

veyed in the oral tradition as well as our genes--what Antonio Gramsci called the *buon senso* of all peoples.

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Herman Gray. *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness."* (University of Minnesota Press, 1995). 224 pp., \$34.95.

Professor Herman Gray offers a fascinating, highly analytical, and well-researched account of race (and gender) mirrored in the prism of televised images. Focusing mostly on the decade of the 1980s, in an almost razzle-dazzle and didactic fashion he explores the deep sociological and political manifestations of televised racial imagery and its effects on the well-being of American society.

Gray's book is a "televisual" combination of Toni Morrison's discourse on race imagery in *Playing in the Dark* (Harvard, 1992) and Cornel West's socio-political treatise in *Race Matters* (Vintage, 1994). His 10 chapters don't always seamlessly flow, as if initially written for different audiences, but each is bridged with an overall rationale brilliantly stated in the Introduction. Framed "largely within the time-span that begins with the election of Ronald Reagan as President (1980) and ending with the airing of the last episode of *The Cosby Show*, which took place during the Los Angeles riots on April 30, 1992," the author interprets the televised images of race in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, which led up to the Republican backlash against The Great Society.

Watching Race thankfully includes gay/lesbian concerns. But this needed perspective in ethnic studies falls glaringly short in Chapter 8 regarding *A Different World*, the author's favorite TV show (along with *Frank's Place* and *Roc*, with *In Living Color* his least favorite.) For all its so-called "imaginatively use(d) (of) the dominant conventions of the genre to saturate its televisual world with blackness . . ." (p103), Gray fails to point out how *A Different World* overlooked opportunities to address black gay/lesbian issues. Perhaps understandable from the show's creators' viewpoint given the recent demise of *Ellen*, still, Gray's critical analysis is glaringly omitted. So were controversies about black student-athletes vis-a-vis the athletic enterprise, which sociologist Harry Edwards has long made a national issue. Gray does address black athlete recruitment in *Frank's Place*, and black homosexuality in *Roc* and *In Living Color*, but won't the milieu of the Historically Black Colleges make inter-

collegiate athletic exploitation and gay/lesbian marginalization all the more significant to an African American experience?

Reestablishing his critical lens with *Foc*, Gray observes the casting of macho-man Richard Roundtree from 1970's *Shaft* as a gay man in an interracial relationship, thus providing astute insight about media's construction and deconstruction of black heterosexuality. But most TV watchers already knew this actor had challenged his so-called macho image in an earlier *Roots* episode begging an angry slave-master (George Hamilton) not to whip him. Obviously aware of this, Gray does not mention it, perhaps because juxtaposing such imagery of (black) masculinity, or the diminishment of it, might support conventional notions of masculinity vis-a-vis an image of homosexuality.

Gray skillfully demonstrates his repartee at word-smithing, which at times is a bit overbearing. For instance, he overuses the word "discursive." Still, the ebb and flow of his impressive narrative have an analytical and conceptual complexity reflecting intimate knowledge of the material and the skill to deliver it.

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MaryCarol Hopkins. *Braving a New World: Cambodian (Khmer) Refugees in an American City.* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1996). 192 pp., \$55.00 cloth.

Cambodians, officially classified as Asian Americans, are a part of this large group which contributes to the country's fastest growing minority population. The Cambodians in Middle City, the pseudonym of a Midwestern city, however, live in a world unlike any resembling those in middle Asian America. They are victims of poverty, of dangerous urban housing and of social isolation. The majority are of poor health, illiterate in English, and too old or too distracted to learn. Hopkins' study of this community is classic ethnography, describing in vivid details the ordinary family and Buddhist ceremonial life of the Cambodians as they adapt to an American city. She interprets for the reader her intimate knowledge of a people and its community, covering topics on how Cambodians meet their basic needs in an alien environment, their patterns of kinship and social organization, their traditional values in a new setting, and the individuals and their institutions as agents of culture change. There is a chapter on Cambodian children in American schools and one on maintaining traditional culture and the barriers to change. Her assessment of the community stems from a systematic comparison with