlands, she argues that it was more the **perception** of good job opportunities than the actual

knowledge of their existence which played a key part in the decision to migrate (Thompson, 1989). She suggests that the post-war return of soldiers who had spent time in Britain further encouraged the view that Britain was accessible and even hospitable to the aspiring Jamaican migrant. Thus the knowledge that migration to Britain was a viable possibility coupled with an increasing perception of enhanced economic and social opportunities conspired to foster a strong motivator for migration. By the early 1960s the migration from the Caribbean and Asian sub-continent was seen as excessive and immigration controls were put in place with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, legislation which has been modified each decade to culminate in the 1988 Act, all of which legislation has made entry to Britain progressively more difficult for black and Asian individuals. The decade of the 1960s was the period in which much anti-immigrant sentiment was fuelled and nourished by the rhetoric of Enoch Powell and the activities of the National Front.

> "Developments since 1962 hae shown that as Britain adjusts to her post-imperial condition her statesmen and women - decent folks all - have demonstrated an often alarming willingness to define more and more narrowly the status of being **British** in ethnic terms. And their ethnicity is determined largely by race rather than historical or cultural considerations" (Goulbourne, forthcoming)

Anwar argues that the 1962 Act which for the first time restricted entry into Britain of Commonwealth citizens, transferred an hitherto fluid movement of migrant workers into a permanent body of immigrant labour, as people attempted to avoid the restrictions created by the Act (Anwar, 1986). Thus the outcome envisaged by the Act, that is, a reduction in immigration probably had the opposite effect.

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In 1964 Peter Griffiths openly fought the general election of that year with his slogan "if you want a nigger neighbour vote Labour". Although the Labour Party won the election, Griffiths himself overturned the Labour majority in his own constituency and won Smethwick for the Tories. In 1966 the Race Relations Act outlawed practices likely to incite racial conflict but the legislation, like the Race Relations Board which it created, could not change people's attitudes and has had little effect on changing behaviour subsequently. Two years later the Labour Party demonstrated that it, too, was equally committed to immigration control with the enactment of further legislation in 1968. The Immigration Act of 1971 virtually ended all new immigration and restricted entry to those who had specific jobs to go to and even then, only for limited periods.

As far as the actual experiences of ethnic minority groups are concerned, in the face of hostility and immigration controls, Hiro suggests that the experiences of black and Asian migrants to Britain were very different. For many Afro-Caribbean people, the move to Britain was regarded as coming home to the mother country. For Asian migrants, on the other hand, the move was only ever temporary and was seen as a simple economic expedient, as a means of amassing money and returning home (Hiro, 1971). However, this analysis is rather simplistic since the factors which contributed to the migration decision would have been specific to each individual, although clearly economic considerations would have featured in many such decisions (see Thompson, 1989; Peach, 1968). The fact that for the majority of Asian settlers, the return 'home' was, in reality, a myth, was the theme of Anwar's study of a Pakistani community in Rochdale. Anwar describes the existence of a social structure within the community which

parallels that which is found in the sending country and where the essential 'non-integration' is rooted in the need to conform to the community norms of behaviour and adhere to a modified style of 'village-life' (Anwar, 1979). Anwar suggests that the main reason for non-integration into the British mode was to do with a certain interpretation of British society.

> "The reason for not participating in the British ways was that the Pakistanis had learnt from childhood that the western ways were bad, to be despised and regarded as a sign of moral failure. They [his sample] reverted back to their 'Pakistani behaviour' as soon as they got the opportunity, because they felt that they were here to work, save....and...return home" (Anwar, 1979, p.216)

Anwar suggests that the transient status that Pakistani groups accorded themselves and the contempt they held for western society combined to encourage an alliance with the various ethnic organisations that existed at the time together with friendship groups, rather than an involvement with the social institutions of the host society.

> "What appears to have been happening in Britain is a situation of 'pluralism' or 'integration' in which Pakistanis are keeping their structural and cultural identity and are participating in the wider community institutions only where it is inevitable, such as in employment and education" (Anwar, op. cit, p.222)

Khan's study of the Pakistani community in Bradford in the early 1970s and Helweg's study of Jat Sikhs in Gravesend in the late 1970s found similar patterns of community life as those identified by Anwar (Khan, 1977; Helweg, 1979). Philpott, looking at the behaviour codes of migrants from Montserrat suggests that less than twenty per cent of such migrants will ever return home although they all talk as if they will (Philpott, 1977).

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A four-phase development strategy which characterised Sikh immigration to Britain was identified by Ballard (Ballard, 1979). The first phase consisted of individual males over a period upto and including the 1940s; the second phase was in response to labour shortages in the post-war years and was again predominantly male; the third phase, stimulated by the recognition that migration was to be a permanent state of affairs, consisted of the wives and children of the men involved in phases 1 and 2; the fourth phase is ongoing and constitutes the birth of Sikh children in Britain. Despite the fact that Asian children are born and achieve adulthood in Britain, Ballard suggests that they will never be fully accepted as Britons and devise a variety of self-preservation tactics to retain their own identities.

> "Young people are, of course, thoroughly conversant with British cultural norms and are quite capable of presenting themselves as British whenever necessary [but] they know that however much they try to conform, they can never really be British because of the colour of their skins. This knowledge of their non-acceptance is a strong and effective counter to complete anglicisation and it is leading them to make some overt expressions of a separate ethnicity" (Ballard, 1979, pp.46-47)

Several commentators suggest that it is those people who are born in this country who have the most difficult problems to resolve as they are encouraged to observe and celebrate the fundamental elements of their traditional culture whilst being educated and socialised in another, entirely different cultural environment.

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WHITE RESPONSES TO THE BLACK PRESENCE

The Immigration Question

How then have the white host community responded to an increasingly visible and vocal ethnic minority presence? One of the main ways in which researchers have attempted to gauge the general public's response to ethnic groups has been to ask about their attitudes towards immigration. In the 1988 survey, students were asked what they thought about laws which restrict the entry of black and Asian people who want to live in Britain and three-quarters of students believe that such laws are a good thing. When asked why students thought that immigration laws were either a good or bad thing, they gave a variety of reasons which are identified in Table 9.1. There was little difference in responses between young women and men but more significant differences across the college range. This was an open question and answers have been categorised by the author.

Table 9.1

Why is immigration legislation a good thing?

Reasons	All	Hi	Lo
1) Prevent general overcrowding	29%	31%	31%
2) Control/reduce ethnic population	17%	26%	16%
3) Keep non-whites in home countries	6%	5%	7%
4) Keep non-whites out of Britain	3%	-	8%
5) Not enough resources already	6%	11%	7%
6) Not enough resources for whites	7%	3%	8%
7) Enough problems already	7%	3%	8%

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Why is immigration legislation a bad thing?

Reasons	All	Hi	Lo
8) Not strict enough	7%	8%	10%
9) All should have same rights of entry	12%	10%	4%
10) Causes hostility against whites abroad	2%	2%	4%
11) Causes hostility in Britain (racism)	3%	-	-

Total	84%
Respondents	(540)

In the 1988 survey, the question on immigration which students were asked was an open one and some of the comments made in response are reproduced below.

Why immigration legislation is a good thing

"To stop us being invaded by millions of asians" (F, 21)

"I don't mean to seem racist but England still has high unemployment and black people take jobs belonging to white men" (M, 16)

"The typical British person does not welcome these groups" (F, 20)

"Because we are British (I am not a racialist) we have our own nation to support - how would I be accepted if I want to live in Asia?" (F, 21)

"Because the country would be flooded with undesirable residents" (M, 16)

"There has to be a state of control to some extent. They are fleeing war famine and racism, hoping to find freedom and jobs in England but this is not so. They still face racism, neglect and the dole. Are they really better off" (M, 17)

"Because eventually our country will become [full of] coloured people and there will be no true British left" (F, 17)

"Can't let any Tom, Dick or Winston live in UK" (M, 19)

"If there are already too few jobs and housing it doesn't make sense to let anyone else in, black or white" (F, 22)

"There's already too many coons here" (M, 21)

"Surely you must have seen the mess they have made of the Foleshill Road and they are slowly spreading" (M, 17)

"Keep Britain white" (M, 17)

"Country has been good enough to let some immigrants in but we are starting to have our good nature abused" (M, 18)

Why Immigration legislation is a bad thing

"Because people's culture/colour should not be an important issue" (F, 23)

"Because it's a free country, anyone should be able to live here" (M, 16)

"Triggers off more discrimination/racism" (F, 16)

"Because it's only enforcing differences between black and white" (M, 16)

"Ought to be allowed to live where they want - only restrict entry when Britain is becoming over populated" (F, 18)

"We do not expect to be discriminated against if going to an Asian, African or Caribbean place" (F, 22)

Across the college range, students with fewer reported ethnic friendships were more likely to suggest that there were already too many black and Asian people in Britain and significantly less likely to believe that all people have the same rights of abode than the average college respondent. The perceived number of black and Asian people appears to be a significant factor in determining attitudes towards minority communities. A third of respondents specifically mentioned excluding or reducing the number of ethnic minority people in Britain as a desirable outcome. Whilst the strategy of blaming the victim resonates strongly with many students, so too does the fear of invasion. A significant number of students felt that Britain is already overcrowded and in danger of becoming swamped with "immigrants" and this fear is scarcely a new phenomenon. Enoch Powell's now

infamous Birmingham speech in April 1968 was, arguably, the catalyst for expressions of resentment against the black community by the white majority and succeeded in placing immigration firmly on the political agenda. Twenty years on, research conducted for the ESRC showed that 30% of young people in a West Midlands study expressed some sympathy for right-wing parties such as the National Front or the British Movement (Daily Telegraph, 3.12.1988) Powell appealed to the fear that existed about 'the other' and suggested that if immigration was not ruthlessly curbed, then black and Asian people could constitute a serious threat to the indigenous white majority.

> "Immigrant communities can organise to consolidate their members, to agitate and campaign against their fellow citizens and to overawe and dominate the rest with the legal weapons which the ignorant and ill-informed have provided" (Powell cited in Cosgrave, 1989, pp.249-250)

The "legal weapons" to which Powell referred was the Race Relations Bill (later enacted) which was being debated that year. Although the speech earned Powell dismissal from the Shadow Cabinet, it nonetheless catapulted him into the political limelight. Amongst his many supporters were the entire staff of immigration officers at Heathrow Airport and thousands of dockers who all marched to Westminster in his support after his fall from office. Opinion polls taken at the time showed that the general public were strongly in favour of his pronouncements, showing levels of support for him at between 67% and 82% (Cosgrave, 1989).

However, largely as a result of increasingly restrictive legislation, immigration from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NCWP) has fallen

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dramatically since 1971, from 44,300 in that year, down to 26,000 by 1985. As far as the right of entry is concerned, all legislation, beginning with the Aliens Act of 1905 and including the most recent Immigration Act in 1988, has succeeded in providing ever more stringent controls on entry into Britain. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act stopped automatic entry for British subjects for the first time (Patterson, 1969) and the 1988 Act has made several substantial changes including removing the right of appeal against an adverse entry ruling.

Between 1971 and 1982 there was in fact a net fall in population due to British emigration and it is only in subsequent years that Britain has made net yearly gains in population numbers. Between 1984 and 1985 Britain made a net population gain of 142,000 but of this number only 36% were from the NCWP countries, the remainder coming from predominantly white countries and continents such as Europe (31%), South Africa (11%) and the rest of the (mainly white) world (23%). Even with these relatively large population gains during 1984 and 1985, Britain still has a net population loss over time (465,000 in 1971 reducing to 323,000 in 1985) (CRE, 1986).

The actual facts of immigration are little known so that myth-making results, encouraging the view that Britain is getting more over-crowded each year, with many of the newcomers apparently arriving from the NCWP countries. For many of the students in the 1988 survey, a reduction in numbers naturally equates with a reduction in problems so that a significant minority of respondents advocate repatriation or total exclusion of ethnic minority people from Britain. This also appears to be a popular view amongst the public generally, or at least among the readers

of the tabloid press. The Daily Mail conducted a survey in the summer of 1989 asking for readers' views on immigration and found that

> "The majority of whites favour a scheme - such as exists already in France - for voluntary, paid repatriation for members of ethnic minorities" (Daily Mail, 30,8.89)

Ironically, in December 1989 many Vietnamese 'boat' people seeking refuge in Hong Kong were 'voluntarily repatriated' back to Vietnam with the lure of cash incentives. One such refugee stated on British television that he and his friends had been promised $80 for adults and $40 for children in exchange for their agreement to return home, but when they opened their envelopes containing their financial 'rewards', both adults and children had been cheated (BBC1 9'o'clock news, 19.12.1989). In the spring of 1990 immigration issues again entered the political arena when the House of Commons debated the fate of Hong Kong residents after China is given control of the island in 1997. In view of the demonstrations and deaths in Peking in 1989 it has been anticipated that many Hong Kong people would seek residency in Britain after 1997 and the present debate concerns who and how many citizens should be given British passports. The provision of such passports is allegedly not to encourage immigration but rather to enable the recipients to feel that they have a last resort if their lives become too intolerable under the new Chinese administration. The perceived threat of thousands of Hong Kong people has encouraged a typically xenophobic reaction in Britons, particularly in the media, where terms such as "swamping" and "overcrowding" are regularly utilised to describe the affects of 'allowing' a specified number of Hong Kong people to hold British passports.

The Multi-ethnic neighbourhood

For many of the students in the 1988 survey, the presence of black people in Britain is understood and constructed within a framework which locate black people themselves as the main problem when considering ethnic interaction. The majority of students stated that the existence of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods fosters a range of problems which are usually the result of intolerant attitudes towards different cultural practices. Blatant rejections of 'Englishness' by 'immigrants' whilst they live in England appears to be a serious focus for hostility. The large majority of students believe that problems are caused by multi-ethnic neighbourhoods (91%) including racism (68%), a lack of understanding and tolerance (20%) and violence (18%). Although nearly all students agree that problems exist as a consequence of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, only a small percentage actually live in such mixed neighbourhoods - 12% of students replied that they have black neighbours and 21% replied that they had Asian neighbours. Across the college range, the percentage of students who had ethnic minority neighbours ranged from 2% to 36% But if ideas are not gained from direct and personal experience, where do they come from? It is suggested here that ideas about ethnic 'problems' are generated by the media and particularly television with its more powerful and accessible image machinery.

Students were asked what type of problems were caused by people living in ethnically mixed areas and some of the comments which were given in response to this question are set out below.

> "Segregation of shops, social venues leads to isolation of groups and they feel unacceptable and can rebel" (F, 24)

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"Mainly attitude ones, indoctrination of young people to follow certain cultures/religions" (F, 21)

"Asian families tend to take over an entire street when they move into a house" (M, 20)

"Racial discrimination to whites" (M, 18)

"People still [do] not associate themselves with black people. As they have different views and cultures, people can be afraid. If one person in the street is racialist the rest may follow" (F, 21)

"Whites hating the way asian families cook smelly curries and walk up and down the street in packs of 10-20 (they did it in our street)" (M, 17)

"They are expected to act according to their religion and cultural dictates and so stop acting like bloody human beings" (F, 21)

"Discrimination, but the asians didn't cause it" (F, 16)

"They [black and Asian families] both force whites out of their homes to move relations in" (M, 16)

"A lot of Asians speak in their own language, not English, this is VERY IGNORANT" (M, 21)

"The fact that white people don't like blacks ruining the environment" (F, 19)

"Pakis - social, smell of food, weddings, large groups attending house, temples, buying foreign cars, tax fraud and evasion, thinking they are above themselves" (M, 20)

"Violence. People will will always pick on the weak, especially if they have a chip on their shoulder" (M, 17)

Possible solutions to such problems were offered to students who were asked whether or not they agreed with the stated suggestions, or whether they could provide their own solutions. Table 9.2 provides an analysis of their responses, where the last category of response was given by students under the "other - please specify" category.

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Table 9.2

How can the problems caused by multi-ethnic neighbourhoods be solved?

AGREE

Solution	Female	Male	All	Hi	Lo
White only/black only neighbourhoods	1%	8%	5%	8%	2%
Better relations between people	79%	56%	67%	63%	61%
Better understanding of cultures	82%	57%	71%	54%	56%
More effective policing	10%	15%	12%	15%	11%
Reduce ethnic population in UK	24%	43%	35%	35%	44%
Everyone adopt British culture	*	1%	*	-	2%

** Total	99%	99%	99%		
Respondents	(291)	(290)	(581)		

[* less than 1%]
[** percentage of respondents who agreed that problems result from ethnically-mixed communities]

Amongst solutions suggested by students, the following comments were included.

"Black people accepting that they should live as the whites do" (M, 21)

"Improve integration and start to alter people's views via education" (F, 22)

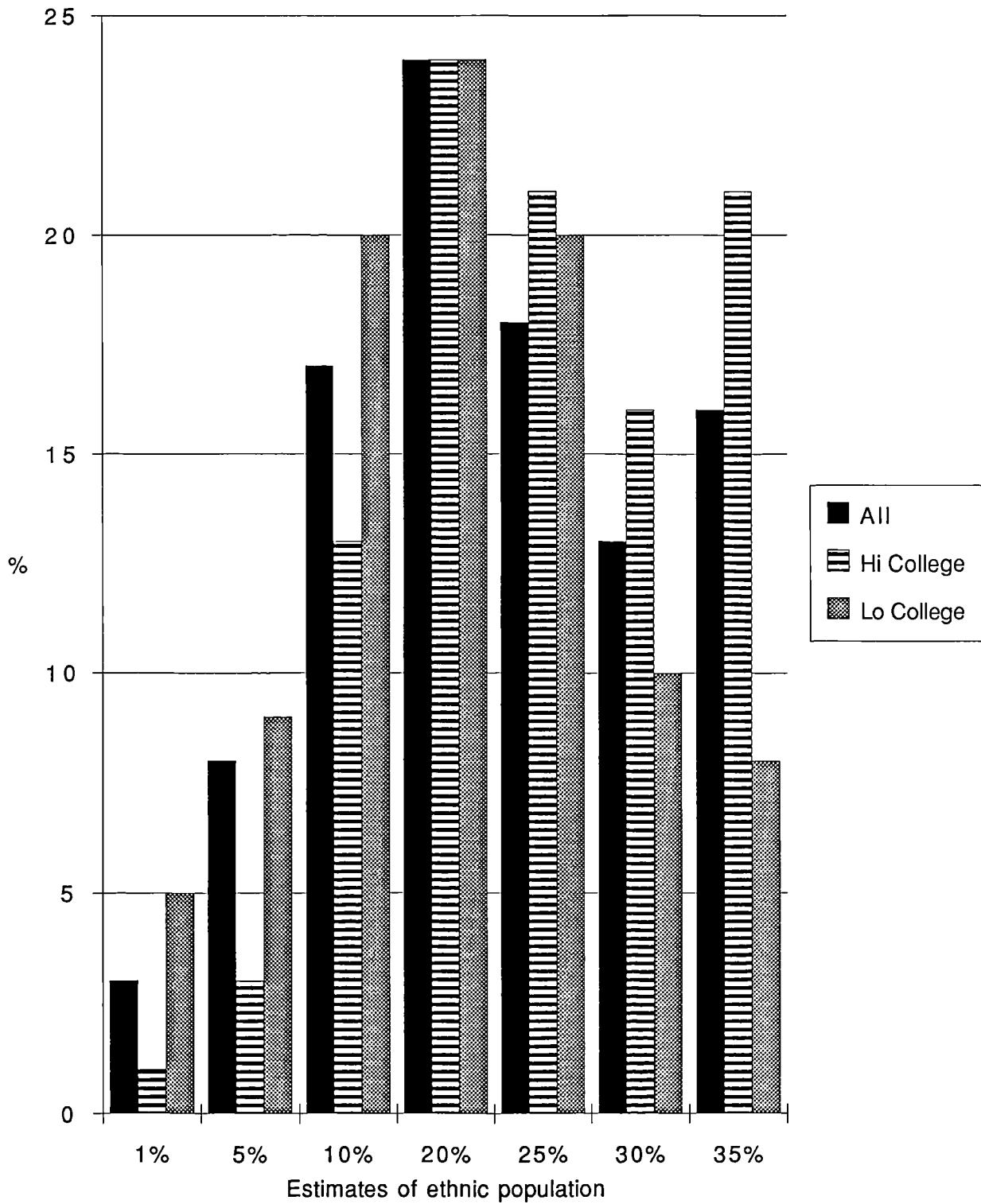"Manipulate them into accepting our ways" (M, 20)

"Send them all back" (F, 16)

A concern about immigration statistics and the problems allegedly caused by ethnic minority peoples appears to significantly related to numbers, that

Table 9.3

Estimates of ethnic population as percentage of total

%

Estimates of ethnic population

Legend:
- All
- Hi College
- Lo College

(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

is, to the estimated number of ethnic minority people already living in Britain. There is a generally exaggerated perception of the size of the ethnic minority population leading to fears of "taking over" and "domination". In the 1988 survey, when asked to estimate the number of ethnic minority people living in Warwickshire as a percentage of the total population, the majority of students considerably over-estimated the ethnic minority population in Britain and there was little difference in response between young women and men or across the college range. The official statistics, taken from the 1981 Census show that people of New Commonwealth & Pakistan (NCWP) origin make up 4% of the total population of Britain and constitute approximately 10% of the local population in the area in which most of the survey respondents lived. It will thus be clear from Table 9.3 that more than two-thirds of students over-estimated the number of black and Asian people by a factor of two to three. This finding reflects similar findings made more than 20 years ago when a survey carried out by the Institute of Race Relations found that two-thirds of survey respondents over-estimated the ethnic minority population in Britain by a factor of between 3 and 7 (Rose et al, 1969). Just under half the students (47%) believe that black and Asian people make up a quarter or more of the local population, with a significant minority believing that such proportion exceeds 35%

White perceptions of discrimination

The 1988 survey found more than one-fifth of respondents spontaneously mentioned racism as a significant social problem in Britain, where the most

popular problems were considered to be unemployment (32%) and violence (23%). Table 9.4 provides a breakdown of ten most popular responses to the question regarding social problems, all of which categories have been coded by the author from open answers. Marked differences arise between young men and women, where significantly more young women mention racism than young men (26% and 13% respectively) and more than twice as many female students believe crime to be a serious problem than male counterparts (20% and 9% respectively).

A fifth of all students spontaneously mentioned racism as a major problem in Britain and the majority believe that people receive differential treatment because of racial discrimination although a minority of students suggested that black and Asian people **want** to be treated differently. These views show similar patterns to those of the general public where 61% of people interviewed for the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey in 1989 believe that there is "a lot" of discrimination against Asian people and just under a third believe there is "a little" discrimination. As far as discrimination against black people is concerned, the corresponding percentages are 52% and 37% respectively.

Respondents to the BSA survey were asked to identify the extent of their prejudice and 4% said they were "very prejudiced", 32% said that they were "a little" prejudiced but 63% replied that they were "not at all" prejudiced (Social & Community Planning Research (SCPR), 1989). Although the majority of respondents believe there to be a lot of prejudice against black and Asian people, it is clear that they also believe that the blame lies with other people. Whilst these two beliefs are contradictory, such

Table 9.4

Problems in Britain
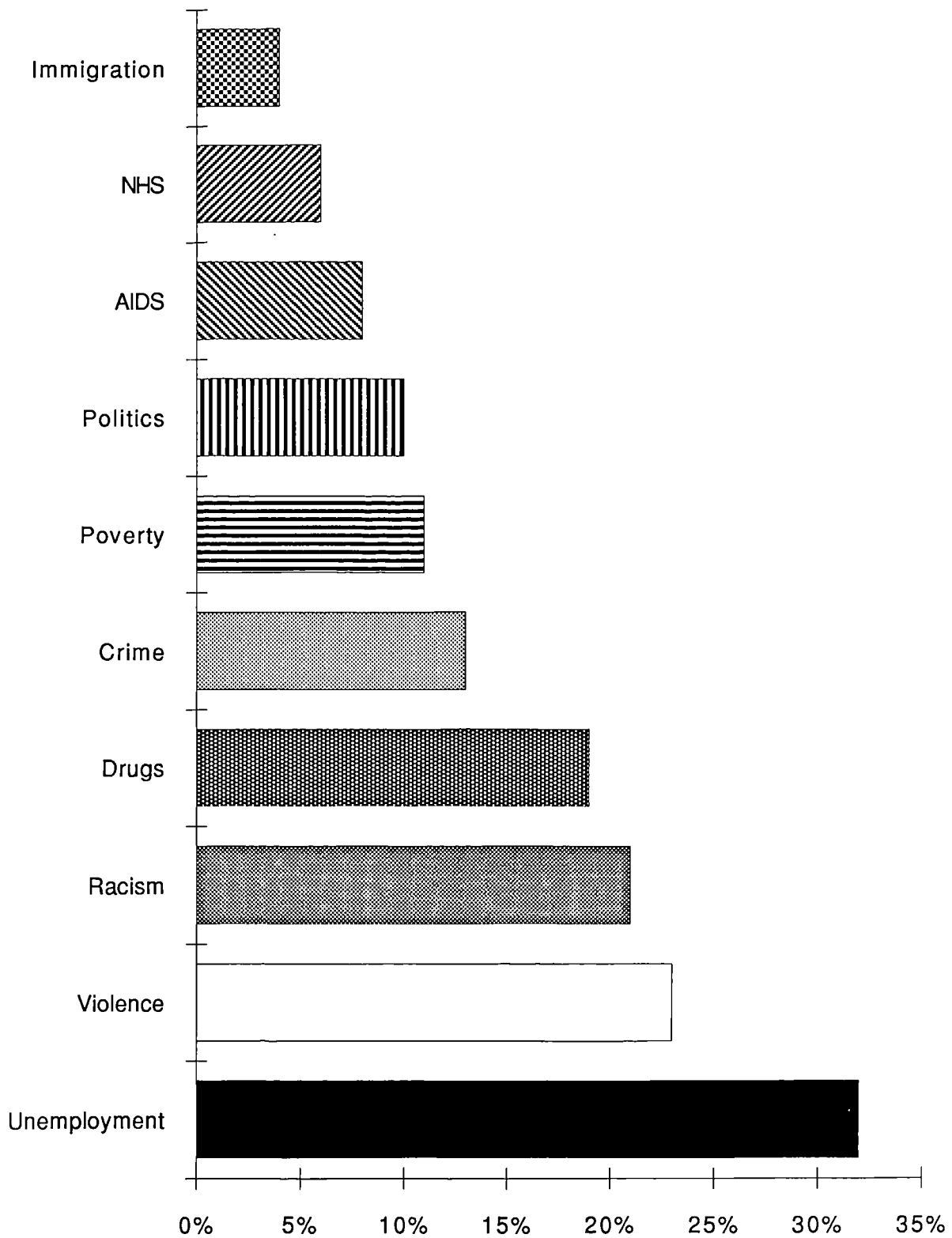
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

responses do provide some evidence to support the view that it is no longer acceptable to articulate prejudiced views in public. In 1964 a research study carried out by Hill found that 49% of interviewees stated that they would object to a black neighbour (Hill in Hiro, 1971). Twenty-five years later and over three-quarters of respondents in the BSA Survey state that they wouldn't mind an Asian boss although half stated that they would mind their children marrying an Asian person. However 79% believe that other people would object to such a mixed marriage.

Although students in the 1988 survey were not asked directly about their own levels of tolerance or hostility towards minority groups, it is perhaps significant that a quarter of all students believe their friends to be racist, a proportion increasing to 46% for students with low reported ethnic friendships. Research undertaken by Cole with a group of 1st year BEd students, all of whom were young, white and female, showed students displaying high levels of hostile thinking. Cole found that, on a sliding scale of attitudes ranging from tolerant to intentional racist, a fifth of his sample were tolerant; nearly a third were neutral/confused; 13% were unintentionally racist; and 34% were intentionally racist. Cole observes that even those students who were classified as tolerant still retained a sense that minority groups are different and 'other' to themselves.

> "Even among those tolerant responses there was a worrying consistency in the use of the term 'immigrant' to describe black people, irrespective of whether they were immigrants or born in Britain, thus cementing a hostile 'us' and 'them' attitude" (Cole, 1989, p.16)

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Although Cole's classificatory devices would need to be made explicit in order to make his findings significant, his general point on the tendency to classify black people as **immigrant** and **other** is reflected in the opinions of many students who participated in the 1988 survey.

Although the majority of students in the 1988 survey believe that racial discrimination is directly responsible for differential treatment both in education and employment, a significant minority also believe themselves to have been victims of discrimination, although such reporting was higher amongst young men (26%) than young women (17%). There was a strong sentiment, both in group discussions and in questionnaire responses, that black and Asian people receive preferential treatment, to the disadvantage of the white majority. This is certainly not a new idea since even in the 1960s when the Institute of Race Relations conducted an extensive attitude survey, it was found that 62% of respondents believed that black people take more out of the system than they put into it (Rose et al, 1969). The BSA Survey shows a decline in the prevalence of this view, with only 36% of respondents believing that Britain gives too much help to black and Asian people and 28% of respondents opposing all efforts to combat discriminatory practices through legislation. However, whilst such attitudes may be less popular than in former years, such findings nonetheless suggest that more than a third of white Britons still believe that ethnic minority peoples receive too many rather than too few benefits, particularly in relation to indigenous white Britons.

A significant minority of students believe that black people take white jobs but this view is unlikely to be rooted in personal experience. In the

same way that immigration facts are little known, so too is the reality of employment practices. During the period 1985-7, more than twice as many black men as white were classified unemployed (24% compared to 11%) with the rate for Pakistani men reaching 29% (OPCS, 1989, Table 5.33). For young people aged between 16 and 24, rates of unemployment are even higher with only 43% of black and Asian men (37%) of women) recorded as "in employment" compared with 69% of white men (61% of women) (OPCS, 1989, Table 5.34). Of those in work, Indian men were twice as likely as white men to be engaged in professional occupations (14% compared with 7%) but only 2% of black men were similarly classified, a majority of black men being classified as manual workers (54%) The unfairness of positive action strategies was mentioned by a significant minority of students, particularly during discussion periods, and provided as an example of the ways in which white people are now disadvantaged in employment and elsewhere.

Ethnic Minority Communities and Employment

Although there are a variety of reasons for differential employment rates amongst different ethnic groups, including the fact that the majority of black and Asian people live in depressed urban areas, they might have language difficulties, there may be educational disadvantages and so on, racial discrimination in employment is arguably a significant factor. In 1988 the Commission for Racial Equality registered 1440 applications for assistance in bringing individual employment-related complaints under the Race Relations Act (1976), just over 10% being eventually supported by the CRE (CRE, 1989). In the PSI Study in the early 1980s, respondents were asked if they believed that they had been discriminated against in their

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search for work and more than a quarter of Afro-Caribbean respondents and a tenth of Asian respondents stated that they had so suffered (Brown, 1984). All respondents were asked if they believed that some employers practice racial discrimination and Table 9.5 provides an analysis of their responses.

Table 9.5

Do you believe that some employers practise racial discrimination?

Male Respondents	YES	Female Respondents	YES
White	73%	White	69%
Black	77%	Black	77%
Asian	48%	Asian	29%

(Source: Brown, 1984, Table 117, p.219)

Even in the caring professions such as nursing, discrimination is perceived as a disturbing factor in recruitment and promotion practises. In a survey undertaken by the National Extension College as part of its 5-year project on training in health and race, the researchers suggest that widespread racism in the health service is leading to a reduction in numbers of black and Asian nurses and other nursing professionals with potentially disastrous consequences for service delivery, particularly to minority ethnic clients (National Extension College, 1988)

Ethnic Minority Communities and Housing

On the face of it, many ethnic minority households appear to enjoy a relatively high level of housing security as 72% of Asian families (41% of Afro-Caribbean families) own their own homes, compared with 59% of white families. However, the 1984 PSI study suggests that the type, standard and location of such accommodation varies considerably (Brown, 1984). White families tend to occupy newer accommodation, in better locations with more and better internal and external amenities and services. Ethnic minority families are more concentrated in terraced housing amongst owner-occupiers and multi-storey flats for council tenants than white counterparts and Table 9.6 provides a breakdown of accommodation types. Table 9.7 demonstrates that "West Indian" families are more reliant on local authority accommodation than either Asian or white families, although Bangladeshi families as a specific ethnic group are the most dependant on such accommodation. Both these tables are taken from data generated from the 1984 PSI study (Brown, 1984).

Respondents in the PSI study were asked whether they believed that private landlords would refuse to let accommodation on the basis of race or colour and 82% of white respondents compared with 72% of black and 34% Asian respondents replied in the affirmative (Brown, 1984, Table 56, p.121).

Ethnic Minority Communities and the Criminal Justice System

The extent to which ethnic minority communities are perceived as being inherently criminal is usually confined to young Afro-Caribbean men with their apparent propensity for "street" crime. Afro-Caribbean people have traditionally been regarded as having a tendency to violence or at least

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Table 9.6

Dwelling Tenure and Ethnicity

White households

Legend:
■ Owner Occupier
Ⅲ Council tenant

Ethnic minority households

Legend:
■ Owner Occupier
Ⅲ Council tenant
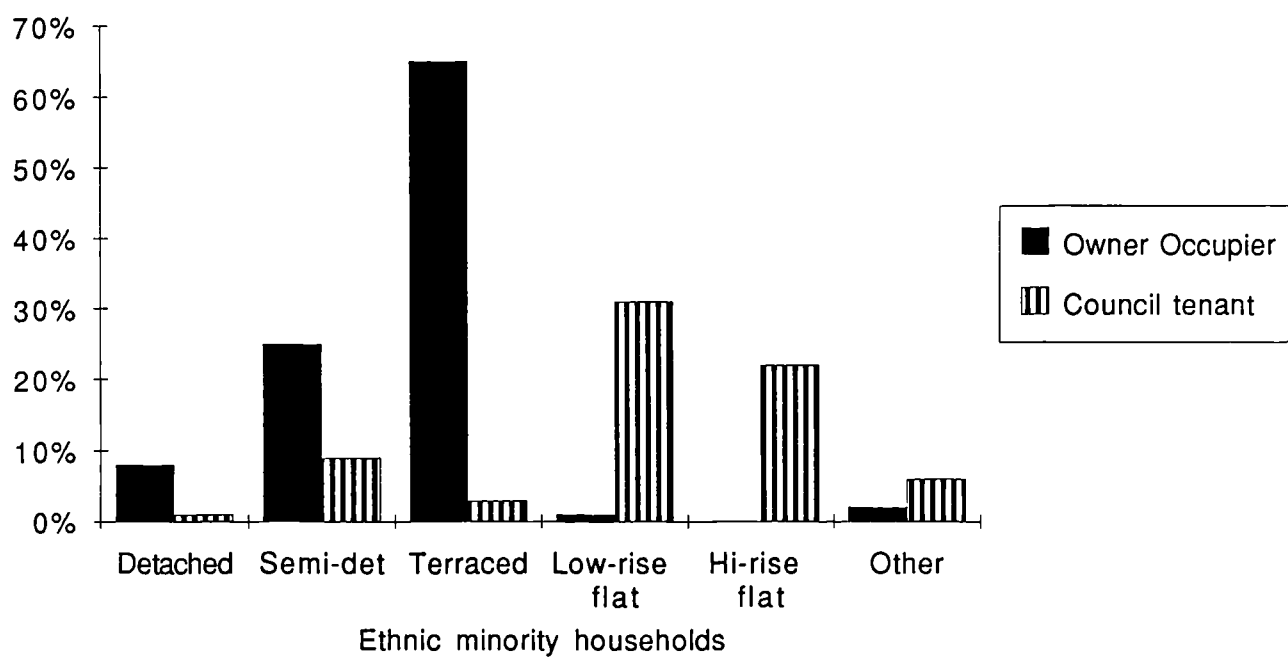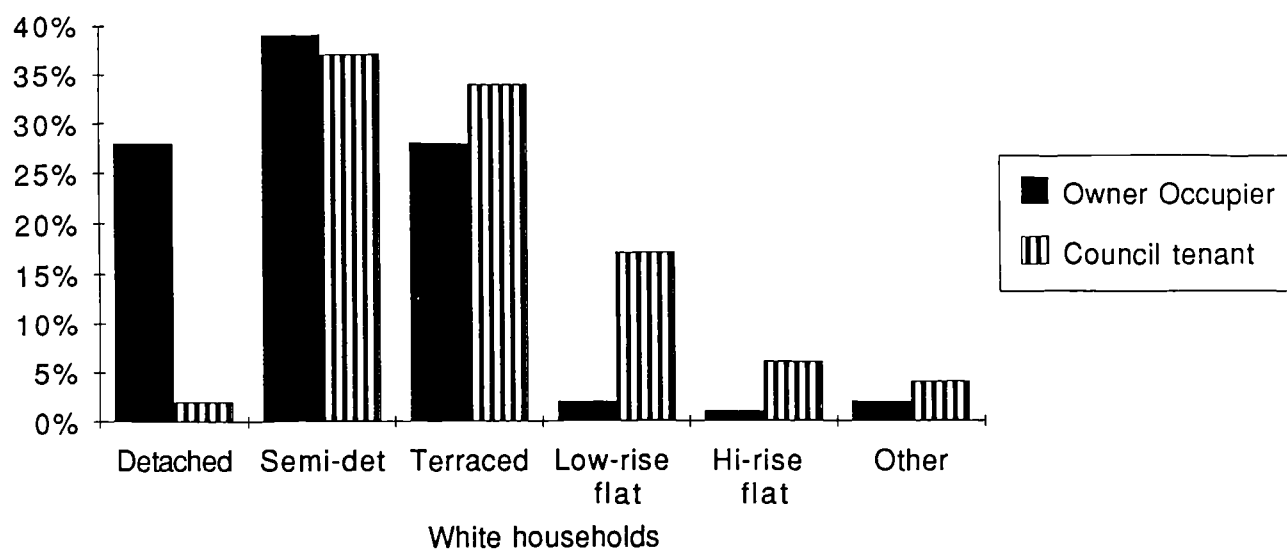
(Source: Brown, 1984, p.104)

Table 9.7

Housing Patterns and Ethnicity

(Source: Brown, 1984, p.96)

delinquent or deviant behaviour, a belief rooted in the earliest encounters with "barbaric" and "violent" natives abroad and such a perception has become more pervasive over the past decade, particularly since the 1981 inner-city disturbances. In the 1988 survey over half the respondents believe that black people are violent and nearly two-thirds of students believe that black people habitually play criminal part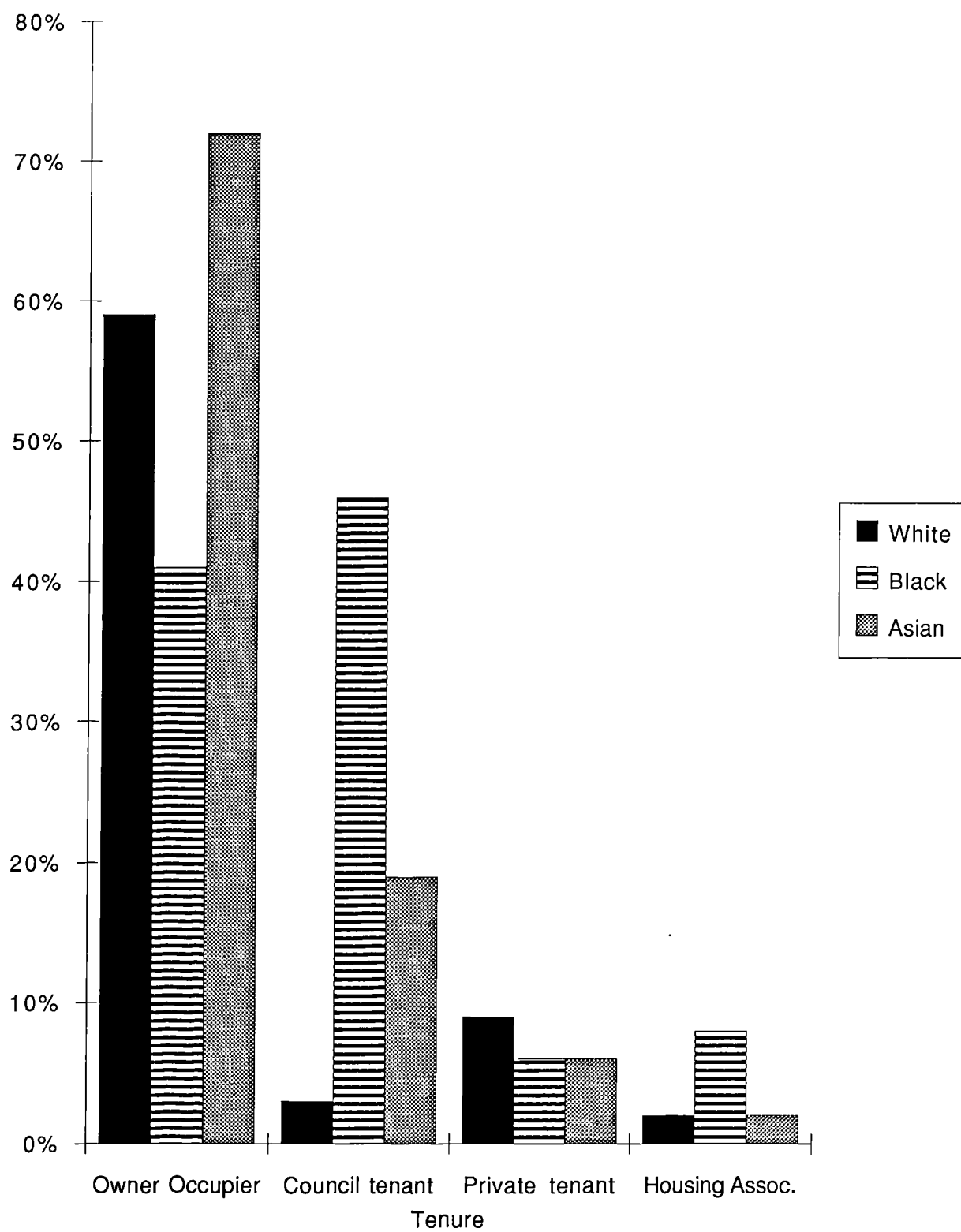s on television compared with 41% and 14% for white and Asian actors respectively. Although reporting of race-related incidents such as the riots have been consistently criticised both at the time and since, the stereotype of the young black rioter/mugger/looter, disdainful of law and order, has added further weight to the criminalisation of the young black community.

Although black people are significantly over-represented in the prison population - 8% of men and 12% of women in 1986 - (Home Office Statistical Bulletin, no.17/86), this fact does not, in itself, provide evidence of pathological criminality. It has been suggested in many examinations of the criminal justice system and its treatment of minority offenders, that sentencing practices discriminate against black and Asian offenders. McDermott, for example, found that black offenders were more likely to be serving sentences at higher security establishments than white counterparts with similar offence records (McDermott, 1990). She also found that whilst prisoners from different ethnic backgrounds had the same attitudes towards a variety of institutional functions, such as welfare, legal aid and physical education facilities in prison, they had very different views as to the prevalance of racism within the institutions. Only one-third of white offenders believe that prison officers are racist, compared with 57%

for black and 47% for Asian offenders. The study also found that work tasks appeared to ethnically-specific, with Asian offenders working in skilled areas whereas black offenders are concentrated in the unskilled work areas. McDermott reports that prison staff reported feeling more vulnerable when they had to deal with high numbers of ethnic minority offender.

Reiner, looking at the incidence of racial prejudice in the police force suggests that many senior police officers regarded the development of racial conflict as a serious problem (Reiner, 1989, p.8). The reasons given for such conflict were suggested by the police to reside, not unsurprisingly, within the black community itself and Reiner suggests that institutional and societal racism are the causes of much abuse within the criminal justice system and its treatment of ethnic minority offenders. The National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders' (NACRO) authoritative 1986 report concludes that

"Discrimination exists in the criminal justice system as it exists in other areas of society, and that measures to ensure the provision of fair and non-discriminatory treatment of black offenders and victims of crime are a low priority for most of the responsible organisations" (NACRO, 1986, p.37)

That such discrimination does exists to the detriment of justice for black people is now a recognised fact. In an address to magistrates in Cambridge in 1989 it was suggested that members of ethnic minorities are likely to serve longer sentences, be remanded in custody rather than on bail and to have fewer convictions than white counterparts.

"These differences may well reflect differences in the nature and circumstances of the offences committed but they still are a

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matter of concern" (taken from the transcript of a speech made by Mr Faulkener, JP, at a magistrates training seminar at Madingly Hall, Cambridge, 8-10 February 1989)

Although in typical legalistic manner this response to overtly differential treatment of different ethnic groups is rather vague, it does at least acknowledge the possibility of irregularities within the system, and a recognition that positive action needs to be taken in order to remedy such irregularities. Even more recently, the National Association of Probation Officers gave a briefing paper, written as a result of its recent ethnic monitoring exercise. Henry Fletcher, Assistant General Secretary of NAPO reported that 20% of the remand population is black (19% of men and 25% of women), that less than half of these remands result in custody and that black defendants are twice as likely to be acquitted as their white counterparts, leading Fletcher to comment that "the evidence strongly suggests that the system is discriminatory" (Fletcher cited in the Independent, 18.12.1989).

Even the Lord Chancellor's Office has recognised that crucial decisions are being taken in an atmosphere of less than full enlightenment. At the beginning of the year Lord Mackay revealed that all newly-appointed magistrates would be sent on 'race awareness' training courses after it was noted that magistrates on a training course were able to accurately assess the background of a young white man from his visual and vocal cues but were unable to repeat the performance when confronted with a young black man (Guardian, 4.3.1989). The fact that young black men are less likely to be in work and/or be unable to provide a permanent address encourages bail applications to be rejected since the risk of absconding is regarded as

unacceptably high. Whilst some effort is being made to tackle discrimination and alleged 'unwitting' racist practices within the magistracy - 1.5% of magistrates are black (the Independent, 18.4.1988) - the judiciary is rather less amenable to sensitive treatment of ethnic issues. In November 1989, Mr Justice Kennedy sentenced a young black man to life imprisonment for the murder of a Turkish student and his summing up included the following comments:

> "You are a disgrace to your community because it gets about that all young coloured men are like you and they are not. The vast majority are decent. You are a disgrace to your country" (cited in the Independent, 18.11.1989)

Kennedy manages to convey an over-riding sentiment of 'otherness' in that "your community" and "your country" clearly do not mean Britain; it is unlikely that such a comment would have been made against a member of the white community. The media obviously play a crucial role in both the reporting of such views and, in more general terms, does very little to challenge orthodox perceptions of the black criminal.

> "The daily parade in the media of particular cases of crimes committed or alleged by black people does, whether intended or not, encourage the reader and the viewer to draw highly suspect general conclusions about black people to their disadvantage" (Lord Scarman speaking at the "Black People, Human Rights and the Media Conference" at Sandra Secretarial College, 19.11.1988)

Over two-thirds of students in the 1988 survey describe Asian people as weak and slightly less than half the respondents believe that Asian people habitually play poor or victimised characters in television fictions. The depiction of Asian characters as victims in television programmes is a reasonably accurate reflection of the way in which members of the Asian

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community are treated in the wider society. The General Household Survey for example, showed that households where the head of household was a member of an ethnic minority was twice as likely to be burgled than white neighbours - 75 per 1000 houses compared with 33 per thousand (OPCS, 1984, Table 7.4). In England and Wales, estimates based on incidents reported to the police show that there are 7000 racially motivated incidents each year, although a Policy Studies Institute survey suggests that the real figure could be at least 70,000 (New Statesman & Society, 12.5.1989). In Leicester, which has the largest minority ethnic population (22%) in the country outside London, the local police report that racially-inspired attacks occur at least 4 times every day, totalling 1460 attacks each year in one city alone. In Leamington Spa, the concern about racial harassment led the local police force to arrange an open meeting to which local Asian youth were invited to discuss the problem informally. Bob Lane, a beat sergeant commented that:

> "About 20 youngsters...came along and we chatted for an hour. A frank and open discussion was held. We were trying to build up a better relationship and I think it helped" (Bob Lane, quoted in the Leamington Spa Courier, 15.12.1989)

The participating Asian people were less convinced however and are reported to be pursuing their campaign for equal rights and better treatment through their local MP. Hall suggests that the reporting of racial conflict particularly that which results from racist provocation and/or police harassment tends to assume that 'right' lay on the side of the law. The language of riot and race warfare thus "simply feeds existing stereotypes and prejudices" (Hall, 1981, p.44).

"The statistics of racial attacks and cases of incitement to racial hatred reflect a hostility to black people which encourages a climate of fear and confrontation. The portrayal of black people in the press encourages the reader to make a crude equation between race and crime.." (Bhat et al, 1988, p.55)

In October 1989 the police mounted a raid on the now notorious Broadwater Farm Estate in Brixton, South London. Selected journalists were briefed a week beforehand that a raid was about to take place, although the target area was allegedly kept secret. On the day of the raid, journalists and police alike were transported together to the site of the raid to enable live coverage to be broadcast on television. Many commentators have suggested that the purpose of the alleged raid was a straightforward public relations exercise, designed to demonstrate firstly that the problem of drugs (both dealing and using) is specific to the black community; secondly that the police were seen to be catching criminals; and thirdly to make it clear to the black community that they were being watched. However it is highly unlikely that any serious criminals would not have been alerted prior to the supposed raid and that subsequent arrests could be construed as simple harassment rather than a concerted effort to eradicate crime.

Nanton suggests that much of the tension which exists in contemporary ethnic relations has been caused by the laissez-faire policies of the 1960s where it was generally assumed that time alone would encourage the assimilation of black migrants into mainstream British culture. He argues that since then, policies have changed so that the differentness of ethnic minority communities has manifested itself into different approaches to ethnic problems instead of locating such problems into the more general matrix of urban deprivation.

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"Black people are thus not deemed to figure among the major groups addressed by public policy. Their problems are not those of the homeless, the unemployed, the self-employed, the old, the young and the handicapped unless the social category is hyphenated and preceded by 'black'" (Nanton, 1989, p.561)

He suggests that such a marginalising process should be halted and a more flexible approach adopted which accepts the fluidity of social groupings and looks at issues such as harassment as specific occurrences with specific individuals rather than as vague and emotive phenomena incapable of solution. However, subsuming the problems that black people experience in, for example, housing provision, into the more general catalogue of disadvantage would necessarily obscure the ethnic dimension which in itself is likely to be a significant aspect of such disadvantage.

Positive Action Strategies and the White Response

Efforts to redress the discriminatory balance by, for example, positively encouraging job applications from people from ethnic minorities have met with considerable opposition from white people claiming unfair treatment and in the 1988 survey a significant minority of students referred to such strategies as discriminating against white people. Edwards argues however, that it is the operationalisation of positive discrimination strategies rather than positive action initiatives which gives cause for concern since the former appear to contravene an inate sense of social justice. Edwards states that positive discrimination is
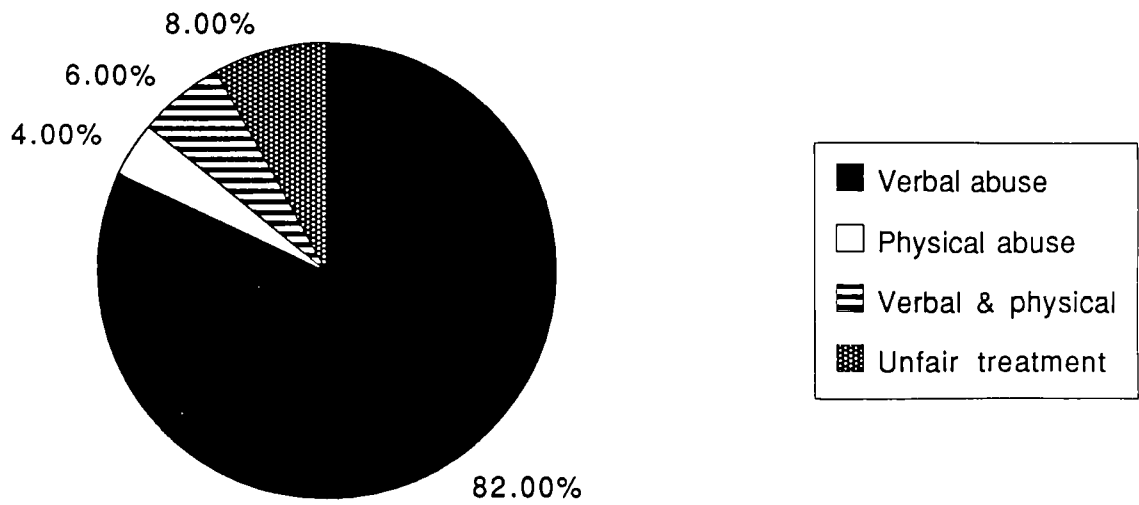
"the promotion of ethnic minority interests and chances within existing procedures for distributing and allocating social goods including jobs, education and training as well as health care, housing and other welfare benefits" (Edwards, 1988, p.405)

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In other words, positive discrimination actively promotes ethnic minority interests in preference to and at the expense of white interests. Edwards argues that in the interests of social justice, a preferred group must be regarded as having a primary claim over other groups and in the context of ethnic minority communities, skin colour is not regarded as a legitimate reason for preferment. This is because not all ethnic minority people are identically disadvantaged, nor do they have identical experiences, nor can they constitute the most disadvantaged group since there will always be more white people suffering greater hardship simply because there are more white people in the population generally. Although Edwards observes that there are a variety of ethical and moral problems associated with positive discrimination strategies, for example, whether the end ever justifies the means, he resolves that they are preferable to no action at all.

A significant minority of students in the 1988 survey claimed to have suffered 'racial' discrimination, both in terms of positive action strategies and verbal and physical abuse. A little over a fifth of students claimed to have experienced racial discrimination, although this was a more popular claim amongst young men (26%) than young women (17%). There was no absolutely no difference between the Hi and Lo colleges in terms of levels of experienced discrimination. Table 9.8 provides a breakdown of the type of discrimination which students believed they had suffered.

Table 9.8

Forms of discrimination and sex (female)

8.00%

6.00%

4.00%

	Verbal abuse
	Physical abuse
	Verbal & physical
	Unfair treatment

82.00%

Forms of discrimination and sex (male)

5.10%

10.20%

18.37%

	Verbal abuse
	Physical abuse
	Verbal & physical
	Unfair treatment

66.33%
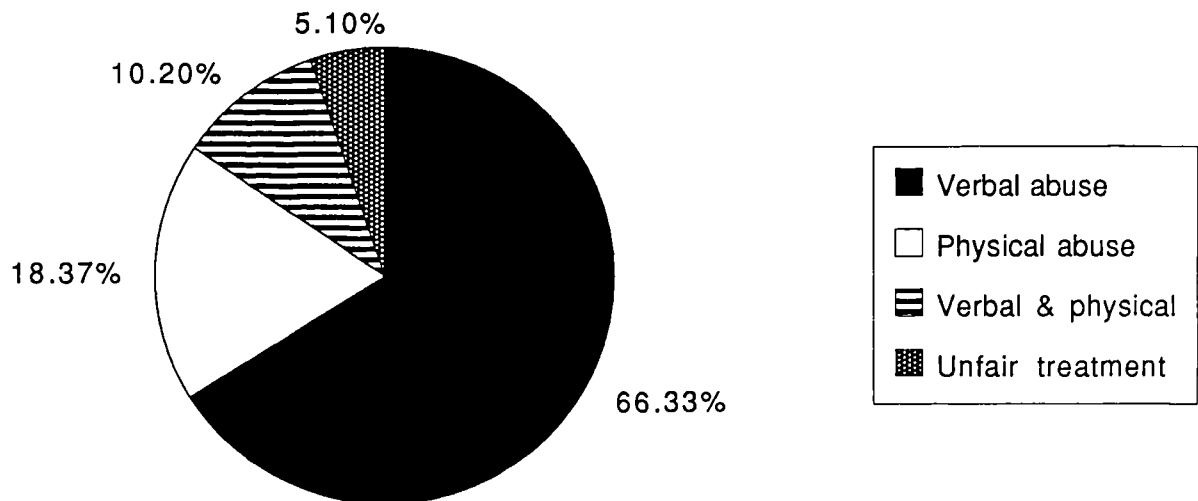
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

Comments made by students in response to the question asking them to specify how they had been discriminated against included the following.

"Positive discrimination for blacks - jobs in the paper specifying black people" (M, 21)

"These black people were on to me because I'm white" (F, 16)

"Being called a white honky by a coon" (M, 16)

"A Paki throwing a brick through my windscreen when I was with one friend and he was with five" (M, 20)

"Not being served in a restaurant in Barbados until blacks had been" (F, 17)

Some students interpreted this question to mean whether they had ever witnessed discrimination or racist attacks. Although affirmative responses from these students have not been included in the statistics, some of their comments are reproduced below.

"I have an Indian friend who went to a job interview. She was everything they wanted (they said on the phone) until they saw her in person" (F, 17)

"A white man went for a job for the Council. He wrote two letters, one in his own name and one in an Indian name - the Indian got the job" (M, 24)

"On a bus a coloured person tried to get on. He banged on the door. Driver said what you screaming at just like you've come out of the jungle" (F, 17)

Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment

The issues of equal opportunities and equal treatment were addressed in two separate questions in the 1988 survey. Students were asked whether or not black, white and Asian people have the same opportunities in education and

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employment. More than half the students (54%) believed that such equality does exist in these areas, although such belief was rather stronger on the part of young men (58%) than young women (49%): of these students, over two-thirds reported ethnic friendships. The most recently available official statistics state, however, that black and Asian male graduates are more than twice as likely to be out of work than their white counterparts (9% compared with 4%), although the gap between graduate women was less marked (7% of black and Asian women compared with 5% for white women) (OPCS, 1989, Table 5.36) In Warwickshire, the County Education Office commissioned its own research into racism and young people and the subsequent report stated that the large majority of young black and Asian respondents believe themselves to be or to have been victims of racial discrimination, were more likely to have been placed in remedial classes and entered for lower status examinations than white counterparts. They also felt that assumptions are made about their abilities and potential which are ethnically-specific (Lashley, 1988).

That racial discrimination does demonstrably exist in academic institutions prompted the National Union of Teachers to publish guidelines in 1989. Among their key recommendations, the NUT argue that: anti-racist policies are necessary both in all-white and multi-ethnic schools alike; teachers should be aware of cultural differences amongst pupils, interpreters should be available for parent-teacher interviews and meetings; teachers should know how to spell and pronounce the names of black and Asian pupils; there should be a procedure for any pupil subjected to racial remarks by teachers to report such incidents without fear of reprisals (reported in the Independent, 14.8.1989).

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That such detailed albeit obvious suggestions need to be made is indicative of both the low priority that the needs of ethnic minority pupils are given as well as the high level of ignorance attributed to teachers whose teaching groups include members from ethnic minority communities. However, it is not the ignorance or racism of individual teachers that is necessarily responsible for the relatively poor academic performance of black and Asian students. A PSI report suggests that poor standards in schools generally were to blame for low achievement levels for all pupils irrespective of ethnicity. The study charted the progress of 2,426 pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and found "radically higher" levels of achievement in some but not other schools which could not be explained in terms of either ethnicity, parental attitudes or previous academic record (Smith & Tomlinson, 1989). The study recommends that the appropriate strategic response to poor academic performance by black pupils is to make schools more effective for all pupils rather than concentrate on devising multi-ethnic curricula. However, such a strategy cannot hope to be fully successful unless unwitting and overt racist practices are eradicated from academic life, an initiative which is being supported by the NUT and other interested parties but which is taking a considerable time to be implemented.

As far as equal treatment is concerned, many more students believe that different ethnic groups are not treated the same (78%). Of those students who believe that black, white and Asian people are treated the same, 91% also believe that all groups have equal opportunities in education and employment, two-thirds of whom also report inter-ethnic friendships. There was very little difference in response across the college range. Students

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were asked why they believe different ethnic groups are not treated in the same way and Table 9.9 details their suggested reasons for differential treatment. This was an open question and student responses have been categorised by the author.

Table 9.9

Why are some ethnic groups treated differently?

Reason	Female	Male	All
Racial discrimination	79%	73%	76%
Positive action	5%	12%	8%
Discrimination by employers	7%	3%	5%
Ethnic self-segregation	3%	2%	3%
Class differences	1%	–	*
**Total	92%	88%	90%
Respondents	(241)	(207)	(448)

[* less than 1%]
[** of respondents who believe ethnic groups are treated differentially]

Some of the comments elicited by asking students why they believe that ethnic groups are treated differentially are reproduced below.

"You hear about thick whites getting jobs in preference to clever blacks" (M, 16)

"They are treated as if they were lepers" (F, 16)

"Blacks use race discrimination to get jobs" (M, 18)

"Some people cannot accept different coloured skins as being just a feature as different coloured eyes" (F, 21)

"Because they don't belong, they have no part in our heritage" (M, 20)

"Some people have various racial prejudices and if they are in a position of authority it can matter" (F, 19)

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"I think that coloureds are given an advantage due to them using colour as an excuse" (M, 19)

"Asians and blacks get supplementary benefits more easily" (F, 21)

"White people feel invaded by all different races coming and living in GB and taking their jobs" (M, 17)

"Too many people still think twice before employing [or] socialising with blacks" (F, 21)

"If you look in many Asian run businesses ie clothes factory 100% are black, its all kept "in the family" too much" (M, 21)

"Because it's a way of life, some asians and blacks can't even speak English" (F, 18)

"Whites are got at for discriminating in their own country and not vice versa" (M, 21)

"Coloured people are treated better. Allowed to get away with things because people in charge are afraid of upsetting racial relations" (F, 17)

It would thus appear from the 1988 survey findings and elsewhere, that white responses to the reality of multi-ethnic Britain have been and are largely negative. The ethnic minority communities themselves are often blamed for provoking hostile sentiment and action and a preoccupation with the (often exaggerated) size of the ethnic minority population encourages xenophobic fears of domination. The influence of television in promoting stereotypical representations of ethnic communities and its over-riding focus on the problematic aspects of the multi-ethnic neighbourhood is explored in the next chapter.

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INTRODUCTION

That television has the potential power to influence opinion and attitude can be adduced by the billions of pounds which are spent annually on advertising and sponsorship. Television has the power to inform and raise awareness about issues which are socially significant as in the various - aid support appeals originally launched by Bob Geldorf and the health promotion programmes concerned with drug abuse and disease. However, it is precisely this same power to inform and disseminate information which can transform an issue into a problem into a panic by continued, exaggerated exposure. When Enoch Powell delivered a speech on immigration to a small audience in a church hall in 1968, it received, unusually, national media coverage and as a consequence, 86% of the British population suddenly knew what Powell's views were on immigration. Prior to the event, a Gallup Poll showed that immigration was an issue of national importance to 6% of the population. After the speech this percentage increased fourfold to 27%. Nearly three-quarters of those polled also stated that the Government should take a harder line on the issue (Seymour-Ure, 1968). Although both print and broadcast media were not slow to include reports on Powell's views, it is argued here that of all the information media, it is television which can be charged with promoting what could be described as a moral panic on immigration, due to its centrality and credibility as an information source for the majority of the British public, where 99% of the

population now have a television set in their homes and 65% use television as the main source of information about world events (IBA, 1989) and presumably national news as well. The media thus initiated a new **problem**, a particular perception of black people which still has currency today.

This is not to say that always and everywhere television deliberately constructs social problems but what does seem to happen is that it links in with what are seen as the current views and particularly the current problems and gives them a new name and thus a new **problem** is created – mugging and child abuse are old problems but they used to be called street robbery and baby battering. Television can thus be seen to both reflect popular values, for example, concern with law and order, but also to amplify events by their concentrated treatment. The media, including television, do not simply reflect society, they set the parameters, locate the agenda and identify what the issues are, helping shape public understanding of the kind of society in which we live.

THE POPULAR MEDIUM

Consumption levels of television have doubled from 2.5 hrs in 1959 (Belson, 1967) to 5 hrs in 1987 (IBA, 1989) although this latter figure is of the number of hours that the television is switched on rather than actually watched. Although, as we have seen, contemporary media research suggests that television does not have a direct impact upon behavioural change, it clearly has some effect, no matter how subliminal. Television companies received £1.625 billion in advertising revenue in the 1988/89 financial year (IBA Factfile, 1989/90), advertisers at least believing in the power

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of television to promote and sell ideas and products. The setting-up of the Broadcasting Standards Council under the Chairmanship of Sir William Rees Mogg in 1988 to act as watchdog for taste and decency in programming also seems to attest to the power of television to make some impact upon the audience. Links have yet to be proven between, say, watching sex and violence on television and the propensity for viewers to then become more aggressive and possibly commit violent or sexual crimes but it is the **potential** for television to influence behaviour in such ways that is at issue. Himmelweit's study of the effects of television violence on children concluded that

> "Television is unlikely to cause aggressive behaviour although it could precipitate it in those few children who are emotionally disturbed" (Himmelweit, 1965 in McQuail, op.cit., p.50)

The main mediator of the potential influence of television images on the audience is thought to be the operationalisation of the phenomenon described as **selective perception.** Broadly speaking, this means that the viewer will choose to interpret, that is, read messages, using his/her own individual frame of reference, experience and predispositions, that the message will be perceived selectively: any media message which is outside such frame is ignored. Similarly, if the message is in direct conflict with the viewer's own values, then the viewer will either ignore it or oppose it. However, this is to assume that all viewers actively engage with the television message, sifting through a variety of experiences in order to interpret what is shown on the screen. It also implies that the audience is an homogeneous one in the sense that each member reacts in the same way to the screen, each engaged in selective perception at a variety of levels.

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However, as Root points out

> "Many TV programmes are deliberately designed to allow us to watch television whilst also getting on with the rest of our lives" (Root, 1986, p.28)

The level of involvement that the viewer will have with the television text will depend on a number of factors including programme type, time of day and level of fatigue, as well as personal background, experience, beliefs and attitudes. Whilst it is accepted here that selective perception does occur, it cannot be accepted that it is an habitual and pervasive phenomenon for if that were the case, then the debate concerning the power of television to exercise any influence on individual behaviour and attitudes would clearly be redundant. There would equally be little point in using television to **sell** a range of products, from political parties to insurance policies as is current practice. That television **is** used as a sales medium would seem to imply that it is regarded as a potential if not actual influence on attitudes and thus behaviour. The function of television as a educative force would also seem to be redundant if it is accepted that the viewer has a perpetually closed mind.

What then do the young consumers of television think about the material which is on offer to them? In the 1988 survey students believe that television programmes are less about real life than exaggerated versions of life (43%), fantasy (34%) or about rich/middle class lifestyles (22%). Table 10.1 provides a breakdown of programme preferences among respondents in the 1988 survey.

Table 10.1

Fauourite programmes and sex
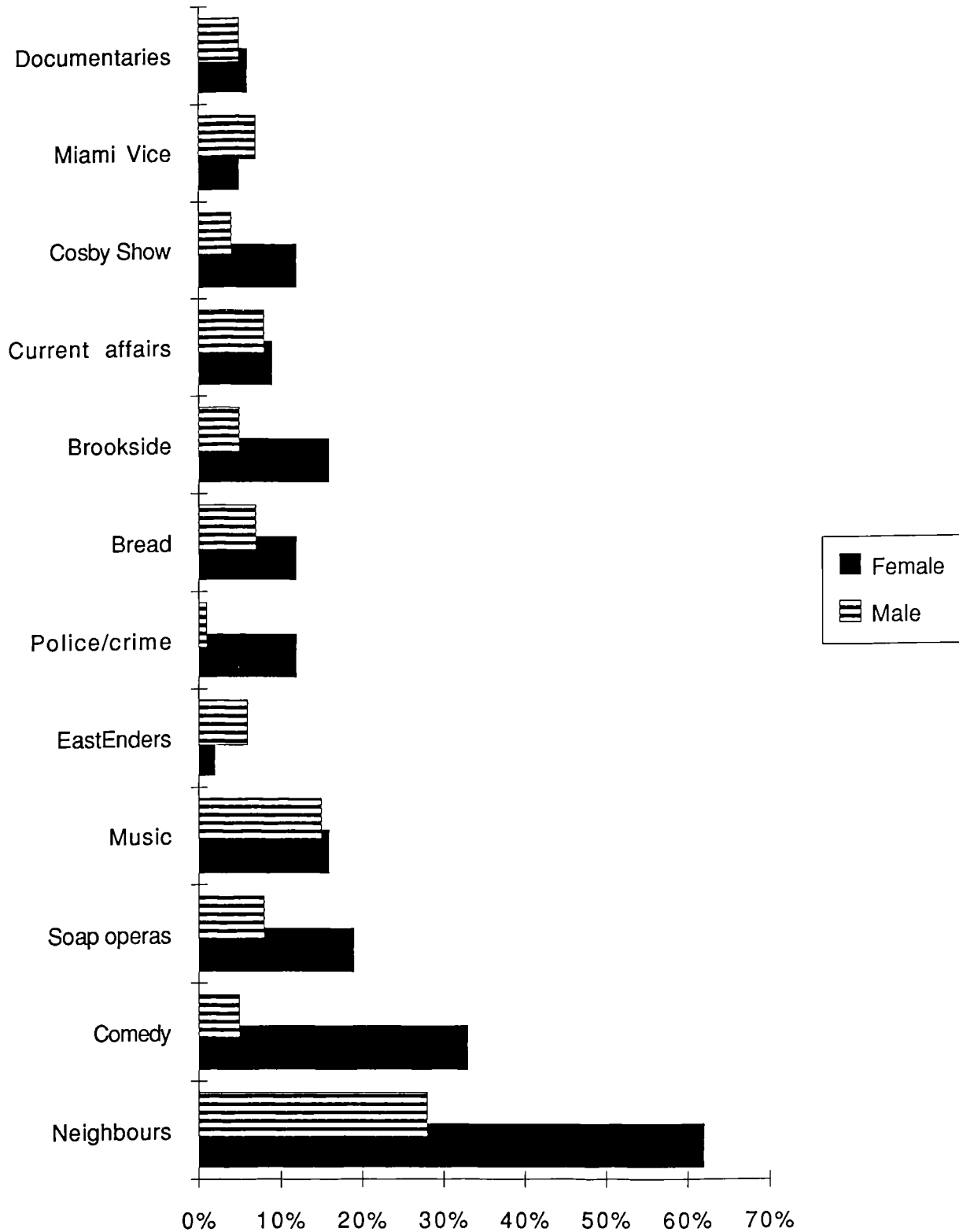
(Source: Ross, 1988 Survey)

Although soap operas are much more popular among young women than young men, most other programmes and programme types are enjoyed equally by both sexes. Programme preference among young viewers is a close reflection of the choices made by an older audience who also regard soaps as their most popular programme genre. When students were asked for their favourite programme type, comedy was the most popular type (80%), followed by soap opera (70%), crime series (46%) and plays/films (42%) It has often been argued that the advance for soaps is an exclusively female one, watching to escape the tedium of their circumstances. However nearly one-third of male students reported that they watched "Neighbours" and a study carried out by North Carolina University in 1981 found that just under half the college students interviewed described themselves as soap watchers, including over a fifth of male students (cited in Caplan, 1983, p.103).

In the winter of 1989, on 27 November, a declaration of principles and a code of practice was published by all national newspapers and signed by every editor except two, in an effort to persuade the general public that reporting standards will be improved via a mechanism of self-regulation. One of the practices to be avoided is the irrelevant reference to "race, colour and religion". Although there is clearly a measure of self-interest in such action, that is, to circumvent the need for curbing legislation, it is nonetheless a positive step for the newspaper world to take. The public service broadcast channel, the BBC, on the other hand, has been reversing the trend for sensitivity and balance for the past few years by changing key wording in its mandate relating to the areas in which it deems it

inappropriate to remain impartial. Between 1974 and 1986 the annual BBC Handbook contained the following wording under the heading "Controversy, Impartiality and Independence"

> "The BBC does not feel obliged...to appear neutral as between truth and untruth, justice and injustice, freedom and slavery, compassion and cruelty, tolerance and intolerance (including racial intolerance) (BBC Handbooks, 1974 (p.281) repeated in the 1986 Handbook (p.196) - from 1987 the words underlined (author's emphasis) ceased to be included in the charter

As far as the functions of television are concerned, it is regarded as being very important in providing information about the world to nearly half the respondents in the 1988 survey, with a further 47% believing television to be quite important and only 8% claiming that television is unimportant as an information source. Nearly two-thirds of students reported television as a significant source of information about national issues such as unemployment, poverty and crime. Similarly, Greenberg & Atkin's study of young black and white people demonstrated that television provides the major source of information about the world (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982, p.228). In the IBA's annual attitude survey it was found that 65% of viewers regard television as their primary news source, an increase of 7% on the 1982 statistics (IBA, 1988).

Students in the 1988 survey were asked a series of questions relating to public personalities in order to ascertain the extent to which television allows people to become known and possibly seen as legitimate commentators. Over three-quarters of students (76%) could name a white news presenter and 70% could name a black news presenter (Moira Stewart, 41% and Trevor MacDonald 58%), although a further 6% of students believe Moira Stewart to

be Asian. As far as politicians were concerned, 84% of students were able to name a white politician (63% named Margaret Thatcher and 14% named Neil Kinnock), 58% could name a black politician (67% named Jesse Jackson) and 29% could name an Asian politician (56% simply gave the name "Gandhi"). The majority of students (90%) stated that television was one of their first sources of knowledge about such public figures. A recent survey undertaken by Barclays Bank amongst its young account holders showed that for boys, the man whose work they most admired was the black comedian Eddie Murphy and the man who they most wanted to be like was Daley Thompson: for girls, Tessa Sanderson came top in both categories (Guardian, 2.9.1989). It is interesting both that the heroes of these admittedly selected respondents are all black, and that they occupy the traditional areas appropriate for black people, that is, entertainment and sport.

Individual viewers watch television for a variety of reasons, including those which are included under the formal rubric of television's overt functions to entertain, educate and inform. A list of possible reasons for watching television were given to students in the 1988 survey with which they were asked to agree or disagree. The majority of students stated that they watch television for enjoyment (88%), relaxation (69%), information (60%) and education (36%). A small minority added the extra reason of "boredom" (7%). As far as the actual amount of television watching is concerned, Table 10.2 provides a breakdown of the number of hours students claim to watch and shows that just under half the students (49%) claim to watch 2 hours or less of television during weekdays. At the weekend, the majority of students claim to watch 3 hours or less (59% on Saturdays and 55% on Sundays), although a significant minority claim to

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regularly watch upto 5 hours of television every day.

Table 10.2

How many hours of television do you watch each day?

Weekdays	Female	Male	All
<1 hour	5%	3%	4%
1 - 2 hrs	47%	43%	45%
2.5 - 3 hrs	17%	19%	19%
3.5 - 4 hrs	10%	13%	13%
4.5 - 5 hrs	11%	10%	10%
5.5 - 6 hrs	3%	8%	5%
6.5 hrs +	2%	3%	3%
Total Respondents	94% (303)	93% (302)	93% (605)

The channel which most students reported as being the most popular was BBC1 (60%), although it was favoured by more young women (69%) than young men (54%). This is probably related to the fact that the two most popular soap operas - Neighbours and EastEnders - are both broadcast by BBC1. The ITV channel, Central Television, was watched regularly by 43% of students, with Channel 4 and BBC2 attracting 9% and 4% of student viewers respectively. A minority of students reported that they watch all four channels equally.

ETHNIC THEMES AND TELEVISION

The way in which television treats with ethnic issues is a result of deliberate policy and programme decisions regarding what is included and

what is excluded, who is allowed to speak and who is not, in addition to the type of language and imagery used. In Troyna's study of race reporting in the media and the relationship between such reporting and public attitudes, he found that respondents living in areas with relatively high ethnic minority populations were more likely to regard 'race-related' themes as national problems. He found, for example, that nearly a quarter of respondents living in Leicester spontaneously mentioned race in relation to current national problems, whereas race was only an issue for 13% of the Manchester sample (Troyna, 1981). In the 1988 survey, 21% of students spontaneously mentioned "racism" or "racial discrimination" as constituting a national problem rather than aspects of race relations such as immigration control which were prominent in Troyna's study. Troyna also found that many people regarded racism as a significant local problem with at least half his respondents reporting racism as a problem in their local area. In Troyna's study, the percentage of respondents who mentioned race as a local problem rose to fifty per cent. Although Troyna suggests that no direct causal relationship exists between media presentations of race and particular attitudes, half of the respondents in his study mentioned the media as a major source of information about race-related matters. Whilst Troyna may be correct to suggest that, from his study, no clear relationship exists between television material and propensity to racism, this does not necessarily mean that television does not influence the formation and maintenance of attitudes and subsequently behaviour. All that can reasonably be inferred is that no direct correlation exists between watching television and the holding of particular attitudes. Troyna's study also found that respondents who were more hostile to ethnic minority people were more likely to recall negative items of news relating

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to race, such as riots and muggings than those respondents who were less hostile.

> "The close correspondence between what people think about blacks and 'race relations' on the one hand, and what they recall the media saying about these issues on the other, clearly demonstrates the mediating effect of individual attitudes on the perception and recall of media content" (Troyna, 1981, p.69)

Troyna concludes that the prominence given to negative aspects of the presence of black Britons encourages a limited perception to be taken by the public, regardless of their personal attitudes towards 'race' issues.

MINORITY BROADCASTING

A quarter of the students stated that they had watched minority programmes such as "Bandung File" and "Network East" and of these, 62% reported that such programmes were enjoyable. The most popular programmes were "Network East" (65%) and "Black on Black" (30%) There was no significant difference in response between young women and young men.

In Anwar's 1978 study of attitudes amongst Asian people towards ethnic minority broadcasting, he found that whilst the majority of respondents enjoyed the programmes broadcast specifically for them, they felt that there should be a greater volume covering a wider variety of topics (Anwar, 1978).

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Although programmes specifically broadcast for black and Asian people have been produced for over 20 years, it was arguably the arrival of Channel 4 in 1982 with its remit to cater for minority tastes that encouraged the active promotion of black writers, producers and film-makers. "Black on Black" and "Eastern Eye" were two of the original minority programmes broadcast by Channel 4, aimed at the black and Asian communities respectively, with "Ebony" being the BBC's contribution to 'ethnic' programming. However, Wambu argues that from their first steps, black broadcasts had difficulties with notions of identity and identification, tending to locate discussion within the conflict model of ethnic interaction, so that "rarely did the programmes attempt to engage the wider society on any other level" (O Wambu, "Obstacle Race", The Listener, 1.6.1989).

Phillips is particularly sceptical of mainstream television's efforts to examine race issues, which examination most usually revolves around a problematic social relationship, be it with neighbours, the police or social services. He suggests that much factual programming is at best patronising and at worst racist, where the black community is paraded in front of the white audience to show how unfair the system is, or how normal black people are really, just like whites (Phillips, 1986). In the United States, black Americans have their own television channel "BET" (Black Entertainment Television) which has been broadcasting for 10 years and is valued at $100m. However, unlike Britain, the potential audience in the United States for black programming is enormous, where 30 million of the total population of 250 million Americans are from ethnic minority groups. Black viewers also watch more television than their white counterparts,

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watching 68 hours per week compared with 48 hours per week for white viewers (The Observer, 11.3.1990)

Another staunch critic of Channel 4, Gilroy, too, criticises what the channel has hitherto offered to the black viewer and suggests that the separation of ethnic identities, for example "Black on Black" and "Eastern Eye" exactly parallels the marginalisation of the black community in everyday life. Presuming that black people are exclusively concerned with policing practices and Asian people with immigration law further distances minority groups from any involvement with mainstream society (Gilroy, 1983). He also suggests that a concentration on the "problematic" relations with white people at a variety of levels encourages the perspective of black as other. Both "Black on Black" and "Eastern Eye" were replaced by the single programme "Bandung File", which has been heavily criticised for its lack of a specific black identity and the series finally stopped broadcasting at the end of 1989. Farrukh Dhondy, film-maker and currently Commissioning Editor for Multi-Cultural Programming at Channel 4 states, in defence of "Bandung" and its deliberate appeal to a wider audience, that

> "...once you get used to the idea that blacks are a permanent part of the British population you will have to get used to the fact that we are going to be doing mainstream programming." (F Dhondy, the Listener, 8.7.1988)

Zia Mohyeddin, Executive Producer of Central Television's "Here and Now" also argues that although his programme may be about minority cultures, it is not orientated towards an exclusively black audience. The programme has been running for 10 years and has viewing figures of approximately one million including white viewers. However, Mohyeddin comments that:

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"Although we try to promote the programme as a straightforward cultural/arts programme, immediately the ethnicity of the participants is seen, people perhaps think, Oh, it's them again, and switch off. That's the sort of perception that needs to change, to get people to stop saying that this or that person is one of them and not one of us" (Mohyeddin, Interview, 3.5.1989)

Narendhra Morar, producer of BBC's "Network East" (broadcast, as is "Here and Now", during Sunday lunchtime, the traditional slot for minority programmes) suggests that racial stereotypes are being broken down by the very existence of programmes like his own. He argues that the format for minority broadcasts has changed dramatically over time so that whilst the old-fashioned "Asian Magazine" which began in 1965 and went out in Hindustani, "Network East" is broadcast in English, to appeal to a younger and more diverse audience and tackles important social issues as well as celebrating artistic endeavours. Morar is adamant that both positive and negative aspects of Asian life should be dealt with in a magazine programme in order to more realistically reflect the life of the community.

"My view is that, as programme makers [we should] reflect both what I call the enthusiasms and the concerns of the community. Immigration, racial attacks, racism and things internal to the community that are problems, dowry abuse, sexual abuse, gays and lesbians, whatever. I think it is incumbent upon us as journalists to dig the dirt both ways" (Morar, 1989)

Morar is clear that although exposing aspects of Asian life which are not typical but nonetheless important, such as homosexuality, provides ammunition for prejudiced people, he feels that to say nothing would be worse. The discussion of sensitive issues encourages the community to look at itself and perhaps tackle something which it would otherwise ignore. It

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also provides an internal perspective on issues which might otherwise only be dealt with by the popular press.

Students in the 1988 survey were asked whether television encourages racial harmony or makes things worse and Table 10.3 provides a breakdown of their responses. There is little difference in response between young women and young men although students with high reported levels of ethnic friendship were more likely to view television as both promoting and discouraging racial harmony. Of those students who believe that television discourages racial harmony, 62% also thought that television is inaccurate in its representation of minority ethnic groups.

Table 10.3

What affect does television have on race relations?

Effect	Female	Male	All	Hi	Lo
1) encourages racial harmony	34%	38%	36%	32%	31%
2) makes things worse	41%	43%	42%	38%	43%
3) does both	18%	14%	16%	24%	15%
4) has no effect	6%	4%	5%	6%	10%

| Total | 89% | 89% | 89% | | |
| Respondents | (286) | (288) | (574) | | |

Whilst television is used as a primary source of information and entertainment by many Britons, the centre of its power and influence lies in the fact that it is regarded as a truthful and credible medium, when set against an index of other possible sources of truth. In the 1988 survey, students were asked to assess the credibility of a variety of sources

including newspapers, radio, parents and friends. Television was regarded as the most credible by 31% of students, compared with 4% for newspapers and 11% for radio. Parents were regarded as the most believable by 52% of students and teachers were only marginally more credible than the press (6%). Television was also seen as being the most truthful in news reporting by 39% of students compared with 12% for radio and 2% for newspapers, although 26% of students believe that all media are equally truthful (or untruthful).

"If there's a problem in this country then the BAA has to react
to it and the problem is there are a lot of blacks and they are
not on the telly. I do not think we have been racist but we have
been like the rest of the country.   There is a degree of
ignorance" (Bill Cotton, (then) Head of BBC TV interviewed for
Today, 29.10.1986)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to draw together the main themes of the research study,

and the first section summarises the main findings of the study.   The

second section reviews the utility of those theoretical perspectives which

were discussed earlier and identifies the one whih appears to provide the

most satisfactory explanation of both the study findings and, more

generally, social relations between ethnic groups. The third section then

interprets the data more closely, informed by the perspective deemed most

appropriate, with the final section suggesting the implications of the

research for ethnic images and television in the future. It should be noted

tht where the study findings are discussed, the ethnic 'categories' of

'black' and 'Asian' are used (for reasons given elsewhere), but where more

general issues of ethnicity are considered, the more inclusive term of

'black' is used, notwithstanding its limitations as an ethnically-

meaningful descriptive tool.

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SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

This study began with the hypothesis that a range of stereotypes exist about ethnic minority people which, having been transmitted through a variety of cultural media - most recently and most importantly through the medium of television - are regularly utilised by the white majority in Britain. This thesis was tested by the development of a research survey framework which set out principally to ascertain white students' attitudes towards ethnic minority communities generally and their characterisation in television fictions in particular. It would appear from the study findings that a majority of respondents are able to differentiate sets of abilities and attributes in terms of the extent to which they are ethnically specific. As discussed elsewhere, the 'ethnic' categories of "Asian", "black" and "white" were used in the questionnaire, and the study found that perceptions of black people as "lazy", "violent" but "good at sport" emerged clearly as did the view that Asian people are "weak" but "hard-working" and "good at business". These alleged 'ethnic' characteristics were generally believed to be reflected in the dramatic characterisations of different ethnic groups in popular television fictions where the majority of respondents believe that the most popular character roles for black people are as servants and criminals and for Asian people to be portrayed as weak, poor and victimised.

Of the television professionals who were interviewed for the research study, all agreed that whilst there was a certain degree of stereotyping amongst ethnic minority characters, the present incidence and types of representation was much better now than in previous decades. In Anwar &

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Shang's study of 81 television producers in 1983, they found that more than half of their interviewees believed that television reinforced racial myths through television fiction, but 80% also believed that the roles which were played by black people reflected the majority white audiences' perception of the black community (Anwar & Shang, 1983).

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents in the 1988 survey believe Asian people in particular to be victimised (both in life and on television), more than half the students believe that **all** ethnic groups enjoy equality of opportunity. However, it was also felt that the practice of discrimination exists and results in the differential treatment of ethnic groups. As far as the propensity to stereotype is concerned, the questions encouraging such stereotyping achieved response rates of 70% (Question 21) and 51% (question 25), where the former question related to more positive attributes than the latter. In other words, students were more likely to attribute positive characteristics to groups than negative ones, although in every case, at least half the respondents felt able to specify certain abilities as 'typical'of particular ethnic groups.

Significant variables affecting differential responses were gender and inter-ethnic friendship. Across all the questions, young women were more likely to express tolerant attitudes and young men more hostile attitudes towards black and Asian people (the categories used in the questionnaire). Whether or not respondents had black or Asian friends was a highly significant factor where such ethnic friendship militated against overtly hostile tendencies, although it should be noted that an acquaintance with

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black and/or Asian people was no guarantee against hostility towards ethnic minority communities generally.

Although a majority of students in the 1988 survey claimed to have black and/or Asian friends, only a small number live in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, 90% of respondents believe that such mixed communities produce a range of problems including racism, violence and cultural incompatibility. Equally, a significant minority of respondents believe that black and Asian people take jobs which rightfully belong to indigenous whites and that white people can no longer get work because of positive action strategies - more than a fifth of all students claim to have been victims of 'racial' discrimination, citing either name-calling, physical abuse or else instances of positive action. In the absence of first-hand experience and knowledge amongst the white majority, the source of ideas about ethnic communities must be located outside the arena of the individual and it is argued here that one very significant locus for the generation of such ideas is the media and, specifically, television. Before looking more closely at the role that television plays in the promotion of particular ideas and images of ethnic communities, it is timely to review the theoretical perspectives which have been discussed in earlier chapters in order to assess their value in interpreting the findings of the study data.

THE UTILITY OF THEORETICAL MODELS

In contemporary discourse, Marxist perspectives have proliferated with a variety of Marxist and Marxian scholars using the eponymous Marx to legitimate any model which uses a class-based analysis of society. Cox, for example, suggests that "race prejudice is the social attitude propagated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatising some group as inferior..." (Cox, 1959, p.393) whilst Miles argues that "a sociology of race relations fails to attribute sufficient analytical significance to the position of black people in class relations.." (Miles, 1982, p.4). For Cox, then, racism as an attitude is foisted on an unsuspecting public in the interests of capital, in order to divide and rule. Miles also uses a class-based analysis but suggests that using the term 'racial' to describe relations between different groups obscures the more fundamental reason for prejudice and discrimination, that is, the class position of ethnic minority groups in society. Thus the extent to which ethnicity is regarded a separate but associated feature of class relations depends on the particular interpretation of Marxist theory adopted by different scholars.

The main difficulty posed by any perspective which is self-consciously 'Marxist' is that it must be necessarily deterministic and must find capital culpable for whatever issue is under discussion. But to subsume race into class and suggest that racism is simply false consciousness is to deny, at the very least, the autonomy of the individual to act for her/himself and deny any other motivating forces for action such as ethnocentrism or irrational prejudice. It is in any event very difficult to

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make the case for false consciousness as the motivator for action amongst the sample population of 1988 survey, none of whome were in employment, still less cognisantof the subtle machinations of capital. Moreover, much of the contempt directed at minority communities was at the level of the private and personal rather than the political, a fear of 'swamping', a dislike of cooking smells and a rejection of 'un-British' cultural practices such as arranged marriages and purdah.

The integration models of Myrdal, Shutz and Park in the 1940s and 1950s addressed an entirely different type of society to that which exists in advanced capitalist countries like Britain (Myrdal, 1944; Shutz, 1944; Park, 1950). The notion of integration as the only desirable outcome of immigration is not only problematic but also inappropriate in contemporary Britain where a large proportion of ethnic minority members have been born and educated in this country and know no other home. The integration model does, in any case, assume that both migrants and host members want integration and regard it as desirable which is manifestly not the case in each and every circumstance. There is no reason why an individual should wish to abandon their cultural origins and practices when living in an alien and potentially hostile environment. There is every reason to retain and celebrate familiar customs as comforting reminders of 'home' as every 'ex-pat' community and other types of ethnic enclave amply demonstrate. Thus a model which suggests that integration of immigrant members into the host society is inevitable and desirable is both doubtful and unsatisfactory as an explanatory framework. History has in any case confounded this theory where Black Britons have resided in this country in significant numbers for at least a century but the white majority are no

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more willing to accept their status as equal subjects now as then. For many respondents in the 1988 survey 'black' still connotes 'immigrant' and black and British are still mutually exclusive concepts.

The plural society model offered, amongst others, by Furnivall (1948) and Smith (1965) seeks to explain social relations as being a function of the plural nature of society, where society is made up of a number of different groups, all pursuing their own goals and competing for scarce resources. This model includes the notion of conflict as a necessary part of competition and sometimes domination by a cultural minority, but all variations of the plural society model allow that a certain amount of consensus must exist, usually at the political and economic level, in order for the society to avoid anarchy and chaos. Thus the 'plural' aspect of plural societies lies in the existence of different groups pursuing different interests but at the same time all groups recognising the same social structure of law and economy and observing broadly similar cultural practices of kinship and religion. It is the very similarity of the underlying cultures of different groups **within** a given society which ultimately undermines the validity of the notion of plural societies being different to other kinds of societies. All societies observe cultural practices which are recognisably similar, so it is perhaps more a question of the extent to which a society displays pluralism rather than regarding some societies as plural societies and others as something different. In any event, the main characteristic of plural societies is said to be the existence of domination of the majority by a minority and clearly, in the British context, this characteristic is absent in so far as 'majority' is taken to mean an ethnic rather than an economic minority and for this

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reason, a plural society model is not appropriate for understanding British social relations.

INTERPRETATION OF STUDY DATA

Given the findings of the study, how then should they be interpreted? What theoretical framework is most useful in comprehending the meaning of the study data? After due consideration of the theoretical perspectives advanced by scholars in the field of ethnic relations, it was suggested earlier that the social status model articulated by Rex (and informed by Weberian discourse) which seeks to explain social relations between ethnic groups in terms of the differential status positions accorded each group appeared to be the most persuasive. The study findings do appear to support that thesis where, for example, respondents to the 1988 survey were able to distinguish different attributes and abilities as being 'typical' of specific ethnic groups, so that ethnicity represented a social and economic characteristic capable of attracting a status weighting. Thus black people were regarded as being "good at sport" and "dancing" but "lazy" and "flashy" whereas white people were deemed to be "good at politics" and "business" and mostly "kind" and "friendly". Asian people were not perceived as being very good at anything except possibly "business" and were viewed as being "difficult" and weak. Thus white people are invested with the more desirable social characteristics such as friendliness and kindness in addition to being regarded as economically superior in terms of business acumen and political power than is the case for ethnic groups. These data do not simply demonstrate that black, Asian

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and white people are regarded as inherently **different** to each other but that the differences identified connote ideas of **inferiority** and **superiority**. The issue, then, is to ascertain where such ideas come from If society is to understood in terms of social status it is first necessary to understand how and why such status positions are imposed and by whom.

Ideas and beliefs do not occur in a vacuum but are the result of a particular history, a particular experience and a particular circumstance. C Wright Mills cautions that in order to understand today we must look back to yesterday and forward to tomorrow. How individuals perceive their world must be understood in relation to the "values cherished by an individual [which] are felt by him to be threatened" (C Wright Mills, 1959, p.15). Thus ideas about the social world are inextricably linked with notions of self-interest and there is a clear rationale for maintaining a belief in white superiority if to do otherwise would signal a fundamental change in the status quo.

The strong theme of ethnocentrism which inscribes much that passes for popular culture can be traced back to the imperialist tradition and what Rex refers to as "400 years of Empire" (Rex, 1986). A continuing focus of Rex' work lies in the colonial experience in British history which, he argues, has operated as the primary site for the generation of notions of white superiority. Thus a history of conquest and domination seeps into the collective cultural consciousness of particular groups and orientate their perceptions. Rex argues that '400 years of Empire' have left their imprint on the national consciousness of white Britons and encouraged an ethnocentric attitude towards groups which are deemed outsiders. But these

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outsiders are not, as it were, external outsiders but outsiders from within, characterised not by their nationality, which is often British, but by their ethnicity.

The historical legacy of colonialism and the ethnocentrism it has inspired has been bolstered more recently by what Barker describes as a 'new racism' where the (racist) response of the white majority towards issues such as immigration are explained and legitimated as the normal expression of their normal fears (Barker, 1981). Theories of inclusive fitness and kinship preference are not, of course, new and both Barth and Van den Berghe have provided valuable contributions to the debate surrounding notions of in-groups and out-groups (Barth, 1969; Van den Berghe, 1987), but the promotion of such a philosophy in the public arena is perhaps more unusual and potentially more dangerous. In April 1990, Norman Tebbit gave an interview to the Los Angeles times where he suggested that few Asians in Britain would be able to pass "the cricket test".

> "Which side do they cheer on? It's an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are? I think we've got real problems in that regard" (Norman Tebbit cited in The Daily Telegraph, 19.4.1990)

Refuting the charge of racism, Tebbit states

> "that's a very foolish thing [to say] because if you say to a lot of people out there in the street Tebbit is racist then they'll scratch the backs of their heads and say, 'Well, so am I. If that's what being a racist is, then I'm one as well' " (ibid)

In other words Asian people in Britain are Asian first and British second, so that their loyalty will always be to their 'home land'. Although it is not expressly articulated, it is implied that such loyalty is entirely natural and clearly Tebbit's argument would extend to any ethnic minority

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group resident in Britain, not simply to the Asian community. So, if it is entirely natural for British Asians to pledge first loyalty to their own ethnic countrymen, so it must be equally natural for British whites to have their first loyalty to the white British community. From this point it is but a small step to argue that if it is natural to support one's own ethnic group, it is also natural to be hostile or at least fearful of different ethnic groups. But when Tebbit discusses "where you came from or where you are" he deliberately ignores the fact that for many Black Britons the two places are the same, that their country of birth is the same as that of their white countrymen and countrywomen. But Tebbit is bold in the (probably correct) belief that his views are shared by the masses, that he is articulating the voice of an otherwise silent majority. It is in precisely this way that ideas seep into the popular consciousness, insidiously finding their way into everyday thinking under the cloak of 'stands to reason' common sense, and therein lies its obvious danger.

> "This then, is the character of the new racism. It is a theory that I shall call biological, or better, pseudo-biological culturalism. Nations, on this view, are not built out of politics and economics, but out of human nature. It is our biology, our instincts to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsides - not because they are inferior, but because they are part of different cultures" (Barker, 1981, p.24)

Thus respondents in the 1988 survey support immigration controls because they wish to preserve the cultural integrity of their 'own' country from outsiders, where a small but significant minority of respondents articulated sentiments which showed their desire to "keep Britain white".

Television, too, regularly highlights the essential differentness of ethnic communities, exaggerating 'alien' cultural practices such as arranged

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marriages and dowry abuse, concentrating on the more negative outcomes of multi-cultural neighbourhoods such as racial conflict and harassment. The fight for national identity and recognition in parts of the Soviet Union, the religious enmity between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus in India and even the continuing troubles in Ireland are all held up as examples of the need to preserve cultural integrity, if necessary by force, indicating the inherent naturalness of such division and conflict. There is in any case a strong sense of conformity in human behaviour where individuals desire to conform to group norms, however such 'group' is constituted and whatever the 'norms' are regarded to be. This tendency to group conformity and group identity have been well documented through social experiments, particularly those conducted by Tajfel in the 1970s but also in later experimental studies (cf Tajfel, 1970, 1973; Rothbart, Dawes and Park, 1984; and Granberg, 1984). Such studies demonstrate how tenuous the link can be between individuals for them to nonetheless think of themselves as a group and to negatively characterise members of other groups. In those experiments, strangers were assigned membership to particular groups and they then proceeded to typify non-group members as less able on a variety of indices. Granberg's work in particular showed the degree to which group members believe that their views are shared by their colleagues. Thus it is more acceptable, in conscience, to be prejudiced towards ethnic minority communities if it is believed that other members of the group, that is, other white people, share those views. On the other hand, in a climate of alleged egalitarianism, Banton suggests that individuals will often under-estimate the level of congruence between their views and those of other people in an effort to appear radical. The operation of the concept which Banton describes as 'pluralistic ignorance' could thus neatly explain why

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successive groups of people (including the majority of 1988 survey respondents) claim that racial discrimination is a serious and pervasive social problem whilst at the same time disclaiming any tendency towards such view in themselves, that is, it is **them** not **me** (cf Jowell, British Social Attitudes, 1986-1988).

The new racism identified by Barker which sanctions the everyday racism of the tabloid press as merely the legitimate expression of 'natural' in-group preference and 'natural' out-group hostility, has evolved in response to the 'swamping' and domination by outsiders predicted by Powell in the 1960s and 1970s which manifestly failed to materialise in the 1980s. No longer able to justify rejection of 'outsiders' on grounds of nationality then, new racist dogma has had to devise a new exclusion principle which abandons the spurious fear of immigrant domination and replaces it with a more honest hostility towards people who are simply phenotypically different. Despite the identical nationalities of black and white Britons the natural preference argument states that black Britons will always naturally support and favour their discrete **ethnic** kinsmen and women and white Britons will be similarly persuaded.

A preoccupation with the 'problem' of immigration in the 1960s and 1970s has become transformed into the 'problem' of ethnic minority communities living in Britain in the 1908s and 1990s. As second and third generation Black Britons grow up in this country, it is their increasing visibility and familiarity with 'the system' which now constitutes the threat, that is, the threat from within. While the immigrant community was relatively small in size and specific in location it was relatively easy to ignore

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and dismiss. But the majority of Black Britons are no longer immigrants, they have been born into and use the system with the same facility as their white counterparts. As they begin to take their place in the social and cultural life of this country, so their strength becomes more visible and threatening. When Black Britons were without economic power, their lack of success was condemned and understood in terms of their innate inferiority. But as they obtain economic and social success, they are still condemned, but now for exploiting the system and cheating white society of resources which should rightfully be theirs. Thus Black Britons succeed only at the expense of their white neighbours.

As discussed elsewhere, the media, and particularly, television is continually involved in identifying ethnic distinctiveness, highlighting ethnic difference and reporting ethnic conflict. Most television documentaries which are concerned with drug abuse maintain an almost exclusive focus on the young black community, adding to the criminalisation of black youth and perpetuating the image of black crime to an uninformed viewing public. Most programmes which deal with discrimination portray the ethnic community as victim, passively and patiently receiving the blows of prejudice, covertly suggesting that in some way the victim is responsible for its wounds.

As television promotes ethnic stereotypes by its concentration on the negative aspects of a multi-ethnic society, it also celebrates the essential 'niceness' of the white British public towards such problem communities by showing, for example, the large sums of money donated to starving Africans. Thus, although Black British communities are constantly

causing problems by, at the very least, their presence in the country, the white majority is still seen to play the role of benign provider, giving assistance to such communities despite their consummate lack of gratitude. Kipling's most telling "White Man's Burden" and more recently, the much publicised concerts promoted by music charities such as "Liveaid" both perpetuate the myth of the charitable nature of white people whilst ignoring the increasingly restrictive immigration controls which have ensured that such 'generosity' stops at the British frontier. As Britain attempts to perpetuate the myth of tolerance and compassion, asylum seekers from various parts of the world are re-classified as 'economic migrants' and sent home, often to an uncertain and threatening future. Television thus serves to reinforce the message of tolerance and charity with broadcasts showing how cash raised by millions of concerned white folks is being put to good use in primitive African villages, allowing a feeling of general well-being to flow over the viewer, conscience salved for another year. It is a sad irony that the desire of white Britons to help secure a better quality of life for black communities is restricted to a wish to assist developing world members rather than being extended to encompass the disadvantaged black communities within Britain herself.

Without wishing to employ a crude conspiracy theory to explain the promotion of Barker's 'new racism' and ideas about in-group preference and out-group hostility, it is clear that to suggest it is entirely natural to prefer one's own group, however such group is constituted, allows prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour to masquerade as natural imperatives. Thus it is natural to want one's child educated with others who share the same cultural background, so white parents withdraw their

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children from multi-ethnic schools and teach them, temporarily, in a pub. Thus Sikh parents campaign for Sikh schools where their children can learn and appreciate their culture away from the discrimination and decadence of the ordinary English school. Thus black parents call for black schools where their children can be taught the truth about their history and be given succour and support in an otherwise hostile world. However, as Goulbourne argues, the pre-occupation with ethnic nomenclature and notions of ethnic separateness does not augur well for the goal of multi-culturalism and inter-ethnic harmony, where differences rather similarities are stressed and supported (Goulbourne, forthcoming). Campaigns for ethnic- or religious-specific schools simply obscure the problem which confronts **all** children and parents and teachers, that is, the extreme interference of central Government into educational policies and practices, resulting in educational institutions being placed in the hands of administrators and bureaurocrats instead of teachers and educators. Education, as an institution, is in crisis with a disastrous set of policies forced on an unwilling teaching staff which is, in turn, underpaid and devalued. Although a greater chance of success would undoubtedly resultfrom a concerted and combined effort to fight for better education for everyone, it is clearly not in all parties' interests to see such unity, in the same way as it is not the desire of all to see a united working class.

But it is unfortunate, at a time when there has never been a greater need to fight for equality of opportunity for all groups, that there is a continuing call for segregation within some sections of some ethnic communities. Such an orientation can only fan the flames of ethnic

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intolerance already manifest in, for example, the closure of many local authority 'Race Units', the rejection of multi-cultural education and the rise, both here and elsewhere, of neo-fascist political groupings.

THE ROLE OF TELEVISION IN THE PROMOTION OF ETHNIC STEREOTYPES

Given the primacy of television in our social and cultural life, what images are reflected through the dramatic and comedic portraits of ethnic characters in popular programming? What roles are cast for ethnic actors and what are the perceptions of these roles from the view of the white viewing public? This study has demonstrated that in the main, ethnic representations conform closely to the perceptions that the white majority hold about ethnic populations in the real world. Perceptions of black criminality and Asian victimisation are regularly rehearsed through the medium of television where ethnic actors are rarely seen as ordinary, normal people, involved in ordinary, normal activities. Instead, the ethnicity of black and Asian characters is always delineated, their essential differentness to other cast members a constant reference point. Ethnic actors are rarely allowed to act 'outside their skin', to break out of the traditional roles accorded them by white producers and expected of them by the white audience.

Whilst it may well be the case, as all the television professionals who were interviewed insisted, that ethnic representations are 'better' now than at any time in the past, it still does not mean very much in terms of positive, realistic and non-stereotypical roles for ethnic actors. If so-

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called comedy series such as "Love Thy Neighbour", "Mind Your Language" and "It Ain't Half Hot, Mum" are now, thankfully, absent from programme schedules, Alf Garnett is still articulating racist rhetoric in his follow-up series, "In Sickness and In Health". The power of humour to confirm or challenge assumptions should not be under-estimated. As Davies points out, ethnic jokes serve to legitimise the position of the majority in relation to the minority (Davies, 1982), to lay out the relationship between the powerful and the powerless.

How then does television operate on the attitudes and behaviour of the viewing public? It is highly unlikely that many 16 and 17 year-olds will have had direct experience of being rejected at a job interview in favour of a black or Asian candidate, so why do students say that "all the jobs go to black people"? Where does this perception come from? Why do students believe that multi-ethnic neighbourhoods encourage house prices to fall? Why do students feel that there is a serious danger of 'swamping by immigrants'? Why do more than a third of respondents believe that black people are over-crowding Britain and putting an intolerable strain on national resources when in reality more than half of current immigration is from Europe, America and other white countries? Why do a third of respondents over-estimate the number of black and Asian people in the County of Warwickshire by a factor of at least two but often more? It is argued here that the answers to many of these questions can be found, to a very large extent, in the role that television plays in the formation and maintenance of attitudes towards groups and situations of which the majority of people have no direct, personal experience. Television's continued focus on the problematic aspects of our multi-ethnic society

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contributes to the promotion of these ideas. In both drama and documentary genres, if ethnicity is an issue, then it is always a problematic one. It is rare that an ethnic character is allowed to be an ordinary person with ordinary concerns and ordinary values. S/he is more usually 'being ethnic' in some deliberate way, the 'black policeman', the 'black nurse' or the 'black villain'. If a black person is put forward as an 'expert' on an issue, it is nearly always an 'ethnic' issue such as harassment, discrimination or inter-ethnic relations. The continual and unremitting focus on difference and conflict encourages a view of the social world which is similarly polarised.

Whilst it has not been possible to isolate the influence that television, as distinct from other sources, exerts on the formation of beliefs it is the contention of this thesis that, given the centrality of television in social life, it is not unreasonable to suggest that television does play a significant role in the formation of ideas and the reinforcement of assumptions and beliefs. Husband for example suggests that television drama "all too often reflects and reinforces the prejudices of white Britain" (Husband, 1975, p.31). Barwise & Ehrenberg similarly assert that the normative values with which much of popular television fiction is overlaid encourages a perpetuation of the prevailing status quo, leading to the accusation that "television reinforces existing differences in the power and status of different groups within society" (Barwise & Ehrenberg, 1988, pp.143-144).

This current study (and others discussed in preceding chapters) demonstrates that television is regarded as the major source of information

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about the world and moreover is perceived as being more credible than either radio or newspapers: in this study, students stated that television is three times more believable than radio and eight times more believable than newspapers. Given the esteem in which television is thus held, it is telling to find that nearly two-thirds of respondents do not believe that television promotes racial harmony and more than a third of respondents believe that television is inaccurate in its portrayal of black and Asian people. Hartmann & Husband suggest that the media perform a dual role in both mitigating and perpetuating negative perceptions of black Britons.

> "The mass media have played an important part in defining for the white public the nature and meaning of the black presence in Britain...this definition is entirely consistent with the attitudes and perspectives on race provided by the entertainment media which continue to reflect traditional cultural assumptions about race" (Hartmann & Husband, 1974, p.208)

Although television still performs its functional trinity of information, education and entertainment for its teenage audience, other sources of information and education about the political, economic and social world are also important in the formation of their ideas and beliefs about society. Parents were regarded as the most credible from an index of sources including various media forms, friends and teachers. It is the contention of this thesis that opinions are transmitted inter-generationally through informal oral history traditions and story-telling: a minority of students made remarks on their questionnaires which were historically specific, for example, mention of Enoch Powell and the National Front, neither of which is a recent or current phenomenon. It is also interesting to note that whilst young men were more prone to hostile attitudes towards black and Asian people, they were also more persuaded by

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parental opinion than were young women. As far as the attitudes of teachers and lecturers impact upon their students, teachers were regarded as less believable than parents, radio or television but slightly more believable than friends or newspapers.

The findings of this study suggest that young white students do make stereotypical judgments about ethnic minority communities where such judgments conform to the traditional conceptions which have been accorded such communities by the white majority. Whilst the study was unable to isolate the specific influence of television on attitude formation and maintenance from other sources, it does indicate the existence of strong parallels between what are assumed to be specifically 'ethnic' characteristics in the population generally and the way in which ethnic minority people are typically represented and characterised in television fictions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ETHNIC IMAGES AND TELEVISION

This study concludes that television reinforces, through its fictional portraits, many of the traditional stereotypical assumptions about ethnic minority communities which are part of the cultural repertoire of the white majority. The medium of television is acknowledged as a powerful transmitter of information and a highly popular entertainment form in addition to having at least a notional influence on consumer purchasing choice. It has therefore at least the potential of influencing opinion by its treatment of controversial issues and its representations of particular

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groups. What then are the implications of the study findings for the future of ethnic images on television?

Given that the majority of ethnic characterisations in popular fictions are stereotypical in form and content, offering no challenge to the traditional perceptions and assumptions of the white majority audience towards ethnic communities, it is clear that such representations must be changed if television is firstly to more accurately portray social life as it exists and is lived and second, provide a service to all its viewers, black and white. One such way is through the device of integrated casting where writers simply write dialogue which is not ethnically specific, so that an actor from any ethnic background would be suitable to play the part. Peter Ansorge at Channel 4 identifies the soap opera "Brookside" as a good example of how such a device can work well. He discusses why the Chinese family in the series has failed to find favour but how the casting of Louis Emerick as Mick Johnson has been much more successful.

> "Well, the Chinese family is an interesting example, because everyone is in agreement that it didn't really work out, partly because they were put in with an awareness of the criticism in certain quarters that Brookside wasn't very ethnic. That's a case where they sat down and artificially introduced a Chinese family in this instance and I think that the audience will spot in the end that artificiality. Whereas with Mick and his family, Mick just arrived as a character in the series...and they just cast him black, it wasn't actually written in as that. He worked as a character and then the writers decided to build up his part and to introduce his family, to actually bring them to the Close and that worked much better because you feel that somehow that's natural. He's a character as any other and that's the way to do it" (Ansorge, interview with author, 1990)

A greater diversity of credible and realistic roles for ethnic actors is also important, coupled with deliberate support strategies for nurturing

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black talent from behind the camera as well as in front of it. Narendhra Morar, producer of "East" comments that

> "I think it is crucial that television is reflective of the community it serves at all levels. I think that there are not enough brown and black faces, either directly on screen or behind, but I don't think there is a magic solution" (Morar, in interview with author, 1989)

Jim Moir from the BBC believes that although television does have some responsibility for challenging traditional assumptions about the black community, he is sceptical that it should or would want to be more controversial since "television is an entertainment, not a crusading medium" (Moir, in interview with author, 1989). However, Ansorge recognises that any movement for change must come from the industry itself and suggests that "in order for the ways in which black people are portrayed to change, people like myself have to go out and make it happen...it won't happen automatically" (Ansorge, in interview with author, 1989).

Both Channel 4 and the BBC have initiated strategies aimed at encouraging black people to enter the television industry at a variety of levels. In 1983 the National Film and Television School offered 4 foundation courses in various aspects of the industry, sponsored by Channel 4. The BBC have run several training programmes specifically for black recruits, the latest being in 1989 when "A Step Forward" was launched to help black comedy writers to get into television. This initiative was jointly sponsored by the black comedian Lenny Henry and another BBC training programme offered in 1989 was co-sponsored by Project Fullemploy, an organisation dedicated

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to getting black people into employment. Speaking to Moir a year later, he suggests that it is still too early to predict the outcome of these initiatives but says that he's positive that something good will come of it (Moir, in interview with author, 1990).

Such strategies are, of course, to be commended but what is of more crucial importance is, a recognition of the ways in which black people are regularly portrayed and then engaging the positive will to reorientate such portraits to provide a more diverse range of character types, environments and social settings within popular television fiction. A simple head-counting exercise is only partially useful since at the level of statistics, the incidence of black actors more or less reflects the number of black people in the community generally. Whilst this is not to suggest that there should not be more black people appearing in television, what is arguably of more importance is the current overly negative characterisation of those black people who do get roles portraying servants, shop-owners, criminals and victims. Whilst the white majority's perceptions of black people may well conform to these stereotypes, it is is highly unlikely that such perceptions are rooted in their personal experiences of the black communities. But in any case, it is only by challenging these stereotypes in the relatively safe context of television that real progress and change can be effected.

That the BBC at least recognises the importance of the television message is indicated by the award of a £100,000 commission to Aston University in 1989 to monitor the way in which certain activities such as sex, violence and alcohol abuse are portrayed on television, in addition to an analysis

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of the representation of minority groups on the main television channels (including independent television) where minority groups include minority ethnic groups, disabled people and women. That the monitoring exercise is designed partly to pre-empt any future complaints about irresponsible broadcasting when the Broadcasting Standards Council finally gets its teeth in the autumn of 1990 is perhaps a cynical but timely reminder that television does have an impact on the audience, an impact which the public service channel is being forced to acknowledge. The BSC also launched a £120,000 research initiative (in 1989) aimed at analysing the impact of televisual material on a range of viewers. The BSC will attempt, inter alia, to identify whether women viewers object strongly to scenes of rape and domestic violence and how disaster victims feel they have been treated by the media.

Given the extent to which television is regarded as having at least the potential to influence attitudes and behaviour, what is the likelihood of change taking place in popular programming? To what extent are ethnic representations likely to more closely reflect the lived experiences of ethnic communities? Given the subtle power of humour and the popularity of comedy programmes, what role can humour play in challenging old orthodoxies and bringing about change? For a variety of reasons, not least of which is impending de-regulation, change in any of the directions postulated is, sadly, unlikely. As some of the television professionals who were interviewed pointed out, the market dictates the terms and the market wants safe and comfortable programmes where their assumptions and prejudices are reinforced, not challenged by awkward realities and themes. Where competition for viewers is likely to intensify with channels being awarded

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to the highest bidder, the future does not look good for broadcasting which attempts to offer something of a less orthodox nature. As Husband points out, there are several reasons why, for example, the "creative use of television comedy to expose racism in Britain" will not be forthcoming.

Firstly, such a dramatic reversal of the traditionally cosy stereotypes utilised in the genre would be a significant deterrent to the popular viewing public. Second, the recent onslaught over the partiality and political bias of television channels and, by default, their producers, has encouraged a heightened self-consciousness within the industry and an attendant reluctance to attract further censure by taking a firm stand on thorny issues of social policy such as institutional racism (Husband, 1988). There has also been an extremely persuasive and effective campaign against anti-racist strategies - again part of the new racism indicated by Barker - which, among other things, used the death of an Asian schoolboy at a Manchester school as the ultimate example of the dangers of anti-racist teaching. The anti-anti-racists regularly lambast the so-called 'Loony Left' councils and various pressure groups for their efforts in aiming to eradicate racism and sexism from the social agenda. Focussing attacks on easy targets such as the banning of Enid Blyton books or the rejection of "Ba Ba Black Sheep" ensures that such small aspects of racism achieve maximum exposure and public ridicule whilst the more harmful and pernicious effects remain undiscussed and unchallenged. The ejection of the labour controlled council at Brent in the May 1989 local elections is some indication of the success of the anti-anti-racist campaign, as is a resurgence in popularity of fascist organisations such as the National Front and the British National Party.

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In the present political climate, with the Broadcasting Bill and its emphasis on impartiality, together with the increased power promised to the Broadcasting Standards Council, it is highly unlikely that any network, either commercial or public service, will include a pioneering theme of social justice programming in its forecast schedules. To do so at a time when debate on franchises and notions of what constitutes 'good' television continue apace, would be rather reckless. To do so at a time when the moral high ground has been appropriated by 'new right' thinking predicated upon notions of cultural integrity and insularity would be singularly inadvisable. The one gleam of hope however lies in the very fact that the television industry is highly sensitive to public opinion. Moir speaks of his sacks full of mail requesting repeat broadcasts of "The Black and White Minstrels" show but is shrewd enough to recognise that public (as opposed to private) opinion at least would condemn such a screening as being entirely racist. When asked whether he genuinely believed that the majority of his viewing public had also moved on in their thinking he said that he did believe that was the case, but that in any event it was illegal to discriminate (Moir, in interview with author, 1990). The industry is totally dependant on the television audience for its continued existence and as competition between channels increases so the viewer will become the focus for a range of sophisticated attraction techniques.

At a time when the population as a whole is getting older, it is the ethnic communities with their younger age base who are going to have increasingly enhanced purchasing powers and periods of leisure time where they might wish to pay for television services. It may well be that the support of the black community will be actively sought because of the crucial

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difference such support could make to particular television channels. If that does happen, and it is not an altogether unrealistic scenario, then it will be interesting to see what demands the black community make on the industry, and to what extent increased black involvement in television, both as consumers and as professionals in the industry, will bring about significant and enduring change.

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