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Editorial Statement

Cultural Studies continues to expand and flourish, in large part because the field keeps changing. Cultural studies scholars are addressing new questions and discourses, continuing to debate long-standing issues, and reinventing critical traditions. More and more universities have some formal cultural studies presence; the number of books and journals in the field is rapidly increasing. *Cultural Studies* welcomes these developments. We understand the expansion, reflexivity and internal critique of cultural studies to be both signs of its vitality and signature components of its status as a field. At the same time, cultural studies has been – and will no doubt continue to be – the subject of numerous attacks, launched from various perspectives and sites. These have to be taken seriously and answered, intellectually, institutionally and publicly. *Cultural Studies* hopes to provide a forum for response and strategic discussion.

Cultural Studies assumes that the knowledge formations that make up the field are as historically and geographically contingent as are the determinations of any cultural practice or configuration and that the work produced within or at its permeable boundaries will be diverse. We hope not only to represent but to enhance this diversity. Consequently, we encourage submissions from various disciplinary, theoretical and geographical perspectives, and hope to reflect the wide-ranging articulations, both global and local, among historical, political, economic, cultural and everyday discourses. At the heart of these articulations are questions of community, identity, agency and change.

We expect to publish work that is politically and strategically driven, empirically grounded, theoretically sophisticated, contextually defined and reflexive about its status, however critical, within the range of cultural studies. *Cultural Studies* is about theorizing politics and politicizing theory. How this is to be accomplished in any context remains, however, open to rigorous enquiry. As we look towards the future of the field and the journal, it is this enquiry that we especially hope to support.

Lawrence Grossberg
Della Pollock

January 1998

Contributions should be sent to Professors Lawrence Grossberg and Della Pollock, Dept. of Communication Studies, CB #3285, 113 Bingham Hall, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3285, USA. They should be in triplicate and should conform to the reference system set out in the Notes for Contributors. An abstract of up to 300 words (including 6 keywords) should be included for purposes of review. Submissions undergo blind peer review. Therefore, the author's name, address and e-mail should appear *only* on a detachable cover page and not anywhere else on the manuscript. Every effort will be made to complete the review process within six months of submission. A disk version of the manuscript must be provided in the appropriate software format upon acceptance for publication.

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Catherine Nash

GENETIC KINSHIP

The recent marketing of new genetic tests for popular genealogy is one significant interface between the science of new genetics and public culture in the West. These new commodities offer to situate individuals within global patterns of human genetic diversity, locate genetic origins and sort out true biological relatedness from practised kinship. Taking two cases of recent attempts to popularize genetic tests in popular genealogy, this paper considers how ideas of gender, reproduction, nation, 'race' and relatedness are being shaped by and deployed within their discourses of genetic kinship. In these efforts to geneticize genealogy, the idiom of kinship and the gendering of narratives of reproduction and descent are used to make these tests meaningful and to distance them from ideas of 'race' and ethnicity. Discourses of family relatedness provide a grammar for translating the complexities of new genetics into public culture. At the same time, geneticized genealogy produces new versions of genetic kinship, in the form of Y-chromosome genetic brotherhood, Mitochondrial DNA clan membership and global genetic kinship. Yet, notions of genetic kinship also provide cultural resources for the making of personal and collective identities in a myriad of ways and with diverse implications for the politics of 'race' and national belonging.

Keywords genetics; genealogy; ethnicity; race; gender; origins

There's DNA and there are probabilities of sharing some, but no tangible genetic stuff divisible among kin and distinguishing or bounding them from non-kin. There is no genetic test for kinship . . . Kinship is not a genetic property.

(Marks 2002, p. 251)

Introduction

The corporate logo that features on the website of Relative Genetics™, a company offering genetic tests for reconstructing global and family genealogies, twins two key icons of Western culture; the roots and branches of the family tree and the double helix of molecular genetics. This is one of several companies in the USA and UK eager to build on the market for genetic paternity tests and the

popularity of genealogy to create consumer interest in new genetic products that purport to answer questions about immediate, historic and prehistoric relatedness and geographical origins. The findings of population geneticists tracing the history and geography of the origins, movement and interactions of prehistoric populations are being converted into genetic commodities that offer to situate individuals within global patterns of human genetic diversity as well as sort out true biological relatedness from practised kinship. Potential customers of Family Genetics™ can buy genetic testing kits to establish biological relatedness amongst known or suspected relatives, or can send DNA samples that can be analysed to locate them within the community of 'the world's largest genetically based genealogy database'.¹ Reports in the popular science press, newspapers and genealogical magazines herald a new 'double helix genealogy' (Howells 2000), or 'genealogical genetics' (Doriott 1999, 2000); family history, they announce, can now be teased from a 'few drops of blood' (Wolfson 2001). Recent high profile publicity for new genetic answers to personal searches for origins now coincides with news of the latest global maps of human migration, origins and difference.² As Haraway observes: 'Epistemophilia, the lusty search for knowledge of origins, is everywhere' (1997, p. 255).

The journeys of blood samples or cheek cells to genetic laboratories and the return of test results to individuals or groups of amateur genealogists, index one significant interface between the high science of genetic projects that claim to tell us what we are as humans, where we come from and how we differ from each other (through genomic mapping, geneticized evolutionary biology and population genetics) and wider beliefs about what shapes people as individuals and what makes a relative. As genetics is commodified and consumed within popular genealogy, the globalized rhetoric of technoscience meets the intimacy of personal genealogies, identities and family relatedness. Population geneticists produce new maps of human origins, migration and relatedness by examining key markers in the genetic material of contemporary people and by using complex statistical algorithms of rates of mutation to estimate pathways of genetic divergence and degrees of genetic relatedness in human populations. The results are depicted through the familiar graphics of the human family tree and explained via old and familiar but newly geneticized notions of human reproduction, ancestry and inheritance. This mixture of the novel and traditional is at the heart of the representational strategies and material practices of technoscience (Franklin 1995, p. 178). It defines the most recent alliance of popular and scientific models of ancestry and descent in geneticized genealogy and characterizes the cultural work of authorising genetic answers to questions of relatedness and identity, offering the security of the known and the excitement of the new. Phylogenetic trees of human evolutionary history and relatedness, the family tree and the gene, whether figured as double helix or the parallel smudges of a DNA sequence autoradiograph, are evocative diagrams of scientific, popular and personal accounts of ancestry, origins and inheritance. In this paper, I want

to explore some of the ways in which ideas of human relatedness, identity and origins are being imaginatively refigured in newly geneticized genealogy. The 'truth' of genetics is supported by the status of science as rational, objective, disinterested and authoritative, yet its communication within and beyond the laboratory must make use of narrative, analogy, metaphor and imagination. Here I want to examine some of this cultural work of making genetic meaning.

The contemporary traffic of meaning and data between population genetics and popular genealogy has telling echoes of earlier borrowings.³ Bouquet (1994) has traced how the figurative connections between family trees and phylogenetic diagrams register new versions of old visual and semantic affinities between biblical trees of Christ's earthy ancestry, family trees, diagrams of human evolution and anthropological kinship charts. Secular family trees drew on the model of sacred biblical pedigrees before the scientific appropriation of the family tree in evolutionary biology and anthropological diagrams of kinship. As Strathern (1992) has shown, Darwin borrowed genealogy in the sense of human and animal pedigrees to visualize patterns of biological relatedness and descent and thereby explain his theory of evolution, natural selection and biological unity and diversity. The networks of meaning that connected family trees and human evolutionary trees included the conceptualization of the nation as family. Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century ideas of the nation and the universal Family of Man were both naturalized through the model of the 'natural' family. The figuring of the nation as a family, happily and divinely ordered through the subordination of women to men and children to adults, simultaneously naturalizes social hierarchies within an organic national unity and gendered hierarchies within the family and polity. The nation is bound together by shared ancestry and ordered by benevolent paternalism; women, protected from the pollution of other 'races' faithfully reproduce the family and the national fraternity of solidier citizens. As evolutionary biologists drew on the family tree to represent the universal Family of Man this trope of natural harmonious hierarchy was deployed by social evolutionists to naturalize a hierarchical model of 'racial' difference and imperial power at a global scale. As McClintock has argued, the 'merging of the "racial" evolutionary Tree and the "gendered" Family into the Family of Man provided scientific racism with a simultaneously gendered and racial image through which it could popularize the idea of imperial progress' (McClintock 1993, pp. 66–67). This semantic intermarriage continues. Haraway (1997) has shown how the mid-twentieth-century retreat from scientific racism with the shift from 'race' to population and more recently to 'gene' has been accompanied by the reconfiguration rather than the disappearance of the discursive entanglements of family, gender, nation and 'race'. The currently renewed relationship between genealogy and genetics is one opportunity to explore the ways in which post-eugenic genetics, acutely sensitive to the charge of racism, reproduces or reformulates ideas of the body, gender, origins and biological or other forms of human difference and relatedness.

Geneticists, aware of the associations of genetics with eugenics and biological racism, repeatedly insist on the anti-racist nature of new genetics and point in particular to ways in which genetics disproves the idea of biologically distinct human groups.⁴ Genetics, most geneticists argue, refutes 'race', yet their work often reinvigorates and appears to sanction a return to questions of bodily difference and biological relatedness. Genes are cast as keys to the essence of humanity in general and to the uniqueness of each individual. Yet between the scale of the global human population and the individual body is the question of genetic difference and similarity *within* humanity. As critics of the Human Genome Diversity Project have argued, genetic research on human origins, evolution, migration and genetic diversity, both deploy and re-figure ideas of biological identity, difference and relatedness, naming and mapping human groups even as the existence of pure, isolated and genetically distinct groups is denied (Hayden 1998, Marks 2001). This paper addresses one significant junction between genetic science and popular practice by exploring recent efforts to geneticize genealogy, the cultural work entailed in converting the highly technical and inaccessible language of population genetics into meaningful concepts and valuable commodities, and emergent forms of genetic kinship.

My coining of this term is indebted to recent work in new kinship studies (Carsten 2000, Franklin and McKinnon 2001). Feminist anthropologists have argued that traditional conceptualization of kinship within anthropology as the social meaning of the 'natural facts' of reproduction assumed the truth and universality of a Euro-American model of kinship based on a distinction between the 'natural' and the 'cultural', and naturalized women's and men's roles in sexual reproduction and sexual difference as the basis of kinship and other forms of social organization. This critique is coupled with a continued focus on the ways kinship operates as a productive classificatory technology and practice that has powerful naturalizing effects, legitimating hierarchical differences based on 'natural categories' of sex, gender, 'race', reproduction and the family (Franklin and McKinnon 2001).⁵ Here I am using the term genetic kinship to stand for the cultures of human relatedness figured within discourses of geneticized genealogy and produced through the popular consumption of these tests. It signals a critical engagement with the geneticization of identity and relatedness and a focus on emergent forms of relatedness as new genetic knowledges create new definitions of gender, 'race' and relative that reinforce, reshape or challenge existing notions of collective identity and personhood. This paper is thus a challenge to the geneticization of kinship and an engagement with the real effects of this fiction.

Tracking the meanings of genetic kinship does not mean crudely contrasting the scientific and the popular, or biological and social accounts of relatedness. Despite the prevalence of genetic discourses of individualized, essentialist and determined identity, as Strathern (1995) has argued, new genetics does not simply stand in problematic contrast to more progressive ideas of identity and selfhood based on the social relations of community or kinship. This is for two

reasons. Firstly, as Strathern points out, Euro-American ideas of kinship already *combine* notions of individualism, biological relatedness and sociality. The making of family through shared production of offspring that Schneider (1984) recognized as the basis of American kinship, persists in Western folk hereditarian beliefs but coexists with more flexible versions of relatedness in response to new family forms and new reproductive technologies. Who is included in the family and who 'drops out' are shaped by patterns of sociality and senses of alliance and affiliation that are not determined by the crude criteria of blood connection (Edwards & Strathern 2000). These dynamic and performative senses of relatedness are eclipsed in the genetic prioritization of biology as the basis of identity.⁶ However, this mixture of the social doing of family, individualism and blood relatedness within Anglo-American culture means that kinship cannot be viewed as a nostalgically lost or newly threatened model of relatedness *vis-à-vis* genetics. Secondly, popular discourses of identity within population genetics combine both a highly individualist notion of the self whose history and identity can be read from, and in essence *is*, the genes and the idea of the individual situated within patterns of historic and prehistoric descent and genetic relatedness. In this way, genetic accounts of relatedness share mixed discourses of individualism and collective relatedness with Euro-American forms of kinship. Yet, whereas who counts as a relative in families is not always a matter of blood relations, population geneticists are obviously only concerned with biological relatedness. Those marketing new genetic tests within popular genealogy often naturalize the primacy of biological relatedness by drawing both on folk hereditarian notions of blood and biogenetic inheritance and the possessive individualism of Euro-American forms of kinship, but discredit, and often scientifically disprove, forms of kinship based on non-biological forms of social relatedness, as in paternity testing when practised fatherhood is tested for biological legitimacy. The term genetic kinship thus stands for understandings of relatedness that result from a new alliance of already hybrid discourses.

This is complicated further by the way kinship is both understood as the product of the flow of genes and practised within popular genealogy. Within Western traditions of genealogy family trees are the formal, written records of the 'facts of kinship', charting the transfer of biogenetic material from parents to offspring, and extending back in time in bilateral lines of ancestry and descent. Yet, while biological relatedness is central to population genetics, blood has a more equivocal place in popular genealogy. Though descent, ancestry, progeny and reproduction structure the family tree, genealogy in action produces rather than simply describes kinship, as genealogical knowledge is bestowed as a gift, shared or exchanged to create or recreate family ties, and as people cohere in affective networks of shared interest in genealogy without being related in any conventional sense (Nash 2003). At the same time, the implications of newly geneticized genealogy are mediated by genealogy's own ambiguous relationships to social structures, institutions and cultural identities. Though some practitioners

draw on its associations with pedigrees and noble bloodlines (Watson 1996), many others try to distance genealogy from the elitist, patriarchal, prestige-hungry and fabricated genealogies of the late nineteenth century. Genealogy is often coupled with local history (in both its conservative and critical modes) and used as a tool for feminist family history and other political projects of historical recovery and demarginalization. It is used to track diasporic historical geographies of migration and to work out multi-locational senses of belonging and identity. At the same time, genealogy can be used to find simple origins and pure roots, define exclusive communities of descent, and naturalize bounded notions of 'race', ethnicity and nation (Nash 2002). The effects of genetics on genealogy and on the versions of relatedness bound up with ideas of ancestry and origins are thus likely to prove politically and culturally significant, but in complex and contradictory rather than straightforward ways.

Concentrating here on the representational strategies used to market genetic tests in genealogy, rather than ethnographies of their consumption, my focus is on two recent cultural projects to popularize geneticized genealogy and new versions of genetic relatedness. The first is a series of radio programmes made and broadcast by BBC Radio 4 in June and July 2001, entitled *Surnames, Genes and Genealogy*, that explored the use of Y-chromosome research in genealogy and surname studies and featured Bryan Sykes, Professor of Genetics at the Institute of Molecular Medicine of the University of Oxford. The second is his account of his work using genetics to characterize prehistoric populations, trace their migrations and determine the relationships between present day people and prehistoric groups using mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) entitled *The Seven Daughters of Eve* also published in June 2001. These cases are not the most obvious targets for critique. They do not suggest the genetic determination of the abilities or behaviours of women or men or the genetic basis of 'race', as in the polemical rhetoric of genetic mavericks which by its nature is more likely to be widely dismissed.⁷ These examples deserve attention because they are mainstream, liberal and apparently uncontroversial, and because they target a potentially receptive public that includes those for whom genealogy is already a hobby, and those personally navigating racialized discourses of belonging, culture and nationhood. My reading of these constructions of genetic kinship is framed by two questions. How are ideas of gender and reproduction figured in geneticized genealogy? How are notions of nation, community, 'race' and difference being shaped by and deployed within accounts of genetic relatedness? These are British cases, but their geographies both invoke and override national boundaries as they appeal to groups whose genealogies are stretched by migration and deploy genetic accounts of the prehistoric movement of people at the global, continental and nation scales.

Genetic fathers and sons

In many respects, *Surnames, Genes and Genealogy* is a conventional guide to undertaking genealogical research in Britain, outlining sources and methods and featuring encouraging stories of discovery. Yet it is also distinctive in two ways. Firstly, its exclusive focus on patronyms is in contrast to the decline of the traditional emphasis on male lines of descent within popular genealogy. Though single surname societies whose members, known as ‘one-namers’, trace genealogical connections amongst people of the same surname, are one feature of popular genealogy, many doing family history are interested in complex and ever expanding tangles of roots rather than only tracing male lines. Since Euro-American forms of kinship are based on bilateral inheritance, in theory family trees are endlessly branching. In practice, the family trees of popular genealogy are shaped by the lines that are most of interest to those tracing their ancestry (as well as the availability of records). They are also shaped by the emphasis on comprehensive and complete data and the credit attached to the number of generations back from the present that have been successfully researched. Though family trees are meant to be empirical records of biological relatedness, like lived networks of relatedness, they are shaped by ‘multitudinous factors that truncate the potential of forever-ramifying biological relations’ (Strathern 1996, p. 530). In *Surnames, Genes and Genealogy*, the family tree is pruned back hard to lines of *direct* male descent.

This is the product of the series’ second distinctive feature: its promotion of the value of new genetic tests as a tools in genealogical research. In particular, it features recent studies that have argued that since the Y-chromosome is unusual in being transferred unchanged from father to sons, it provides a marker of genetic difference and relatedness amongst men. At the same time, small mutations over time lead to distinctive Y-chromosome types. Therefore, while one line of sons, fathers and grandfathers and so on will share the same form of Y-chromosome, other paternal lines will share their own distinctive forms. The combination of direct inheritance and variety of form is thus used by geneticists to trace patterns of relatedness between individuals and groups of men. Crucial to the series are claims that where surnames are inherited patrilineally like the Y-chromosome, surnames can also be taken to be markers of genetic relatedness. Amongst a group of men with the same surname, the most common form of Y-chromosome is judged to be the Y-chromosome haplotype for that paternal lineage. The Y-chromosomes of other men sharing that surname can then be tested to see if they are also paternally related (Jobling and Tyler-Smith 1995, Jobling 2001). The programme notes that accompany the series acknowledge that the focus on a single surname is contrary to the genealogical tradition of bilateral branches, which diminishes the significance of one name: ‘usually only one in four of our grandparents was born with our surname and that the proportion becomes much smaller as you go back in time. Family

historians get a more rounded picture by tracing all their family lines back to the sixteen great-great-grandparents', but still assert that 'DNA brings new power to the task of finding the home of a family name – the ultimate quest for the genealogist who has traced a family back as far as the records allow' (Hey 2001). What counts as the family name is not explained, the implication being that this is the name men hold and women get from father or husband, and from which a direct patriline can be traced back in time. Single surname societies provide ready sample populations for the 'awesome power of DNA analysis' (Hey 2001) that frames the series and its discussion of conventional sources, the origin and regional differences of the surname system in Britain, social and economic history, demography and personalized stories of connection and discovery.

The first programme entitled 'There's only one Mr Sykes' opens with a narrative of scientific curiosity and fortuitous discovery, and six Mr Sykeses: Sir Richard Sykes, 'chairman of GlaxoSmithKline which is now the largest pharmaceutical company in the world and [. . .] also Rector at the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, which is certainly one of the most famous science universities in the world'; Michael Sykes, 'I'm a dairy farmer from Slaithwaite or Sloughwit as it is known locally in West Yorkshire and I've lived here all my life'; Stephen Sykes, 'I'm a professor of theology and also a Bishop'; Sir John Sykes; Richard Sykes from East Preston in West Sussex; and geneticist Bryan Sykes, who with surname historian George Redmonds, the presenter, set out to explore the combined powers of genetic analysis, genealogical research and surname studies. In this line up of Sykes, the power and global reach of technoscience joins the image of northern English hardy pastoral permanence; the noble, acclaimed and ordinary are listed side-by-side sharing names and, as Bryan Sykes discovers, genes. Finding that he and Sir Richard Sykes share the same Y-chromosome haploptype after what is presented as a whimsical experiment, Sykes sets out to test the Y-chromosome relatedness of a sample of men with the same name. Michael Sykes was one of the 50 or so who sent back a testing brush and cheek cells and turned out to be one of the 50 percent of the sample sharing the same Y-chromosome 'fingerprint'. This suggests for Bryan Sykes that contrary to the assumption that many separate Sykes patrilineages were started taking their name from the local word for a brook or stream, there was an original Mr Sykes, who historical record suggests is Willian Del Sykes farming in the 1280s in the village of Flockton, nine miles east of Slaithwaite and who was the primary progenitor of the Sykes of Flockton, Slaithwaite and everywhere else. For Redmonds, this supports his claim that many surnames have single origins, most becoming hereditary names in the late medieval period in England. The relatively recent development of permanent family surnames (Scott *et al.* 2002) serves less to diminish their significance and more to produce a notion of a single founding father. In *Surnames, Genes and Genealogy*, genetics are presented as a solution to