

Globalization, Communication and Transnational Civil Society

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Globalization and the Music of the Public Spheres*

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In this chapter I trace the movement of sound across various global spaces and public spheres and pinpoint some of the ways that music moves beyond simply being a form of aesthetic expression or commodity to become a medium of transnational communication and affective knowledge. My point of departure is with the self-proclaimed "global" strategies of the recording industry and the responses that these have aroused, both inside and outside the music business in Europe. I take this as a concrete focus to begin interrogating some of the abstractions and universalisms of arguments about globalization. I argue that what has so often been labeled as "globalization" is, when examined more closely, a series of very *particular* cultural movements, corporate strategies, and political struggles. These are certainly occurring over space and time and across nation-state boundaries, but they are not quite as "global" as many corporate commentators and academic theorists have suggested.

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My argument here is that the "global" repertoire policies initiated by the major entertainment companies do not produce dynamics that can be neatly explained by reference to theories of globalization as an abstract dichotomous homogenizing or fracturing universal force or a "dialectic" of the global and local (and in making this argument, I critique the work of Anthony Giddens who has proposed such a theoretical model). Instead, in this context, globalization involves untidy human struggles over a series of quite specific practices through which attempts are being made to impose and assert a "dominant particular" (Hall, 1991b, p. 67) as a "global" universal. As a consequence, the entertainment companies that are pursuing "global" policies are continually confronting the active responses of different producers and audience groups who are attempting to resist these narrow particulars and generate alternative routes of cultural expression. Research into the particularities and power relations of such struggles might contribute far more to our understanding of specific changes that are happening in the world than the grand universalisms of theories of "globalization."

In the second part of this chapter I move on from this argument and follow some of the tracks as music moves out from the commercial direction of the corporations and its status as commodity and becomes an important medium of transnational communication and a significant form of affective knowledge. In doing this I highlight how music is frequently central to individual lives and collective political struggles and how it is an important element in the creation of distinctive and identifiable public spaces of communicative activity. I do this not only to indicate the power of music as an expressive form of communication, but also to indicate the disjunctions and dislocations between the "globalization" of music within production and its "global" uses as a form of affective knowledge and media of communication in the field of consumption (a lack of fit that indicates that the conventional designations of production/consumption and their assumed theoretical relations are becoming increasingly inadequate for referring to the distribution and social use of musical styles around the world). I introduce these themes in order to contribute to a critique of concepts of the public sphere derived from Habermas (1974, 1989). In particular, I am concerned about the way in which theories of the public sphere neglect significant nonlinguistic areas of contemporary communication while privileging a logocentric view of knowledge and political communicative action. Particularly neglected is popular music, which I suggest can be used to contribute to the formation of spheres of public knowledge that have the potential to be independent of the interests of individual states and irreducible to the boundaries of constructed commercial markets.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

The term *globalization* has been used in a number of different ways and has been incorporated into various discourses both inside and outside the academy. There are two articulations of the concept that are relevant to my discussion here. First, there is the way that processes of "globalization" have been theorized by Anthony Giddens, who offers important and influential interventions within contemporary social theory that are relevant to my account of how popular music might be an outernational form of communicative cultural expression. Second, there is the way that "globalization" has been adopted as a description of a set of business strategies by entertainment corporations as they pursue ever more consumer markets across the world. What I emphasize here are the similarities in the way that globalization is employed in both discourses, and also the particularities that are elided when this term is used in a rather benign universalistic manner.

In his brief and schematic discussion of processes of globalization in *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), Giddens notes that this concept indicates a shift away from ideas about a bounded society toward conceptions of how social life is ordered across space and time; distant events are lifted out of their immediate local context and relayed, by the communication media, across the surface of the world to other localities. Giddens, like other writers who have written on this subject (see Featherstone, 1990), has stressed this movement across borders and the concomitant trends toward "cultural globalization" as events are experienced simultaneously across the world and as cultural forms and commodities are consumed concurrently in a variety of geographical locations. With little reference to empirical research, Giddens (1990) presents an abstract and frequently impressionistic account based on the idea of a "dialectic" of globalization moving across the planet. There is little concrete sense of the humans involved in this dialectic. There is no real sense of any disruption to or discontinuities occurring within this process; driven as it is by the "diffusion of machine technologies . . . the global extension of the institutions of modernity . . . [and] . . . the global money markets" (pp. 76-78). Giddens is on spaceship earth, bearing witness as the planet is becoming "one world" (p. 77).

Very similar ideas inform the outlook of senior executives within the music and entertainment industry. Trade magazines and company reports regularly feature discussions of globalization and "global-local" relationships. The industry's own magazine, *Music Business International*, regularly employs the term and spends much space commenting on the "global reality that is changing the face of music" (*Music Business International*, 1993, p. 3). However, for the people actually

working in the music business, such abstract ideas about globalization can only have any concrete meaning if they are translated into a series of quite specific working practices and repertoire policies by the corporations involved. I have described some of the "global" operations of the music industry in more detail elsewhere (Negus, 1992, 1993). Here I very briefly summarize what *globalization* concretely involves.

Two distinct but interrelated general practices can be identified: First, the world has been divided into a series of discrete regional territories or market blocs and a number of judgments made about which areas are to be accorded top priority. Such judgments are informed by very particular considerations, the most important being the size of the market (the number of potential consumers and revenue that can be generated), the "penetration" of the technologies of musical reproduction (tape machines and record and CD players), the media systems that can be used for promotion (television, radio, printed word), and the existence of copyright legislation that will ensure that recordings broadcast by the media and played in public will generate rights revenue that will accrue to the corporation. The markets being accorded top priority at the moment are in North America and Europe, with the latter rapidly becoming equally as important as the United States, which has been the industry's main focus of attention for many years.¹

The second global strategy involves personnel in the central marketing divisions of the corporations assessing the music being produced by the different company labels and subdivisions and drawing up a priority list of "international" repertoire. The term, *international repertoire*, is regularly used by personnel within the record industry, reported in trade reports and corporate publications, and can frequently be found employed in record stores in non-English-speaking countries.²

¹For over 30 years the United States has been the most important source of revenue and repertoire for the international recording industry. However, since 1988, the income generated from the sales of recorded music in the European Community (EC) taken as a whole has been creeping above that of the United States. At the time of writing, the most recent figures indicate that retail sales in the EC account for approximately 34%-35%, whereas those of the United States are 31% of the world total (IFPI, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993a). In a similar way, between 1989-1990, revenues derived from the exploitation of music publishing rights within the EC member states accounted for 55% of the world total, whereas those of the United States were considerably less at 28% (Lightman, 1992). The importance of Europe has also increased since the collapse of the Stalinist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe.

²International repertoire does not refer to the same thing as world music, a term that emerged in the 1980s and that was mainly used in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan to refer to an eclectic mixture of non-Anglo-American styles, rhythms, and sounds (initially emerging as a sales category to resolve a marketing dilemma within the entertainment industries—how to construct a market space to place such a diversity of music).

International repertoire signifies a music that is predominantly (but, by no means necessarily) composed of Anglo-American artists who perform pop-rock music that is sung in English. In theory, as long as they fit the criteria, an "international" artist can be drawn from anyplace. As an international marketing director for a major musical entertainment group remarked, anyone can be prioritized as international repertoire "as long as they sing in English without an accent."³ These are the artists that will be accorded the most investment and have their recordings released simultaneously in all of the major territories of the world. This can be contrasted with "regional repertoire," a secondary list that will contain artists who will be promoted to other more regional audiences (such as Latin America or Southeast Asia), and "domestic repertoire," the lowest priority of recordings that are judged to be suitable for one national territory.⁴

Like the term *global, international repertoire* has come to refer to something that is "international" in one specific sense. It has become a music business euphemism for the recordings of Anglo-American artists singing conventional rock/pop songs in English. The record industry's own statistics and a number of media scholars have highlighted how this Anglo-international repertoire has dominated sales charts and radio playlists throughout the world for a number of years (Hung & Morencos, 1990; IFPI, 1993b; Laing, 1992; Negus, 1993; Robinson, Buck, & Cuthbert, 1991; Wallis & Malm, 1984). This has been particularly so in Europe, in which the introduction of pan-European repertoire policies provides an illustration of the particularity of the global commercial music strategies that are reinforcing this dominance.

CORPORATE COMPOSITIONS: GLOBAL STRATEGIES IN EUROPE

Since the end of the 1980s, the major record companies have been establishing pan-European marketing and repertoire divisions (moving away from a system of semi-autonomous offices in each national territory). The aim is to acquire artists and coordinate the simultaneous release of prioritized recordings across the entire continent. Despite vari-

³Personal interview with Mike Allen, International Director, Polygram International, May 11, 1993.

⁴This is a very condensed and simplified summary of record company strategies, drawn from information reported in Music Business International during 1993 and IFPI's Annual Review (1993b), and supported by personal interviews with Stuart Watson, Senior Vice President, MCA Records International (June 9, 1993); Mike Allen, International Director, Polygram International (May 11, 1993); Jonathan Morrish, Director, Corporate Public Relations, Sony Music Entertainment (April 28, 1993); and Hiroshi Kato, Managing Director, LOE Entertainment (June 18, 1993).

ous platitudes about supporting "local" talent, the European continent is increasingly being viewed as one big potential market for the international repertoire of the major entertainment companies. As a result, patterns of investment have shifted in two important ways: first, from signing and producing the music of a large number of local artists to marketing the music of a small number of international stars (Rutten, 1991); and second, from financial decision making distributed across a series of local companies and corporate subdivisions to investment centralized in one regional operations center.

To give just one example of this, in 1991 Sony Music introduced a label called Sony Music Soho Square, which was to operate as the industry's "first ever pan-European repertoire source" (*Music Week*, 1991, p. 1). Not only was the chosen title decidedly English, being named after the company's base in London, the brief of this "pan-European" label was restricted to signing only English-speaking artists in Europe. Although having scouts seeking artists in various European countries, the label was firmly based in London. The label's director explained that when artists were found they would be brought "over to the UK" and developed in London ("A & R World," 1992, p. 22). This is by no means an isolated example; most of the major record companies began to follow suit and started implementing very similar schemes (see Negus, 1993). By the beginning of 1994, for example, Virgin's Spanish subsidiary had no local artists signed to its roster.

What I am outlining here is a process by which the major record companies have been rationalizing in order to set agendas and priorities across existing national divisions and to coordinate the placement of a small number of acts on a panregional (European) scale. Such "global" policies undoubtedly involve the relaying of music and images to distant places and the simultaneous crossing of boundaries (particularly via radio and video)—as globalization theorists like Giddens suggest. However, what I am describing here is a very particular attempt to regulate, order, and control the regional organization of popular music production and consumption. One of the most immediate impacts of such policies is that they impede the prospects for local performers who do not sing in English and privilege artists from Britain and the United States, reinforcing and maintaining the cultural dominance of Anglo-American pop (Wallis & Malm, 1984, 1992). To simply describe such a process as "globalization" (whether as homogenization or as a dialectic between the global and local) is to partially mask or simply ignore the unequal relationships being actively formed across the European continent and beyond. In the first instant, these are quite specific transnational practices (Sklair, 1991) arising from the motivations of transnational corporations.

Such transnational practices have not simply been imposed on hapless producers and consumers, and I do not mean to suggest that the popularity of Anglo-American pop music can be explained simply by reference to the international marketing mechanisms of the entertainment industry. However, musicians are not doing as they please, audiences are not simply getting what they want, and there have been a number of reactions from those who feel excluded by the dominant particular that is being distributed as the "international" in music. First, there have been responses within the music industry. This has often taken the guise of alliances between personnel and groups in different national territories. For example, in 1992, record industry agencies from France, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Denmark formed The European Music Network, with the aim of "maximising cross border exposure" for their national artists (Clark-Meads, 1992, p. 33). In a similar way, the Latin American Federation of Societies of Authors and Composers was formed in 1993 as an alliance of music rights societies from Latin America, Spain, and Portugal, with the explicit aim of challenging the Anglo-American hegemony that permeates the record industry (Llewellyn, 1992).

These two examples are an indication of a struggle that is occurring within the webs of the entertainment industry, a struggle about "global" policies and priorities, about the distribution of investment, about the formation of promotional agendas, and about which genres and artists will ultimately receive the push to become commercially successful. Such struggles are not simply confined to the "local," but are occurring across national boundaries, and, inevitably, they do not stop at the edge of Europe.

These untidy movements within the music industry are occurring at the same time as further series of reactions to such "global" policies are being generated outside (but in relation to) the commercial entertainment industry. In recent years a number of European governments have attempted to support their musicians and music industry. State organizations in France, Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands (and, further afield, similar bodies in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada) have been implementing various popular music policies and assisting musicians and bands in producing, distributing, and performing, both nationally and internationally (Bennett, Frith, Grossberg, Shepherd, & Turner, 1993; Malm, 1982; Van Elderen, 1985). Such state initiatives have not simply involved local responses to global movements, although they are certainly part of a process in which vague global strategies are directly confronted and translated into particular practices in specific localities (Negus, 1993). Instead, such responses involve a local, national, and transnational element. That is, state representatives are working locally by providing facilities in specific areas; acting nationally by supporting the development and distribution of national music (whether defined by language or the legal citizenship of

its producers) against imported forms of music and "international repertoire"; and operating transnationally by contributing the internationalization of their own nations' repertoires into overseas markets.⁵

What I am referring to here are particular transnational practices. These may well involve the "re-ordering of social life across space and time" and the intensification of worldwide social relations which, as Giddens (1990, p. 64) argues, link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away, and vice versa. However, far from this being due to the "dialectical character of globalization" (p. 67), driven by the abstract forces of modernity, this is an asymmetrical conflict-ridden process that involves quite specific power struggles that arise due to corporate attempts to construct and pursue quite partial "global" practices that then result in opposition both within and without the corporation. The way that the dominant particulars of globalization are being resisted and contested, and the way in which a phenomenological experience of cultural subordination is frequently articulated during such struggles, suggests that these practices involve more than residual or rhetorical elements of a struggle over "cultural imperialism"; it is, perhaps, "not yet the post-imperialist era" (Schiller, 1991). It may well be a difficult job to identify whose or which culture is involved and to untangle the threads that become woven together when these cultural forms are received, interpreted, and appropriated during the exchanges between different companies, audiences, and musicians. It seems premature, however, to avoid this difficult task by making a conceptual shift to the abstract dialectal forces of modernity and globalization, as Giddens (1990) and Tomlinson (1991) do, and a shift away from an analysis of forms of cultural domination that are directly connected to (but not reducible to or simply determined by) the changing organizations of contemporary capitalism.

Further questions about the simplicity of the dialectical abstractions of globalization theory can be raised by reference to two of the central conceptual terms employed by Giddens (1990) in his discussion of this process: disembedding and reembedding. *Disembedding* refers to "the lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (p. 21). In contrast, *reembedding* refers to "the reappropriation or recasting of disembedded social relations so as to pin them down (however partially or transitorily) to local conditions of time and place" (pp. 79-80).

Some aspects of the processes I have been describing could be viewed as processes of disembedding and reembedding, that is, entertainment corporations seek to commandeer and generate revenue from

⁵The French Music Office has been doing this in the United States; and Australian government bodies have been assisting their artists in the United States and in Southeast Asia, for example.

particular forms of music and promote it as international repertoire across time and space (disembedding), whereas local audiences and musicians respond by "pinning down" their own music, and in doing so emphasize the local and the particular in opposition to the global, the international, and the disembedded. Therefore, these metaphors do provide a way of characterizing actual processes that are occurring, and I do not dismiss Giddens' work in toto on the basis of my own partial critique here.

However, these metaphors provide little explanation of the particular human dynamics and power relationships involved. Giddens's (1990) largely abstract discussion of "disembedding mechanisms" (operating in conjunction with "expert systems" and "abstract systems") gives the process a rather mechanical quality, with any sense of real human struggles rather absent. When he refers to nation-states as "actors" and corporations as "agents" (p. 71), it gives the impression that they are mysteriously moving and thinking with one undivided "body." One of the main points I have sought to make here is that it is within the webs of the corporation where the struggles and negotiations occur, as capitalistic corporations adopt, implement, and struggle to impose very particular "global" practices in very specific regional contexts. It is at this point that a whole range of individuals and groups challenge or oppose such activities. It is these struggles that lead corporations to become agents in any meaningful manner. It is these practical activities and not the abstract movement of modernity that are "globalizing" the world. It is here that detailed research into such struggles could contribute much to our understanding of the very particular, concrete, and clumsy ways in which the "dialectic of globalization" is being moved across the planet and raise questions about just who is doing the pushing. Such research might reveal that the dialectic of disembedding and reembedding is not quite so symmetrical and that there is more than an interaction between yet another new binary opposition (the global and the local) at work here.

Those who have been trying to keep track of the movement of music have had difficulty confining music to particular localities and have been confronted with the way that music is continually on the move (Chambers, 1993; Lipsitz, 1994). No sooner has a music emerged from a subcultural group (Hebdige, 1979) to be coopted by the entertainment corporations (Chapple & Garofalo, 1977) than it is turned into part of the national heritage and used to promote tourism, and then it escapes and becomes part of the vernacular fabric of everyday life.⁶ It is this shift that

⁶I am thinking here of the Beatles, whose music moved, in the space of 30 years, from leather-clad rockers in the clubs of Hamburg's red-light district to the executive suites of EMI and the corridors of Buckingham Palace, and now accompanies wax works dummies on Liverpool's heritage dockside. The Beatles' songs, meanwhile, have become part of British everyday vernacular, played in pubs and at children's birthday parties and whistled by window cleaners.

provides clues as to how popular music might escape from the regimes of corporate "globalization" and provide intimations of possibilities for the creation of alternative transnational public spheres.

POPULAR MUSIC AS TRANSNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND AFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

In their studies of music making in various countries around the world, Wallis and Malm (1992) have indicated how vast amounts of music are produced and consumed "below the national level of government and corporate activities" (p. 22). Such everyday musical activities do not confine themselves to specific localities, but carve out and follow a number of "pathways" (Finnegan, 1989). Some of these have been traced by Michael Pickering (1987) when following the movement of specific songs through time and across the spaces of everyday life between the 17th and 19th centuries in Britain. Hints of the variety of contemporary routes being taken by music are registered as the sounds of a collective of amateur musicians from the small English city of St. Albans were exchanged in solidarity with Romanian musicians immediately after the fall of Ceaucescu during 1990 (Johnson, personal interview, December 3, 1990). These hints are also apparent in the mutual visits, exchanges of recordings, and combined performances involving musicians from Ireland and Turkey exploring the Arabic influences on both musics (Stokes, 1991); and manifested in the way in which Welsh musical enthusiasts have been distributing recordings, paying visits, and forming links with other Celtic regions across Europe for a number of years (Wallis & Malm, 1992).

Such examples provide only the merest hint of the "invisible" activities engaged in by "amateur" singers, musicians, and their audiences. Such practices frequently do not correspond to the interests of the entertainment industry. For this reason, they often remain hidden—invisible and inaudible (see Finnegan, 1989; Fornäs, 1993). This is an important but under-researched and theoretically neglected area of communicative activity and social practice. It is here, in the "hidden" world of everyday music making, where sounds move beyond their commercial commodity status and slide between the spaces that open up between the local, the national, and the global. Here music is continually being used to create a series of "affective alliances" (Grossberg, 1992). These alliances constitute pan-regional spheres of communication that are outside of nation-state regimes and not reducible to the commercial marketing categories of the music business. Such alliances have the potential to have a direct impact on politics and culture.

To argue that music is powerful—politically and culturally—is not particularly new; a recognition of the political power of music goes back

at least to Plato, and the 20th century has witnessed the banning of music by political regimes in Stalin's USSR, Nazi Germany, and Pinochet's Chile (Tagg, 1990). In Anglo-American theorizing since the 1960s, much has been written about the potential political and cultural influence of rock music, whether used by hippy radicals (Street, 1986), youth subcultures during the 1970s (Willis, 1978), or by those seeking to impose censorship on music during the 1980s (Cloonan, 1991; Grossberg, 1992). Much of this has concerned the symbolic role of music. Here I wish to emphasize the explicitly material way in which music can operate as an "affective" form of political communication and knowledge. In pursuing this line of thought, I draw on Lawrence Grossberg's (1992) argument that music works at the intersection of the body and emotions, generating affective alliances between people that in turn create the energy for social change. Such affective alliances do not operate according to liberal bourgeois democratic political theory, nor do they correspond to the rationale of conventional political movements. But the affective empowerment that is generated does provide the potential for optimism and political change. Grossberg argues that such alliances are increasingly important in a world in which pessimism has

become common sense, in which people increasingly feel incapable of making a difference . . . affective relations are, at least potentially, the condition of possibility for the optimism, invigoration and passion which are necessary for any struggle to change the world. (p. 86)

A number of writers have identified this potential energy emerging on an everyday level, as music escapes its narrow definition as a commodity and provides forms of empowerment (Chambers, 1985; Gilroy, 1993b). It has also been apparent in more dramatic and revolutionary political struggles and social changes. An indication of music being used in this way was apparent during the events in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) that led to the breaking down of the Berlin Wall.

In the GDR, under the previous Stalinist regimes, music was heavily censored and regulated. In 1965, Erich Honecker, then Chief of National Security, had deemed that rock music was not compatible with the goals of a socialist society, as part of a general regime of cultural repression particular sounds were effectively banned.⁷ As a result, the performance and transmission of specific musical sounds became a non-linguistic, nonrepresentational way of communicating opposition to the

⁷It should be noted that this policy was implemented with varying degrees of ambiguity, with the state providing and then withdrawing organizational support for various forms of rock music at certain periods during the 1970s.

system. Peter Wicke's (1991, 1992a, 1992b) illuminating work on the role of rock music in the former GDR indicates that the music that was created by musicians and shared by their audiences played a vital role in communicating ideas of solidarity and building resistance. By being a central element in the organization of private, underground, and public events, music became integral to the articulation of opposition and generated an affective sense of solidarity, the solidarity that was so visible in the broadcast scenes that accompanied the breaking-down of the Wall. By improvising performances on trailers or trucks in public places and by distributing sonorial material within the state and across its borders into surrounding territories (via illegally produced recordings and broadcasts), rock musicians were able to operate as cultural catalysts, mediating cultural values that symbolically and materially challenged the system. Rock music did not "smash the wall" (Pekacz, 1994), but it did provide an important means of communicating dissent and forming alliances that in turn connected with broader political struggles at the time.

Much more could be written about the role of music in the changes in the GDR. In my brief reference to these events here, however, I want to draw two points from Wicke's (1992a) observations: My first point concerns the way that music communicates. Wicke observes that:

Music is a medium which is able to convey meaning and values which—even (or, perhaps, particularly) if hidden within the indecipherable world of sound—can shape patterns of behaviour imperceptibly over time until they become the visible background of real political activity. (p. 81)

It is this "intangible" presence of music as a form of affective communication that has so often been acknowledged in everyday discourse, but frequently neglected in studies of the media due to the apparent nonreferentiality of music and the way it seems to operate at the level of the "phatic and the ineffable" (Gilroy, 1993a).⁸ It is partly this aspect that makes music difficult to tie down—to embed, in Giddens's language—and contributes to its ability to keep on the move.

Wicke (1992b) also describes how cheap radio receivers were used as amplifiers in order to create a form of "publicity" that was outside of the control of the state. Here Wicke's reference to publicity need not simply be understood in the same way as product promotion or marketing. Instead, it bears a relation to a conception of publicity as employed in Enlightenment thought from Kant to Habermas. This is publicity as a critical principle that can make a direct contribution to public knowledge.

⁸For an analysis of how music encodes and communicates quite specific cultural meanings, see Tagg (1990).

As John Thompson (1993) observed, "The critical principle of publicity is the idea that the personal opinions of private individuals could evolve into a public opinion through a process of rational-critical debate which was open to all and free from domination" (p. 178). Wicke does not make this connection overtly, but this principle of publicity is of direct relevance to discussions that have derived from Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere as a space in which dialogic communication can be conducted that is free from both state and commercial interests. This seems particularly relevant to the way that music is continually used for mediating public communication and private experience outside of and across the strictures of the state and constructions of the commercial markets. Music generates a public form of knowledge and a mode of understanding that is shared by vast numbers of people; these are people who know that the meanings of music are not *that* indecipherable.

Throughout this chapter I have been drawing on Paul Gilroy's evocative arguments about the importance of music within the counter-discourses that have opposed the particular forms of communication privileged by modern bourgeois rationality. This is vividly illustrated in his work on the formation of identities within the Black diaspora. Tracing the enduring resonances of the terror of slavery within the Black diaspora of the Atlantic world, Gilroy (1993a) has made the important point that:

Access to literacy was often denied on the point of death and only a few opportunities were offered as a poor surrogate for the other forms of individual autonomy denied by life on the plantations and in the barracoons. Music becomes vital at the point at which linguistic and semantic indeterminacy/polyphony arise amidst the protracted battle between masters, mistresses and slaves. . . . Music, the grudging gift that supposedly compensated slaves not only for their exile from the ambiguous legacies of practical reason but for their complete exclusion from modern political society, has been refined and developed so that it provides an enhanced mode of communication beyond the petty power of words—spoken or written. (pp. 74-76)

Gilroy has traced how, for many years, music has operated beyond the boundaries of the nation state as a transnational, pan-regional form of cultural communication. It has provided diverse populations of Black people with a vision of the future based on the "politics of fulfillment" (rather than the "rational" teleologies of liberal bourgeois politics). It has provided an affective form of communication that is not simply subjective, intuitive, and irrational, but that generates forms of "counterrationality," which in turn create affiliations, alliances, and understanding among dispersed and diverse groups of people. Gilroy has shown that within the Atlantic triangle of Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean, and

Europe, music has been a significant means of articulating and communicating experiences, and that in the process it has transformed the cultural life of both Black and White citizens of Europe. Gilroy's work is suggestive of the way that musical forms directly contribute to "intercultural conversations," yet such dialogues have received little acknowledgment in contemporary debates about the public sphere. It is to this point that I now turn.

POPULAR MUSIC AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE

Contemporary theories of globalization and the public sphere are based on a number of assumptions and claims about contemporary culture and the modern communication media. My focus here is inevitably only on one particular aspect of these assumptions, and to pursue this I return to Giddens (1990), who in discussing the globalizing impact of modernity, identifies culture as fundamental and the mass media as central. However, in his brief allusion to the "cultural globalization" generated by the mass media, he refers only to the print media, the growth of mass circulation newspapers, and "the pooling of knowledge which is represented by the 'news'" (p. 78). This is a narrow definition of public knowledge, but it is one that can be found frequently among those writers who have drawn on Habermas's concept of the public sphere to develop a prescriptive politics for the communications media.

In Habermas's (1974, 1989) formulation, the public sphere is an area of social life in which "something approaching public opinion can be formed" (1974); access is guaranteed to all citizens, the freedom of assembly and the freedom to express opinions is guaranteed, and all citizens are able to engage in communication and dialogue without coercion or constraint. Habermas's concept has taken on a particular relevance for communication researchers because the public sphere is explicitly about communication and the media: "Newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere" (1974, p. 49).

Although acknowledging the limitations of this approach and the need for "reconstruction,"⁹ a number of writers agree that the concept of the public sphere is useful for developing a democratic politics that might

⁹The concept of the public sphere has been subject to a number of criticisms: the accuracy of Habermas's version of the historical emergence and subsequent decay of a public sphere has been questioned and the concept has been criticized for its gender bias, its privileging of public discourse over private, and its lack of attention to nonbourgeois public spheres (see Calhoun, 1992; Dahlgren & Sparks, 1991; Hohendahl, 1979).

be exercised through media that are free from the constraints of both the state and the market (Calhoun, 1992; Dahlgren & Sparks, 1991; Garnham, 1990; Hjarvard, 1993).

Yet, in referring to a media permeated with nonlinguistic images and sounds, there has been a tendency to uncritically follow Habermas's emphasis on speech and language as the means of communication for reaching an understanding through dialogue. As a result, what is continually emphasized and predominates in such arguments is a logocentric model of communication based on rational discourse that in turn explicitly privileges the work of journalists in the print media and broadcast news (Curran, 1991a; Dahlgren, 1991; Garnham, 1990).

Such an orientation involves a very narrow conception of contemporary knowledge, information and communication. As John Durham Peters (1993) has pointed out, "Habermas prizes conversation, reading and plain speech as worthy forms of discourse for a democratic culture and is frankly hostile to theatre, courtly forms, ceremony, the visual and to rhetoric more generally" (p. 562).

Musicologist Philip Tagg (1990, 1992) has made a similar point about the historical neglect of musical knowledge and music as communication. Tagg has highlighted how, within the European enlightenment tradition of Western thought, a conception of knowledge has developed that is logocentric and excludes major aspects of nonverbal (gestural, sonic, and visual) communication. Taking television as a favorite site for studies of the media, Tagg notes how television has been identified as one of the most important mediums providing messages influencing political, economic, and cultural activity. Yet what is so often ignored when television broadcasts are analyzed by media scholars is the music.¹⁰

Music is pervasive in everyday lives across the world. Its sounds range from the subtle and carefully researched use of tones in shopping malls to the improvised appropriations of melodies and songs that are collectively chanted at sporting events. For many years, election rallies, party broadcasts, and political events have had their associated imagery and music, songs, and anthems (whether broadcast or not). Yet, communication researchers have often merely focused on the verbal delivery of the words and the reporting of the "issues." As Peters (1993) has argued, what is frequently missing is a "conception of communication, appreciative of its gloriously raucous as well as its soberly informative qualities" (p. 567). Such elements remain underintegrated into arguments about contemporary communication due to residues of an anachronistic and elitist model of knowledge that continues to make a distinction between "information" and "entertainment" (Garnham, 1992),

¹⁰P. Tagg & R. Clarida (n.d.). For details contact P. Tagg, Institute of Popular Music, PO Box 147, University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 3BX, UK.

with the consequence of privileging the institutionalized "rational" public discourse of the liberal bourgeois classes of the industrialized West.

The producers and consumers of pop music, however, have frequently recognized the communicative power of the "gloriously raucous," particularly when harnessed to global mass-mediated events such as the Live Aid concerts that raised awareness about famine in Ethiopia and similar broadcast events that helped change the political climate that resulted in the release of Nelson Mandela. Such mega-events are certainly not autonomous from states or markets and have to be created between the contours of multiple state broadcasting organizations and political systems of government. They also have to continually negotiate the attempts at incorporation posed by the music and entertainment industry (Garofalo, 1992). But the creation and impact of these events cannot simply be reduced to the influence of either state or commercial interests. It is at such moments when the potentials for a gloriously raucous transnational space of communication are vividly apparent, but underrealized.

In his introduction to a collection of readings on the public sphere, Dahlgren (1991) has called for a more "nuanced understanding of the limits and possibilities of meaning production and circulation . . . [to] avoid such pitfalls as assuming cardboard cut-out versions of 'rational man' (p. 9). My concluding call is for such a nuanced view to incorporate an understanding of the way in which a variety of musics communicate within and across a transnational public space or multiple overlapping and interacting public and private spheres. Of course, the spaces created by the movement of music are not simply "public." The transnational movement of music continually connects the private politics of affective emotional communication with the public declarations of collective desire. And, as Nancy Fraser (1992) has observed, the terms *private* and *public* are not transparent categories of social life, but culturally constructed rhetorical labels.

A more nuanced approach to such affective communication would also need to acknowledge that music is significantly different from other forms of mass communication such as the newspaper, book, film, and television broadcast. Not only is music less dependent on language¹¹ or reliant on formal education and the acquisition of a sophisticated body of knowledge, but it is based on forms of affective expression and communication (antiphony, rhythm, timbre, paralinguistic vocal expressions, etc.) that have been shaped by musical technologies, techniques, and cultural (ex)changes that have occurred as a result of the movement and meeting of various diasporas long before it became an electronically

¹¹Lyrics are always performances and affective utterances that do not simply communicate as words (see Frith, 1987).

reproduced and commodified media form associated with the entertainment media of the "West" (Goodwin & Gore, 1990). These elements have not simply disappeared, but too often they are not heard or are forced from earshot by dismissive condemnations of "Western" pop music. Noisily offensive to the rather genteel version of communicative discourse advocated by Habermas and those who follow his line, it may perhaps be these very elements that allow popular music to communicate across cultural, political, and geographical boundaries so effectively.

If a less culturally encoded (Peters, 1993) and less politically exclusive praxis of knowledge creation and public communication is needed, then perhaps it is time we started listening more closely to the music of the public spheres.

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