Introduction
Questioning Cultural Difference

Phil Hammond

During the Second World War the director Frank Capra made a film for the American government, called *Know Your Enemy - Japan*. Released on 9 August 1945 - the day Nagasaki was atom-bombed - the film was withdrawn from circulation before the month was out. Short as its life was, however, *Know Your Enemy* is an interesting piece of propaganda because of the history of its making: first drafted in June 1942, the film took three years to come to the screen. The chief cause of the delay was, ironically, the fact that the film-makers did not 'know their enemy'. As one of the scriptwriters, Irving Wallace, recounted:

> From [President Franklin Roosevelt] to General Marshall down, no one knew what to tell the troops about who their real enemy was. Some felt that the only good Jap was a dead Jap and condemned the whole race of people as the enemy (as Colonel Capra believed). Others felt the enemy was the Emperor. Still others believed Tojo and the military clique were the real enemy.[1]

The first producer of *Know Your Enemy - Japan*, the Dutch film-maker Joris Ivens, thought to treat Japan as Germany had been treated in US propaganda, whereby military and political leaders were the main villains. He came into conflict with Capra and the Pentagon, who insisted that the whole Japanese people as a race were the enemy. Since Japan was a non-white power, a racial double standard was applied. As John Dower notes in his discussion of the film, there was no room for the 'good Japanese' as there was for the 'good German'.[2]

This differential treatment of the Japanese and Germans was again apparent fifty years later on the occasion of the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War. The British government announced in January 1995 that, while for the anniversary of Victory in Europe 'the theme is reconciliation, a celebration of fifty years of peace in Europe and hope for the future', the anniversary of Victory over Japan Day 'will have quite a different theme'.[3] The different tone of the two occasions reflected the decision not to invite any Japanese representative to August's sombre commemoration of VJ-Day, in contrast to the invitation extended to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to attend the celebratory festivities marking VE-Day in May. The *Daily Mail* positively delighted in this decision, declaring that: 'there is a huge difference in the way we are treating these once mortal enemies. Rightly so.'[4] The *Mail* - which ran this story as a front-page item, placed it at the top of its editorial column, and carried a feature article on it - argued that 'John Major had no choice but to snub Japan'.

Though the *Mail* may have been singularly enthusiastic, it was not unique in taking its cue from the government. In the months that followed, all sections of

the British press were relentless in their demand that Japan apologise for its wartime conduct, and vociferous in their justification of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A similar mood existed in the United States, although there the priorities were reversed, and the primary focus of the media was on defending the decision to use the bomb. In this volume, Uday Mohan and Leo Malley III describe the coverage of the Pacific War anniversaries in America, while Paul Stirner and I provide an equivalent analysis of the British press, and John Knight examines the impact which the anniversaries made in the Japanese media. As Mohan and Malley demonstrate, despite a past legacy of dissent over the bomb decision, in the 1990s media reporting has closed down public discussion, curtailing historical investigation in favour of an uncritical commemoration of the past.

Occasionally, a dissenting voice would be heard, and sometimes official initiatives went too far for the media. For instance, when the US government proposed issuing a special postage stamp to celebrate the bombing of Hiroshima - bearing a picture of a mushroom cloud and the slogan 'Atomic bombs hasten war's ends, August 1945' - one American commentator pointed out that it would be hard to imagine an equivalent Japanese stamp, depicting a sinking battleship and captioned: 'Japanese aviators achieve surprise at Pearl Harbour, December 1941'.[5] Yet in general the sense of Anglo-American moral superiority over the Pacific War was so ingrained that it was echoed even by those writers who tried to take a distance from the anniversary fever. In Britain, for example, the *Guardian*'s Political Editor, Michael White, rightly set the obsession with the war in the context of 'a backward-looking, heritage-minded society...where the past offers more comfort than the future'. Yet even as he described Britain's attempt to monopolise the 'trade in moral superiority', White referred to the atomic-bombing of Hiroshima as 'a cost-effective life-saver'.[6] It seemed evident, to any reader of the British or American press, that 'they' commit atrocities and never apologise, while 'we' save lives (and cheaply) by atom-bombing them.

During the Second World War Allied propaganda portrayed the Japanese as a sub-human species. American and British newspaper cartoonists routinely depicted them as rats, lice, and, most commonly, as apes or monkeys.[7] Fifty years later, the commemorations of the end of the Pacific war became the occasion, in Britain and the United States, for a media deluge of anti-Japanese chauvinism and self-righteousness. The continuity appeared to be striking, particularly in the way in which racial thinking underpinned the contemporary view of Japan. Why were apparently similar attitudes still surfacing in the media half a century after the end of the war? This question was the starting point for the research presented in this book.

1. Continuity and Change

Some argued that the Japan-bashing of 1995 was simply a hangover from the past. Scott Lucas and Richard Hope, for example, observing that the British attitude was worse than that of America or Australia, explained this perceived difference by reference to the legacy of wartime propaganda:

> Behind this British portrayal there is a history, not only of the treatment of prisoners of war or the cost of the Pacific conflict, but also of the propaganda of the second world war. Long before the first battles in Asia, the British government was producing a vision of Japanese fanaticism, unthinking loyalty, and even barbarism, which still continues today.[8]

Quite apart from the fact that, in terms of the hostile and racist depiction of Japan in wartime and earlier, there is little to distinguish Britain from the United States, this explanation cannot stand. It strains credibility to assert that the news coverage of 1995 was determined by the propaganda of the 1930s and '40s. Certainly, there were remarkable continuities. In a judicious synthesis, Gina Owens' chapter in this volume traces the pre-war history of Western perceptions of Japan. Themes which emerged in the thinking of the Anglo-American élite in the nineteenth century are still strikingly evident in today's discussion of Japan. Yet these echoes are present in the 'normal', routine reporting of the country - and were not simply prompted by the wartime anniversaries stirring old memories.

A truism about British media reporting of Japan is that there is not much of it. Despite being one of the most economically powerful and technologically sophisticated countries in the world - and despite being a major investor in both Britain and America - Japan is generally rather under-reported. Yet during 1995 Japan was a highly newsworthy country, experiencing a major earthquake, a poison gas attack on the Tokyo subway, a hijacking, and a trade war with the United States. As against all these extraordinary stories, however, the wartime anniversaries provided the longest-running news event of the year. In one sense, of course, it was the most exceptional story: catastrophes and disasters, though rare, may happen any time; fiftieth anniversaries, by definition, happen only once. But in another sense the war commemorations were the most typical events - not just because the Second World War is central to British political culture,[9] but also because, as Paul Stirner and I demonstrate in our chapter, the loud proclamation of Western moral superiority which accompanied the anniversaries of the Allies' atomic bombings and ultimate victory was simply a full-throated version of the prejudices and double standards which are voiced routinely the rest of the time in more muted tones. This is a point developed in this volume by Tessa Mayes and Megan Rowling, who present the results of a survey of British Japan correspondents and Foreign Editors.

On the occasion of the wartime anniversaries, one could perhaps be forgiven for thinking that anti-Japanese chauvinism was a throwback to earlier attitudes. Yet we had been there before, without the prompt of a victory commemoration. As David Morley and Kevin Robins note:

> An outburst of 'Japan bashing' flared up around 1987, and it did so as an immediate consequence of the thawing relations between the West and the Soviet bloc. It is the transformation to the so-called New World Order that is now changing American and European attitudes to Japan. Now there is a growing hostility to what is seen as its ruthless and dedicated

> economic expansionism, anger at a corresponding insensitivity to global concerns (the environment, famine) and resentment about its lack of political solidarity (the Gulf War).[10]

In 1991 the French Prime Minister, Edith Cresson, notoriously described the Japanese as 'ants'. These 'little yellow men', she said, have 'a strategy of world conquest', and 'stay up all night thinking about ways to screw the Americans and Europeans. They are our common enemy.'[11] As Morley and Robins rightly observe, it was the growing power of Japan relative to America, in the context of a changing framework of international relations, which prompted outbursts such as Cresson's. In other words, the causes of contemporary anti-Japanese sentiment are contemporary, rather than a throwback to an earlier era.

However, Morley and Robins suggest that this argument is insufficient to explain the outburst of Japan bashing in recent years:

> In 1989, the Japanese overtook the Russians in opinion polls as the nation which Americans fear most. The 'official' explanation of this is in economic terms....It is, however, not simply a matter of economic hegemony.[12]

In one sense, of course, this is true: economic rivalry is not explanation enough on its own, although it is important. By the early 1990s, not only had America turned from the world economy's largest creditor to its largest debtor, it was Japan which largely financed that debt. Yet this economic rivalry has to be set in the context of, first, a thaw in US-Soviet relations, and then the end of the Cold War. Though noting this context, in practice Morley and Robins tend to underestimate its significance. American hegemony was not simply a matter of the economic pre-eminence enjoyed in the early post-war period. Increasingly, as its economic power declined, the United States came to rely on the stable framework of international politics provided by the Cold War as a means to assert its global leadership. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, America's established position as leader of the free West against the Evil Empire to the East also collapsed.

Western triumphalism over 'winning' the Cold War was muted and short-lived. The political élites of London and Washington have come to miss an international order in which challenges from the relatively dynamic economies of Germany and Japan could be offset by the balance of military power and political influence established through the Cold War. Perhaps the most useful point of historical comparison to be made today is with the pre-war period, when, as now, Japan was seen as upsetting the world order. In a world dominated by white colonial powers, the growing strength of Japan was perceived as a threat not just to the economic and political interests of Europe and America, but to the ideology of racial superiority through which they justified their domination of the globe. Whereas in the past such concerns were expressed explicitly as a fear for 'white prestige' in the Far East, today's commentators are more likely to frame the problem in terms of Japan's *moral* inferiority and *cultural* difference.

This is not to suggest that contemporary Japan-bashing is purely a matter of international politics and world economic rivalry. Rather, the British crusade for apologies, American sanctimony over the bomb, and French name-calling are designed primarily for domestic consumption. This is why, in his chapter in this volume, Uday Mohan locates the controversy over the Smithsonian Institution's planned Hiroshima exhibition in the context of the 'culture war'. He argues that the conservative reaction against critical history in 1995 was as much an attack on the legacy of 1960s liberalism as it was an attempt to enforce the official interpretation of the decision to use the atomic bomb. Similarly, in Britain commemoration of wartime anniversaries provided a rare opportunity for an unpopular government to generate a 'feelgood factor'. Berating the Japanese for their war record afforded politicians and journalists a comforting sense of moral superiority in an uncertain present. Anti-Japanese chauvinism in the 1990s, then, is a product of contemporary Western problems and concerns. This point deserves emphasis because it has important consequences for how one understands the significance attributed to Japanese 'cultural difference'.

2. The West and No 'Other'

Morley and Robins draw on the work of Edward Said and Robert Young to supply what they perceive to be missing from what they call the 'official' explanation of contemporary anti-Japanese chauvinism:

> Our interest here is in tracing a set of discursive correspondences that have been, and still are being, developed in the West between 'Japan', the 'Orient' and the 'Other'. More specifically, we want to explore why, at this historical moment, this particular Other should occupy such a threatening position in the western imagination.[13]

Despite an avowed intention to be historically specific, viewing Japan as the 'Other' of the West inexorably leads to an ahistorical and ultimately mystifying perspective. Since the approach Morley and Robins adopt toward Japan is representative of much of today's thought about the West and its 'Others', it is worth examining in some detail.

The concept of the Other refers to the way in which what Said calls the 'universalising discourses of modern Europe and the United States' silence the rest of the world.[14] The universalism of Enlightenment thought, it is argued, is ultimately oppressive - a form of intellectual imperialism. As Young puts it:

> The appropriation of the Other as a form of knowledge within a totalizing system can thus be set alongside the history (if not the project) of European imperialism, and the constitution of the Other as 'Other' alongside racism and sexism.[15]

The West can only construct its own sense of identity by excluding the non-Western world. The discourse of the conscious, rational, acting subject exists only at the expense of silencing an objectified Other. This radical critique of Enlightenment rationalism, which traces its roots to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, suffuses much contemporary critical thought, and, Morley and Robins contend, provides a useful framework for examining the West's relationship with Japan. The latter is the West's mysterious Orient; a 'traditional' culture of inscrutable irrationality counterposed to the rationalism of Western modernity. Accordingly, Morley and Robins argue that contemporary outpourings of anti-Japanese sentiment should not be understood as an expression of economic rivalry, but rather as a reaction against Japan's refusal to be the West's Other:

> Western anxieties about Japan are an expression of resentment at this emergence of a threat to what has been seen as the West's natural and proper claim on universalism.[16]

Thus, Japan's refusal to toe the Western line - as exemplified in Ishihara Shintaro's 1989 polemic, *The Japan That Can Say No* - should be understood as a fundamental challenge to the West's very sense of self.

To say that Japan has been constructed as the West's Other, however, is to lose sight of the specific historical conditions which have determined the country's relationship to the West. Just such an ahistorical approach is evident when, for example, Morley and Robins state that: 'For nearly five centuries now, Japan has been among the West's Others'.[17] This telescopes five hundred years of history into one 'discursive practice'. Similarly, they suggest that:

> The image of 'Japan Inc.' can readily be seen as an echo of the West's age-old fear of 'Oriental Despotism' - a phrase first used by the ancient Greeks to describe the Persians, but one which still provides the inherited script according to which the West now imagines (post)modern Japan.[18]

What are we to make of such a statement? Can it be that contemporary Western fears of Japanese industrial strength are not at root a matter of economic and geopolitical rivalry, but are really the playing out of an ancient Greek script? This is a particularly peculiar claim to make since elsewhere in their essay Morley and Robins point to the 'arbitrary annexation of Hellenic culture to Europe' as part of the very universalising Enlightenment tradition they criticise.[19]

At best, such an approach may illuminate the continuities of racial thinking - though tracing these ideas back to ancient Greece is decidedly unhelpful. But even when this is achieved, it is at the expense of understanding the specificity of how the ideology of race has been reworked and reformulated in changing historical circumstances. A key argument running through many of the contributions to the present volume, presented initially in Daniel Ben-Ami's chapter, is that ideas of *racial* difference have been re-thought, in the post-war period, in the language of *cultural* difference. It may be tempting to say that

nothing has changed in the West's view of Japan, and in one sense this is true: there is still an underlying racist attitude. Yet if we focus exclusively on the element of continuity we lose sight of the specificity of the contemporary discussion of cultural difference. It is not a question of an inherited script, but of a different script - one appropriate to the times. Edith Cresson's 1991 remarks prompted an outcry for exactly this reason. It is not the same to portray Japanese as racially different - a nation of rats, monkeys or ants - and to portray them as culturally different. Today the one causes a furore, whilst the other is likely to draw nods of assent.

For those who criticise the universalism of Enlightenment thought, the alternative must be an endorsement of difference. When Morley and Robins describe the 'fear that Japan's irreducible difference will remain aloof from, and impenetrable to, western reason and universalism',[20] they are not challenging the notion that Japan is 'irreducibly different' but agreeing with it. If a universalist perspective is a 'totalising' and ultimately 'totalitarian' one, the answer is a celebration of particularism. The goal, as Young puts it in discussing the work of Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard, must be to construct 'a form of knowledge that respects the other without absorbing it into the same'.[21] Despite the good intentions evident in this statement, assuring respect and de-capitalising the 'other' provide no solution. The notion of cultural difference, after all, promises precisely to 'respect' difference, but in practice equates difference with inferiority. As Ben-Ami and other contributors to this book argue, despite the subjective intentions of the liberal proponents of cultural difference, 'culture' turns out to be very similar in content to the concept of race. Where once European élites classified the peoples under their colonial rule, and the classes at the bottom of their own societies, as biologically different, their contemporary counterparts now speak of cultural difference as the cause both of savagery abroad (for example, in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia,) and of the persistence of an 'underclass' at home.

Take, for example, the work of the American social scientist Charles Murray, whose 1994 book, *The Bell Curve,* written with Richard Herrnstein, was greeted by many with outrage. Murray and Herrnstein sought to explain the inequalities of American society through IQ, the supposedly objective measure of inherited, innate intelligence: 'the wages earned by people in high-IQ occupations have pulled away from the wages of low-IQ occupations, and differences in education cannot explain most of this change'.[22] The alleged link between IQ test scores and differences in income is thus supposed to prove that the inequalities of society are not social, but natural. As Murray and Herrnstein put it: 'the evidence presented here should give everyone who writes about ethnic inequalities reason to avoid flamboyant rhetoric about ethnic oppression'.[23] In other words, if blacks are at the bottom of US society, this is not the result of racism but the natural consequence of their lower intelligence. The reason *The Bell Curve* was such a controversial book is that it used old-fashioned genetic, or racial theories to naturalise social divisions. However, in earlier work Murray employed the more contemporary idiom of cultural difference to make essentially the same point. In a 1990 pamphlet for the British conservative think-tank the Institute of Economic Affairs, he explained the existence of an 'underclass' not in genetic, but in cultural terms.

The underclass, he argued, are the product of a ‘culture of poverty’. They have a distinctive ‘mindset’. They have different ‘values’ which are ‘contaminating the life of entire neighbourhoods’. Such an underclass develops, Murray contended, not as a result of the socio-economic system, but not as a result of inherited biological traits, such as innate intelligence, either. Rather, it is as a result of the socialisation of children by underclass parents; the passing on of cultural values and attitudes, rather than genes.[24]

In one sense it makes little difference whether one explains social inequality as a result of culture or nature. The concept of cultural difference fixes human characteristics just as much as the concept of race. Whether the argument is posed in terms of a biological inheritance or a cultural one, people are seen to be as they are, not as a result of their own actions and ideas, but as a result of an inherited legacy from the past. This is why an ahistorical notion such as that of the West and its Others is so problematic. Differences between societies are not seen as the product of human social activity in changing historical circumstances; rather, culture constructs people differently according to its own trans-historical discursive logic. It is not just that racial thinking underlies the liberal discussion of cultural difference. The latter is also far more dangerous because to view differences between and within societies in terms of culture is generally deemed acceptable, even sympathetic and sensitive, while the outmoded language of race is condemned.

3. Modernity and Self-loathing

The conclusion of Morley and Robins’ essay is that contemporary fear of the Japanese Other may reveal a disenchantment with the Western self. They speculate:

> ...we might suggest that the resentment expressed against Japanese technology (rationality, development, progress) reflects an unconscious and primal hatred of this aspect of western maturity. There is perhaps a (delirious) refusal, rejection, detestation of that modernity into which our own culture has been transformed; of that (totalitarian) element of modernity that threatens some deep-seated aspect (or cultural monad) in western society.[25]

Hatred of the Other, it is argued, belies a repressed self-loathing. Since contemporary anti-Japanese chauvinism is often expressed as a fear of Japanese technological advancement, perhaps the real object of attack is not so much the Oriental Other, but Western ‘modernity’ itself. This is something that Morley and Robins see as positive:

> Japan is significant because of its complexity: it is non-western, yet refuses any longer to be our Orient; it insists on being modern, yet calls our kind of modernity into question. Because of this Japan offers possibilities.[26]

Thus, a hostility to universalism implies a critique of ‘modernity’. If universalism, reason and progress are seen as characteristic of a totalising Eurocentric discourse, then its rejection must entail the disparagement of all these Enlightenment ideals.

Some recent thinking on the concept of race has questioned the equation being made here. This critique of ‘modernity’, as we have seen, implicates certain ideas or discourses - of progress, reason, universalism - in the history of imperialism. Yet pitching the argument against a certain discourse - that which constructs the Other - entails an ahistorical approach. As Kenan Malik writes:

> By conflating the social relations of capitalism with the intellectual and technological progress of ‘modernity’, the product of the former can be laid at the door of the latter. The specific problems created by capitalist social relations became dehistoricised....In this way the positive aspects of capitalist society - its invocation of reason, its technological advancements, its ideological commitment to equality and universalism - are denigrated while its negative aspects - the inability to overcome social divisions, the propensity to treat large sections of humanity as ‘inferior’ or ‘subhuman’, the contrast between technological advance and moral turpitude, the tendencies toward barbarism - are seen as inevitable or natural.[27]

Evidently, the intention of critics such as Said, Young, Morley and Robins is not to provide an apologia for racial division but to challenge it. Yet the approach adopted cuts the ground from under their critique. As they rightly observe, the Western claim to universalism is false. However, what is criticised, from this perspective, is not a *false* universalism, but false *universalism*. In other words, the criticism is not that the ideal of universalism is betrayed in practice; rather, what is rejected is universalism *per se*. Universalism is therefore abandoned in favour of a celebration of particularism and difference. As Frank Füredi puts it in discussing the New Left of the 1960s:

> The New Left was not in its origin motivated by a conservative impulse, but by rejecting universalism in general - because it confused the universalist form in which Western capitalism presented itself with the concept itself - it uncritically ended adopting a particularist epistemology. Unconsciously, the New Left reaction to postwar Western capitalism copied the methods and arguments of the conservative reaction to the Enlightenment.[28]

Yet a universalist outlook does not imply that differences, divisions or inequalities should be denied, but rather locates these as products of society and history. By contrast, where racial thinking explains inequality as the inevitable outcome of innate biological characteristics, the celebration of cultural difference understands divisions as the product of inherited cultural values. Instead, the target ought to be the inability of capitalist society to live

up to its universalist ideals and to deliver on its promised freedom and equality.

It may seem odd to criticise the celebration of culture for fixing identities, since it often appears to offer a view of cultural identity as something infinitely fluid and malleable. Where racial thinking rigidly ordered human being according to biological traits, culture is an 'anti-essentialist' concept. As we have seen, in practice what amounts to a cultural essence is substituted for a biological one, but in theory this should not be the case. If subjectivity is understood as the product of various discourses, there simply is no 'essential' self; we can reinvent ourselves. In relation to Japan, this perspective is adopted by the contributors to a recent volume on consumerism which suggests that: 'in a changing Japan, what people consume may be as important as what they produce in shaping a sense of self'.[29] One of the essays in the collection, for instance, addresses Japanese drinking etiquette:

> …the reason mixed drinks have not done well in the past is not that people did not like the taste or found the drinks too heavy or prohibitively expensive, but rather that Japanese social drinking traditionally emphasizes the sublimation and unification of individuals into community. Mixed drinks, by definition, are mixed and thus require special preparation that focuses undesirable attention on the individualistic demands of the drinker's order. Japan is a culture in which diners frequently seek consensus as to what they should order, a culture in which guests are automatically given sugar and cream in their coffee so as to save them from socially awkward decisions and the expression of individual demands.[30]

In many ways this passage simply reiterates established clichés about Japanese cultural difference, whereby ordering a whisky and soda supposedly precipitates an agony of embarrassment at an act of such rampant egoism in a conformist, 'group' society. The point being made, however, is that consumption - drinking, eating, shopping - is the means by which we construct our sense of self and through which social identities are transformed. Accordingly, the essay concludes that the situation regarding beverages is now more fluid than might be expected: 'In sum, one finds that there are more drinking contexts and more ways to drink, making drinking a more individualized, less ritualized experience'.[31] Culture, in this respect, appears not as a fixed and rigid phenomenon, but as something which can change through the act of consumption.

The example of drinking etiquette may seem a trivial one, but it is symptomatic of a tendency to promote consumption as a potentially liberating sphere of human activity. As Stuart Hall argues, consumption involves the 'pluralisation' of social life, since it 'expands the roles and identities open to ordinary people (at least in the developed world)'.[32] Even overlooking the fact that we are obliged to write off most of the world's population in order to sustain this theory of progressive consumerism, it implies a highly limited view of human potential.

If we understand the human subject as the product of an inherited script, who can only sustain a sense of self through oppressive objectification of the Other, human subjectivity itself is degraded. This is not simply an unfortunate by-product of the notion of the Other, it is central to the hostility toward Enlightenment rationalism. This is the hidden danger which underlies the celebration of cultural difference: not only is it a coded, liberal expression of racial thinking; it also ultimately denigrates purposeful human activity and the project of social change. Even when culture is understood as a fluid and manipulable phenomenon, our capacity for social action is limited. Though the re-invention of the self through culture may appear as an active process, it is essentially passive: human potential and control is constrained within the limits of shopping, or ordering drinks.

It is, in a sense, ironic that Morley and Robins should understand Japan bashing as a reaction against a challenge to Western claims of universalism. In her chapter in this book, Lynn Revell examines the way in which Anglo-American commentators have often viewed Japan as exceptional and different precisely because of its particularism; its refusal to conform to a universal standard. They point to Nihonjinron - the theory of 'Japaneseness' - as confirmation that not only are the Japanese different, they also see themselves as different. Japanese expressions of particularism do not challenge the Western world view, but confirm it. As Revell argues, the notion of cultural difference is of European origin, and the emphasis on Japanese cultural difference is a product of American thought. While the European emphasis on culture and tradition traces its roots to the nineteenth century reaction against the Enlightenment, the post-war adoption of the language of cultural difference was the product of the Nazi experience: after the Holocaust, the ideology of racial superiority was discredited, and had to be re-thought in cultural terms. In either case, there is nothing progressive or challenging in the celebration of difference or the denigration of universalist values.

'Cultural' explanations of all sorts of social phenomena are increasingly popular today.[33] As I hope to have indicated here, at the same time as having a very specific focus on the Anglo-American media portrayal of Japan, this book also raises broader issues and engages a number of wider debates which preoccupy scholars working across a number of disciplinary fields. One of the aims of the book is to interrogate the concepts of culture and cultural difference, and the first three chapters do this by exploring the history and contemporary nuances of Western images of Japan. The second section of this volume continues these arguments, taking a detailed look at how the discussion of difference was expressed in the media coverage of Japan in 1995, and examining the role of the media in constructing history and popular memory.

Notes

[1] Quoted in W.J. Blakefield, 'A War Within: The Making of *Know Your Enemy - Japan*', *Sight and Sound,* Spring 1983, p130.

[2] John Dower, *War Without Mercy,* London, Faber & Faber, 1986, p322n.

[3] Downing Street Press Office, 11 January 1995.

[4] *Daily Mail,* 6 January 1995.

[5] *International Herald Tribune,* 7 December 1994.

[6] *Guardian,* 14 January 1995.

[7] See Dower, op. cit., p181-190, for some representative examples.

[8] *Guardian,* 19 August 1995.

[9] See: Phil Hammond and Joan Hoey, *History As News,* London, LIRE, 1994.

[10] David Morley and Kevin Robins, 'Techno-Orientalism: Futures, Foreigners and Phobias', *New Formations,* No. 16, Spring 1992, p151. In relation to their point about criticism of Japan on 'environmentalist' grounds, it is perhaps also worth noting the long-running press story of the same period concerning Japanese whaling. See: Arne Kalland, 'Whale Politics and Green Legitimacy', *Anthropology Today,* Vol. 9, No. 6, December 1993.

[11] Quoted in Morley and Robins, op. cit., p 136.

[12] Ibid., p144.

[13] Ibid., p136.

[14] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* London, Chatto & Windus, 1993, p58.

[15] Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West,* London, Routledge, 1990, p4. This is a passage which Morley and Robins quote approvingly, op. cit., p147.

[16] Morley and Robins, op. cit., p150.

[17] Ibid., p136.

[18] Ibid., p142.

[19] Ibid., p143.

[20] Ibid., p148.

[21] Young, op. cit., p10.

[22] Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life,* New York, Free Press, 1994, p91.

[23] Ibid., p340.

[24] Charles Murray, *The Emerging British Underclass,* London, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1990.

[25] Morley and Robins, op. cit., p155.

[26] Ibid., p155. It is interesting to compare Morley and Robins' own invocation of Japan's supposed 'complexity' here with their earlier observation that: 'Its difference has been contained in the idea of some mysterious ambiguity. Japan is both "the chrysanthemum and the sword"....It is this complexity and ambiguity in the image of Japan that has given it a particular resonance in western fantasies. But, if it has been complex, it has always been possible symbolically to control this image of Japan' (p136-7). They draw attention to the past mystification of Japan as mysteriously 'complex' only to reiterate the idea themselves.

[27] Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race,* London, Macmillan, 1996, p246-7.

[28] Frank Füredi, *Mythical Past, Elusive Future: History and Society in an Anxious Age,* London, Pluto, 1992, p227.

[29] Joseph J. Tobin, 'Introduction: Domesticating the West', Joseph J. Tobin (ed.), *Re-Made in Japan,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992, p8.

[30] Stephen R. Smith, 'Drinking Etiquette in a Changing Beverage Market', in ibid., p153-4.

[31] Ibid., p156.

[32] Stuart Hall, 'Brave New World', *Marxism Today*, October 1988.

[33] For an illuminating discussion of this trend see Lynn Revell, 'The Cultural Apology', *Confrontation,* Vol. 2, No. 1, 1996.