

## Discourse and Race

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### Introduction

Many researchers have investigated the idea of 'race' as a discursive construction, the role of discourse in racialization processes, and the reproduction of racial stereotypes and discrimination of marginalized groups in society. In this body of work, researchers have often drawn on insights from cultural studies, critical theory, and postcolonial studies, apart from the analytical tools of different approaches to discourse analysis. In this chapter we outline key studies which have contributed to this topic. Instead of attempting to be exhaustive, we aim at highlighting intellectual milestones in this area and pointing towards some directions for future research.

### Discursive Construction of Race: Production of Self and Other

Early critical studies have exposed the historical emergence of the ideology of racism by analyzing how the white European colonialist discourse of race was formed both in conjunction with and in support of the slave trade and slavery institutions. Fryer (1984), in his book on Black history documented and critiqued the discourses of key figures in the colonialist era in the development of the ideology of racism. He pointed out:

Once the English slave trade, English sugar-producing plantation slavery, and English manufacturing industry had begun to operate as a trebly profitable interlocking system, the economic basis had been laid for all those ancient scraps of myth and prejudice to be woven into a more or less coherent racist ideology: a mythology of race (Fryer, 1984, p. 134).

Cultural theorists Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy are two key figures in problematizing the discursive construction of 'the West and the Rest' (Hall, 1992, p. 276), and the concept of 'race' (Gilroy, 2002, p. 36). Hall pointed out that 'the West' is not a fact of geography, but a historical construct discursively produced and reproduced in colonialist discourses and it functions to classify societies and people into different essentialist categories. It produces knowledge about the superior (White) West, and the inferior (non-White) Rest; it discursively constructs both the binary categories of cultural Self and Other and binary sets of knowledge about them (e.g., the civilized, advanced, superior West vs. the uncivilized, primitive, inferior Rest).

Similarly, 'race' is also a concept constructed in these colonialist discourses. As Gilroy (2002) observed:

Accepting that skin 'color', however, meaningless we know it to be, has a strictly limited basis in biology, opens up the possibility of engaging with theories of signification which can highlight the elasticity and the emptiness of 'racial' signifiers as well as the

ideological work which has to be done in order to turn them into signifiers in the first place. This perspective underscores the definition of 'race' as an open political category, for it is struggle that determines which definition of 'race' will prevail and the conditions under which they will endure or wither away (Gilroy, 2002, p. 36)

Edward Said's Orientalism, a key text in postcolonial theory, shows how the colonialist discourse on the Orient—Orientalism—has constructed a knowledge of the East and power-knowledge relations privileging the West. 'The Orient was a European invention', and 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience' (Said, 1985, pp. 1-2). Drawing on Saussure's linguistic theory (1974) on how signs gain their meanings not through representation of external facts, but through the setting up of internal contrasts, postcolonial theorists argue that **the colonialist has to construct an inferior cultural and racial/ethnic Other in order to know who he/she is (Self):**

The English are racist not because they hate the Blacks but because they don't know who they are without the Blacks. They have to know who they are not in order to know who they are.... It is a fantastic moment in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks when he talks of how the gaze of the Other fixes him in an identity. He knows what it is to be Black when the White child pulls the hand of her mother and says, "Look momma, a Black man." And he says, "I was fixed in that gaze." That is the gaze of Otherness. And there is no identity that is without the dialogic relationship to the Other. **The Other is not outside, but also**

inside the Self, the identity. (Hall, 1989, p. 23)

Hall (1989) launched a deconstruction of identity and difference in a poststructuralist and post-identity move to do away with essentialist constructions of race and ethnicity and of Self and Other altogether, and to focus on positionality. This has been echoed by recent critiques of Whiteness studies, and arguments for non-essentialist conceptualization of whiteness in critical education projects (Trainor, 2002), as will be discussed in the next section.

### Whiteness Studies and its Critiques

Whiteness studies were initiated as scholars began to focus on whiteness as discursively and socially constructed and to problematize its link to power and privilege. Works include White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness by sociologist Ruth Frankenberg (1993), Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination by writer and literary critic Toni Morrison (1992), and The Wages of Whiteness by historian David Roediger (1991). However, in recent years, Whiteness studies has been critiqued, chiefly for its ‘difficulty in moving against or away from the master narrative rooted in white supremacy’ (Kubota, 2004, p. 42). Another critique is that there is the danger of essentializing whiteness which is as worrying as the danger of essentializing blackness. As Trainor (2002) points out:

[there is ] the need to help students articulate antiessentialist identities as whites and to work through the paradoxes of constructing an antiracist white identity. We need to be

more aware of the rhetorical frames our pedagogies provide for students as they structure identity... Without such examination, we risk promoting a devastatingly unintended consequence: the development of a conscious, essentialized, and angry white identity predicated on reactionary political values. (Trainor, 2002, p. 647)

Essentialist constructions of race/ethnicity, and of Self and Other, however, seem to characterize not only earlier colonialist discourses but also contemporary elite discourses, which constitute our topic in the next section.

### Elite Discourse and Racism

Key research conducted by T. A. van Dijk uses both linguistic and social psychological approaches to the critical analysis of racist discourses of the White ruling elites in European, British, Australian, New Zealand, North American, Latin American and South African societies (van Dijk, 1993, 2005; Wodak and van Dijk, 2000). Van Dijk's classical 1993 study critically analyzed racist discourses from all key domains: political discourse, corporate discourse, academic discourse, educational discourse, and media discourse. In this important volume, van Dijk both integrated and theoretically elaborated his earlier research on racism and the press (van Dijk, 1991) and ethnic prejudice in thought and talk (van Dijk, 1987). Van Dijk differentiated between elite racism and popular racism and argued that it is the racist discourses of the elites in different domains of society that provide both the cognitive frameworks and the discursive resources for the reproduction of ethnic stereotypes in everyday

talk and thought of the masses. Drawing on Bourdieu (1984, 1988), van Dijk saw these elites as playing an important role in the authorization and legitimation of racist policies and everyday racist practices. Almost outperforming their earlier colonial predecessors, contemporary elites employ a range of sophisticated forms of discourse to legitimate their own social, political, language and economic policies that safeguard their elite status and privilege in society.

In line with the thinking of cultural theorists and postcolonial critics who have written earlier on the discursive construction of Self and Other (e.g., Said, 1985; Hall, 1989), van Dijk, working from his interdisciplinary perspectives informed in particular by linguistic analysis and cognitive schemata theory, saw it as an important empirical project of the discourse analyst to systematically gather the data and analytically demonstrate the discursive and cognitive processes through which racialized Self and Other are constructed both in elite discourses and everyday texts and conversations. While cultural theorists and postcolonial critics are important in providing the insightful observations about the intimate connection between racism and discourse, it is the empirical discourse analyst who systematically gathers and analyses the discourse data to show the many different ways in which language is recruited and shaped into recurrent, complex formats or patterns that mediate, perpetuate, and reproduce racialization and racism in both high and low domains of society. In his methodology, van Dijk drew on different linguistic and research traditions that include: theories of style, rhetoric, narrative, argumentation and conversation, pragmatics, ethnography, and the cognitive and social psychology of text and talk.

To illustrate the range of research procedures of such an interdisciplinary approach, van

Dijk's data collection and analysis methods employed in his study on racism and the press might be useful to the reader (see van Dijk, 1991, pp. 8-10). In this study, the main data corpus consisted of all types of news discourse that appeared in the British press between August 1, 1985 and January 31, 1986 as well as in the first six months of 1989. This corpus included all news reports, background and feature articles, columns and editorials about ethnic affairs, from both quality press and popular press. A total of 2,700 articles were analyzed. All news articles were coded for genre type, size, presence and size of photographs, and overall subject matter (e.g., immigration, race relations, education or crime). Finally, they were coded in terms of a number of propositions formulated in simple clauses (e.g., 'The Home Secretary said that the riots were criminally inspired').

Then, to study the hypothesized effects of racist reporting on the public, in-depth interviews among 150 newspaper readers (all white people) in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities were also conducted. Van Dijk adopted a sophisticated theoretical framework to inform his analysis which took into account the structures of media discourse, cognitive strategies of news text comprehension and memorization, and the structures and strategies of social representations of the readers.

### Everyday Discourse and the New Racism

Apart from critical analysis of elite discourse of racism, another important tradition of research in this area is the analysis of (re)production of racial formations and racist ideologies in everyday discourse, in particular, ordinary, mundane conversations and interactions.

Without attempting to be exhaustive, three studies will be reviewed here to illustrate the range of theoretical frameworks and methodological tools in this area of study.

Whereas earlier colonialist discourses drew on biology to construct racial and ethnic categories, the New Racism (Barker, 1981) discourses draw on culture to universalize and essentialize a superior Cultural Self and an inferior Cultural Other. Durrheim and Dixon (2000) analyzed how the discourses of White South African holidaymakers justified racial segregation and criticized social reforms by asserting universal theories of humans as cultural beings to naturalize everyday racist practices. Through a qualitative analysis of the informal interview talk of these holidaymakers, Durrheim and Dixon (2000, pp. 103-4) identified the rhetorical features of lay ontologies of culture.

Apart from lay theories about 'natural', 'universal' human nature, everyday racist discourses are also found to be (re)producing linguistic hierarchies. Anderson (2008) analyzed the race talk in her data of ten interviews with women in a large southeast U.S. university town. The interviewees were asked to identify the racial identity of pre-recorded voices. Not only did she find that her interviewees formulated links between speech styles and racial identities, but she also found that they accorded differential values to these speech styles and used this linguistic hierarchy to justify their hegemonic attitudes towards different racial groups (Anderson, 2008).

The New Racism discourse (Barker, 1981) continues to circulate in contemporary society and gets reproduced in everyday interactions. Pagliai's recent study (2009) drew on Conversation Analysis (CA) (see Kitzinger and Wilkinson this volume) methods in analyzing



how people engage in repeated conversational agreement to co-construct a racialized image of immigrants in Italy. Pagliai argued that this deployment leads to reinforcement of the racist stances expressed in the conversation itself, and possibly beyond it. The conversationists' (re)production of 'the category of the Other' who are assumed to share the same set of beliefs and actions (e.g., those of a terrorist) is part of an essentializing process of racial formation that can be seen operating at various levels, from everyday conversations, to public political discourse, to the mass media, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe', and is part of the New Racism discourses that draw on culture and religion to construct a separate 'race' (e.g., 'Arab/Muslims) (Pagliai, 2009, p. 568). Pagliai (2009) thus argued that educational programs created to reduce racist attitudes among the general public should pay attention to not only racist state policies (i.e., elite racism) but also the processes through which racist discourses are (re)produced and circulated in ordinary conversations (i.e., everyday racism).

With the global spread of the Internet, everyday racist discourses in the new media environment have become a rising concern. In the next section, we shall include excerpts from a study (Lin and Tong, 2009) to illustrate how positioning theory and storyline analysis can be used as one of the discourse analysis approaches to analyze how Hong Kong-based TV drama fans co-construct a superior cultural/ethnic Self (Chinese) and an inferior cultural/ethnic Other (Japanese) on an Internet fan forum of a Korean TV drama, Dae Jang Geum (the name of a Chosun Dynasty medicine woman). As in the New Racism, culture and ethnicity—two intertwined terms—are proxy for the idea of race (Kubota and Lin, 2009).

Positioning Theory and Storyline Analysis of Racist Online Discourses (Lin and Tong, 2009)<sup>i</sup>

In this study, Lin and Tong (2009) draw on positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré and Langenhove, 1999) to analyze weblog messages to see how different participants use discourse to construct cultural Self and Other. In typical colonial encounters, the colonizer discursively positioned the colonized as a cultural, ethnic and linguistic 'other', establishing binary separation of the colonizer and the colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the former (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998). In both our daily conversations as well as public discourses such discursive construction of Self and Other and of different subject positions for Self and Other routinely occurs. Positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) proposes that such subject positions are linked to our discursively constructed storylines which are constantly being negotiated by different parties. For instance, a speaker can position other speakers by adopting a storyline that incorporates a certain interpretation of cultural stereotypes to which other speakers are invited to conform, if they are to continue to interact with the first speaker in a cooperative manner (Davies and Harré, 1990).

The construction of storyline is central to the establishment and articulation of collective and personal identities, which involves assigning different subject positions (or 'characters') to different people in a certain context according to a storyline projected by one's discourse. By giving others parts in a story, a speaker makes available a subject position that the other speaker normally would take up (Davies and Harré, 1990).

In projecting storylines, people routinely draw on culturally available stereotypes (or recurring storylines) as resources to position themselves and others. Stereotypes are not

preexisting mental entities or inevitable outcomes of human cognitive functioning; instead they are rhetorical devices that people can use to position themselves and others (Langenhove and Harré, 1999).

The study focuses on a TV drama fangroup website arising from the Korean TV drama Dae Jang Geum. As positioning involves the process of the ongoing construction of the Self through talk (Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré and Langenhove, 1999), the discursive practices of these fans show their discursive strategies and tactics in constructing their different/multiple identities with several collective storylines that they co-constructed and sometimes contested.

#### The Web Discussion Forum of Dae Jang Geum

In this study, activities of the Hong Kong Television Broadcasting (TVB)'s web-based discussion forum of Dae Jang Geum were observed regularly from January 2005 to May 2005. All messages related to cultural and national topics, and construction of identities and storylines are selected for in-depth textual analysis. Although the age of individual members is not specified in their profiles, based on their messages, it is inferred that most of them (approximately 80%) are young students from Hong Kong.

The web forum discussion is not confined to Dae or Korean TV dramas. In the following sub-sections, the textual messages of the members are analyzed to understand their discursive acts of constructing Self and Other, and their discursive moves in drawing and shifting boundaries of different subject positions within the 'storylines' they created/offered. With some exceptions, almost all of the original messages analyzed were written in Chinese

characters and they have been translated into English for this study. Viewing rates (number of times the message is read by clicking the topic title) of each message are shown to indicate its popularity.

## Re-constructing/re-producing Historical Narratives of a Strong Cultural China as the Centre of Cultural Civilization

Dae Jang Geum is set in the political backdrop of Chosun being sandwiched between two strong aggressive powers, China and Japan. These dramatically encoded historical cultural memories and encounters might make popular audience reception difficult in modern-day Mainland China and Japan. However, in the consumption practices of Hong Kong viewers, they seem to exercise selective attention to the dramatic texts and choose to focus on those aspects that they can readily identify with culturally and emotionally. Here is an opening message for the topic: ‘Stella, there are things which you do not know, Chosun is greatly influenced by Chinese culture, Chosun people have been...’ (「Stella, 你有所不知, 朝鮮深受中國文化影響, 朝鮮人一直...」). This message shows the writer’s Sino-centric attitudes toward the ‘Great China’ in history. This reproduces and reaffirms the common discourse among Chinese people that China has been historically influencing Korea with its relatively strong and superior culture and loaded with this discourse seems to be the speaker/writer’s sense of cultural pride. When one of the members discovered that the Korean writing used in the dramas looks ‘exactly like the Mandarin characters’, another member called Aviao replied in this way:

*'Yeah, (I) noticed that too. Not really sure but back in those days, China was considered 'the centre of the world' so a lot of countries in the vicinity adopted Chinese ways. That's how Confucianism got spread to Korea and Japan. And I think the writing too. Even the current Japanese writing still incorporate Chinese characters.'* (Posted on 25/1/2005, viewing rates<100)

The term 'center of the world' expressed the Sino-centric storyline (or narrative) of historical China being the centre of the world and the origin of high civilization in Asia. This seems to be a storyline strongly held and affirmed by the fans in reproducing a kind of 'Great Cultural China' discourse. As discussed above, it is true that historically Koreans (and many other East Asian peoples) have been influenced by the spread of Chinese culture (e.g., language, writing script, architecture, customs, Confucianism), but China has equally been on the receiving end of other Asian cultures, e.g., Buddhism from India. The historical political power (and domination, as often perceived by its neighbors) of China might be drawn upon proudly by many Chinese people as a resource for constructing their Chinese cultural identities.

However, in the polycentric, multicultural world of today, it can be problematic for Chinese people to continue to draw on such a Great Cultural China Discourse for constructing cultural Self and Other, especially when such a racist discourse is mobilized to culturally denigrate other Asian peoples and cultures. This danger is evidenced in some forum members' criticism of South Korea's decision to change the name of its capital city in 2005. The abandonment of the Han writing system by other Asian countries received harsh criticism from these Hong

Kong 'Korean drama fans', and the Chinese influence on or dominance over Korea is frequently emphasized in their discourse. These fans perform the 'othering' process by differentiating themselves (i.e. Chinese) from Koreans drawing on and reproducing the historical Great Cultural China storyline and discourse. In this storyline projected in their discourse, Korea was positioned as historically, culturally, and racially inferior and Koreans as cultural minors who kept imitating a Great Cultural China.

As positioning involves the process of the ongoing construction of Self and Other through talk and collective folk stories (Harré and Langenhove, 1999; Mühlhäusler and Harré, 1990), the forum members co-construct their subjective positions by positioning themselves in their 'Great Cultural China' storyline as a proud member of the constellation of being 'Chinese', and not as isolated individuals. The fans create and assign themselves the position (or the character in our storyline analysis) of 'culturally superior Chinese', and at the same time, offer the 'culturally inferior' subject position (or characters) to Koreans and Japanese. This othering strategy is made possible by drawing on resources from the historical narratives/discourses, and also the collective social imaginaries (Taylor, 2002) held (both implicitly and explicitly) by many Chinese people.

One important point is that these members draw on another legitimation discourse which has prevented them from having to confront with the ethnocentrism and racism of their discourse. They adopted one of the useful strategies of communication, the metaphor of 'father-like principles'. Their discourse positioned Korea as both a cultural 'offspring' who was described as constantly learning from Chinese culture. In this discursively constructed

storyline and moral order (of China as the cultural father with a constellation of cultural offsprings hierarchically positioned under him), Korea (or ancient Chosun) was given a junior part to play as a people who called themselves ‘small China’. This storyline, as we shall see in the next section, is further extended and elaborated in these members’ racist discourse to position Japanese as not just an inferior cultural/ethnic other but also an ‘amoral non-human’.

### Discursively Constructing Different Characters in their Storylines

The real-life drama of China-Japan conflict seemed to be drawn upon by the web forum members to further construct their storyline in their discourses. In March 2005, Japan revised their history textbooks, omitting the mention of their invasion of China during the Second World War (‘textbook incident’ hereafter). This act sparked many protests in Chinese communities in China and Hong Kong as well as great anger among some of the web forum fans of Dae Jang Geum.

When TVB planned to broadcast the Japanese drama, Oh Oku (Tai O in English) after Dae, many of the fans were opposed to this decision and posted messages with harsh criticisms of Japan and Japanese people. In their messages, many fans positioned, implicitly and indiscriminately, all Japanese as ‘bad’ and even as ‘dogs’ by making reference to the invasion of China by Japan—the ways in which Japanese soldiers killed many Chinese civilians in the Nanking Massacre during its invasion of China. This is the most frequently cited historical event and provides the resource in establishing the major storyline of ‘all Japanese are bad’ in the forum members’ discourses.

In order to highlight China as a historical victim of Japanese aggression, the fans tried to amplify the ‘goodness’ of the Chinese and also the ‘badness’ of the Japanese. When the subject is produced, the Other is the ‘excluded’ or ‘mastered’ subject created by the discourse of power and thus the construction of Other is fundamental to the construction of the Self (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998). This ‘othering process’ ensures that they can put Japan in an unprivileged position. Below are two illustrating examples of the linguistic ‘othering’ practice engaged in by the fans; both are under the topic ‘Will all of you watch E-Dou’ (「大家會唔會睇醫道呀？」) (Posted by ‘ccc’ on 16/4/2005, viewing rates: 2600)

*‘Do you think that it’s good to learn the ways of treating others viciously with a friendly exterior? (It) requires us to learn how to hurt /kill others! The damn Chinese traitors and Japanese dogs will like this! We Chinese won’t be so vulgar...we Chinese are simple and honest... we have love and honor, better than the Japanese dogs, who use deceitful and treacherous ways to harm others! (Posted by ‘Chinese people’ 中國人 on 16/3/2005, a responding message to the above topic, viewing rates: 2600)*

*‘I am so happy that I am a Chinese. I am so proud of my identity as a Chinese. I agree with what a friend called octopuzzz said before, very meaningful, he/she said there are some bad Chinese, they have faults too...but many good Chinese people have taken the responsibilities of those bad people...but how about Japan? They did something wrong, didn’t apologize, and even didn’t admit their fault...if I am a Japanese, I won’t act like those Japanese, who just escaped from their responsibilities. I will apologize to China, and also teach my next generation not to commit the same fault again...not like a cold-blooded animal without feelings.’ (Posted by ‘Chinese people’ 中國人 on*



*16/3/2005, a responding message to the above topic, viewing rates: 2600)*

We can see that some fans used the term ‘we Chinese’ who are ‘simple and honest’, in comparison to the ‘Japanese dogs’ who were described as using ‘deceitful and treacherous ways to harm others’. The choice of the solidarity words of ‘we Chinese’, produced a clear and privileged (through victimhood, as occupying the moral high ground) subject position of a Chinese. All these together made up a stable storyline with three main collective characters (or cultural personas/stereotypes): The first one is the ‘good’, ‘honest’ and ‘simple’ Chinese, regarded as ‘I’, ‘we’ or ‘us’; the second one is the ‘bad’, ‘damned’ Japanese ‘dogs’ who treat others ‘viciously with a friendly exterior’, who are indexed by the deictic words: ‘they’, ‘them’ and ‘other’. The third collective character in this storyline is the Korean, who is positioned as playing a supporting role (i.e. a ‘weak’ victim humiliated by the Japanese) whose function is to magnify the ‘badness’ of the Japanese.

There is, however, some diversity of voices in the weblog messages. Some messages offer a different storyline from the above one by reversing it: praising Japan’s technological achievement while admonishing both historical and contemporary China’s corruption. One of the fans protested on behalf of the Japanese drama. Some fans draw on other historical events to invalidate the ‘truth claims’ of the previous messages posted by the other fans. For instance, one of them pointed out the ‘dark’ side of the Chinese by referring to some historical figures.

By providing counter-evidence related to the ‘immoral conduct’ of some infamous Chinese historical characters (the Empress Dowager who spent more money on a summer

palace than on building up the navy of China, leading to the defeat of China to Japan in the late 19th century; He-kun who was a very corrupt court official in the Ching Dynasty), and also the on-going social issues in contemporary China (in 2004, there were many news reports of food merchants in China producing and selling poor-quality milk that led to the death of many babies in poor villages), a forum participant, 'Betty', challenged the 'simple and honest' image of Chinese constructed for the 'Chinese people' by other forum participants. This shows that the dominating storylines and characters set up in the forum might not be welcomed and accepted by all fans. There can be alternative voices. Indeed, there are possibilities of a second speaker refusing the original positions being articulated in a storyline projected by a first speaker, and posing alternative storylines as a kind of 'resistance'. Such resistance is illustrated by some fans who demonstrate agency in listing counter-evidence to 'invalidate' the original one-sided cultural storylines/images built by other fans in their messages.

#### Understanding the Construction of Self and Other in Discursive Acts of Positioning

Traditional role theory sees roles as isolated and fixed, whereas positioning theory sees all these being in a flux, being constantly negotiated, shifted, modified and renewed. Positioning is the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversation (and in this case the online written messages of the fans) as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced and accepted 'storylines' (Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré and Langenhove, 1999). By providing a cast of different persons in the storylines offered, a speaker/writer makes available different subject positions for different parties involved in the storyline, which is in turn linked

to different moral orders with different sets of norms about what counts as right/appropriate to do.

One speaker can position others by adopting a storyline which incorporates a particular interpretation of cultural stereotypes to which they are 'invited' to conform (e.g. the position of 'bad Japanese'). In this storyline, a sharp contrast was set up between a set of collective negative attributes of one group vis-a-vis another set of collective positive attributes of another group, as shown in Table 1:

[ Place Table 1 about here]

The above 'binary opposition' between the discursively constructed attributes of Chinese and Japanese is relatively consistent throughout the forum discussion. The recent 'textbook incident' highlighted the growing conflict with Japan, and many Chinese people (including the Hong Kong fans in our study) expressed their anti-Japanese positions. Most of the fans seemed to draw on this membership category for managing national, ethnic and cultural identities. This construction of social type by discursive tools of membership categorization involves identities which carry rich inferences of category-bound activities (Ma, 1999).

However, the 'us versus them' dichotomy results in polarizing cultures and peoples, constructing a victimized Self occupying moral high ground and an immoral Other. This polarizing effect selects the worst section of outsiders and generalize the negative characteristics to the whole group of 'other' and at the same time, selecting the best section of

the established group and generalize the positive characteristics into the category of 'us' (Ma, 1999). Then the two categories involved will push in different/opposite directions, as we are 'focusing on the minority of the worst and the best of the respective groups' (Ma, 1999, p. 93). Applying this concept to our study, the binary, absolute polarization of 'extremely good' Chinese and 'extremely bad' Japanese is highly problematic, and (re)produces racism with the constructed dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them'.

### Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed some key critical cultural studies that uncovered the role played by discursive processes in the social construction of race and legitimation of racist ideologies. Key research studies have examined how racist ideologies are produced and reproduced in elite discourses, which provide both the cognitive frameworks and rhetorical resources for the reproduction of racist stereotypes in everyday discourses of ordinary people. Examples of the use of conversation analysis and positioning theory, among other discourse analytic and ethnographic approaches, are illustrated in some of the studies reviewed. Future research in this area should be broadened to include not only critical analysis of white-against-nonwhite racism in Western colonialist discourses but also of the worrying renewal of Sino-centric racist discourses or conversely Japanese racist discourses against China or North Korea, especially in the new media, in the Asian Pacific region. Future directions of research should also encourage more collaborative work among scholars positioned in different sociocultural contexts, as well as pedagogical research on how to engage

students in critical analysis of everyday discursive processes of racialization and how to offer fluid, non-essentialist identities to students from diverse backgrounds.

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Table 1: The collective attribute structures of Chinese and Japanese in the storyline discursively constructed in the weblog messages

<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Japanese</b>
Moral	Immoral
Civilized	Violent
Honest	Deceptive
Simple	Pretentious
Willing to love and forgive	Ambiguous; ready to harm/cold-blooded

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Note: <sup>i</sup> Parts of this section have appeared in Lin and Tong (2009).