

Wilson, Clinton C., Gutierrez, Felix and Chao, Lena M., Racism, Sexism and the Media: The Rise of Class Communication in Multicultural America, 3rd edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, 2003, ISBN 0 7619 2516 3, 327 pp., A\$75.00. Distributor: Footprint.

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For 20 years, Wilson and Gutierrez have been documenting the growth in academic work around the relationship between the mass media in the United States and that country's non-White population. When they began working on *Minorities and Media* (published in 1985), even supportive colleagues were sceptical that there was a book in it. Now they sit astride a burgeoning academic sub-discipline which, with the growth of market segmentation, has become a key formation in the world's dominant communication industry.

In this book, what they term the third edition of their joint work, Wilson and Gutierrez are joined by Lena Chao who brings her expertise in Asian-Pacific American media and women of colour to Wilson and Gutierrez's perspectives on Black and Hispanic media. The result is a comprehensive, almost encyclopaedic, account of non-Whites in the media that is recommended for undergraduate and graduate students taking Mass Communication and Social Sciences courses, presumably in the United States.

Racism, Sexism and the Media provides an extensive history of racial stereotyping from Vaudeville to video games. It features detailed accounts of racism in the press, advertising and public relations, with a chapter on the place of women of colour in the media. This historical reporting provides the spine of the book and is perhaps where the authors are most comfortable.

By contrast, their theoretical work is more of a moveable feast which reflects the state of play within the sub-discipline in the United States. The authors internalise the dichotomy that is race relations in the United States: the wealthy Anglo majority need the cheap labour of divegmerican way for 400 years and the abolition of slavery (an economic necessity to draw the country from its agrarian, feudal past to its industrial, modern present) has just changed the way minority populations are controlled.

There is a sense in which the authors know this problem, but it is difficult to escape the American dream. They do not take the recourse in Frantz Fanon or Stuart Hall that would give them firm grounds on which to build a thorough-going critique of the media's creation and control of minority audiences. Rather, they celebrate the rise of hip-hop and J-Lo and explore strategies for dealing with 'racially insensitive' media, arguing for access to the mainstream media, advocating change in the

mainstream media and constructing alternatives from the newspapers of the nineteenth century to the cable channels and websites of the twenty-first century. The irony is that these alternative media have become vital tools in corporations' targeting of audience segments for marketing purposes.

While the authors correctly identify the class basis of this audience segmentation, they see it as an opportunity for minority investment rather than an opportunity for critique. The issue remains the same, not just for ethnic minorities but for all without power in the emerging global economy: how can the media be subverted, diverted and converted to allow for the broad deliberations which the effective operation of democracy requires?