*RE*PRESENTATION, RACIALISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY: MALE ATHLETIC BODIES IN THE (BRITISH) SPORTS AND LEISURE MEDIA

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The predominance of the male 'Other'[1] on the pages of contemporary sport and leisure print media has become increasingly ordinary over the last decade or so. Many subjugated ethnic groups have utilised sport and leisure stages to challenge the fallacies of psychological and biological inferiority and other ill-founded vestiges of nineteenth-century bio-racist discourses (Carrington, 2002; Hylton, 2009; Messner, 1993). Evidently, whilst 'black' females remain underrepresented in media spaces (Knoppers and Elling, 2004), their male counterparts, particularly those of African-Caribbean heritage, have accessed the realm of the popular *en masse* (Carrington, 2002). The mere presence of these men no longer seems to threaten the status quo of modern Western social democracies; in fact, images of African-Caribbean males are often held as exemplars of neo-liberalism and its fetish for championing quasi-multiculturalism. Indeed, according to some, media consumers only have to open a magazine (Hylton, 2009), switch on the television (Carrington, 2002) or visit the cinema (Giardina, 2003) to experience "a bit of the Other".

Before one is falsely charmed by some gloriously liberating homily of absolute social improvement, it is important to consider the instrumentalism of these developments more critically. This paper therefore aims to address the implications of racialisation in the context of the sport and leisure media and its role in *re*presenting athletic bodies in highly stylised and particularised ways. It will be argued that the racialisation of ethnically differing athletic bodies, through modes of photographic and digital manipulation, delivers messages that disadvantage particular ethnic groups, whilst advantaging others. Throughout, racialisation is conceptualised as a process of "categorisation, a representational process of defining an Other, usually, but not exclusively, somatically" (Miles and Brown, 2003: p. 101). For the purpose of this paper, I employ this conception to foreground the negative implications of racialisation.

Photography, authenticity and *re*presentation

Before one attempts to engage in a discussion of contemporary technologies of digital manipulation, and their contribution to processes of racialisation, one must first understand how photography, even in its most primitive form, is an inherent manipulation in itself. Thus, as technologies continue to advance, the concept of capturing authenticity is considered by some to be an unreachable ideal.

Walter Benjamin (2006 [1936]: p. 21) claimed that each piece of art possesses an "aura". He outlined how the mechanical reproduction of an original work of art, usually for the sake of commodification, is doomed to cause a "shrivelling" or "decay" of that aura. For Benjamin, the purity and certainty of the real is the true work of art's hallmark and its hallmark alone; no imitation or reproduction can ever claim to be the original or to possess the same "presence in time and space"

(p. 20) as the genuine article: "[t]he presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity" (p. 20). Benjaminian analysis provides theoretical tools through which to critique the ways in which twenty-first century digital images (or works of art) *re*present (or mechanically reproduce) reality (or aura). One instrument held accountable for the deflation of aura is the camera:

> Confronted with … manual reproduction, which was usually branded as a forgery, the original preserved all its authority; not so vis-à-vis technical reproduction … For example, in photography, process reproduction can bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens, which is adjustable and chooses its angle at will. And photographic reproduction, with the aid of certain processes, such as enlargement or slow motion, can capture images which escape natural vision. Secondly, technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. (Benjamin, 2006 [1936]: p. 20)

In other words, the camera absorbs and obscures aura which negates any *re*presentation's authenticity; the aura that is reproduced through technological means is something that is not objective. From this standpoint, it is because the point of recognition is reallocated away from the subject/object and placed upon the mediator/technology that a fully inflated aura can never be accessible via a mediated image (Poster, 1995).

Bourdieu (1996 [1965]), too, is concerned by uncritical discourses which further the falsity that the photo exists "as the model of veracity and objectivity" (Bourdieu, 1996 [1965]: p. 74). He asserts that "[o]nly a naive realism sees the photographic *re*presentation of reality as realistic; if it appears objective, it is because the rules defining its social use conform to the social definition of objectivity" (Bourdieu, 1996 [1965]: p. vi). Long (1998, quoted in Wheeler, 2002: p. 42) concurs with Bourdieu's cautions and is equally critical of the notion of the photograph as purely objective:

> photography has always been subject to certain manipulation, but we have imbued the … photo with verisimilitude beyond its nature. It looked like reality so we equated it with reality … a photograph symbolically represents reality; it is not in itself reality.

However critical the accounts discussed hitherto are of mechanical reproduction, those adopting a Benjaminian lens should not be wholly damning of *re*presentation as a monodirectional practice (see Benjamin, 1972 [1931]: p. 6). Benjamin does indeed acknowledge the democratic functionings of photography, implying that, "Above all, [mechanical reproduction] enables the original to meet the beholder halfway" (Benjamin, 2006 [1936]: p. 20). For instance, Neil Leifer's capture of a victorious Muhammad Ali, standing over the floored body of Sonny Liston — taken at St. Dominick's Arena in Lewiston, Maine on May 25th 1965 — is one famous example which has allowed a countless number of absent fans restricted access, but nevertheless access, to an event which can never again be truly replicated. Aura may indeed be deflated, but it may be equally appropriate to conceive that the photo may have "acquired an aura" (Crimp, 1980: p. 100) and in the case of the Ali photo, promotes an ideology about the empowerment of a (muslim) Black athlete in late twentieth-century sport. Thus, aura can be deflated and/or acquired by *re*presentation which offers a conception of photography as a productive as well as an obscuring practice.

Hyper-reality and the digital media image

While for Benjamin the emergence of the camera challenges the quintessence of aura, for twenty-first-century society the emergence of the digital image further problematises the issues. Poster (1995) specifically draws attention to the centrality of the digital image to the "second media age" (p. 7) — an epoch that succeeds the likes of Benjamin and the "first media age" (p. 6) — insofar as the digital image has, more fundamentally, further complicated concerns regarding authenticity and the realness of media *re*presentation. Therefore, if authenticity was ever in question when a photograph was a tangible piece of paper, the fact that one cannot hold a JPEG in one's hand, since it is rather "a long series of 0's and 1's that are more like an idea than a crystal of salt" (Kelly, 2002: p. xiii), must surely confirm the loss of all claims to authenticity and realness?

The consequence of these technological advancements upon society has been described as one

of hyper-reality, which is a concept defined by Baudrillard (1983) as the simulation of something which has never really been in existence. For Baudrillard (1993: p. 18), modern Western society is engulfed in a "realer than real" existence which is intensified by superfluous simulation that one now encounters, on an incessant basis, which is a result of a neurotic fascination with minute detail. The concept of hyper-reality is here intended to be interpreted as one of the confusion of reality: what is real and what is not? Or, indeed, for Baudrillard, does the real or authentic exist regardless of technological manipulation? Pivotal to the disturbance of the real is the role of the media and the ever more powerful forms of *re*presentation and manipulation available to both professional and personal image producers, which continues to shape peoples experiences of their worlds. Thus, Baudrillard's concept of hyper-reality is able to offer an invaluable *beginning* and important insight into the deceptiveness of images as printed in sports magazines.

Implicated in the furtherance of the hyper-reality of athletic bodies is the current trend of digital retouching as a way of 'correcting' physical 'flaws' (Martin, 1991; Reaves, 1987, 1991). The puppet master of digital image deception is the 'touch up artist' who utilises computer functions such as cropping, black and white conversion, clone brushing, colour hue, brightness/contrast adjustment and countless more tricks to fabricate and refabricate the image that was captured by the photographer (Knox, 1982): for example, "a patch of sky or grass or even skin can be 'cloned' and used as a 'paintbrush' of sorts, to enlarge, reproduce, or mask elements within the frame" (Wheeler, 2002: p. 41). Most digital images, particularly in non-news articles such as features, advertisements and magazine covers, thus very rarely appear to the consumer 'warts and all'. One may cite these images as the epitome of the hyper-real insofar as the collusion between human intelligence and computer/artificial intelligence renders manipulation imperceptible. This by no means suggests, should an athletic body be subjected to processes of *re*presentation, that the *real* person is somehow unreal or fictional; yet through this process the printed, mediated image alters the subject to something it never was in actuality.

Feminist scholars have been particularly critical of digital manipulations when used with the intention of 'retouching' female bodies, particularly within popular magazines (Duncan and Messner, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994; Mikosza and Murray, 1999). Although in theory the Associated Press limits the manipulation of photos, notably the use of digital 'retouching' is not only more commonplace than one might think but, more worryingly, such image manipulation is undisclosed to the consumer (Kennedy and Hills, 2009). For instance, actress Tori Spelling was reported by the *Chicago Tribune* to have had a series of virtual 'surgeries' performed on digital images of her body: a manipulation of her lips to make them appear fuller; a breast augmentation; a lengthening of her legs; a reduction in waist size; and an increase of nipple size were all procedures performed by a digital touch-up expert (Wheeler, 2002: p. 183). This process firmly removes the practice of retouching from the realms of artistic expression and positions it squarely within what could be described as the 'virtual, cosmetic operating theatre'. In spite of such drastic alterations, artistic freedom for photo editors remains a stalwart and cherished precept of the profession (Reaves *et al.*, 2004).

Diedrichs and Lee (2010), too, mark the significance and prevalence of airbrushing and digital manipulation in removing the athletic body from "biological reality" (p. 219), but warn that research in this area has largely been conducted with a concentration on women. Hence, with the shifting focus of heterosexual white males from semi-naked women to the bodies of semi-naked men, as the success of *Men's Health* would indicate (Alexander, 2003; Gill, 2003; Whannel, 2002), there is an equal need to focus on processes of *re*presentation in relation to male athletic bodies, as the following sections aims to do with a specific focus on racialisation. Further, this reflection marks the importance of shifting the focus of this paper away from an overly theoretical, ontological debate concerning the nature of the real and the unreal to a more pragmatic debate concerning the social impact of hyper-real imagery upon *real* people's lives.

Beauty and the beast: a classic tale (constantly) retold?

Entman and Rojecki (2002) describe how 'whites' learn about 'blacks', and visa versa, partly because

of residential segregation, through the images that media portray. This would suggest that, should there be an inherent trust of the highly stylised portrayals of athletic bodies as accurate depictions of reality, it is then important to critically appraise the ways in which athletic bodies are subjected to racialised and gendered processes of *re*presentation in order to counter the myths which can arise from processes of media *re*presentation.

Carrington (2002: p. 22) remarks that print media images of white athletic bodies are often "air-brushed" in order to modify physical 'flaws', and are also photographed in "soft focused light" which is a technique supposedly used to create a more delicate and feminine mood (Hedgecoe, 2006; Milburn *et al.*, 2002). An analysis concerned with addressing the negative impact of racialisation would suggest that an attempt is being made by those involved in processes of *re*presentation to cover up the imperfectness of whiteness. Hoch's (2004) white hero/black beast dichotomy can be evoked here to demonstrate the ways in which whiteness in sport has long been developed by dominant discourses as being tantamount to perfection and godliness (Judge, 1982). To illustrate this, Garner (2007: p. 47) observes the ways in which whiteness is often portrayed as the "Greenwich Mean Time" of normativity and morality against which a body's humanity and ordinariness is measured; thus those who are understood as white are lavished with various unseen (at least to whites, anyhow) privileges (see McIntosh, 1997). For instance, morality, humbleness, power, goodness, heroism and righteousness have long been regarded as racial characteristics synonymous with white athletic bodies: one need only to be reminded of cricket and its associations with the 'English gentleman' — a concept that "draws upon classical and Christian ideals" (Coleman, 1973: p. 97), evoking the caricature of a middle-class white man in a bowler hat. And in American culture, the pervasiveness of 'white=right' was picked out brilliantly by Muhammad Ali (1967, quoted in Hauser, 1996: p. 76):

> We were taught when we were little children that Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow. Then we heard about Snow White, White Owl cigars. White Swan soap. White Cloud tissue. White Rain hair [rinse]. White Tornado floor wax. White Plus toothpaste. All the good cowboys ride white horses and wear white hats. The President lives in the White House. Jesus was White. The Last Supper was White. The angels are White. Miss America is White. Even, Tarzan, the King of the Jungle in Africa is White!

The narrative of the white hero or white knight overcoming the dark villain has dominated folklore and story-telling in mainstream Western cultures dating back to Ancient Rome. Moreover, a cursory glance at "Hollywood", the cultural breeding ground of contemporary stories, reveals an overrepresentation of whiteness in the sense that white leading men are frequently portrayed overcoming some kind of repressive circumstance or another. From *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) in which Quentin Tarantino rewrites history by depicting an archetypal white male American, played by Brad Pitt, as the man who almost single-handedly ends World War II, to Clint Eastwood's *Gran Torino* (2008) which tells the story of a 'reformed' white racist (played by Eastwood) who sacrifices his life to protect an American-Chinese family (Jalao, 2010), whiteness is racialised and framed as noble and moral — a technique that has functioned historically in film to *re*present the white self and in doing so *re*present the Other (Vera and Gordon, 2001).

White middle-class athletes, more specifically, such as Tim Henman, Gary Lineker and Jonny Wilkinson, too, are often *re*presented by the media as exemplars of morality and rectitude. For instance, Whannel (2009) describes Henman to be an interesting case in point who, despite his dreariness, benign personal life and lack of grand-slam titles, remained at the epicentre of the British sports media's coverage of tennis until the emergence of Andy Murray — which is at odds with the mass media's obsessive fascination (more generally) with crude displays of laddishness and promiscuity (Whannel, 2000). Perhaps, the racialisation of Henman as 'whiter than white' offers a *raison d'être* to the media's persistent coverage; perhaps he embodied the stereotype of the modern day white knight who, in the pseudo pre-industrial village green milieu of Wimbledon, competed heroically and lost humbly whilst carrying the hopes of his kingdom — white, middle England — on his shoulders. Furthermore, Carrington (2002: p. 18) notes a caption which was used to describe images of Henman's white-skinned body, clad in all-white tennis apparel, juxtaposed against a dark, robed Mike Tyson (importantly, this counterposing occurred in the midst of a media storm vilifying

Tyson for biting a bloody chunk from Evander Hollyfield's ear): "Beauty and the beast: Britain's Tim Henman brings a smile to Centre Court while Mike Tyson descends to new levels of savagery". This analysis should not be read as an attempt to defend the behaviour of Tyson, nor to endorse the existence of a static black-white dichotomy, yet the symbolic intersecting of the image, colours and associated narratives bears significant resemblance to the way in which Western societies conceptualise the classic tale of 'good versus evil'.

Although one might argue that the fear of 'darkness' is a rational paranoia in a society in which racism functions on many different levels, it would be ill-advised to dismiss this juxtaposition as wholly inconsequential. *Re*presenting white athletic bodies, in conjunction with broader media discourses surrounding white bodies, as moral and honest thus furthers the mantra of whiteness as the yardstick of normality.

*Re*presenting and racialising the African-Caribbean athletic body: the realities of negative racialisation

Hylton (2009) has described how bodies in sport and leisure paradigms are popularly deciphered through biological and psychological discourses of 'natural' (dis)advantage. None more so than the African-Caribbean body. Miller (1998) describes how, subsequent to the success of African-Caribbean bodies, a language emerged during the twentieth century, provided by journalists and anthropologists, which claimed that "natural ability", "physical prowess" and "physiological advantages" (p. 124–125) accounted for African-Caribbean sporting excellence. Marqusee (2004) demonstrates, in the context of cricket, how the Western interpretation of the West Indies cricket team quickly changed as the team began to excel: "In the good old days, before the West Indies started beating England regularly" (p. 164), West Indian bodies were described as "colourful", "unorthodox" and "lovably unthreatening" (p. 165), because of the approach they adopted in order to navigate the game. However, as the team began to excel on the international cricketing stage, the lexicon used to articulate the Èlan of the West Indies conveniently shifted from "joyous and uninhibited" to phrases which implied ability with bat and ball was simply a corollary of "boorish aggression" (p. 166). A clear example of shifting processes of racialisation through *re*presentation.

This language continues to inform everyday discourses concerning 'race' and sport which, St. Louis (2004: p. 24) argues, has mobilised a 'commonsense logic' that equates the biological myth of 'race' with athletic bodies:

(1) sports are based on structural principles of equality;
(2) the results of sporting competition are unequal;
(3) this inequality of results has a racial basis;
(4) therefore, given the equality of access and opportunity, the explanation of the unequal results lies in racial physicality.

This logic has continued to underpin bio-racist argumentation and has filtered into mainstream media in a persistently covert and systematic manner (Billings and Eastman, 2002; Carrington, 2002; McCarthy *et al.*, 2003; Sabo and Jansen, 1994; Whannel, 2002), which has given 'credence' to the belief that African-Caribbeans are merely born into a body with the potential/capability of remarkable physical/sporting feats.

Cashmore (1997) has criticised this everyday discourse and suggests that only a few carefully selected racialised Others are granted access to the mainstream media. For Cashmore, only those African-Caribbean bodies who are able to instil unrealistic expectations of upward socio-economic mobility, such as musicians and sports stars, are deemed to qualify as suitable role models (or representatives) of ethnic minority communities. But Majors (2001) describes how perceiving sport and leisure as 'the way out' is paradoxical: that whilst sport and leisure institutions may appear to offer ethnic minority groups an escape route, this meritocratic ideology, which is given credence by sport and leisure media, ignores the constraints of racism in sport and leisure and within society at large (Knoppers and Elling, 2004).

Whereas those subscribing to eugenicist fantasies were blatant in their claims of racial and ethnic superiority, Back *et al.* (1999) suggest that it is now in fact unhelpful to treat racism as an

exclusive belief with which only a "fully paid up card carrying Nazi" will affirm, since in reality those people are few and far between. Rather, they invite the possibility that "[c]ontemporary racisms have evolved and adapted in new circumstances. [Their] crucial property … is that they can produce a racist effect whilst denying that this effect is the result of racism" (Solomos and Back, 1996). This new or neo-racism is able to manifest itself in (what could be perceived as) positive, as well as overtly negative, discourses (Cashmore, 1997; Giardina, 2003; Hokowhitu, 2003; Majors, 2001; Solomos and Back, 1996) about anti-racism policy and liberalism. Hokowitu (2003: p. 21) suggests that neo-racism is perturbing in that it can be "veiled within positively framed cultural clichés", even while contemporary sporting discourses are not necessarily filled with overt, negative racial images. He asserts that the racialised athletic body "soaring above adversity into the echelons of sporting success is a powerful symbol of freedom and hope, but ironically, it shackles people of colour to the physical realm and prevents them from being self-determining".

Carrington (2002: p. 22) describes how the media often further remove African-Caribbean bodies from the realm of the everyday by exaggerating their physicality through the ways in which images are digitally manipulated:

> [B]lack models are usually shot with a high intensity film so that the black skin is exposed to a microscopic gaze, showing veins, pores, and sweat gleaning from the dark skin, reproducing a 'pornographic' effect in rendering the black male body vulnerable, 'open' and exposed to inspection.

Industry professionals such as Milburn *et al.* (2002: p. 101), recommend the use of high intensity techniques for achieving a more "macho, rugged" effect which 'hardens' the African-Caribbean athletic body's appearance. Thus, these black bodies, which are "always heavily defined, never 'soft'", are exposed to an intense gaze, which heightens their athleticism, strength, aggression and power, which heavily connotes physical black masculinity as tantamount to animalism (Carrington 2002: p. 21).

Whilst white athletes are *re*presented as exemplars of moral standards, African-Caribbean athletes are racialised as the epitome of the physical: corporeal differences are accentuated and thus *imposed* upon bodies rather than emanating from them innately. For Carrington, those media professionals involved in processes of *re*presentation are thus complicit in the racialisation of the softness of white bodies, whilst dark skin is subjected to artistic techniques which exaggerate the appearance of corporeal features. In this way, retouching tools and artistic processes serve as apparatuses of segregation, which function to *re*present trivial physical differences within the human species as meaningful and significant.

Beyond a black-white dichotomy: the symbolic annihilation of British Asian bodies

Whilst images of male bodies identified as African-Caribbean appear ubiquitously in the media, those categorised as British Asian[2] are rarely visible. These bodies, too, are described in terms of their athletic capabilities; but mainstream media narratives suppose that it is because of a distinct ethnic and cultural habitus that British Asian bodies as less physically able. The title of Bains and Patel's (1996) work, *Asians can't play football* (similarly *Asians can play football: Another wasted decade* (Bains *et al.*, 2005) is emblematic of the attitudes and stigmas attached to British Asian bodies and their relationship with sport, and not just football but more generally. It is thus unsurprising that images of British Asian athletic bodies are scarcely found on the pages of popular sport and leisure magazines and/or on mainstream internet sites.

'Commonsense race logic', identified in the previous section, is also commonly applied to explain the lack of British Asians visible in mainstream sport and leisure magazines. Media and medical discourses have labelled British Asian men as being more at risk than "Caucasians" in relation to "type 2 diabetes mellitus and coronary artery disease" (Banerji *et al.*, 1999: p. 137); thus some medical scholars have called for measures such as "intense dietary intervention" to reduce the risk of harmful medical conditions that affect the British Asian community (Lip *et al.*, 1995: p. 287). Such a racialisation of British Asian bodies as medically problematic denotes them as weak and

vulnerable, which is antithetic to traditional postulations of the athletic body as strong and disciplined. The media does not remain blameless in such homogenising practices since the need to package and represent complex information for popular consumption reconstructs the intricacies of health and ethnicity in an overly simplistic and pathology-based manner. This kind of biological reductionism perpetuates and trivialises the harmful effects of institutional racism in Britain. Thus, incursions such as "intense dietary intervention", *per se,* are unlikely to address any medical 'problem' as long as social, cultural and generational differences within British Asian communities are ignored.

With the media images of 7/7 [July 7, 2005 London bombings] and "the summer of violence" still fresh in the minds of many, it is not solely from a medical perspective that media producers choose to reconstruct and reify British Asian bodies. For instance, the media imagination of British Asian-Muslim male bodies has focused upon displays of hyper-masculinity and physicality (Burdsey, 2004), which is in stark contradiction to the 'weak' and 'feminine' image of first-generation Asian immigrants to Britain (Alexander, 2000) and to the imagination of Asian bodies, more broadly, as medically problematic. Giardina (2003) describes how media images of white and British Asian Muslim males, for instance, clashing against a fiery orange backdrop, provokes an image of hyper-masculine and violent behaviour. He argues that social disturbances in the north-west of England during the summer of 2001 should be seen as symbolic of the inner frustrations felt by lower-class British Asians (particularly Muslim groups) across the nation: these were people who were "deprived of futures, hemmed in on all sides by racism … and unwilling to stand by as first fascists, and then police officers, invaded their streets" (Kundani *et al.*, 2001: p. 105). Despite this scholarly narrative, media and politicians did not seem to understand how an invasion of one's home and one's community could be anything but simply the result of white and British Asian groups living 'parallel lives' (Phillips, 2006). The mainstream British media chose to frame Asian and Muslim youth as disaffected and disillusioned, and, most worryingly, in terms of the 'enemy within' (Abbas, 2005: p. 4).

The rapid rise to fame of the most prominent 'British Asian-Muslim' athlete of recent times, Amir Khan (a second-generation British Pakistani Muslim), has gone some way to challenging the cultural stigmas attached to 'British Asians'; however, Burdsey (2007) warns of a need to exercise caution over the construction of the young boxer's successes: deliberate (mis)uses and (mis)*re*presentations of images of Khan by politicians and ideologues in the media have shifted the focus away from his sporting achievement and onto the importance of his rise to prominence in relation to the post-riot and post-7/7 climate of Islamophobia. For Burdsey (2007: p. 623), the images which accompanied the rise of Khan promoted him as a leading light in the fight to fill the "lacuna in communities that are believed to lack positive role models", which could potentially quell the social unrest simmering in Muslim communities: numerous pictures of Khan caped in the Union Jack promoted him as a 'good' Muslim rather than a 'bad' Muslim terrorist. Media *re*presentations of Khan further framed reconstructions of him as the epitome of what it is to be a socially acceptable British Asian-Muslim; in other words, "through his hair style, clothes and speech patterns" he is presented as a non-traditional Muslim (Milward, 2008: p. 3.3) who has (conditionally) embraced his homeland. Thus, Khan, often pictured competing in shorts that display both the British and Pakistani flags, demonstrates how, suddenly, it is "possible to be British, Muslim and a success" (BBC Radio, 2005 quoted in Burdsey, 2007). Images of Khan also reveal a notable whiting of his skin, which appeals to a white audience in that it provides a knowable and less-threatening British Asian-Muslim male for consumption. In addition, this manipulation of imagery of Khan is able in turn to promote mechanisms by which one can become whiter (not in a physical sense but in terms of cultural and identity performances).

Khan is *re*presented as the masculine ideal that all British Asian, particularly Muslim, men should aspire to in the midst of late modernity and its hastening social and cultural transformations. This *re*present-ation not only overlooks the heterogeneity of these communities but it also provides white audiences with artificial insights into the 'realities' of being British Asian and Muslim in England at this time. Rather than identifying differences that exist between individuals by marking the uniqueness of Khan, or signifying the multiplicity and complexity of belonging and collective and personal identity, media imagery reproduces an unhelpful narrative of homogeneity. In

promoting Khan as a benchmark and role model — through the Cycloptic and pseudo-panoramic lens of the media — British Asian males who resemble Khan in his attitude toward nationalism and moral values, for instance, are considered 'with us' (but importantly, still not quite 'us'), whilst those who are unable (or refuse) to resemble his media persona are positioned as obdurately 'against us'.

Conclusion

Qualms about the deceptive use of digital software or the artificialness of *re*presentation have not often been expressed by media workers; however, such manipulation of, particularly, human bodies is an issue with serious social consequences. This chapter should not be read as a call to curtail technological advancement or to damn the processes of *re*presentation as fascist or unhelpful. It is, however, a warning to those with an interest in media ethics to realise and acknowledge that uncritical practices breed complacence and an iniquitous system. This system impacts upon people in subtle yet very *real* ways, despite the claims made by media that the industry attempts to *re*present as 'objectively' and/or 'neutrally' as possible.

Media producers must accept increased responsibility for their involvement in processes of racialisation, in relation to the athletic bodies they *re*present. And thus their practices must represent athletic bodies in ways that challenge and disrupt 'commonsense' racial stereotypes rather than furthering their reproduction. From the outset it has been suggested that it is imperative to foreground the negative and disabling practices of racialisation, as evoked by media imagery, in order to highlight unhelpful practice. The lives of those living in the twenty-first century are saturated with media images and messages and the future will only witness an increase in the capability and reach of media channels. It is therefore imperative to raise concerns surrounding media procedures so as to continually campaign against the artificialness of media imagery and its deceptive and repressive operations.

Notes

1 Throughout this chapter the term 'Other' is used to denote someone or something that is perceived to be different to the notion of the 'self'. In mainstream media, the Other is typically defined as someone or something which is outside, strange or even anathematic to the norms and traditions of mainstream white-British culture. See Frantz Fanon (2008 [1952]) for a more detailed account of Othering, domination and subordination and constructions of the Other in relation to racialisation.

2 The term 'British Asian' appears throughout and is intended as a generic label, often employed in other research, and as an externally constructed identity (Alexander, 2000), but as in no way connoting homogeneity. In the context of this paper, the term is used to refer to those whose immediate close ancestry lies within India, Pakistan and Bangladesh but are born in Britain or hold a British passport. In some instances the term is deemed useful when referring to more inclusive, less religiously specific, fluid forms of identity, and when attempting to deal with the cumulative affects of racialisation. Although British Asianness can be understood as a performance or practice (see Nayak, 2006), the term British Asian is deemed useful as it is a label which people use to describe themselves: it is used as a means of imagining physical and cultural sameness and as a political term.

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