

were diluted both by the time of their initial production in the theatre and in subsequent publications can include similar notions of ethnic alterity. After a lengthy reading, Bornstein chooses to conclude his text with a single sentence rather than a chapter, a strategy that speaks to the persuasive force he has placed on demonstration: "there may be less of a gap between an American mule bone and the clout of an Irish loy than we sometimes think" (166).

Paulo M. Campos

Paul Gilroy. *Against Race: Imaging Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002. 406 pp. \$16.95 pb.

In the future, the traditional concept of race will no longer be an issue. Due to the human genome project's DNA mapping, humans will finally realize that race is an irrelevant term. It is to this future that Paul Gilroy would have us look, to move beyond what he terms a "crisis of raciology" in his latest book, *Against Race: Imaging Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Unfortunately, humankind seems to have an infinite ability to create new "others." The old concept of "race" will be outmoded in favour of another sort of discrimination. Instead of prejudice based on skin colour, the future citizens of the world will find other reasons on which to discriminate. One need not, however, look to the future to see this new "racism" at work. The new "others" are any foreign culture we currently deem to be "alien." Gilroy's work is important in its charting of white and black racism and the future he portends. But discrimination is discrimination and when we finally become "post-race," we do not yet have a solution to what will become the new "racism."

As in any good science fiction novel, Gilroy's ultimate aim is a culture beyond earthly constrictions, in this case, race. He provides an excellent study of race and racism in Europe and the United States, from the period between the wars up until today, using examples as diverse as singer R. Kelly to novelist William Gardner Smith's *The Last Conquerors*. He well-illustrates that the concept of race is limiting to those who are degraded by it as well as to those who use it as a sign of superiority, black or white in either case: "Black and white are bonded together by the mechanisms of 'race' that estrange them from each other and amputate their common humanity" (15). And it is in the direction of what Gilroy calls "planetary humanism," that he would like the people to go. And although he does not refer specifically to Canada,

Gilroy's new humanism sounds a lot like the Canadian multicultural model. In referring to Europe, with which he is more familiar, he writes that the new humanism will be "a matter of building upon the narratives and poetics of cultural intermixture already alive inside Europe's postcolonial popular cultures" (253). But there are problems inherent in the multicultural model that have been discussed in more detail elsewhere (Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions*). One of the problems is that in any multicultural society one or two cultures tend to dominate. In Canada, the two cultures are French and English; too often in Gilroy, the main cultures in his multiculturalism model are black and white:

Corporate multicultural is giving the black body a makeover. We are witnessing a series of struggles over the meaning of that body, which intermittently emerges as a signifier of prestige, autonomy, transgression, and power in a supranational economy of signs that is not reducible to the old-style logics of white supremacism. (270)

Gilroy does state that "the theories of inter- and multicultural that are currently available do not assist in capturing half of the stories we need to consider" (275), but his study is largely bicultural.

Despite the primarily bicultural nature of his book, Gilroy does believe that a society free of all racial categorizations will emerge in the not too distant future. This post-racial era will lead to what Gilroy calls a "crisis of raciology." If concepts of race, new or old, are in a state of "crisis," it is a crisis that has existed since time immemorial. Yet, Gilroy insists on its urgency:

It is a crisis because the idea of "race" has lost much of its common-sense credibility, because the elaborate cultural and ideological work that goes into producing and reproducing it is more visible than ever before, because it has been stripped of its moral and intellectual integrity, and because there is a chance to prevent its rehabilitation. (28–29)

There are indeed problems with the concept of race and its insidious ramifications. As far-reaching and detrimental it may be, referring to it as a "crisis" appears to be a bit of a misnomer. It is more so an ugly, chronic problem that often flares into crisis.

And it is in these very crises that Gilroy sees elements of fascism. This is his most contentious point in the book—that there is a link between black consumer culture and fascism. He argues that when "nation, race, and culture come together [...] the rebirth of fascist thinking and the reappearance

of stern, uniformed political movements was not far away" (39). And when black popular culture is posited as sameness of identity based on the black body, there is an element of fascism present. Gilroy asserts that in segregating the black race and asserting its superiority, some black cultural icons are not that far removed from the Nazis and Fascists. He provides the examples of Ice Cube (the rapper/actor), and Marcus Garvey and the UNIA: "The chain of fundamental(ist) meanings established here—strength, masculinity, fraternity, self-reliance, discipline, hierarchy—is articulated above all though and by appeals to the value of racial purity" (216).

Gilroy's solution to this "crisis of raciology" is to look to the future, to the world of science fiction perhaps. When race truly is an irrelevant concept, and all the people on the planet are various shades of brown, we will not be able to ascertain, based on how someone looks, which identity they claim. This fluidity of identity will be a characteristic common to all, if they have sufficient funds to shape or buy new identities through globalized consumerism. But as Gilroy argues, "sameness becomes difference" (100) and new groups are found/created every week against whom innovative discriminatory approaches are leveled. Once we get to Gilroy's post-race era, the new discrimination, equally insidious, will be against those "others" we have not yet identified.

Camille Isaacs

Work Cited

Bissoondath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1994.

Chinosole. *African Diaspora and Autobiographics: Skeins of Self and Skin*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. Pp. xv, 187. \$29.95.

This is a useful and fascinating book. The diaspora to which it refers is "the forced displacement of Africans that was initiated by the European slave trade, perpetuated through colonial governments, and continued through global economic and military control by the United States and other Western powers," with a consequent "proliferation of distinct African-related cultures" (136). The volume's sub-title expresses both Professor Chinosole's view of "Skin as representative of racial consciousness [...] that taut [...] site [...] on which is tapped individual and communal expression of self" (152),