

1. The founding of WOMAD (World Of Music and Dance) by former Genesis vocalist Peter Gabriel and Thomas Broome in the early 1980s of course predates both of these events, but my concern here is with the origins not of world music as such but of the concept of world music itself and the point at which world music became a mass cultural phenomenon.

2. An interesting aspect of Appadurai's model of the global cultural economy is that it is itself a global model. Its organizing metaphor of landscape, indeed, calls to mind the geological structure of the earth's crust, which consists of a set of partially overlapping transcontinental plates whose barely perceptible movement and interaction with one another produce continual shifts, slippages, and occasional upheavals, from minor tremors to full-blown earthquakes. Appadurai's global cultural landscapes may be thought of in similar terms, what he calls the "disjunctures" between them corresponding to the geophysical fault lines along the borders between plates where new bursts of activity occur. The task of the cultural critic accordingly becomes a seismicographic one of monitoring shifts in each of the various dimensions and their relationships to one another, noting the new types of cultural flow they generate, and assessing their significance and possible future repercussions.

3. This in turn can lead to equally paradoxical phenomena: artists may be more successful abroad than at home (as in the case of Brazilian singer Margaret Menezes), or their international success may have a direct impact on their recognition at home (David Byrne's two releases of Tom Ze's music have apparently relaunched his career in Brazil).

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## Kinship, Nation, and Paul Gilroy's Concept of Diaspora

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In the literature of traditional anthropology, "community" and "culture" have been privileged units of analysis and have often been considered to be isomorphic with well-defined national or ethnic territories. Recent anthropological attempts to understand constellations of community and identity in a transnational, postcolonial, and global economic context have questioned this easy relationship between culture, community, and place and have focused on how social worlds can be webbed together across transnational space (see Appadurai, Gupta and Ferguson). Among the many contenders for an analytical concept accountable to the complexities of culture and economy in a transnationally interconnected world are such notions as "the deterritorialized nation state" (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton), "ethnoscapes" (Appadurai), "borderlands" (Anzaldúa), and "diaspora" (Hall; Gilroy, "Cultural Studies"; Safran; Tölölyan). Each of these concepts calls into question the "natural" bond that anthropology historically has presumed to exist between community, culture, and place.

In this essay, I would like to give specific attention to the concept of "diaspora," examining Paul Gilroy's particular use of it in "Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism" and in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*. It seems important to excavate some of the meanings latent in the notion of diaspora at this historical moment because of its increasing importance in the theoretical discourse on transnationalism. I think that Gilroy's vision of diaspora may recapitulate some of the very problems he identifies in nationalism and ethnic absolutism. I will argue here that Gilroy relies on some of the same ideas about kinship, nature, and territory that traditional nationalist rhetorics employ to define citizenship and delineate national boundaries. I will also briefly contrast Gilroy's formulation with Stuart Hall's treatment of diaspora.

In "Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism," Gilroy warns against narratives of ethnic history that eliminate the experiences of people based on their divergence from ideal-typic life courses; he maintains that constructions of black tradition in terms of nations

It might be useful to return to the etymology of the term *diaspora* itself, in order to recover some of what Stuart Hall calls the "traces" of meaning that a word accretes and preserves in its motion through history (229). The word comes from the Greek διασπορα (dispersion), from δια (through) + σπεννεν (to sow or scatter), and originates in the Greek translation of the book of Deuteronomy in the Bible (Deut. 28.25: "thou shalt be a diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth") (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The original meaning of diaspora summons up the image of scattered seeds, and we should remember that in Judeo-Christian (and Islamic) cosmology, seeds are metaphorical for the male "substance" that is traced in genealogical histories (see Delaney). The word "sperm" is etymologically connected to diaspora. It comes from the same stem, σπεννεν [to sow or scatter], and is defined by the *OED* as "the generative substance or seed of male animals." Diaspora, in its traditional sense, thus refers us to a system of kinship reckoned through men and suggests the questions of legitimacy in paternity that patriarchy generates.

Gilroy is concerned to index with the concept of the diaspora an important historical unity, but it is a unity perhaps too dependent on the telling of tales about genealogies. Gilroy rehabilitates the stories of people who have been excluded from the intellectual and cultural genealogies of nationalist and ethnic absolutisms, but I suspect that his simply extending the compass of the "family" so that it includes disowned ancestors does not quite escape the problems of nationalism. Moreover, I think that if we take seriously the possibility that diaspora is about patriarchal lineages, then the androcentrism latent in Gilroy's analyses becomes more apparent. His examples of how the unity of the black Atlantic is constituted—through the experience of black men on ships ("Cultural Studies") and at the turntables of Afro-Caribbean-British discos (in "Ain't No Black")—privilege a set of experiences historically inaccessible to women. The transatlantic experience on ships was available only to those politically and economically positioned in a male-dominated public sphere. And though Gilroy maintains that "European travel [was] not an exclusively male preserve" ("Cultural Studies" 194), his examples of cosmopolitan African Americans are primarily men. It could also be argued that Gilroy's celebration of predominantly male disc jockeys remixing records in "Ain't No Black" symbolically associates consumption-as-"production" with males and values this over consumption-as-mere-"reproduction," symbolically associated with females.<sup>1</sup>

I think that part of the reason that Gilroy ends up relying on so many of the same kinship metaphors that surface in rhetoric about national unity is because he neglects the fact that geography itself is politically, economically, culturally, and hegemonically structured (Gupta and Ferguson) and is not simply a given in nature. As Gilroy

or limited geographical areas (as in African-American, African-Caribbean, and African-British studies) inevitably exclude people who do not fit neatly into those spaces. In "There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack," Gilroy illustrates how the hegemonic construction of community in the British context has collapsed "nation" into "race" and thereby conflated "cultural" with "biological" heritage. This has been accomplished by citizenship policies that have stipulated that national belonging be an inherited quality. British citizenship law, as it invokes ideas about kinship, also encodes notions of "race" and effectively excludes people from the "national family" on the basis of "racial origin." And the link between "family" and "nation" is reinforced by metaphors that plant "races" in "places" and "nation" is reinvented, the British are referred to as "the Island Race" [45]).

Gilroy's dissection of the logic of nationalism and racism parallels David Schneider's analysis of how metaphors of kinship provide a store of symbolic devices through which the modern nation-state can construct itself. Schneider points out that in the Judeo-Christian conception of kinship, there are two kinds of kin, those by birth and those by law. Belonging to a family requires falling into at least one of these categories. Children, in order to be legitimate, must fall into both, and this can be accomplished by being born into a legally sanctioned heterosexual union. Schneider notes that being a citizen in a nation also relies on conceptions of birth and legality. And Bill Maurer observes that under current British citizenship law a child born to a noncitizen mother and citizen father will be conferred citizenship status only if the parents are legally married, that is, if the child is "legitimate" ("The Land"). In the United States, becoming a citizen requires going through a process of "naturalization"—a reference to the "natural" character of birth that symbolically fashions together citizenship, legality, and legitimacy.

Gilroy hopes to construct a historical narrative that escapes the conflation of nation with race with place with kin. Because he believes that African diasporic histories must not subordinate themselves to or contain themselves within the borders and histories of nation-states, he proposes that a "diasporic perspective" might be gained by focusing on the more encompassing analytical field of the "black Atlantic" ("Cultural Studies" 191). This would allow us to see the lives of people like DuBois and Garvey not as falling "between" traditions but as constitutive of a tradition that transcends national boundaries. Diasporic histories break the borders of nation and, hopefully, the borders of race.

But while Gilroy shows us how nationalist racism and ethnic absolutism are mutually defining and dependent on pseudobiological rhetoric ("There Ain't No Black" 154), I remain unsure that his notions of diaspora and "black Atlantic" get away from the exclusionary and naturalizing logics of kinship and territory.

notes, nations as geographical and geopolitical entities cannot fully explain the provenance or character of cultural or economic flows or the personal histories of real subjects; but, though it is more inclusive of particular people, neither can his unit of the Atlantic do so. It relies implicitly on an appeal to historical ties of kinship and thus ends up excluding a variety of people who might identify with the black Atlantic experience.

Among these are people who have settled around the Indian Ocean and who trace their origins to Africa, and Australian aboriginal people who identify with Pan-Africanist struggles, though they do not position themselves as part of an African diaspora but rather identify with a common experience of subordination as "blacks" under British colonization. The black Atlantic diasporic story also easily effaces its own intersection with indigenous populations of the Americas. We might remember, as Maurer has noted, that "the Atlantic has been the site of various diasporas and struggles, each with political consequences that have resulted in the formation and bridging of national boundaries" ("The Construction" 4).

In "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," Liisa Malkki excavates the complex of botanical metaphors through which anthropological and nationalist discourse "roots" people in the "soils" of national and ethnic territories, and she argues that such metaphors suggest "natural" connections between people and the places they inhabit. These "natural" relations are reinforced by the way in which national and ethnic identities are often figured through a kinship metaphor that relies on the arborescent image of the "family tree." The trope of the family tree suggests ancestral seeds from which genealogies sprout in particular soils (or oceans). So does, I submit, the notion of diaspora. The metaphor of diaspora, especially when mapped onto a particular territory, naturalizes historical connections and ideas about territory in a fashion similar to the arboreal metaphors Malkki elucidates.

Hall's treatment of the concept of diaspora is, to my mind, more careful. He recognizes that identity is produced, "never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (222). He says, "Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (225). For Hall, diaspora is an ever-changing representation which provides an "imaginary coherence" for a set of historically constituted identities. Hall is clear that he means diaspora metaphorically and does not wish the concept to steer people into an identity that "can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even

if it means pushing other people into the sea" (237). He maintains that "diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing themselves anew through transformation and difference" (237). Hall emphasizes the diversity, hybridity, and difference of diaspora identities. Gilroy does, too—for instance, when he writes that "black culture is actively made and remade" ("There Ain't No Black" 154) and that black "self-definitions and cultural expressions draw on a plurality of black histories and politics" (and, he argues, on nonblack histories and politics, as in the interaction between white British punk culture and Afro-Caribbean-British reggae culture in the Rock Against Racism movement) ("There Ain't No Black" 156).

But Gilroy's analytical frame of the black Atlantic seems to privilege shared heritage—figured through a patriarchal metaphor for inheritance—over hybridity. And the implicit reliance on the idea of African dispersal often ends up romanticizing "Africa." Gilroy writes, "The ideologies and beliefs of new world blacks exhibit characteristically African conceptions of the relationship between art and life, the sacred and the secular, the spiritual and the material. Traces of these African formulations remain, albeit in displaced and mediated forms, even in the folk philosophies, religion, and vernacular art of black Britain" ("There Ain't No Black" 159). One benefit that Hall's concept seems to have here is that it allows a more active and less nostalgic engagement with contemporary Africa. As he says about Afro-Caribbean concepts of Africa, "Africa must at last be reckoned with by Caribbean people, but it cannot in any simple sense be merely recovered" (231).

Though I am somewhat more sympathetic to Hall's use of diaspora than I am to Gilroy's, it is clear that Hall also occasionally falls into a kinship-based model of diaspora. His glaring omission of any indigenous presence in the Americas (in his discussion of *Presence Americaine*, with its so-called "silences") points to his retaining a notion of hybridity that admits as legitimate ingredients only particular groups.

Perhaps we would do well to heed the spirit in which Hall references Benedict Anderson: "Communities, Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (237). Gilroy's imagined unity of a black Atlantic seems to rely on notions of family and territory that are parallel to ideas about nation, while Hall's treatment of diaspora opens up spaces (though they are not always explored) to think about imagining a community apart from the rhetorics of kinship and the naturalized heterosexism and patriarchy that it perpetuates.

Of course, getting out of the metaphorical identification of kin with nation is more difficult than it seems, and it is dangerous simply to dismiss its theoretical and political utility against systems

of oppression and domination that still operate in its terms and that deny some people families, nations, and histories. Gilroy is certainly aware of this. He says, "The African diaspora's consciousness of itself has been defined in and against constricting national boundaries" ("There Ain't No Black" 158). At the same time, he is clear that there are limitations to the applicability of the concept of diaspora. He says that the term *Pan-African* and its conceptual companion *diaspora* (and perhaps even his *black Atlantic*) are "inadequate as anything other than the most preliminary description, particularly as [they] can suggest mystical unity outside the process of history or even a common culture or ethnicity which will assert itself regardless of determinate political and economic circumstances" ("There Ain't No Black" 158). I hope that in the course of this critique I have been able to designate one locus of the inadequacy of which Gilroy writes and simultaneously to situate and set in motion to new meanings the term *diaspora*.

#### Notes

I would like to thank Bill Maurer, Andrea Khimi, and Renato Rosaldo for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

1. In his recent talk at the University of California at Santa Cruz, entitled "The Black Atlantic and the Politics of Authenticity," Gilroy was asked by an audience member to account for the androcentrism of his analytical formulations. Since one of the themes of his talk was an examination of the cultural, historical, and ideological freight carried by the concept of "diaspora" in light of its inextricable ties to Jewish experience, Gilroy connected a focus on males in diasporic thought to patriarchal and masculinist traditions in both rabbinical scholarship and black nationalism. He also replied that the normative individual in nationalist rhetoric has been the "soldier-citizen," a masculine figure. Gilroy's reply may illuminate the traditions he is analyzing, but it does not quite answer for the androcentrism of his own analyses.

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