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Africa Persists: The Transformative Powers of Jazz, Blues, Samba and Bossa Nova

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Africa Persists: The Transformative Powers of Jazz, Blues, Samba and Bossa Nova

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Advisor: Mark Sanders, PhD

An abstract of A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, 2012.

Abstract:
Africa Persists: The Transformative Powers of Jazz, Blues, Samba and Bossa Nova

By Keme Hawkins

During my time in graduate school, my interest in art and notions of black identity in South America reached its zenith during my first trip to Brazil in 2006. There I witnessed a cultural idea of race and identity that simultaneously attempted to include and exclude African sensibilities. Having studied and taught black music and American cultural history for three years prior to beginning my doctoral program, I decided to return to my roots for my final project. This project is an examination of the musical traditions of Jazz, Blues, Samba and Bossa Nova as they reflect various cultural encounters, and subsequently newly improvised creations. Through the chaos of these cultural encounters in the U.S. and Brazil a corridor of rhythm opens up for us and we can see that there is a thread of continuity in the reinvention of identity in these cultural expressions. I am suggesting that perhaps African cultural survivals or linkages between Africa and other diasporic communities are revealed through an act of disruption, or improvised cultural linking to African derived religious traditions (ADRT), in the music of blues, jazz, and samba and bossa nova. It is a challenge to encapsulate all the important shifts that took place in each nation's identity, the influences of African religion and the various creations of musical genres through an interdisciplinary study. Nevertheless, this document attempts to trace the national importance, cultural context and formation of these genres.

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Introduction: Defining Diasporic Context and Reading for Cultural Survivals

Engaging African Diasporic studies presents one very clear challenge from the start: the question of cultural survivals, cultural linkages and a conceptualized homeland. The scholastic inquiries of those like Herskovits, Mintz and Price, and Frazier give us a sense of this tension. These scholars have been asking these questions for more than a half-century. Are there, in fact, African cultural practices retained by new world Afro-Americans (or people of African descent in the Americas)? How might we identify these cultural survivals? Are they consciously enacted in an attempt to restore or maintain a connection to a homeland? And is this idea of homeland necessarily connected to a landmass of the African continent?

This project is an examination of the musical traditions of jazz, blues, samba and bossa nova as they reflect of various cultural encounters and subsequently improvised creations. Through the chaos of these cultural encounters in the U.S., France, and Brazil a corridor of rhythm opens up for us and we can see that there is a thread of continuity in these cultural expressions. This thread is the practice of shaking up or disrupting one's reality or way of seeing and offering a new vision, a re-definition of oneself and her community. And this process of stepping outside of the boundary of homogeneity is most notably connected to the practice of *balanse*, as practiced in the African religious tradition of Vodou, the generation of *axé* in the African derived orisha religious, and ultimately an encounter at the crossroads, where the African deity or orisha Esu resides. I am suggesting that perhaps African cultural survivals or linkages between Africa and other diasporic communities are revealed through an act of disruption, or improvised cultural linking to African derived religious traditions (ADRT), in the music of blues,

jazz, and samba and bossa nova. This disruption involves the reinvention of an identity through practices based in or closely connected to African derived religious traditions. This reinvention, re-interpretation or improvisation also creates a separation from more conventional ideas or the homogeneous cultural ideas of the nation-state, complicating ideas of race, sacredness and national identity.

While scholars like Franklin E. Frazier[1] believed that there were no real African retentions in America, Melville J. Herskovits[2] found that there were in fact

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[1] Frazier, E. Franklin, *Black Bourgeoisie*, (Glencoe: Free Press, 1957).
This book, which was considered more polemic then scientific, provided an analysis of economic and social standard and class standings among African Americans. He looked at the social dimensions as opposed to the power structure. He took note that social pathology, crime and murder were associated with lower classes. He claims this social stratification began during slavery where enslaved blacks were divided by house negroes (more common mulattos) and field negroes (more commonly, darker skinned blacks). The house negroe would form the nucleus for the black middle class or bourgeoisie fusion, half peasant half gentleman. The Black middle class, who emerged within this separation, valued education, and a light skinned complexion. This group lacked cultural tradition as they disconnected themselves from other blacks. They were delusional and insecure by Frazier's standards. For Franklin, Africanisms or African cultural retentions or practices were either meaningless or absolutely absent. He also argues that Herskovits does not take into account sociological patterns of cultural productions. For Frazier, African Americans were simply responding to social conditions, and not creating them. He believed slavery had wiped clean any meaningful remnant of African culture. The black masses that were not apart of the Bourgeoisie and had trouble assimilating to the migrating culture remained in the South, where they developed a black folk culture influenced by the black Christian church. His project here is integration and free assimilation, suggesting that embracing or retrieving Africanisms would thwart full integration and only further separate blacks as they would be seen as savages.
[2] Herskovits, Melville J. *The Myth of the Negro Past*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1941)
Herskovits's thesis resisted 5 assumptions whites had of people of African descent or *blacks:* blacks were naturally childlike and accepted slavery over extinction, only poor stalk Africans were enslaved, a common or simple culture could not withstand the strength of Euro-American culture and the negro is thus a man or woman without history. These myths were combatted by examples of retention and re-interpretation seen through syncretism. He defines syncretic process as the result of stamina, in which old world traditions are re-interpreted in the context of new world traditions. But this process includes choice, experimentation and selection. This process is improvisational and reflects resilience and tenacity on behalf of the African. Herskovits called the results of

identifiable African cultural practices in various others countries such as Suriname, Guyana, Brazil and Caribbean islands. This told him that Africans were not outside of history and were not without a culture. Mintz and Price[3] agreed that Africans did have a cultural history, but argued that it was modified or morphed through encounters with Europeans and enslavement during which their cultures were absorbed into what would become a new cultural practice altogether. Therefore, this new cultural practice was a no longer purely African or European, but newly, American.

Robin Kelly and Ruby Patterson also say that cultural linkages are inevitable[4], as diaspora exists within the context of global, race and gender hierarchies that are constantly conceived then reorganized across national boundaries. It is both a process and condition that is continuously re-constituted through travel, migration and the production of cultural products. When looking at seemingly isolated cultures and countries, we must consider both the literal return to a physical landmass and the figurative or imagined return. The imaginative aspect of diaspora does not necessarily involve a physical return

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this improvisation retentions or Africanisms. He believed that knowledge of these Africanisms would endow black Americans with confidence in their position, and the psychological effect of this pride would lessen racial tensions in the U.S.

[3] Mintz, Sidney W. and Richard Price. *The Birth of African American Culture.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976). Mintz and Price focus on independent development and innovation with overlapping broad aesthetic ideas, as opposed to retention of specific cultural markers. They argue that formal continuities from Africa are the exception, not the rule. They stress both history and sociology, continuity and discontinuity with a focus on institutions. They disagree with Frazier in that African culture was wiped clear, instead they read African American culture as being innovative, creative and syncretic. It is a highly stylized or artistic worldview impacted by sociology and slavery. The cultural identity of African Americans are integrated through hostile situations and a process of independent innovation in the form of cooperative efforts and larger groupings of free and enslaved communities. Through this self-reflexive process of identity creation we, as African Americans, remake ourselves.

[4] Tiffany Patterson, Robin D.G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43.1 (2000): 11-45.

to a homeland, but refers to the connection one makes to a collective center or place of collective cultural harmony, not necessarily a landmass. Therefore ideas can connect across national boundaries to create a sense of collective cultural consciousness or a return to the center of the collective thought.

Scholars of the Caribbean and Latin America also have distinct ways in which they conceptualize the cultural exchanges that took place between Africans, Europeans and Indigenous communities. Fernando Ortiz offered the neologism *transculturation* to describe a process of complex, multi-leveled cultural influences that provide the bedrock for Cuban cultural identity. Ortiz uses the metaphor of sugar and tobacco as examples of the ways in which sugar affected cultural changes in Cuba, as opposed to the way tobacco reflected an enactment of new cultural processes. For Ortiz, transculturation is a more suitable term than the oft-used acculturation, which describes a process of transition from one culture to another. Like Mintz and Price, Ortiz sees something more complex happening. It is cultural sharing and a mutual creation of cultural practices. Transculturation captures this idea in that it expresses the varied phenomena that have come about as a result of the complex transmutations of culture that have occurred in Cuba[5]. These factors or occurrences must be understood in order to really understand all levels of life in Cuba: "legal, ethical, religious, artistic, linguistic, psychological, sexual or other aspects"[6].

Whereas acculturation means to uproot a culture and replace it with another, transculturation notes the specific phases in the process of cultural transition. Although Ortiz begins his tracing of cultural encounters and their effects starting with the

[5] Ortiz 98
[6] Ortiz 98

Paleolithic Indians who first encountered the Spaniards, he explains that the cultural transmutations continued, as there was a steady stream of other nationalities including Anglo-Saxon, Jewish, French, Portuguese, Cantonese, Mongolians and North Americans also flowing into Cuba, and along with the "whites" came the Africans. African tribes who were brought to Cuba in bondage include: Ciboneys, Mindingas, Yolofes (Wolofs), Hausas, Dahomeyans and Yorubas[7]. They came from the coastal regions all along the Atlantic, from Senegal, Guinea, the Congo and Angola. Some even came from as far away as Mozambique. Each of these groups had to deal with being torn from their cultural foundations and thrown into a process of readjusting, deculturation, acculturation and ultimately transculturation.

Identity is a multifaceted experience that is affected by something as small as a grain of sugar and as large as a hurricane: "Organized and politicized movements are just as significant as impromptu cultural developments"[8]. Ortiz is saying that everyone was impacted by *transculturation*, even the whites, who forcefully brought over enslaved Africans; their culture was modified by the encounter as well. Here, transculturation is synonymous with cultural exchange:

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[7] Ortiz 101

[8] Butler, Reginald D., Scot French and Brian Owensby. "Shifting Identities". Thinking from Cuba. University of Virginia. n.d. Web 26 Feb. 2012. Thinking from Cuba is a collaborative effort of the African American Studies and Latin American Studies departments created to integrate classroom teaching, field experience designed to examine constructions of race, ethnicity, and national identities in the African diaspora. Reginald D. Butler, Scot French and Brian Ownesby, whose conversations spawned its creation, also sponsor the site. The Carter G. Woodson Institute provided funding for class-related activities, travel and the design of the website through the Ford Foundation grant "Re-Thinking African American and African Studies: New Approaches to teaching and Research in the 21st Century".

> It is a process of cohabitation that resolves differences through mutual convergence. Transculturation does not imply that one culture must necessarily cede its identity to the other, instead both cultures retain a modified version of their identities by reinterpreting aspects observed of the other group and making it their own.[9]

And as Ortiz would suggest sugar and tobacco were the vehicles for such exchange. In the case tobacco, initially it was seen as something in which only Indians and people of African descent would partake. It eventually worked its way up from the lower strata of society and became a common practice for whites too. The significance isn't in the details of how whites came to partake in tobacco, but that the cultural shifts happened from the bottom up. Tobacco, a product unique to the Caribbean, gained prominence in European cultures. This is an example of how something as minute as the practice of taking in tobacco reflected a cultural exchange and the reinterpretation of a cultural product and those who come in contact with it.

However, the fate of the African was far crueler than that of the other immigrant groups. Although the Africans were there in body, a part of them, which Ortiz calls their soul, was left behind with their institutions. It was necessary for Africans to recreate these institutions and gain new forms of implementation. This need generated the creation of syncretic religious traditions, which, in turn, spawned a new wave of musical traditions that affected the entire country. Maria Teresa Vélez[10] notes that African religious traditions, practiced in individual church-temples, produced their own versions of religious practices and music. She says, that not only did Yoruba religious and cultural

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[9] Butler and Owensby
[10] Vélez 101

practices persist, but also something new was born from the encounters with non-Yoruba Africans and Europeans in a new environment under a new social order. The music played in these venues slowly began to integrate with non-African communities[11]. White hesitancy actually allowed time for these African musical traditions to crystalize.

[11] Veléz 101

Chapter One: Cultural Encounters, Transculturation and Improvisation

Alejo Carpentier's chronicles of the interaction between black and white musicians and the transformation of Son, from "the starting point of Cuban music", into a genre of distinctive Cuban music[12]. He refers to it as " a process of transculturation", in which an amalgamation of meters, melodies, Hispanic instruments, and clear traces of African oral traditions helped create a new style of music: "In the first half of the nineteenth century blacks played and created white music, without enriching it further, except with their atavic rhythmic sense, where they uniquely accentuated certain kinds of danceable compositions"[13]. There were drummers, called *completos*, who could perform secular styles and also had a familiarity with Afro-Cuba religious styles. This new practice of music demanded shared space for the secular and sacred. The music continued to develop by way of an evolution spurred on by impromptu jam sessions in which creative variations took place.

Initially, the Cubans of European descent rejected these popular music forms either because they were afraid of the "negative implications associated with adopting non-European customs", and they were concerned with not appearing culturally up-to-date, which necessitated that they reject the primitive African influences. Eventually popular music and the pull of the masses would bring Afro-Cuban music, essentially Afro-Cuban culture out of the shadows of dejection and into the light of national identity. Alejandro de la Fuente,[14] in *A Nation for All*, discusses how the project of whitening, or an expansion of its white population, was superseded by the Afrocubanista movement of

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[12] Carpentier 87
[13] Carpentier 88
[14] Fuente, Alejandro. *A Nation for All*: *Inequality and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba*. Durham: University of North Carolina, 2001.

the 1920s, which suggested that the African's influence on Cuba were equally important to the formation of Cuban identity as its Spanish ancestors[15].

Music in Cuba has always been and continues to be a living and adapting cultural force. In order to really understand how these encounters shaped the personal, social, and national identity we can consider music as "an appropriate medium for tackling the identity question. It is an intangible presence of everyday life that influences an individual's experience. It is therefor part of a nation's collective memory despite different tastes and preferences. Culture and identity are like music. They are ambiguous concepts that reflect the old, new, transformed and unchanged"[16]. Therefore, music is a very effective way of not only measuring or tracking the development of African cultural adaptations, but also understanding how nationhood in the New World has responded to this African influence.

Antonio Benitez-Rojo's theory of chaos and jazz metaphor[17] are also helpful in conceptualizing the ways in which these cultural forms connect and create or reveal cultural linkages and an African cultural sensibility. Benitez-Rojo suggests that neither the middle passage nor the plantation are the center of African Diasporic cultural continuities but the telescope through which we might see the manifold changes and continuities of the African Diaspora in the new world. His work corresponds with the idea that through cultural encounters a new hybrid culture is made. We can look at a particular region's given textual signifiers as not wholly disorganized or unpredictable, but as responding to a constant influx of cultural dynamics. Moving within these

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[15] Fuente 183
[16] Butler and Owensby
[17] Benítez-Rojo 1996

seemingly random and chaotic occurrences of diasporic cultural identities throughout the new world, there is a corridor of rhythm. It is a rhythm produced by cultural polyrhythms spurred on through various moments and acts of improvisation. In negotiating this cultural polyrhythm, we, as scholars and cultural participants, search for our place within the community of the black Atlantic and within the nation-state.

Using the Caribbean as a meta-narrative for the larger black Atlantic, Benitez-Rojo's metaphor of chaos offers a way to explore historical links between isolated cultures. We can see the connection or linkages through three important processes: performance, improvisation, and polyrhythm. Thusly, we can see different groups synthesizing cultural ideas. Benetiz-Rojo contributes this synthesis to a creative energy on the part of each culture. These new forms include minute adjustments, which constitute the beginning of a new syncretic culture. His work seeks to discover in improvisatory cultural performances a polyrhythmic current. There is a consistent moment in the disorganization of chaos that moves throughout time, throughout each cultural adaptation. Ortiz's historical narrative embodies Benítez- Rojo's theory of Chaos. By taking a peripheral view and making that perspective the center of his conversation or analysis he is facilitating a repeating dynamic state, which is a characteristic of chaos. In his introduction of *Cuban Counterpoint*, Fernando Coronil notes that Ortiz "constantly displaces and re-places home and exile, the national and international, centers and peripheries and shows us they are formed historically through constant interplay".[18] Ultimately, Ortiz is thankful for the de-culturation that takes place in Cuba, leaving them in what he believes is a more civilized state.

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[18] Ortiz xlv

Benetiz-Rojo comes close to focusing on the moments of intersection in his discussion of the Creole merchants who sold and exported cattle hide; yet it becomes merely a discussion of economic and social mobility ultimately concerned with contrabands and geography. His language in regards to the dynamic repetitions of centering and de-centering also further elucidates his focus on the fragmented nature of Chaos: "rhythms cut through by other rhythms, which are cut still by other rhythms".[19] Nevertheless, the central idea of the terms like transculturation and chaos is to take what seems to be disparate or disconnecting modes of being, historical thought, traditions of origin or self – identities and connect them. But these ideas are not represented in the texts as a fluid transition.

Many of the aforementioned scholars approach history from the traditional angle of politics and power, but cultural history, oftentimes, offers a more inclusive approach to understanding cultural or national identity in Cuba or the U.S. or Brazil. One of the ways in which we might engage a cultural study or national identity is through music and musical performance. Here we can see the convergence of the Old World and New World and their mutual cultural influences upon each other through a *down up* perspective. These are spontaneous moments of improvisation in music and ultimately cultural identity that occur in culturally open or flexible places, places where imagination and re-definition are encouraged and provoked, places like religious temples, musical venues, moments of revelry, and foreign lands where one's uniqueness is valued and praised. Such locations will be discussed throughout.

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[19] Benítez- Rojo 18

Before a full discussion of the significance and practice of African religious traditions (ADRT) in these musical styles can begin, it is important to discuss why one would privilege the study of music and musical performance in an approach to cultural history. One of the main reasons is that music can so easily express the cultural overlaps of transculturation. It can represent or play out the act of border crossing, as musical styles traverse the world and interact with its many genres. This is not surprising as many forms of literary criticism are applicable to music, especially American blues music, which is often called an oral form of literacy. Anya Smith argues that there are two literary theories that can be applied to blues music. One is the metaphysical border crossing and the second is the theory of the Signifying Monkey, use of metaphorical border crossing to express traditional ideas in clearly contrasting modern contexts.[20] She goes on to examine how a scholar is able to apply both approaches to Blues music.

Smith says, that "maintaining any sort of cultural identity under slavery demanded an overt acceptance of covert resistance to, the dehumanizing racial myths of slavery" and made the trickster a necessity as far as expressing an identity outside of the societal mandate.[21] She defines trickster in the African American tradition as "one who flouts the norms of society, using cunning, humor and deceit to obtain personal gain".[22] Characters imbued with these attributes often embody some sort of limitation that allows them to be trod upon in life. Because these characters have a fault that seriously detracts from their power to act within the respectable, or normal parameters of society, they are forced to use their superior wit to gain an upper hand. Some famous examples she gives in African

[20] Smith 179
[21] Smith 180
[22] Smith 179

American literature are Br'er Rabbit and Old John Tales. We might also consider the characters like Uncle Julius in Charles Chestnutt's *Conjure Woman*[23]. In Brazil we might see this as the Malandro[24]. The trickster figure in the Americas has its roots in slavery and is preoccupied with a narrative method of dealing "psychologically with power struggles and lack of self-determination"[25]. I think of this as the natural state of chaos, to which Benitez-Rojo's refers. That battle and tension between complete physical subjection and mental acuity and cunning wiles, often expressed through scenarios of enslavement and discrimination. Smith says the African American trickster reminds us of the need for subversion, masking and signifying in daily power struggles between whites and blacks. As my study traverses the international life of Jazz and Blues, the same need for subversion, masking and signifying may be used among the same race revealing tension between those with power to make decisions and create and enforce societal structures and those with no such power.

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[23] Chesnutt, Charles. *Conjure Woman*. Boston and New York: Houghton Miffilin,1899. A white planter from the north narrates this collection of short stories. He and his wife, Alice have moved south to prove to themselves and the country that industry still exists in the south and that there are opportunities for growth. They meet a man named Uncle Julius who had lived on the land during slavery. This is just after abolition. The white couple wants to grow a vineyard. Julius gets hired on by them and tells them stories of different conjurations that have happened during his time on the land. The planter does not believe the stories, but his wife is more wiling to look into the matter and after hearing the tale of Po' Sandy, she responds, "what a system it was". This suggests that Julius and Chesnutt's aim was to engender sympathetic understanding of slavery from white audiences. The conjure tales are often read as subversive tricks that Julius uses to enact his power and get decisions to be made in his favor.

[24] The *Malandro* is a person who partakes in *Malandragem,* which is defined as a set of tricks used to take advantage in a given situation (these advantages are often illegal). The Malandro and his mischief is often characterized by ingenuity and subtlety. The implementation of this mischief requires dexterity, charisma, cunning and any other characteristics that allow for the manipulation of people or situations.

[25] Smith 180

Albert Murray echoes these ideas in his book *Stomping the Blues*. The trickster figure is often portrayed as destructive, evil or sexually promiscuous. In one of the most prominent African American traditions, the Signifying Monkey speaks in double entendres. These narrative poems, usually spoken by or about black men, express the "relationship between the literal and the figurative, and the dire consequences of their confusion, which is the most striking repeated element of these tales"[26]. The monkey's effectiveness depends upon his victim's inability to mediate between these two poles. There is a similarly contrasting element to the blues, as the poet-singers' genius ability to weave together "lines and ideas from a much larger oral tradition evoke a particular sentiment in the thread of a new narrative"[27]. And it is this bi-location that draws close similarities between the Trickster and the orisha Esu-Elegabara, who embodies the juncture between word and meaning. These cultural movements of literal border crossing express the nature of the guardian of the crossroads, Esu, also commonly called the trickster.

Alma Jean Billingslea-Brown's book, *Crossing Borders Though Folklore,* shows that these intersections are most readily apparent in art forms and literary works. She echoes previously mentioned scholars when she says, "forced migration, dislocation, and displacement produced an experiential borderland . . . Because borders are erected to separate, marginalize, and exclude, borderlands are sites of contestation, transition, and flux. At the same time they are places of communication, negotiation, and exchange"[28]. Gates describes Esu's function in all of these diasporic narrative traditions as a mediator

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[26] Gates 55
[27] Smith 183
[28] Billingslea-Brown 1

situated at the crossroads: Esu is the messenger of the gods; He carries the desires of man to the gods; He is frequently characterized as an "inveterate copulator" possessed by his enormous penis, linguistically the ultimate copulator; connecting the sacred with the profane, text with interpretation, truth with understanding.[29] He limps because of his mediating function, keeping one leg anchored in the realm of the gods and the other foot in the human world

One dimension of the border-crossing abilities of music is the lyricism, the word play, again another one of Esu's specialties. According to Craig Werner, Esu revels in chaos carrying messages between material world and the spirit world.[30] If one needed to "learn the meaning of incomprehensible messages found in dreams, moments of awe-fullness or awareness of spirit" she must deal with him, for Esu's strengths lie in his mastery of language and codes, his verbal facility, his literary intelligence.[31]

Smith says, "the originality and ingenuity of the author, composer, and performer is in his or her ability to create something new out of something pre-existing".[32] In the same way the architects of the New World black societies were composing unique, authentic cultural moments prompted by forced encounters that would alter the nation's identity. Signifying goes beyond imitating the creative. Artist must create significant or recurrent themes that comment upon the original in a new and interpretive context.[33] Jon Michael Spencer, in *Blues Lyric Poetry*, says, the association between Esu and the devil is based on West African religious traditions an African American religion of hoodoo, but

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[29] Gates 6
[30] Werner 66-7
[31] Werner 67
[32] Smith 184
[33] Smith 184

it is unclear how he is defining this religious practices. He even uses the term voodoo-hoodoo, which is also unclear. This is important, as I believe he is onto something with this connection, a connection that will be explored in our discussion on the ADRT of Vodou and its derivatives voodoo and hoodoo. In the traditions of most orisha religions, it isn't the devil that sits at the crossroads, but Esu, the most powerful trickster god. He goes even further saying that Christian missionaries taught the African converts that Esu was Satan.[34] This seems to work as the devil is often portrayed as a manipulator and instigator, so is Esu.

Thomas F. Marvin says that the description of blues as an emotional affliction in songs reflects a resemblance to specific West African cultural initiation rituals. He specifically notes the similarity between the disorientation of one affected by the blues and the trance-like experiences of the initiates of the *bori* cult among the Hausa. Magicians provoke the trance-like states. These musicians are granted the role of oral historians, preserving traditions and culture.[35] Smith continues, "the blues musician, and by extension the trickster-devil-figure, are both analogous to the trance-provoking musicians of the Hausa origin, through the similarities in their functions. Both American blues musicians and Hausa musicians are keepers, interpreters and transmitters of cultural identity – human versions of mediating Esu" (188). Smith offers this, "the trickster figure controls the perception, understanding and actions of his victims. By viewing the blues texts through the lens of literary criticism, we can further appreciate the complex layers of associative meaning inherent in these songs," and performances "and forge a stronger bond between literary and musical analysis" (190).

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[34] Spencer 28
[35] Marvin 607

Investigating the cultural linkages in music is apt, as it is an ideal cultural product to examine as a multi-dimensional art form that can reveal much. In her article, "Sterling A. Brown's Poetic Ethnography", Beverly Skinner considers the multiple ways in which we might derive cultural ideas and meanings and signifiers. She argues that art forms like poetry, and thereby music, "can be one and the same time the record, expression and study of culture"[36]. Cultural art forms like music and musical performance can be regarded as polysemy, containing multiple meanings and identities. Polysemy is the capacity for a sign or signs to have multiple meanings. Polysemy is the "phenomenon where a single linguistic unit exhibits multiple distinct yet related meanings" (Evans, Green 36). According to Charles Filmore and Beryl Atkins, polysemy has 3 elements:

1.) A polysemeous word or sign has a central origin.

2.) The links between the senses form a network.

3.) Understanding of the innermost or central idea contributes to a deeper understanding of the external or superficial appearance.

In this way we are able to receive and interpret many otherwise unnoticeable forms of communication. The artist - musicians, poets, singers and songwriters - use this multi-leveled approach as a way of talking to numerous audiences at once while delivering specific messages to a culturally insider and culturally outsider group. The messages are different depending upon whether the evaluator or listener is taking an emic or etic approach. Through the use of metaphor, imagery, vernacular and sound intermingled with multifarious identities such as an ethnographic informant and a protestor of hegemony we may consider their works to be naturally occurring cultural artifacts with historic

[36] Skinner 998

importance. The various layers of musical performance - lyrics, vocal style, rhythms, and dance - reveal concepts and metaphors and connections between cultures.

One of the ways in which we can see this level of subversive metaphor working in both the U.S. and Brazil is through syncretic religious practices. As African religions became vilified in both countries it became necessary to co-opt some level of trickster behavior to continue to connect with an African heritage and way of understanding life. Thus, the trickster, as Smith suggests, becomes an outlet for the expression of socially unacceptable themes and behavior. Some of the characteristics of the trickster's performance that we may see in music, literature or art are: defiance, comical exaggeration and trading insults.[37]

Brazil and the United States are two cultures that appear to be isolated from one another, in regards to language, distance, ethnicity and history, but I have had many personal experiences with the ways in which Brazilian music like jazz, blues, samba and bossa nova have encountered one another and crossed boundaries between the sacred and the secular and between the national and international, creating new ideas of self-expression national identity. I have also experienced various manifestations of syncretized or outright ADRT in both the U.S. and Brazil. I want to look at the polysemy of these musical styles or cultural artifacts and their expression of the cultural encounters they experienced along the way, which led to their numerous transitions.

Considering Benitez-Rojo's idea of a seemingly chaotic diaspora containing a hidden corridor of rhythm, I suggest that disruption acts in the same way. It is this repeated act of disruption or improvised reinvention that points to cultural linkage. It

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[37] Smith 181

links back cultures in the western hemisphere to African derived religious practices. There are various terms I am interested in exploring throughout my analysis. These terms point to a particular kind of disruption or a particular effect of disruption: balanse, axé, Esu and in some cases, pure deviltry.

The disruption is like Vodou's "balanse", Esu's message in the interwoven contours of the borderland, the enlivening power of axé awakening those ideas, which upset homogeneity or unity of a solely national identity (American or Brazilian). This is Antonio Benitez-Rojo's hidden corridor. The shake up is the point to Africa.

Chapter Two: African Derived Religious Traditions and Philosophy

One of the ways in which this disruption and improvisation happens is through religious syncretism. This blending of religious symbols and applications of ideas found in African religious traditions such as Yoruba, Voudun and Congolese practices are blended with or imposed upon Catholic symbols and saints. This was done as a way for Africans to maintain their religious practices and ideals in the face of these extreme cultural encounters, which occurred during their enslavement. This process of improvisation also fostered a feeling of connection to their homeland and the collective center of cultural harmony. It is as though the Africans buried parts of themselves in the cultural exchange of the slave trade. Even though the diasporic journeys were fraught with the constant changing of cultural ideas and practices, Africa persists. ADRT, particularly, were able to move along with the changes and morph accordingly, improvising new identities and new performances of this identity. One of the ways we might notice Africa's persistence is through the sacred, secular and therapeutic modalities of musical styles strongly influenced by ADRT. The way the music purifies, heals, rectifies, or empowers through an expressed syncretism, mixing the sacred and the secular, reveals elements of West African musical traditions like the ring shout, call and response, the falsetto scream, occasional loving insults in the lyrics to name a few.[38]

The goal of this chapter is to gain a deeper understanding of what African religion is and how it reflects and interacts with African philosophy and what are the implications of an integrating and expanding religious and philosophical ideology. How do we continue to ascertain an authentically African ideal when African religion and philosophy

[38] Stearns 12

continue to grow and move into different modes of expression? Through this discussion we might discover how to begin to think about and engage a transnational subject in a language that is reductive and insufficient.

In his book *African Religion* Laurenti Magesa quickly responds to the questions of justification by proclaiming the validity of African religion and its morality. For Magesa religion works as a way to prove that there is a moral and ethical belief held by Africans that is expressed through its religious attitudes. African Religion is not acknowledged as a religion because it is thought not to have any moral quality or value. In his foreword to *African Religion* John Mary Waliggo brings the moral perspective of African religion to the front: African morality is centered on the promotion of life. Magesa uses this criterion to "analyze the transmission of life force, the enemies of life, the restoration of the force of life and the political ethics in Africa.[39] And through this schema he also judges "good and bad leaders, parents, and persons . . . good and bad systems and structures- be they political, economic, cultural, religious, or environmental – again, the same principle is the only sure guide"[40]. This Pro-life moral criterion is also part of a philosophical belief and is mirrored in cultural practices. This moral stance is a way to undo the ravaging effects of colonialism and racism, which "targeted life, human dignity, and the human rights of Africans"[41]. The idea that African religion lacks sort of in depth scope reflects Darwinian and colonial ideas that Africans were barbaric, unable to produce sophisticated social hierarchy and a moral code. With the prevalence of ideas

[39] Magesa x
[40] Magesa x
[41] Magesa xi

like these African religion has not been considered as an equal to the rest of the world religions.

Canonically African religion rested in a broad subtext of primitive rituals. This grossly inaccurate description is a result of the misinterpretations of Western scholarship on African culture. Magesa quotes Janheinz Jahn's explanation of this misunderstanding through the deliberate use of artifice: "Simply by applying a certain vocabulary one can easily turn Gods into idols, faces into grimaces, votive images into fetishes, discussions into palavers and distort real objects and matters of fact through bigotry and prejudice"[42]. Although there are many elements in African religion that can be found in other world religions, these traits are exacerbated in African religion as a way to disqualify its stance as a world religion.

Magesa gives three examples of hypocritical claims often used as reasons for this exclusion. The first alleged impediment, which keeps African religion from being considered a world religion, is its lack of a written tome. Although Judaism was also oral based, many reject the oral tradition in African religion. Without a gospel or written dogma it is unclear how they are receiving and declaring revelations. For Africans, revelation does not come in the form of a book or gospel. Revelation comes through "dreams, by ecstasy or trance or possession, by prophets and divination, or through reincarnation or events such as calamities . . . for them revelation is a continuing and ever present aspect of religious living. In that sense their religion is much more morally/ethically- based than doctrinally based"[43]. Another obstruction for African religion is its lack of aggressive attempts at conversion. In this instance Magesa also

[42] Magesa 22
[43] Magesa 23

compares African Religion to Hinduism and Confucianism, which also rejects proselytizing. Therefore every feature of African religion that makes it unequal to other religions is found in those same *valid* religions. Perhaps the misinterpretation lies in the definition? In order to disprove this assumption Magesa uses Hans Küng's description of religion as a " believing view of life, approach to life, way of life, and therefore a fundamental pattern of embracing the individual and society, man and the world, through which a person (though only partially conscious of this) sees and experiences, thinks and feels, acts and suffers everything".[44] African religion fulfills all of these requirements as it is explained in great detail throughout Magesa's book. Moreover, he ties his discussion of religious morality into philosophy and culture. Magesa quotes scholars like John Mbiti who claims, with certainty: "For Africans, religion is quite literally life and life is religion"[45].

Magesa uses Mbiti's argument to declare that the "acceptance of Christianity or Islam in Africa means that Africans 'come out of African religion but they don't take off their traditional religiosity . . . Traditional concepts still form the essential background of many African peoples'".[46] This double bind of religion and philosophy creates an illusion of separation allowing for an integrating capability in African religion, where one can subscribe to Christian dogma while still maintaining his philosophical beliefs. Magesa plays off this illusory separation of religion from philosophy saying that while some converts are asked to give up practices such as divination or sacrifice as it is forbidden by the church, they are not necessarily asked to repudiate religious or African philosophy.

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[44] Magesa 24
[45] Magesa 26
[46] Magesa 6

And it is this adherence to philosophical ideas that bring the converts back to old currently forbidden practices. Through this example Magesa is suggesting that there is space to elucidate difference or create distinction between practice and philosophy.

Magesa references Ashley Montagu who says that this kind of discrimination against African religion stems from an "ortholinear view of development" where earlier cultural beliefs and practices are seen as primitive or less sophisticated than later ideals, which are considered more advanced. Magesa argues "we cannot afford to sever the link between the old and the new, between one form of religious system and another. Religious truth is relational, not exclusive".[47] Therefore, this one religion can absorb, move and shift in a non-linear motion giving it the appearance of multiplicity and plurality. And this relational truth also applies to the philosophical reinforcements of African religion.

According to John Mbiti, however, African religions must be spoken of in the plural while the philosophy underlying the religious expressions of African people is singular. The various forms of religious expressions of African people are tangible and perceptible, but the thinking behind them is not. One can only ascertain the one philosophical underpinning by observing the many, varied practices. But Magesa sees this kind of essentialist thinking, and takes it a step further by saying that while there are varieties of expression there is still one basic belief that is essentially the same: "African Religion must not be taken to mean a diversity of fundamental belief"[48]. In other words Magesa would deny the idea that there is a separation between practice and philosophy, and that they both co-exist as two heads of one being. And both heads are expansive

[47] Magesa 13
[48] Magesa 17

allowing room for interaction with various forms of expression in varied cultural contexts.

In his introduction to *Postcolonial African Philosophy* Emmanuel Chukwadi Eze takes issue with the plurality African Philosophy both historically and contemporarily. Eze troubles the notion of a singular philosophy through a series of questions, which address the multiplicities of ways in which one might think about *Africa* (the African Diaspora) and *philosophy*. For example he asks:

> If one focuses on the African continent, and attempts to extend the meaning of the qualifier 'African' beyond the scope of is geographical meaning, it becomes notoriously difficult to define what kind of philosophical production is "African" or not. If the designation "African philosophy" is meant to highlight the ethnic or cultural origin of the philosophy in question, then should one not speak of African philosophies ('Akan philosophy', 'Igbo philosophy,' 'Yoruba philosophy', 'Luo philosophy', and so forth) rather than of philosophy in the singular, since Africa is made up of significantly diverse national and ethnocultural sources and traditions that constitute the philosophic originations?[49]

Eze is asking if these distinct ethno-cultural ideals should be considered as a single autonomous philosophy containing its own moral and ethical implication. Are we doing a disservice to these traditions by trying to squeeze them under the same umbrella? Or is there a unifying premise under which all forms of philosophical traditions of different

[49] Eze 2

African ethnic groups? How would we begin to qualify it, if not by geography? Eze seems to want to resolve this issue and his first step in doing so is to ask more questions:

> How do we articulate the conceptual and historical relationships between traditional African philosophies (predominantly practiced and recorded in 'unwritten' traditions) and the contemporary practices of the profession . . . moreover, how does one understand the conceptual and historical relationship between these two dimensions of African philosophy the 'traditional' and the 'modern', on the one hand and the philosophies of the African Diaspora especially African-American and Afro-Caribbean philosophies, on the other?[50]

Considering the movement of Africans within the continent and those dispersed Africans, it is important to comprehend the enormous historical, geographical and cultural revisions African philosophy has undergone.

This multiplicity and pluralism can and needs to be defined by necessity. To illustrate how we might begin to create parameters for African philosophies he uses the work of Lucius Outlaw[51] and his attempt to explore the range of this umbrella term and its universality. Outlaw's detailed elaboration of African(a) attempts to stay mindful of the historical and cultural diversity and at the same time eschewing essentialist conceptual organization. For Outlaw, the term Africana includes:

> The experiences and situated practices of dispersed *geographic race*: that is, not a genetically homogenous group but persons and peoples who, through shared lines of descent and ancestry, share a relatively permanent

[50] Eze 2
[51] Outlaw 1990.

> geographical site of origin and development from which descendants are dispersed, and thereby, who share a relatively distinct gene pool that determines the relative frequencies of various physical characteristics, even in the Diaspora; and persons who share – more or less – evolved social and cultural elements of life worlds that are in part traceable to those of the 'ancestors'. In turn, geographical, cultural, social, and natural selection factors influence the shared gene pool and cultural practices to condition *raciation*: that is, the formation and evolution of the biological and cultural factors collectively characterizing the 'race'.[52]

Outlaw's definition of African(a) is incredibly expansive. It not only includes Africans who are geographically located on the continent but also those dispersed people who share African ancestry. This extends to Outlaw's definition of African(a) philosophy is not restricted to race or geography, but focuses more on "features that make certain intellectual practices and legacies of persons who are situated in geographically and historically-socially diverse societies 'philosophy,' features characteristics — though not necessarily *unique* to – the persons as *members of a dispersed race*"[53]. Although Eze does not consider Outlaw's model perfect, he believes it to be a necessary attempt at defining African(a) philosophy. Through this model we see how philosophies developed throughout the Diaspora under different cultural influences may still be connected to one source by way of acknowledged ancestry and evolved cultural elements that can be traced back to those ancestors. It is an evolving and mobile philosophy. Therefore, it may be developed and discussed in different languages by people of different nationalities.

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[52] Eze 3
[53] Eze 3

With this understanding Eze further complicates the issue by asking if the scholar of African philosophy needs to be African himself. Using Robin Horton as an example he asks: "how does one characterize the works of so many non-African nationals that have enormously influenced, enriched, and in many cases, transformed both substantive issues and orientations in the field and practice of African philosophy?"[54] Horton targets those scholars, be they anthropologists or theologians, who come to African religion from a moral Christian perspective. He argues that these 'Devout' scholars are using insufficient language and religious models to try and understand a completely different way of thinking about God, ancestors and immortality. Either the 'Devout' lacks translational understanding, which refers to the "understanding of a particular thought-system from the successful translation of the language and conceptual system that embody it into terms of a language and conceptual system that currently enjoys 'world' status"[55]. Or he uses ideas of a universal conception of God. Horton advocates for a 'world language' for the entire realm of discourse: "There may be no realm of discourse in the 'world' language that exactly fits the bill. We may have to bend and re-fashion existing realms, and redefine their guiding intentions. We may have to recombine realms that have become separated during the evolution of the modern condition"[56]. Here Horton concedes Eze and Outlaw's notions of an expanding religious and philosophical universe and tries to reconcile cultural and language differences through the creation of a 'world' language. Horton's wants to pull together all of the dispersed bits of African culture.

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[54] Eze 2
[55] Horton 163
[56] Horton 163

One might easily see how this culture and it's religious and philosophical ideals have evolved and moved into different social areas not always directly connected to a geographical or cultural recollection of Africa. The characteristics of African religion listed by Dr. Emmanuel Lartey and Dr. Dianne (Stewart) Diakité, which includes: the sacredness of all life, communal theistic, mystical connectivity through ritual, divination, pragmatic spirituality and ancestor veneration, has now been re-packaged and re-named. It now comes to us, in some cases, as *New Age Consciousness* or *New Age Spirituality*. It basically works with all of the characteristics of African religion previously mentioned and in much the same way. You can find authors like Esther and Jerry Hicks, Kathy Freston, Brian Weiss, Anslie McCloud and Michael Lossier who are teaching a highly Americanized form of African religion, without recognizing an underlying African Philosophy. These authors and spiritual teachers work as channels or mediums to divine information such as past life regression, paying off karmic debts, reincarnating to a lower or higher life form, communing with spirits to ask for guidance, recollecting previous knowledge of your self-determined life plan, and considering holistic approaches to health. This is when I think about the implications of authenticity. Can these teachings some how be linked to or considered as African religion or philosophy? Should they be?

My work seeks to have that connection to African ideals be made explicit or at least question how and why a connection so obvious is so carefully avoided. Has African religious ideology been spread so thin throughout the Diaspora that it has become so pervasive that it is now imperceptible? It is important for the African connections in New Age teachings and in other similar doctrines to be made explicit so that we may keep up with the next stage of the inevitable expansion of African religion and philosophy.

Similarly, a study on the musical traditions of Blues and Jazz, Samba and Bossa Nova in three countries and two languages may also clearly reflect back to ADRTs and the proliferation and new interpretations of African philosophy.

There are many current and unfolding expressions of ADRT and philosophy that one may draw upon for examples of the ways in which these ideas permeate artistic expression on varying levels. In the preface to their book *Healing Cultures: Art and Religion as Curative Practices in the Caribbean and its Diaspora* editors Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisni-Gerbert ask what happens when a culture is in jeopardy, when they "come under siege as they enter the debate over national identity in colonial and postcolonial societies"[57]. The answer is, create new traditions with the available resources and technology as a way to maintain one's connection to a place of origin. The centuries long displacement of Africans in the African slave trade disrupted many African religious healing traditions. For Africans throughout the Diaspora the removal from their homeland resulted in a psychic fissure. As a result, fragments, modules and rations of ADRT and practices are woven together like patchwork, allowing traditions to survive. The integrative, universal quality of African religious traditions and philosophy allowed for the practicing of these traditions to take on both religious and artistic forms. There are opportunities to acknowledge the sacred in even the most mundane tasks.

Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert offer multiple ways through which such practices have survived and become revived through art and religion, while reminding the reader that "Vodou, Santería, Obeah and the other religious, restorative, conjuring practices

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[57] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert xvii

discussed here were repressed and persecuted because of the practitioners' reputed skills in the preparation of spells and cures"[58]. Healing Cultures makes its focus clear:

> The beneficial aspects of these practices as seen from within the communities in question. With the reevaluation of traditional curative practices taking place worldwide, we would appeal for a reconsideration of the healing methods used by peoples accustomed to adaptation and reinvention; alternative and integrative strategies have been the tools of survival in these creative Caribbean societies.[59]

Here they are clearly connecting practices of improvisation or re-interpretations of African philosophical ideas that undergird these specific ADRT. Through its focus on Afro- Caribbean healing traditions, this book offers a blueprint for ways in which we might reevaluate and incorporate valuable curative practices. Through its focus on Afro-Caribbean healing traditions, this book offers a blueprint for ways in which we might reevaluate and incorporate valuable curative practices. Like Benitez-Rojo's Caribbean microcosm, which also serves as a larger metaphor for the ways in which isolated cultures express and explore historical links. The author's examinations of the ways in which ADRT act as healing modalities, purifying and bringing disparate parts back into a whole, one can observe the ways in which music has a similar healing and uniting function.

Vodou is the oldest Afro-Caribbean belief system, born in the Dahomean, Congolese and Nigerian regions of West Africa pressed through Roman Catholic symbolism. The syncretic nature of Vodou in the New World was the result of the

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[58] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert xix
[59] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert xix

demand that African slaves give up their African gods. Slaves linked the Christian iconography with that of their gods: 'Thus, Erzulie, the beautiful water goddess of love in Dahomey became the Virgin Mary"[60]. Cuban Santería is also a mixture of Yoruba rituals honoring the orichas[61] through the obliged veneration of Roman Catholic Saints. Unlike Vodou or Santería, conjuring and Obeah rely on individual conference toward a distinct goal as opposed to rituals that require community support. Nevertheless all three African derived religious practices play a "vital cultural role throughout the English-speaking Caribbean as a repository of the African folk's cultural heritage"[62] as the practices aspire towards humanity's connection with the spirit world through service. The reciprocal interactions between community and nature and the spirit world are manifested in music, literature, art and movement.

In literature the "healing metaphor – as counterargument to the metaphor of illness"[63] is one of the most effectively deployed weapons against colonial discourse. This healing metaphor, in African American literary tradition, is often connected to a realization that one has emerged from an African past that is still part of them or one is immersed into a community of African ancestry and tradition. Olmos' essay "La Botánica Cultural: Ars Medica, Ars Poetica" comports itself as an interpretive guide for the reader who may experience her own cultural immersion through the text. The essay initially gives a detailed description of the products available in a botánica: a sort of garden shop usually found in Latin American communities, that holds an "unfathomable

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[60] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert xviii
[61] Here I am using Olmos and Paravisni's spelling of orisha, which is the Cuban spelling 'oricha'.
[62] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert xviii
[63] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert xx

melange of books, statues, herbs, candles, soaps, powders, spiritual lithographs and leaflets . . . copious pharmacopoeia of traditional folk and ritual healing"[64]. These shops offer curative promises. For example in botánicas one can find herbal recipes to appease a spirit or oricha. Olmos uses Byron J. Good to expound upon the multiple implications involved in the language of medicine: "it is a rich *cultural language*, linked to a highly specialized version of reality and system of social relations, and when employed in medical care it joins deep moral concerns with its more obvious technical functions"[65]. For Good and Olmos the language of medicine operates on various levels.

The language works within what Good calls a *specialized version of reality*, which incorporates both the world of the seen and the world of the unseen while joining together moral and technical concerns. Medicines that one would find in a botánica for instance would address both the physical ailment and its spiritually imbalanced impetus. For example if evil spirits are physically tormenting one then she must use medicines or herbs that appeal to her guiding spirit or Oricha for help and protection. Conversely there is also the potential to use these medicines to cause harm to another person but this is not up for judgment by the botánica, as Dr. Dianne Stewart (Diakité) explains in her book *Three Eyes for the Journey*, "the unfixed nature of moral potential (capacity) is an important tenet of classical African religious thought"[66]. Therefore the capacity of the medicines and herbs found in a botánica is determined by the user who may exercise her free will to heal or harm. Although Olmos goes into great detail in her instruction about the natural products offered and how they might be used, her essay not only serves to

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[64] Olmos 2001 p.1
[65] Olmos 2001 p.2
[66] Stewart 64

show us how the botánica works but also unpacks a cultural reference that often appears in Afro-Latino literature, allowing one to view the sacred in the secular closing the distance between the two theoretical positions.

To further illustrate and hopefully elucidate the myriad ways in which magical/religious practices of Vodou, Santería and Obeah are alluded to in literary texts Olmos turns to Cuban ethnographer Lydia Cabrerra and her work *El Monte* (The Sacred Wild: Igbo-Finda; Ewe Orisha, Vitti Nfinda; Notes on the Religions, the Magic, the Superstitions and the Folklore of Creole Blacks and the Cuban People). *El Monte* deals specifically with Afro-Cuban religious traditions on the island. The first half of the expansive 600-page text deals with initiation rituals, magical causes of illness and the utilization of herbs and prayers in spiritual healing. In the second half Cabrera gives an extensive list of herbs used by Cuban folk healers called curanderos. The second half of this book is also useful for interpreting the collections of short stories of Afro-Cuban folklore that Cabrera has written. These tales are often the re-telling of *patakis*, Santería narratives that correlate to the Yoruba divination system of Ifá, "a vast information-retrieval system that preserves, accesses, and processes the terms of mythological, naturalist, medicinal, and spiritual knowledge"[67].

These stories are at once literary texts, cultural documents, partial incantations and the groundwork of divination methods used in Santería. The *patakis* and *El Monte* act as cultural interpreters for all of the ways in which the medicinal language of religious curative practices is involved with morality, technology, society and reality (seen and unseen) and embedded in popular literature.

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[67] Olmos 2001 p.6

In a more straightforward treatment, Olmos translates an essay by Cabrera, *Black Arts: African Folk Wisdom and Popular Medicine in Cuba*. In this essay Cabrera carefully explains the medicines and rituals, as they relate to the Orichas, often used in Santería[68] and Lucumí[69]. In the section on Black Folk Healers, she gives several detailed examples of the ways in which health is restored through the combined, yet distinct efforts of the curandero (black folk healer), the herbalist, the santeros (those initiated into the cult of the Oricha), the mayombero (priest/ sorcerer). Cabrera works diligently through thorough explications of therapeutic techniques of both the Lucumí and Yoruba religious systems to show that there is little difference between them. Cabrera says, "Their remedies are located in the same pharmacy: nature. Illness is attributed to the same causes in both: spells, divine retribution, the ominous influence of the dead and of jinxers and the dangerous 'evil eye,' worse than that of witchcraft, to which we are all vulnerable, especially children"[70]. Again, understanding that these practices work in similar, interchangeable yet distinct ways helps to close any imagined cultural divide between not only the Yoruba and the Lucumí, but also for the African and the Afro-Cuban.

The foundation of their understanding of healing, illness and medicine are virtually the same and so are their instructions for prevention. Cabrera closes out the essay with earnest didacticism as she addresses methods of prevention that one might engage whether they are a part of any of the aforementioned cultures:

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[68] An Afro-Cuban religion of Yoruba origin from Nigeria, syncretized with Catholicism, also known as ocha, regla de ocha and regla de ifá.
[69] Lucumí is a nation of Yoruba origin, comprising various groups. It is also an orisha religion, commonly called Santería.
[70] Olmos 2001 p.42

> In order to conserve one's health, it is indispensable, they insist, and I repeat word for word, 'to behave well to the saints and the dead; have a spiritual reading from time to time, a cleansing of oneself and one's home with purifying waters and incense, to defend one's door with a magical "working," obtain a good protection [talisman].' Don't violate the prohibitions dictated by the deities. Avoid sleeping with the old and infirm, as they unconsciously deplete health, stripping the young and the healthy of their life force.[71]

Cabrera is especially emphatic when she warns against bad behavior towards one's saints and the dead. This relationship is prized above all others perhaps because it carries within it the greatest capacity for either health or harm depending upon one's interactions with the unseen world. Just as this essay serves to close language and cultural gaps, it also begins the work of closing the gap between our world and the unseen world. For, those who inhabit the unseen world are just as integral to our livelihood and health as those who inhabit the world of sight and sound.

In Anna Wexler's essay *Dolls and Healing* she interviews Steve Quintana, Cuban born devote of Santería and priest of Obatalá about the utility of dolls in Santería. Quintana currently resides in Dorchester, Massachusetts and is a ritual leader, diviner/ healer and spokesperson for the House of Obatalá, which opened in 1988. In this interview Wexler is specifically devoted to understanding the ways in which dolls function as abodes for spirits (either people who have passed on or Orichas) and sites where feedings may occur. Engaging in a seemingly secular craft such as doll-making

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[71] Olmos 2001 p.42

can have unbelievably spiritual implications should one decide to give only the slightest shift in her thoughts towards making the doll and her interaction with it. Making the doll is a way of connecting with the ancestors or spirits. It starts from the moment one begins to create the doll in his or her mind. Quintana explains that even before sewing the spirit must be considered: how do they want to be dressed? What materials should be used? Then there is the question of what to put inside the doll. When making the doll Quintana says,

> You use ingredients that have been used throughout the years – herbs and things that to us are secret and that are used to call the spirit or Oricha. So we use things and we add them up in a specific place to give them life; It's like a battery in a little doll or something that's going to move it.[72]

Once those things are decided, communication with the spirit continues to ascertain what foods or beverages they would like given to them, where it would like to be situated, and are they happy with the clothes they have on. Once the exchange has been activated through feeding attention must continuously be paid to the spirit. A partnership has been solidified and neglecting the spirit would result in illness or bad luck, for which there is no other remedy than petitioning that Oricha or spirit.

However, there are more independent avenues to traditional healing, like Obeah, which can also be expressed through seeming profane activity. According to Stewart, Obeah is "An institution entailing much more than expert knowledge of botanic therapeutic properties. Jamaican Obeah has always included the exercise of spiritual and

[72] Wexler 97

mystical power"[73]. Accessing and exercising spiritual and mystical powers are fundamentally different from entreating favors from one's Oricha. Yvonne Chireau gives a careful description of the power of harnessing magic separate from or outside of a definitive religious context in her book *Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition*. Magic is a particular approach or attitude by which humans interact with unseen powers or spiritual forces. In contrast with religion, it is efficacious, with its spells, curses, incantations, and formulae. Magic is used for specific, personal ends. It operates mechanically – as opposed to prayer, which is communal, devotional, and non-coercive.[74]

Magic can exist in its own field or space of being separate from religious traditions and any moral judgment connected with religious beliefs. Such is the practice of conjuring with Obeah. Stewart reminds us,

> Obeah was multifaceted and came to be associated with manifestations of elaborate African-derived systems of communal belief and practice as well as solo practitioners' assertions of power via the exercise of specialized knowledge of forces and spirits . . . Obeah practitioners do not render one specialist evil and the other good. Both can use power stances involved.[75]

To access the power of Obeah, one must simply have the knowledge. There is no required third person intercessor from which one neither receives her magic nor is there a moral code to which she is bound. Poet and painter LeRoy Clarke consciously chose to

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[73] Stewart 43
[74] Chireau 3
[75] Stewart 62

access his knowledge of African communal beliefs toward an expression of Obeah in his work as an artist.

On New Year's Eve 1969 Clarke committed to creating *De Poet* a series of painting drawings, and poems that Clarke divided into thematic consecutive phases of movements, the main subject of which is the neo colonial African. Through each phase Clarke is attempting to elevate the African to a state of grace and sovereignty.[76] His collection of poems, *Douens,* forms the voice of the images of *De Poet*. Douens, according to Trinidadian folklore are "unnamed and unbaptized children. For Clarke, the douens are a metaphor for all neocolonial peoples but specifically the Africans, who also were stripped of their identities"[77]. The work has been called a spiritual anthology. Olmos and Holder ask why the work is considered, thusly, and begin an excavation of the terms *douens* and *douendom* to find their spiritual sources. Clarke explains that douens reflects a spiritually defunct state that still pervades in African people. He saw this spiritual state of despair and emptiness in literary works like Amie Cesaire's *Return to My Native Land*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and Wole Soyinka's *Idanre and Other Poems* and in the works of Latin American authors like Gabriel García Márquez, Alejo Carpentier and Octavia Paz. While encountering these works, Clarke's love of calypso music and jazz was also deepening and inspired him to attempt to "re-chart the ruins, to piece it together in its beginning"[78].

Douendom, was in fact, a space or zone where beings are only "half initiates" and may suffer a sickness where there is "self-denial of our essence, the nature, the origin of one's

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[76] Olmos an Paravisni-Gerbert 203
[77] Olmos an Paravisni-Gerbert 204
[78] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 204

being, and is the massive fracturing of one's psyche"[79]. According to Clarke, the re-naming of African peoples to "black" precipitated a mental fracturing. He explains that art is a way of becoming and for him as an African man this means "the unique task of re-charting the ruins, gathering up my dismantled psyche piece by piece"[80].

Through this re-construction one can become truly conscious of himself, conscious of the "profound sensing of self in the affirmation of the Past-Present-Future"[81]. This presence of self is directly connected to and contingent upon being in touch with one's inner passions and engaging those passions through imagination. By imagining his inner passions in works like *De Poet* and *Douens,* Clarke simultaneously takes on the spiritual work of rebuilding his house, his word, his being and explores his bountiful potential. This is the inner work of Obeah, "that cultural instrument, a practice that begins behind the zero, as if one were to design a compass anew"[82]. Through this work Clarke becomes Obeah man. Accessing the primal primordial imagination, sensing one's passions beyond the scope of already past or historic events is to design the compass anew, to be free of the influence and force of history and modernity while re-creating one's personal trajectory. Obeah can work outside and inside of time, "for behind there is a 'hidden life,' an 'inner time' beyond the reaches of gossip and *mamaguy*[83] that wait to be evoked and affirmed"[84]. As Clarke re-charts the ruins using Obeah to access inner passion without time privileging his own internal parameters he discovers an alternative. The highest mountain in the Northern Range of Trinidad, El

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[79] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 205
[80] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 207
[81] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 207
[82] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 207
[83] Trinidadian expression for flattery
[84] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 207

Tucuche, for Clarke, symbolizes the "ascent to the reaches of consciousness, an exaltation of purest utterance"[85]. This pure utterance will demand great intensity of his efforts, physical, physiological and spiritual resources. The re-charting of the ruins alongside conjuring of Obeah works towards a perfecting of the self as experienced through the authentication and expression of one's internal passions.

Obeah, like Vodou and her sister Santería can be accessed, explored and incorporated into art, literature and crafts as curative practices in a number of creative ways. The most startling realization that these ideas, understandings and practices have always been present but we may not have always had the language to name them or the comprehension to explain it. By learning how African religious traditions functions and by understanding their philosophical underpinnings we are able to recognize and name them as they appear in many sacred and secular. Additionally, practices help integrate the African Diasporic psyche with both eastern and western teachings with confidence, clarity and insight. And ultimately provide a historical and cultural context for the theoretical approach to African philosophical ideals embedded in these practices. Africans, indeed, had constructed their own moral universe and behaved accordingly. Thus, creating a broader view for understanding not only the processes of knowledge production but also the practice of systematized disenfranchisement.

Magesa explicates the philosophies, which underlay African religious ideals and an African worldview. In the African moral universe God is the initiator in the people's way of life, their traditions. The ancestors, who are revered dead human progenitors of

[85] Olmos and Paravisni-Gerbert 209

the clan or tribe, are the "custodians of tradition"[86]. Magesa explains that the ancestral lineage is the "immediate reason and ultimate purpose of tradition"[87]. The ancestors are in constant contact with both God and humanity and often intrude upon the lives of humanity either directly or through spirits – "either discarnate human persons or powers residing in natural phenomenon" (i.e. trees, rocks, rivers or lakes)[88]. All three influence human life as moral agents: "The African moral code has its own particular emphases and orientation because of the ancestors from whom it immediately derived and claims legitimation"[89]. For all that, balancing the relationships between humanity, ancestors, spirits, and God is a universal rule that Africans would ascribe to intelligent persons. Yet, in order to balance those relationships one has to have an understanding of the order and nature of the entities. The universe is a composite of animate and inanimate beings, hierarchically perceived but always interacting with one another. God occupies the highest position in the order but is only slightly removed from humanity because of its fallibility. Nevertheless, God is loving and just. If he has withdrawn his protection "it is always temporary and indicates that it is time for humanity to examine itself to see what it has done wrong and correct its behavior and repair the damage"[90]. Although we cannot be certain as to whether or not Emerson had any knowledge of this worldview, which is not so dissimilar from his own, a few likely unintentional allusions may be recognized through a careful re-reading of Emerson's essay "Emancipation in the British West Indies".

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[86] Magesa 35
[87] Magesa 35
[88] Magesa 35-6
[89] Magesa 36
[90] Magesa 45

Myth and ritual, in an African worldview, are forms of symbolic language that express the "truths of human existence in a way rational logic cannot"[91]. Myths are used to embody a deliberate and conscious statement by a given community, which usually contains elements of great religious significance. It also provides a reason and an explanation for the way things are.

Obeah practitioners are also described as priests, diviners, mediums, and herbalist who are able to influence a neutral mystical power.[92] How one engages this sphere brings up issues of morality as Obeah can be used in the healing or harming traditions. Stewart explains that the impulse to characterize Obeah as "bad" is most likely founded upon a Western Christian moral theology. In the context of an African worldview where inter-relations between the self, ancestors, spirits and God are of the highest importance in regards to a healthy and holistic state of being, Obeah in itself is a morally neutral phenomenon and practice. But this is not to say that there is no consequence for the ways in which one engages the practices or knowledge systems of Obeah. Stewart further explains, "Because African religious cultures often adhere to some principle of moral neutrality, they hold persons accountable for how they access and use mystical power"[93]. For instance it was fairly common for Obeah practitioners to participate in salve revolts in both furtive and unconcealed ways. Across African religious cultures morals are rarely absolute. Perhaps Emerson was warning against such moral neutrality as he positions "Obeah" as a pursuing, menacing force. The African's tool for liberation has turned against him and now seeks to destroy him. But it is difficult at best to ascertain

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[91] Magesa 36
[92] Stewart 58
[93] Stewart 63

Emerson's level of understanding of Obeah and other African derived practices. What we can know with certainty is that there was in fact an African worldview and morality, which was not acknowledged or employed.

Similarly the magical practices of conjure, practiced in the U.S. has its own moral universe, yet it is not considered a religion. Jeffrey E. Anderson describes conjurer as "a professional magic practitioner who typically receives payment in return for his or her goods and services"[94]. Conjure represents the low end of religion, yet it is not dogmatic nor does it rely upon devotional supplication like syncretic religions require. Anderson goes on to say that conjure falls between "religion proper" and "low-level supernaturalism"[95]. Conjure allows one to accomplish practical objects in the earthly plane, through appeals to the spiritual world. Conjurers are sometimes distinguished from hoodooist, who possess supernatural skills and are able to create powerful magical devices such as "luck balls", which are constructed with a combinations of human hair, ashes, graveyard dust and the like. Hoodoo is largely used as an interchangeable term with conjure however, as its discrepancies are only observed within certain regional or personal preferences. Some conjurers apply the epithet doctor, or more specifically two-headed doctors, which suggests that they use magic *and* herbs to heal. Those working with herbs are often called rootworkers or healers, who routinely conjurer herbs to cure medicinal problems. Hoodooists, more commonly, only work with magic. But these are just many of the variety of conjurers that exist. The term witch is often used to describe conjurers as well, although conjurers are human and witches are usually described as inhuman.

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[94] Anderson x
[95] Anderson xi

Candomblé is comprised of a variety of magical practices and religion according to the records of 19th century formation of the religion in Bahia, Brazil. This Bantu term was used to indicate the collective influences of many South, West and Central African peoples. Among these were "the Gunoch cult of the Tapas, the Voduns of the Dahomean Jejes, the Inquice and ancestor traditions of the Cong-Angola Bantus, the Orixá venerations of the Yoruba", and even some aspects of the Islam of the Hausas.[96] Candomblé also includes some aspects of Creole Catholicism and indigenous Brazilian Indian traditions. All of these religious ideas were collectively known and practiced as Candomblé. More about the details of the rituals and practices will be discussed in the chapter *Candomblé, Carnival, Samba e Bossa Nova.* Although the magical practices of Obeah and conjuring will not continue to have a place in my discussion, the ADRT of Vodou and Candomblé will be more germane to my study of recurring healing, spiritual phenomena expressed through specific musical styles, in order to recognize, these improvised experiences of African(a) philosophy and religion.

To begin our discussion of Vodou, Karen McCarthy Brown's essay "Afro-Caribbean Healing: A Haitian Case Study", discusses the centrality of family in Haitian communities. Family is not only limited to blood relatives but also includes fictive kinships, ancestors and spirits. And these family members have designated roles. For example the patriarch of an extended family also functions as the "*oungan*" or priest treating illnesses in the family. He is the one who "knows leaves" and the patriarch who "presides at the *gwo sèvis*, the big dancing drumming events that includes animal

[96] Harding 38

sacrifice"[97]. Just as family is essential so is the land to which the family is connected. Deceased family members are buried on the family's land. To inherit someone's land is also to inherit the spirits that occupy that land. These familial structures are more common in rural areas. In the urban centers of Haiti, the family structures are much more tenuous, therefore fictive kin and Vodou temples help indemnify the loss of the large rural family. Vodou parents "like actual ones, owe their children protection, care, and help in times of trouble . . . The urban Vodou temples are currently the closest thing to a social welfare system that exists in Haiti"[98]. While the men who head the temples and are said to "father" many children in the community, female "mambos" also re-create warm atmospheres akin to home inside their temples. Just as home and family are complex systems of personal specification so is the cosmology of the individual.

The individual is comprised of the *nam,* which is the soul or animating force, *gwo bonanj* (big guardian angel "capable of sustained existence outside of the body . . . and wanders from the body during sleep", the *ti bonanj* or little guardian angel, which has been compared to the light area surrounding a dark spot in one's shadow or is known as a spiritual reserve tank for the individual, and finally there is the less popular *zetwal*, also called star, which is a celestial parallel self.[99] The nam, gwo bonanj, ti bonanj and the zewtal all contribute to what is called in West Africa "the multiple soul complex" (another potentially unifying detail or term)[100]. And then there is the *lwa* or Vodou spirit who is also considered to be part of a person. The lwa is drawn to or chooses a person with whom to connect and the person will often share the lwa's personality. It is difficult

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[97] Brown 46
[98] Brown 47
[99] Brown 49
[100] Brown 50

to say definitively if the lwa is truly separate from the human, but Brown explains it by saying, "If it is understood that within the Vodou worldview the individual is both a separate self and an inseparable part of a family, then it can be grasped how the spirits who are part of that extended family can be *both* other than and merged with those who serve them"[101]. In other words the person must in a reciprocal manner serve and direct, obey and instruct the lwa that is associated with them. In addition to these presiding lwa, also called *mèt tèt*, there are also smaller groups of spirits attending to an individual. In this way we see the individual human as a microcosm of the universe that operates through the relational interaction of these separate but combined aspects of the one.

In rituals, connections with spirits are key. In this religious tradition social relations are absolutely germane to any sort of illness or healing that might occur. The interactions between human and spirit may be brief, such as lighting a candle, "other problems require a more routinized and long-term relationship with one or more spirits"[102]. An example of this long-term routine may be an initiation process where one can experience a series of encounters with the spirits through feeding or sacrifice that often culminates in possession or the manifestation of the spirit through the initiated. The practice of Vodou means more than having faith in the lwa or believing they exist. In Paul Farmer's book *Aids and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame*, his discussion of Vodou privileges the narratives of Haitians and their understanding of the religious tradition. Through multiple interviews and discussions of sorcery and Vodou, he explains that although most people in Haiti would not deny the existence of the lwa, "there is an enormous difference between the feeding of the lwa . . . and participating in

[101] Brown 51
[102] Brown 52

large ceremonies, the *raison d'etre* of which is to make offerings to the lwa. (Congo Square) The lwa exist, whether one likes it or not"[103]. Through this analysis it is clear that Vodou is a practice more than a belief. The practice of feeding the lwa activates one's potential for healing or harming, through the supplication of one's lwa. Feeding the lwa does not always refer to food. Yet it requires an altar or some physical object in which the spirit is housed and to which gifts may be delivered.

The feeding of the lwa also has a great place in the story of the Haitian revolution, and the religion of Vodou would travel to New Orleans and evolve and disperse into other religious and cultural products. In cities like these, old world European religious traditions and ADRT collide in, sometimes, violent encounters that would spawn further cultural productions for centuries to come.

[103] Farmer 200

Chapter Three: Vodou, Hoodoo, Blues and Jazz

The best New World location in which to study Vodou is Haiti. In his article, "Vodou and History" Laurent Dubois says that this is a great example of diasporic movement and re-inventions or re-interpreted ADRT, as the study of history and religion are intertwined:

> Together these works suggest the promise of combining the approaches of history, literature, Anthropology for the study of Vodou. In so doing, they highlight the difficult questions of interpretation raised by a religion that has emerged from, and bears the profound traces of, the system of Atlantic slavery and the complex social and economic forces it unleashed.[104]

This passage is important because it allows us to see ADRT through various manifestations, and through interdisciplinary work. It also shows us how sacred and secular music is are useful mediums to investigate some of these manifestations.

The slaves of St. Domingue – like other enslaved Africans in the Caribbean- were forced to live in very unique and circumstances. There were Africans from so many different places and these different groups became known as nations. Some nations spoke the same language or could understand some of the other nations' language, perhaps if their languages or cultural practices were similar. Others could only communicate through the island's evolving creoles. Sometimes gathering as a particular African "nation", other times joining with Africans from other nations and with creole (American-born) slaves, African slaves and their descendants on plantations and in towns, as well as in maroon communities, carved out spaces for worship, adapting their

[104] Dubois 93

religions to the New World. They did so for the most part hidden from the eyes of planters and administrators who might have documented the process.[105] Dubois explains, "The practice of African religion, of course, was one way of fighting against the dehumanization of this system, of creating relationships and possibilities that the system consistently sought to shut down".[106]

According to Dubois, by the end of the 18th century slave importation was so high in St. Domingue that the majority of Africans there had come straight from the continent and had spent much of their lives in Africa. Also by the end of the 18th century St. Domingue had become an independent nation because of the Haitian Revolution, where the slaves overthrew successfully their slaveholders. The African born adult slaves who were responsible for much of the uprising were often called "Congos". In order to unite all of the Africans from various tribes "new forms of religious coherence" were created. These combined rituals gave them revolutionary significance. According to historians, the ceremony that launched the Haitian Revolution is called The "Bois Caïman".[107] Bois Caïman is also noted as a location in the northern mountains of St. Domingue where slaves met to perform a ceremony, which began the revolution.[108]

The Bois Caïman, also known as the Pact with the Devil, is the Vodou ceremony in which Haitians allegedly participated as a way to commence to the revolution. In 1991 at a conference on the state of Haiti two hundred years after the Bois Caïman, French critic Leon Hoffman accused the meeting of being a mythical creation. Hoffman had

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[105] Dubois 94
[106] Dubois 94
[107] Dubois 94
[108] Antoine Dalmas *The History of the Saint-Domningue Revolution* 1814 published by Mame frères in Paris.

previously written a much-appreciated book called *Romantic Nigger*, which debunked many stereotypes of Africans in 18th and 19th century French literature.

Haitian patriot, Haitian activist, member of the Haiti Solidarity Committee, archivist (at the Schomburg), intellectual and blogger Daniel Simidor (whose real name is Andre Elizee), refers to Antoine Dalmas as the "malevolent French man", who insists that the myth of the Bois Caïman was concocted by Haitian historians who were too lazy to do the proper research.[109] David Geggus, a historian who is not Haitian, points out that there were actually two meetings that took place. The first meeting was on Sunday Aug. 14th where 200 delegates were gathered in Norman de Mezy Plantation to agree upon revolting. The accounts of this meeting were supposedly verified by revolutionary prisoners, which Dalmas helped treat as a medical examiner. The second meeting was of a more religious nature and it was secret. It took place in the Caïman Woods. Historian Celigny Ardouin says that Touissant Louvreture was only at the first meeting, but his trusted friend, Boukman Dutty, was also at the second meeting.

The ceremony of the Bois Caïman involves a sacrifice to the Petro lwa Ezili Danto. A pig was sacrificed to her and the participants devoted themselves to overtaking the French. And the revolution began. Laurent calls this ceremony a "symbol of this gathering of 'nations' in the pursuit of freedom, a gathering that is evoked by *ougans* (priests) today and powerfully represented the structure of the religion itself"[110].
Haiti was successful in its overthrow and became the second independent nation in the Americas and the first to lay the foundation of that independence on the elimination of slavery.

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[109] Simidor, Daniel blog
[110] Dubois 94.

He also goes on to discuss Margarite Fernández Olmos, Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santeria, Obeah and the Caribbean.* Literary critics wrote many of the articles in this collection, but the collection, as a whole, is instilled with an interdisciplinary approach that primarily uses ethnography and literature as windows into the spiritual practices of Caribbean peoples in various contexts. The text delivers a range of articles dealing with Afro-Caribbean religion and specifically focuses on the boundaries between literature, history and anthropology in its exploration of these religions. On quoting Joan Dayan, Dubois says "Vodou practices must be viewed as ritual reenactments of Haiti's colonial past, even more than as retentions from Africa".[111] Rather than seeing lwa primarily as African imports, in the tradition of Melville Herskovits, she suggests that the forms of religious practice that developed into Vodou were "responses to the institution of slavery," and "to its peculiar brand of sensuous domination". "A historical streak in these spirits," Dayan continues, "entirely this side of metaphysics, reconstitutes the shadowy and powerful magical gods of Africa as arbitrary power".[112] Vodou, then, is in a sense an archive of slavery itself, of the tortured human relationships it produced.[113]

Just as I may call this an improvisation or reinvention, Dubois and Dayan say it is a new thing unto itself borne to an extraordinary set of circumstances. In that case, I think it can certainly be called an improvised philosophical practice, phenomenon or way of life. The African Gods were recognizable everywhere. They really were transportable, maybe because they spoke to a larger, more complex, sophisticated, nuanced way of

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[111] Dayan 98
[112] Dubois 98
[113] Dubois 98

understanding life and the universe, and us. Africa persisted. Its ideas were undeniable. But, what might we say about the action of the ideas in the music, the art, the performance of it, the stirring up of the ancestral forces, ashe/axé? If axé is the power to generate change then we see it in the combining of spiritual forces and ideas, which made manifest not only a successful revolution, but also sowed the seeds of religious improvisation, which would continue in the U.S.

Laurent continues talking about Dayan and how she most powerfully illustrated her case through an examination of the lwa Erzulie, who has among her manifestation of the white-skinned, French-speaking Ezili Freda and the black voiceless, violent Ezili Danto. Extending the explorations she began in an article entitled "Erzulie: A Woman's History of Haiti," Dayan suggested we take Ezili as a "medium" for understanding the complex dynamic of sexuality and domination that engaged in colonial St. Domingue"[114].

All of the works Dubois mentions are not to be taken for a coherent strategy or program for understanding Haitian Vodou, but they suggest the necessity and vivacity of approaches that draw upon and connect anthropology, history and literary analysis in seeking to understand a religion so complex. He continues by saying this interdisciplinary work moves beyond "the traditional approach of focusing on either African retentions or the oft-examined syncretism African deities and Catholic saints"[115]. Such interdisciplinary work allows us to see the ways in which these philosophical and religious ideologies manifest as newly improvised performances and rituals that shift societal paradigms.

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[114] Dubois 99
[115] Dubois 99

Dubois closes by reminding us of "the emerging scholarship on Haitian Vodou situates the religion within a broader Afro-Atlantic historical and cultural context, one re-shaped by the economic and social effects of the slave trade, the intense cultural encounters forged in the Caribbean"[116]. For, Benitez-Rojo tells us the Caribbean encapsulates, locally, the characteristics we might see on a larger global scale.

Northern European countries and North American countries were really terrified of Haiti or at the contagion of rebellion, and so Haiti was left isolated. There were only a few foreign Catholic priests who visited the island. In the midst of all the transformation that was happening in Haiti – from its independency and transition from a plantation economy- these new religious ideas based on ADRTs and in dialogue with Catholicism were being formed. New genealogies of ancestors who helped settle the land in the New World were now included in the religious worship. Dubois adds, that "the re-emergence of the foreign priesthood in Haiti, the development of the urban centers, the U.S. occupation of 1915-34, which incited more revolts and new cultural developments, the Duvalier dictatorship and the *dechoukaj* that struck many *ougans* and *mambos* (priestesses) in its wake, not mention the creation of a massive Haitian diaspora which itself is arguing a new set of transformations in the religion" all had an effect on the ways in which the religion of Vodou would be transformed or reinvented.[117] The history of Vodou is the history of Haiti and it is mired in silences. Silence that was demanded by the execution of a successful revolt, and as Vodou emerged out of a plantation society where slaves were not allowed to read or write or create documents further silence was forced upon it. This silence was deepened by the necessity of secret oaths taken at religious

[116] Dubois 99
[117] Dubois 95

ceremonies. And it is this silence that will not allow the traditional historical methods of investigation to appropriately glean Vodou's impact, importance and transformation.

But, we do know that as slaves were sent to the U.S., Vodou changed yet again. The Black Code of 1724 forbade all forms of worship and all religions except Catholicism in an effort to stop the pervasiveness of Vodou and its newest offspring, voodoo in New Orleans. But because of syncretism the "problem" or prevalence persisted. In 1728, Governor Galvez banned the admissions of black people from Martinique in an effort to squelch the religion's popularity and prominence. He said it made the citizens unsafe. Black people were also sent back to Africa starting in1792 until as late as 1803. Municipal Councils banned a ship full of enslaved blacks from Santo Domingo because they said that Vodou was spreading to whites. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, all restrictions on immigration were lifted and Vodou really boomed! The Municipal Council legalized the dances at Congo Square as a way of keeping the slaves content and acted as a combative effort against Vodou or *voodooism*.[118] These dances were very popular and lucrative tourist attractions.

Carolyn Morrow uses Voodoo to distinguish New Orleans practices from the Haitian religion usually spelled Vodou. The practice of voodoo often relies less on the devotion to one's lwa and more on the use of mystical technologies or magic brought about through working with herbs, potions and incantations. French and Spanish government tolerated voodoo and its worshippers in New Orleans. In the histories ADRTs are usually talked about in as far as they threaten white authority not an inherent sinfulness of the practice. There was no record of persecution for practicing Vodou or

[118] Stearns 44

voodoo and no "anti-superstition" campaign was waged against Africans by the Roman Catholic Church in Louisiana.[119]

The 1803 Louisiana Purchase made Louisiana an official state and a lot of Anglo Saxon people from the east and Midwest began to migrate there. That is when the Protestant standards began to call the Latin Catholic religion in New Orleans immoral. The prevalence of race mixing and the large number of free people of color escalated this paranoia. There was no choice really but to rationalize or justify slavery of another human being as an underpaid menial. It became necessary to demonize, ridicule and trivialize their religion and culture – teaching subjugated people to hate their religion and value the traditions of the ruling class.[120] These fears were further amplified by the reports of successful slave revolts in the French colony of Saint- Domingue between 1791 and 1804, which resulted in the creation of the black republic of Haiti. Stories were circulated that the rebels were able to fight so ferociously because their Vodou deities had made them invulnerable. Many refugees forced out by the revolution made their way to New Orleans. There was already a voodoo community in New Orleans because they had already imported slaves from those regions where Vodou is practiced, but when the Haitians came their presence really bolstered the support and practice of the religion.

Morrow cites Donald Cosentino and Alfred Métraux, as she attempts to explain the cosmology and hierarchies in Vodou. She asserts that there are three levels of existence: There is a supreme God at the top who is "comparable to the Christian God the Father".[121] Then, just below the supreme God there is the lwa or lesser deities as how she

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[119] Morrow 86
[120] Morrow 87
[121] Morrow 88

calls them. The lwa mediate between human beings and God and are usually paired with one or more Catholic saints. In the Vodou temple there are altars dedicated to the lwa. Devotees and initiates leave offerings for the lwa in the form of liquor, flowers, fruit, cooked food, candles and other symbolic objects. The lwa communicate with the faithful through spirit possession, during which the spirit mounts the body of a worshipper and speaks to the congregation. The goal of Vodou worship is "a balanced life characterized by harmony with the human community, the natural environment, the lwa and the ancestral spirits"[122].

New Orleans followed the Haitian model of Vodou in the beginning of the 19th century, which was documented through newspapers. Devotees served the lwa just as they did in Haiti. Vodou emerged as an organized religion with a pantheon of deities and a structured theology, powerful priests and priestesses – the most famous of whom was Marie Laveau. The white citizens of Louisiana were all aware that Vodou was involved in the Haitian Revolution, and was suspected of being behind attempted revolts in Louisiana and other parts of the south. That and the agitation of northern abolitionist really made people leery of large mixed gatherings of slaves, free people of color and whites. These meetings were potential breeding grounds for rebellion. People saw it as a "horrifying brew of sorcery, devil worship, interracial fraternizing and sexual license"[123]. Although Voodoo ceremonies were never outlawed, police often raided gatherings and accused participants of unlawful assembly.

Morrow cites a newspaper report from August 16, 1820, which involved several persons of color and one white man who were charged with holding illegal nighttime

[122] Morrow 88
[123] Morrow 88

meetings for "occult practices and the idolatrous worship of an African deity called *Vaudoo*".[124] Since the French colonial period slaves gathered at an area behind the city known as Congo Square, where they socialized, sold their produce and wares, and gathered for drumming, dancing, and chanting. This, to many Americans, was the hotbed of Vodou! And these African cultural displays attracted many white onlookers, native New Orleans, foreign visitors, and American newcomers.[125]

Another police reports cited by Morrow is from the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* of July 31, 1850:

> Carried on in secret, they bring the slaves into contact with the disorderly free negroes and mischievous whites, and the effect cannot be other than to promote discontent, inflame passions, teach them vicious practices, and to indispose them to the performance of their duty to their masters . . . The public may have learned what goes on the [recent] Voudou disclosures what takes place at such meetings – the mystic ceremonies, wild orgies, dancing, singing, etc. … The police should have their attention to continually alive to the importance of breaking up such unlawful practices.[126]

From the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* July 12, 1859 we hear about the "notorious hag" Marie Laveau, "Queen of the Voudou!" "Marie and her wenches were continuously disturbing his peace". In this case, a neighbor of hers complained about "their… infernal singing and yelling. The police say… the noise was the… hellish observance of the

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[124] Morrow 89, this report that Morow cites was documented by field workers of the Louisiana Writer's Project and other historiographies.
[125] Estes 1991
[126] Morrow 89

mysterious rites of Voudou"[127]. The article goes on to say that Vodou is " one of the worst forms of paganism and is believed in and practiced by large numbers of negroes in this city, and by some white people. A description of the orgies would never be put in respectable print, however, "her majesty, Queen Marie, was duly sent after". [128]

Persecution of the Voodoo community worsened after the Civil War. Following the abolition of slavery, the regulation against 'unlawful assembly' of slaves and free persons could no longer be used as an excuse for breaking up ceremonies and arresting participants. Newly instituted ordinances against disorderly conduct, exposing the unclothed body, and loitering in public places accomplished the same purpose, as attested by dozens of newspaper articles from the 1860's through the turn of the century.[129]

Voyeuristic outsiders flocked to New Orleans to catch a sight of the St. John's Eve Voodoo celebration on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain hoping to be titillated and entertained by the illegal and sinful revelry. In fact blacks themselves were beginning to exploit the commercial potential of Voodoo by staging bogus ceremonies for which they charged admission.

The Louisiana Writers Project, LWP, conducted their first real research on 19th century Voodoo "under the auspices of the Depression-era Works Project Administration, the fieldworkers of the Louisiana Writer's Project interviewed approximately seventy elderly black New Orleanians who remembered Voodoo as it existed in the 1870's -

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[127] Morrow 89
[128] Morrow 89
[129] City ordinances used to justify such arrests were #3046 passed May 7, 1879 and #7805 passed May 17, 1881. Catherine Dillon, "The Law's Long Arm: The Suppression of Voodoo," unpublished manuscript, Louisiana Writers' Project (henceforth LWP), folder 118d, Federal Writers' Collection, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana, Watson Memorial Library, Cammie G. Henry Research Center.

90's"[130]. They focused on Marie Laveau and presented New Orleans Vodou as a diluted version of Haitian Vodou, tending more toward Catholicism. The names of the lwa had almost disappeared, and it was the Catholic saints who were called upon to solve everyday problems and aid in magical works.[131]

Most salves came from the West coast of Africa - Senegal, Guinea, Niger delta, and the Congo.[132] Colonial preference helped determined what Africans would go where in the New World. For example, Portuguese traders were originally supplied with Senegalese Africans, and from then on that is what the Portuguese preferred.[133] Spanish preferred Yoruba, English Ashanti, and French planters Dahomeans. So the African music in Cuba came from the Yoruba, preferred by the Spanish who also colonized the country. In Jamaica (a British colony) the Ashanti were favored, and in Haiti, a formerly French colony, Dahomean were preferred. It was also the Dahomean who were the original Vodou (often spelled vodun) worshippers-- the snake God Damballa is one of their deities. The fact that New Orleans was a French colony helps to explain why this city became the 'voodoo' capital of the United States. It offers us a clue as to how jazz was born in New Orleans.[134]

Much depended on whether the slave was sold to a British Protestant or a Latin-Catholic colony. The music of Latin colonies had a more rhythmic life. Some suggest that it's because of the Moors from North Africa that were in Spain during the Middle Ages. Spanish music employed elements of improvisation and complex rhythms. An example

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[130] Morrow 90
[131] Morrow 91
[132] Stearns 17
[133] Stearns 17
[134] Stearns 18

of this is flamenco dancing (comparable to Portuguese fado). And the numerous church festivities in Latin colonies gave the slaves many opportunities to hear this music. The March was probably the music most appealing to an African sensibility because it lends itself to "superimposed rhythms in the African manner".[135] There was also a difference in the ways in which the slavers dealt with the enslaved Africans. For example, the Latin-Catholic planters dominated the lives of slaves, but did not really care what they did in their free time. British-Protestant slavers were very involved in every aspect of the slaves' life and attempted to "save" her, make her Christian and civilize her.[136] They were very concerned with the thoughts and actions of the slaves. The Cultural laissez-faire attitude of the Latin-Catholic planters allowed African religious traditions to be maintained through syncretism. To them, whether or not the slave became Catholic, they were still a slave. The Catholic churches were filled with pictures of saints and their attributes could be easily compared to or share parallels with the gods of the Dahomeans. For example, St. Patrick and Damballa had similarities, so slaves would play African drum rhythms sacred to Damballa and worshipped both St. Patrick and Damballa, an improvised performance of worship and devotion in front of an improvised altar.[137] Musical characteristics tended to survive in Latin-Catholic colonies, which resulted in elements of West African music contributing to the blend that became jazz.

Still holding onto Benitez Rojo's idea that the Caribbean is the meta-narrative of the African Diaspora, we understand the far reaching affect of Stearns assertions of the West Indies: "Each island in the West Indies is a sort of musical test-tube in which West

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[135] Stearns 19
[136] Stearns19
[137] Stearns 20

African and European music have been mixed in more or less known quantities, thus furnishing clues as to what happened in the U.S.".[138] So Stearns is laying this foundation to argue the probability that similar encounters occurred in the U.S. where they are bound to be musical forms that reflect both African and European ideas and aesthetics. Unlike the Saints in Cuba, the Trinidad Shouters were banned from dancing and drumming in accordance to British rules. Hand clapping, and foot stomping evolved to take the place of the drums, and the ceremonies became famous for their revivalist power and frenzy. According to the Protestant prohibitions, when people of African descent played European hymns it sounded like a shouting spiritual - a precursor to Jazz in the United States. If European instruments were added it might sound like Jazz.[139]

Conclusions one can draw from examples in Dutch Guinea, Haiti, Cuba, Trinidad, the Bahamas and Martinique- "West African music such as *vodun* survived best of all, because it was highly formalized and could mix with elements of Christianity, especially Catholicism. Where Protestantism existed, blending took the direction of shouting revival music. And Latin-Catholic environments appear to have assisted the survival of African cultural practices (32). New Orleans, Mobile, and Charleston seemed to have evolved a blend of march and satirical love song and instrumentation to Afro-French music of Martinique. The U.S. countryside, dominated by Protestant religion seems to have evolved into a style of the preacher shouting to the congregation as in Toco and Trinidad. Both traditions began to mix (adding another layer of complexity) and blend in the Southern U.S. in a variety of ways. Many, many improvisations!

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[138] Stearns 23
[139] Stearns 30

With all the changes happening in the New World, New Orleans remained fundamentally French.[140] It still is a Latin-Catholic town. A lot of the music of the early 19th century probably resembled Haitian or Martinique music. The editors of *Gumbo Ya-Ya s*tate that many blacks came from the West Indies to New Orleans, 500 from Martinique, Guadeloupe and San Domingo were imported into Louisiana in 1776, and 3,000 more the following year. The Islands were French possessions at the time and the slaves were mainly Yoruba and Dahomeans, worshippers of *vodun*. From 1809-1810, more than 3,000 enslaved Africans arrived from San Domingo, by way of Cuba, their French masters fleeing the revolution. And more came directly from West Africa. Africans of all kinds could be found in New Orleans after the Civil War.[141]

Congo tribes, arriving last, were referred to as the most numerous in New Orleans. Dahomean tribesman warriors called Arada - the original "Vodou worshipper". The Iboes learned the dances of the Congos, the Arada of the Senegalese. And yet one culture came to dominate the whole that of the Dahomeans. Their religion of *vodun* gave its name and served as a focal point for a constellation of similar rituals from a variety of West African tribes: "The combination was both powerful and enduring, and it surfaced later in Congo Square".[142] Stearns goes on to explain how, "African and European music had a pronounced head start because of the wide range of assimilation by people of color amidst unusual business prosperity. For during its early years, New Orleans was a musical melting pot *par excellence* with a large component of West African ingredients

[140] Gayarré 37
[141] Stearns 38
[142] Stearns 40

simmering to a boil over the forced draft of financial boom".[143] The culture mixed creative infectious musical styles. The country of France would continue to be known for its ability to provide hot beds for culturally mixed musical experiences.

These changes in the religious ideologies, along with the popularity of the marching band, the adoption of European instrument and a desire for creative expression and voice helped the music of Congo Square evolve into Jazz. With the popularity of marching bands, parades and concerts became one of America's favorite pastimes. And Military bands were usually accompanied by black brass bands. These players were mostly freedmen or house slaves. Black men who worked as field-slaves would not have an opportunity to play until after the Civil War. Their sound and rhythms had a more concentrated West African sensibility that also influenced the evolution of Jazz.[144]

Marching bands and the accompanying brass section of Negros were employed for all sorts of occasions: riverboat excursions, dances, picnics, parades and funerals. These were the first bands that began to swing. Another factor that contributed to the prevalence of these bands was the popularity of secret societies. Each group had it' s own band and the purpose of the group is to ensure the financial solvency of a financial foundation for the bands. They also played at the wake of each of the members. A person could join as many as 7-9 groups, so this meant that he would have 7 - 9 bands playing for his funeral. These funerals were seen as celebrations. There would be special meals served and swinging bands to play for them. This is in keeping with the West African traditions of ancestor veneration, where it is understood that when one dies, she passes into the after world. It is very important that this crossed-over spirit be appeased, so people would

[143] Stearns 43
[144] Stearns 55

intentionally join many clubs to have many bands play and they would make arrangements to have their favorites songs played and foods served.

There was a performance to the procession. All of the friends and family would march up to the gravesite; the relative closest to the deceased would go last. The crowd would part for her as she approached the coffin. There, the family or a family member would give a performance of extreme distress or grief. One style of music is played on the way to the gravesite and a ragtime or swinging beat would play on the way back. The processions would dance along the way in the streets. It enlivened the community and "even policemen's horses pranced".[145]

To the untrained ear, West African music can sound like chaos! The musicians do not read music, but play ear and sound and memory. They would not do anything as regular or routines or prescriptive as 16 bars. That's very European. Their rhythms change right in the middle of a measure, which is completely unconventional in European music and it confuses musicologist. But even the untrained ear can sense that these complicated and seemingly disparate pieces fit together.[146]

Stearns goes on to share with his reader the perspective of a music theorist: "Theorist tell us that there is no limit to the complexities that can be superimposed upon march rhythms - and that is what jazz is doing. The basis of jazz is the march rhythm but the jazzman puts more complicated rhythms on top it".[147] It is this layering that accounts for the improvisation. One must listen and find his place amongst the various sounds. Stearns

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[145] Stearns 59-62
[146] Stearns 4
[147] Stearns 5

uses the example of Erroll Garner, who is famous for fooling around the beat and Louis Armstrong who also shared this talent.

One might read these movements and the emotional and psychological responses the listener might have:

> Here is the quality that gives jazz some of its appeal. Psychologically, Garner's steady left hand creates and fulfills the expectancy of a continuous rhythm. His lag-long right hand, however, sets up a contrasting tension, which is released when, by means of more unexpected accents, he catches up. It's like a sprinter who saves himself from falling on his face by an extra burst of speed. It's also a kind of rhythmic game. The effect on the listener varies: he may want to sing, dance, shout, or even hit somebody. Somehow he wants to express himself.[148]

It's just rush of emotion and excitement in the music that serves to agitate the listener, stir up her body and make her want to move. Through this experience of movement one can have an experience of catharsis or understanding. The following quote from Rudy Valle goes on to explain the effect on one's psyche and emotions: "I have played a certain barbaric in quality on my saxophone very softly, and have watched its effect upon a crowd, the livening up of young legs and feet.[149]

As this document explores the historical and cultural influences of genesis of the musical form of jazz, a discussion of blues or ragtime must also takes place as the three styles tend to meld together and heavily and consistently influence one another. As jazz and blues are often conflated, I do not draw hard lines between the genres either, as jazz

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[148] Stearns 6
[149] Stearns 7

evolves from the swinging beats of ragtime[150]and blues. In the film *New Orleans* the change between jazz and ragtime amounts to the effect of drunken slur. The music does not change, simply the title. Also, it is not necessary for my purposes here to pinpoint the historical moments of musical transition. The following scholars and film that are discussed do make some distinction between the genres, but do not specify any tangible sonic boundaries and again, the cultural shifts are part of an constantly evolving African philosophical expression.

Picking up on Stearns' description of the genesis of Jazz music the movie *New Orleans*, carries the story further in its portrayal of the way the culturally mixed musical form evolves and affects the listener. Written by Elliot Paul and Dick Irving Hyland and directed by Arthur Lubin, *New Orleans* is loosely based on the life and career of Louis Armstrong, who is responsible for moving the focus of Jazz from the collective to the soloist's improvisation, and his work in the proliferation of Jazz music, but is told through the romance of the characters Nick Duquanese and Miralee. The way the film came into being is almost as spontaneous as the musical style itself.

The film took six years to make and took on many forms before hitting the silver screen. Originally, the film began as a feature film project headed up Orson Welles, entitled, The Story of Jazz. It came after the release and success of his film *Citizen Kane*, and was among a list of other projects he had begun. There is a manuscript/ screenplay for the film among the Orson Welles papers at the University of Indiana. Although the screenplay does not have author, it is assumed to be written by Welles, as it takes the

[150] A genre of music that is a modification of the March music, ragtime is layered with syncopated rhythms. It was popular in African American red light districts between 1897-1918.

form of two other projects written by him during that time: *The Heart of Darkness* and *The Road to Santiago*. But it is also noted that the film does not have some of the same cinematic characteristics. The director of the film got his vision from this screenplay. This original screenplay is long, as it covers the lives of several characters over four decades and uncovering the history of jazz in the process. *The Story of Jazz* was an elaborate, sweeping screenplay but it lacked character and cohesion.[151]

Welles fixed this by adding Louis Armstrong to the cast and intended to re-write the script as a fact-based film of the cornet player's life. He also enlisted Duke Ellington to serve as a consultant and to add music to the film. Billie Holiday also auditioned for a role, but was not cast at that time, although she would appear on the final project. An important addition to the film's creation process was screenwriter Elliot Paul, who helped bridge the gap between Welles' vision and Arthur Lubin's film six years later. It is uncertain if Paul completed a script in collaboration with Welles and Armstrong, but at this point, the tentative title was *Cinematic and Sonorescent Accompaniment for Chronological and Historical Concert of American Jazz.*

In 1945 Welles spoke to Louis Armstrong backstage after a concert, and they revived discussions on a biographic project. Armstrong wrote a long letter detailing his rise to fame in response. Although Welles, heavily edited the six-page letter in pencil and erased large passages, as though he intended to publish it, but the passages were restored. In the special features section of the DVD, the letter is available.

In the letter Armstrong recounts: Welles had come to Orpheum to talk to him after the concert. He says all the "spades" were excited to be close to such a popular actor,

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[151] *New Orleans*

although he frightened them. He has a lot of joking phrases in the letter like "tee hee" and pushing Welles to recall that he was a cute kid who would have to "lead off one for those sisters"[152] in the choir. He was singing tenor in the quartet at the age of 10. They would walk down the street in groups of two. People would ask them to sing and offer them money for their performance. With that money he took care of his mother and sister. He jokes about how they were unable to eat and it was not due to their health.

He quit the quartet in 1912 on New Years. One week before he found an old trunk that belonged to his mother. While admittedly ransacking the trunk he found an old pistol that belonged to his stepfather. It was 38 one of those, "old time muskets- one of those short businesses with short barrel". During the holiday season, Christmas and New Year's, people would celebrate in New Orleans by popping firecrackers and shooting off guns. Armstrong said that he wanted to be extra cool this holiday, so he took the gun with him when he went out with the quartet. As they were hanging out around Rampart and Perdido Street, another man started shooting off his six-shooter gun, which didn't sound much louder than a firecracker. His friends egged him on, "C'mon, Dip! Show him". They called him Dippermouth in those days; Satchmo is short for Satchel Mouth and it was the Englishmen in London that would give him the name Satchmo. So, Armstrong fired his arm, and the boom was quite impressive indeed. Impressive enough to get him arrested and sent to the Waif juvenile detention center for boys.

In the Waif's Home, he grew close to a keeper called Mr. Peter Davis who taught music. He began by playing tambourine at first and then moved to drums. Mr. Peter Davis was so impressed with a particular improvisation Satchmo played on the popular

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[152] Letter from Louis Armstrong to Orson Welles in the special section of the *New Orleans* DVD, by Majestic Productions 2000.

tune “At the Animal Ball”, that he immediately moved Satchmo to the coronet. He picked up the instrument quickly. He was able to travel outside the Home with the band and perform in the streets. He saw people from his neighborhood and they asked Mr. Peter Davis if they could give him some money for playing. That day he returned to the Home with two hats filled with dollars, and he used it to buy more music. From then on he was the bugler for the Waif’s Home. He would play to announce different activates. He fondly recalled announcing meals in the mess hall, while also ensuring he was always the first one at the table.[153]

The film reflects Armstrong’s life close enough, but the main difference is that he is not the protagonist, the protagonist, the proprietor of a cabaret and a casino on Basin Street in the crime-ridden neighborhood of Storyville in New Orleans where ragtime is played and whites and blacks can be caught socializing in the same areas.

To continue with the letter, finally, when Satchmo could be released back to his mother’s home, he started a band with a guy named Joe Lindsay. They would play Saturday and Sunday nights at Perdido and Franklin at a place called Matragas Honky Tonk. He would often play piano with a fellow called Boogus and another called Gambee on drums. This is where he met King Oliver, who would come and watch them play and he would often play for them as well. He says Joe Oliver, King Oliver to his fans, took a liking to him. King Oliver played with the Onward Brass band and Armstrong/ Satchmo would “second line” behind him on occasions like burying a “brother” and marching back from the graveyard. Armstrong said he would follow him everywhere, playing behind him as longer than most other players. He would go to King Oliver’s house in the

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[153] *New Orleans*

daytime on weekdays and run errands for Mr. Oliver who would show him free lessons in return.

Armstrong's big break came when King Oliver and Joe Noone left New Orleans and went to Chicago in 1918 to play at Lincoln Gardens. King Oliver was playing in the Kid Ory's band in New Orleans. They were called Oliver and Ory. This union plus Armstrong's close relationship with Oliver automatically included a space for him Kid Ory's band once King Oliver left for Chicago. He was only 18. At the same age he married his first wife Daisy. In 1922, Satchmo would head to Chicago too, as King Oliver sent for him to join his band. Once there he met Fate Marable. Armstrong credits Fate Marable, King Oliver, and Erskine Tate in Chicago with the symphony orchestra with Fetcher Henderson, did more for Jazz music as anybody else because they all created their own style of music and started many young musicians on their way to being leaders. Armstrong had seen many boys go up North and come back to New Orleans as failures and that scared him. Only King Oliver could get him to leave because he trusted King Oliver implicitly. He says he's always lived the life of King Oliver musically and was going to do whatever he did. He stayed with King from 1922 to 1924 when left to play with Fletcher Henderson at the Roseland Ballroom on Broadway. He was with Fletcher until the early part of 1936. Then he left to play with Lil Armstrong's Orchestra, which was the band at the Dixieland Cabaret. He also played with Erskine Tate's Symphony Orchestra at this time at Vendome Motion Picture House. The experience of playing symphony and scoring films was really good for him and "gassed him up to no end"[154].

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[154] *New Orleans*

Then in 1928the Savoy opened. There, Armstrong saw Zootie on drums for the first time. He convinced Zootie to let his band play. They had a gig at Connie's and Amstrong was also playing numerous other gigs in the city. After six months the band went back to Chicago and Armstrong joined Jed Dooly's unit and they all went to California. There, they took the band to Sebastian's' Cotton Club where Lionel Hampton and Lawrence Brown played. After this they went to Europe and toured extensively. In Europe he played with players of all nationalities and said they all swung just like American boys. One of his greatest thrills of his time in Europe was a jazz concert he gave in Paris. They played for three nights in Sal Playale, which he equates to Carnegie Hall. He left Europe in 1935 and returned to Connie's. After Connie's he went to Hollywood and made *Pennies from Heaven* with Bing Crosby. More "breaks" followed with *Artists and Models*, *Every Day's a Holiday*, and *Going Places*. At the time of this letter he was on a break from making movies, as there was an industry strike that was taking place. He was still playing gigs, along the coast, and preparing to go back east. He promises Welles he will be in touch concluding the letter.

Many parts of Armstrong's life are mirrored in the film. The scene in which all the inhabitants of Storyville are forced out after the death of a white society woman dies in front of Nick Duquanese's cabaret, and Billie Holiday sings her mournful rendition of Farewell to Storyville is echoed in Armstrong's autobiography *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans*. He recalls a time when some sailors on leave in Storyville got into a fight and two of them were killed. Police began to raid homes and Cabarets frequently. Even as a young boy, he knew it was the ending of Storyville: "It sure was a sad scene to watch the law run all those people out of Storyville. Bret Wood says that the creation of "The New

Orleans Ragtime Band" was the most impressive tribute to a bygone era of jazz. Great players from the 1910's and 20's like Edward "Kid" Ory, Arthur "Zutty" Singleton, Albany "Barney" Bigard, Arthur "Bud" Scott, George "Red" Callendar and Charlie Beal. Also, tributes to performers like Meade Lux were made via walk-on rolls. Richard Hageman, a prolific Hollywood composer, played the highbrow Mr. Ferber. He is known for scoring John Ford films such as *Fort Apache* and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. Arturo DeCordova was a popular Mexican actor who had worked almost exclusively in Spanish-language films. The film did not have the promotional backing of a major studio and the only critical acclaim it received was for its jazz performances.

The first scene opens on the Orpheum Cabaret, owned by the protagonist Nick Duquanese. The camera zooms in on a rear entrance, maybe it's also the entrance for deliveries, black patrons or white patrons who are "slumming" and want to enjoy the black entertainment. This is where we see Armstrong's band, The Original New Orleans Ragtime Band. They are shown playing inside this back room that looks to be attached to a kitchen. In the band we see some famous jazz players who are also seen throughout the film: Zutty Singleton on drums, Barney Biggard on clarinet, Kid Ory on trumpet, Bud Scott on guitar, Red Callendar on bass, and Charlie Beal on piano. Piano player Meade Lux Lewis also has a cameo later on in the film.

In the this part of the club the players are all facing one another and the piano is the central focus, as that's where Armstrong stands playing his clarinet and cuing the other players in on his movements. The players interact with each other. It's like they are having a conversation and each player waits for his turn to speak. The audience is on the outside watching the discussion take place. The band and their music is full of emotion

and changing moods, nevertheless, there is always a feeling melancholy surrounding them, even in their most playful moments.

In contrast the quartet that we see upstairs in the club is all white. The players sit in austere semi-circle facing out the audience. There is even a harp being played. This interior shot it filled wealthy looking white patrons who are being served cocktails while they circle around betting tables to play, or watch or cheer or jeer others who are placing bets. The club is in a neighborhood called Storyville, where all manner of sundry behaviors are encouraged. There is prostitution, drunkenness and gambling happening in this neighborhood. But of all the unseemly practices, race mixing might be the one most looked down upon. Because even though there are both blacks and white in this area, segregation is still in tact for the most part, with the separate entrances for example. But there is an opportunity for whites and blacks to interact in a manner that is not acceptable: dining together or sitting in the same venue watching black musicians play black music.

The scene cuts to Louis Armstrong and his band and Woody Herman and his band are playing in front of the river where the riverboats are docking for passengers coming on and off of the boat. Both bands are positioned in the bed of a pick up truck where they play and interact with the passersby and audience members. They are both playing the same songs but in two different melodies. The all white band called Monte Carlo Saloon plays fast paced, staccato rhythms. The Orpheum Cabaret band's truck has the Original New Orleans Ragtime band players in it. Armstrong is leaning over the side of the truck playing his coronet. The song they are playing is "Maryland, My Maryland".

Duquanese's love interest Miralee is disembarking from a riverboat as she notices the clear distinction between the two battling bands is Armstrong's coronet. The all white

band plays the tune in a more formal sound while Armstrong and his band tend to bend the notes and hold out phrases while hopping to a staccato beat. This is our first opportunity to feel the difference between the two forms without any exposition.

The scene then cuts to the inside of Miralee's mother's house, and we hear the maid Endie, played by Billie Holiday, playing the piano and singing "New Orleans". Miralee is intrigued. She asks Endie, "What is that music you are playing?" Endie simply answers, "An old blues tune". Miralee asks if she only plays blues when she is blue. Endie reiterates Albert Murray when she tells her that the blues can be played when one is happy or sad, even when they are in love. Endie confesses that she is in love with Satchmo, Armstrong's character.

In his book, *Stomping the Blues*, Albert Murray talks about the nature of the blues, the emotional condition of having the blues, as something that has neither face nor body. It is a contracted emotional experience that is "represented as teeming, swarming, and writhing".[155] When the blues are near one can feel uncertain, "down-hearted or woebegone ad anxiety-ridden".[156] When the blues is contracted is often called the spell of the blues, and usually suspected of being connected to some kind of sorcery or conjuration, which will require some sort of voodoo queen, witch doctor, snake doctor, or voodoo king to remove the spell.[157] But often the involvement of a magical practitioner can be seen as troublesome, as one can expect that the voodoo king, queen or doctor may replace the existing spell with yet another spell in order to keep the patient returning and

[155] Murray 3
[156] Murray 3
[157] Murray 10

paying more.[158] But there are other counteragents that one can employ to release the feeling of the blues. According to Murray, One way the feeling can be dislodged is through a forthright acknowledgement of the illness, calling out its name – either correctly or incorrectly. Just the threat of revealing their "diabolical identities and intentions through a full-scale description" is more effective.[159] One can acknowledge the blues or call it out through imitation, mockery, mimicry, sound, and movement. Murray says that "malediction, bad-mouthing, loud-mouthing, damnation by diatribe and vilification" are also effective ways to cast out the blues.[160] This is what the music does.

The whole point is not to give in and let the blues win, let the blues have you. A "phony show or gesture of belligerent opposition" does not seem to carry the same impact. The dance hall is a place where one's affliction can be exorcised. The deliberate and ceremonial practice of physical movements like grinding, stomping, shaking, and strutting consecrate the dance hall space. To keep the blues away for as long as possible one must evoke an "ambiance of Dionysian revelry in the process".[161]

The dance hall and the house party represent a "comprehensive elaboration and refinement of communal dancing", which is, by nature, "festive".[162] While the sorcery of Marie Laveau and her male counterpart né Charles La Fountain were questionable, the incantations and percussion of Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong always worked.[163] The most common counteragent to the blues is that "seemingly magical combination of

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[158] Murray 16
[159] Murray 9
[160] Murray 9
[161] Murray 17
[162] Murray 17
[163] Murray 20

idiomatic incantation and percussion that caress the dance-oriented good-time music also known as the blues.[164]

Murray explains that Europeans used the word *blue* to describe someone being overcome with anxiety, depression and other feelings of discomfort or anguish. He also says the word "blue devils" come from early English and it signifies the baleful demons that are expelled through music. However, Murray, like Stearns, credits West African and European ancestors of U.S. black Americans with the original influences of the music. He vaguely says that blues music is connected to or is a spin-off of from spirituals and that Musicologists have traced sources like structural and sonic patterns to African music. It is a product of an Afro-American sensibility in a mainland American situation.[165] He tries to shun or throw off any connection to an actual demonic force or devil associated with music, instead, he says that any of those ideas are more likely coming out of *voodooism*, the commercial practice of root magic, which is usually employed for spell casting or inflicting one with the condition of the blues.[166]

Murray makes the distinction between "the blues" and blues music saying that the emotional affliction of the blues is associated with low spirits, but the music is not.[167] The music is the confrontation of the affliction: the parody, the mimicry, the imitation, which then serves as a purifying force, a redemptive or recovery mechanism or force. Murray explains that although the music is preoccupied with harrowing experiences and "the most disturbing aspects of life", it is performed as entertainment.[168]

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[164] Murray 16-7
[165] Murray 63
[166] Murray 65
[167] Murray 45
[168] Murray 45

The blues is not concerned with agony, but with ecstasy, getting to the nitty gritty and out of the realm of the abstraction of dreams. When it has opened the listener, dancer, participant up, the response is often a robust or sensual embrace.[169] So I guess in this way, Murray is describing the sensuality of the music and the performance as visceral and replete with abandon, which ultimately reflects or works to come to a control. The whole performance is enacted as a way to control the deluge of low spirits connected with the emotional phenomenon of the blues. Murray says rock and roll are one dimensional expressions of pain, which also use idiomatic devices, but it can result in a sort of self-pitying whine of clashing and screams, while the blues seeks to exorcise demons.[170] So while the music of the blues can be used to cure the emotional condition of the blues, it can also be enjoyed in times of pleasure or for entertainment. But the nature of the music can still be disturbing to some.

Cut to Armstrong sitting alone in the cabaret basement, where the *Negro* entertainment takes their places. He is playing a song on his coronet, when Mr. Ferber, an orchestral conductor and mentor of Miralee, enters. He begins to accompany Armstrong on the piano who begins to play around with the speed and pitch of the melody in such a way that Mr. Ferber is unable to keep up with him. Ferber yells out, “Stop that! That note you are playing isn’t even on the diatonic scale.” Satchmo innocently responds, “Did I do something wrong?” Ferber corrects him, “Something extraordinary. You’re playing between flat and natural. It’s like discovering secret scales that’s made for this type of music.”

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[169] Murray 51
[170] Murray 51

For music and cultural studies historian Craig Werner, the blues is a reflection of the cultural sentiments of the times during which it proliferated, for which he uses the metaphor of the crossroads. The crossroads represents two different struggles for both black and white musicians. For white musicians it often represented an existential angst, as it revealed things about America's racial lines that whites were told did not exist. This is seen in the scene where Mr. Ferber tries to explain the way ragtime blues or jazz makes him feel.

During this scene with Armstrong and Ferber, there is moment of call and response when Satchmo plays a line on his coronet and then Ferber repeats it on the piano. This moment is so interesting because Armstrong and Ferber (Richard Hageman) are both noted musicians off-screen. So it is a moment of true musical play. It is during this moment of play that Duquanese enters the room and Ferber tries to conceal his identity. It fails as Duquanese immediately recognizes him and says, "I've seen you conduct the concerts but I never thought I'd see you conduct Ragtime." Ferber admits that he is unable to reconcile his love for both Ragtime and Classical music. He admits that it has him "a little mixed up". Satchmo disagrees, however, interjecting, "He never gets mixed up when he plays with us." This suggests that the musical art form of ragtime/ jazz is open to all levels of interpretation and invites improvisation. There is no clear way to be in blues or jazz. Ferber also explains this as he responds to a charge from Duquanese who suggests that Ferber thinks ragtime is ok as long as it is locked away in a basement in Storyville. Ferber insists, "Oh, that's the trouble. You can't lock it up. It leaks everywhere. It is as though I had caught some virus, except that a virus makes one ill. This music doesn't make me ill. It makes me feel very well, but mixed up. Ferber is

trying to explain the healing qualities of the musical experience of playing Ragtime, although it contorts classical musical standards.

Duquanese is not convinced of Mr. Ferber's motives. He says Ferber is two-faced. He is a Dr. Jykell who conducts the concerts, and a Mr. Hyde who sneaks away to play ragtime. He sure that Ferber is using this double life to avoid or escape something. Ferber corrects him saying, "Maybe it is to come back to something." Ferber is alluding to the rich and complex cultural lineage of the musical form that is budding and the ensuing choice or paradox of the crossroads.

According to Werner there were various crossroads of which one had to be aware. And the "choices made there could determine everything, life or death, slavery or freedom: whether you were a fugitive slave or a black man running from the Klan".[171] It's the sense that you are about to take an irrevocable step – for whites it was a choice of going past white down a road "that bends back to where black and white came to pretty much the same thing, if only on Beale Street[172] between three a.m. and dawn".[173] In New Orleans, it would be Basin Street.

And then there was a spiritual crossroads where religious conventions collided and diverged. Werner uses the example of blues singer and guitarist Robert Johnson to exemplify the black experience. For Johnson, the evil in the blues was often connected to the real life of the black church. Werner discusses Johnson's agonizing over the American racial realities and his exile from the church. This was an exile many other

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[171] Werner 65

[172] Beale Street is a street in downtown Memphis where many African American clubs, restaurants, and stores were located in the early 1900's. It was known for its Jazz music scene and was a place where whites frequently went to "slum" or experience or enjoy black culture and entertainment.

[173] Werner 66

musicians have experienced. Murray touches on this as well as he describes the influences and similarities of the dancehall and the church as well as the performance of the preacher and congregation and the blues singer/musician and dancing crowds. In these cases the crossroads reveals an "abyss between the theological and the social".[174]

For Johnson the crossroads also remembers the routes the West Africa, which also connects to the Delta. There, the crossroads represents the "place where the spirit world and the material converged, where you went when you needed spiritual energy".[175] For the Yoruba it was a place of "power and danger" dedicated to and ruled by the spirit or orisha, Esu-Elegba, who is known to walk with a limp, revels in chaos and carry messages between the material and spiritual worlds.[176] The orisha are full of contradiction and are used to ignite discussion. Esu's strengths lie in "his mastery of language and codes, his verbal facility, his literary intelligence"[177]. His weakness lies in his amorality. And because of his affinity and intelligence he is perfectly able to tear a community apart. Werner goes on to say that "if you need to get closer to divine presence, to learn the inner meaning of incomprehensible messages found in dreams, "moments of awe-ful awareness of the spirit" or music and outside cultural forms you must deal with him.[178]

According to the legend, Robert Johnson met Esu at the crossroads and Esu bestowed upon him musical and creative gifts. Prior to his meeting with Esu, Johnson was laughed off the stage in blues clubs in the Delta. After his meeting at the crossroads,

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[174] Werner 66
[175] Werner 66
[176] Werner 66
[177] Werner 66
[178] Werner 67

he disappeared for one year; some say three. When he returned, "he spoke the blues in tongues his elders had never imagined".[179] Some say he honed his craft in New Orleans while others say he sold his soul to the devil. Werner explains that Christians called Esu the devil as Esu always exacts a price for the gifts he bestows. For him, Esu embodies the spirit of Beale Street – sex, drugs, violence and death, all in the name of a good time and good music. This is exactly what happens in the film *New Orleans* when the white socialite woman is killed by the Bacchanalian decadence of Basin Street. And it is in this decadence that Miralee feels she has found herself.

Miralee, has unexpectedly arrived at the Cabaret. She joins Duquanese and Mr. Ferber in watching Negro band play ragtime. She comments on how the musicians seem to make their instruments talk.

Both the church and the dance hall carry the same sort of effect and performance: clapping, foot shuffling, rocking and rolling to up-tempo hymnals that generate paroxysms of ecstasy".[180] It seems as though the blues man evokes god as much as the preacher does. Murray agrees saying that the greatest compliment a blues man or woman can receive is being told that he or she can make the dance hall rock like a down home church during revival time![181] The blues man's performance comes from, is influenced by, and is an imitation of the preacher's movements and cadence, namely call and response. The preacher's call and the congregation's response and the soloist's call and the ensemble's riff mirror one another. But to differentiate, Murray posits "barrelhousing,

[179] Werner 67
[180] Murray 27
[181] Murray 27

ragging and jazzing" are employed to make the music more danceable and to further secularize the form.[182]

Spellbound, Miralee asks, "Where does such music comes from?" Duquanese answers, "Well it comes from Work Songs, Gold Coast of West Africa, Christian churches, Riverboats." Miralee somehow understands this spontaneous, scattered genesis and goes on to say, "you just want to make up words to it as you go along." She still does not understand why it is so secret and not embraced by the world outside of the Cabaret basement and Storyville. She explains how the classical operatic music that she sings was once new and even though it too had sprung up in many different places, she has learned to make it her own. Similarly, Miralee explains how she has the same experience with ragtime: "This music is mine already . . . I feel I'm exactly where I want to be, and on my way to where I want to go." Even Duquanese's driver explains that ragtime is like "playing from the heart".

Although Miralee seems to understand Armstrong's music, he does not understand hers. When looking at a piece music from a recital she is to perform, he is confused by the notes: "Don't these little flags on the fences get in the way of your feelings?" to Armstrong, the notation and structure of this music is confining and thwarts authenticity or spontaneity. But as Ferber begins to play the music on the sheet, which he refers to as *uptown music*, Armstrong interrupts. He says, "The guy who wrote this music stole it from Sugar Brown. That's 'Corn Crypt Blues'." Although it seemed foreign to him initially there is still recognizable form of ragtime present in the music.

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[182] Murray 28

Even though the film does not, Werner does draw a distinction between the cultural impulses of blues and jazz music. In his discussion of jazz Werner uses a quote from Louis Armstrong where he says that jazz music is never played the same way twice. The presence of improvisation occurs more highly in this music form than blues. Perhaps this is because jazz is a style that developed from the improvisation of blues. Jazz "imagines transitions in that moment", while also taking into account what has come before this moment or led up to it.[183] Werner asserts that jazz stretches the mind and transgresses every boundary it meets and is obsessed with redefinition.[184] In jazz nothing is ever given: who you are, the people you were born with and live for, the culture you bear – everything remains open to question, probing, reevaluation".[185] In this way it seems similar to the convention of blues music in that the music reflects and distorts reality. Perhaps this is also suggestive of the crossroads, in that the music is occupying a liminal space.

And even though jazz can go anywhere, it is a part of the African American tradition and asks questions of the conventions of racialized understandings, putting you in your place: "on the other side of the tracks and in the back of the bus"[186]. Werner uses a Bobby Timmons' quote on jazz , saying we can do "this here or dat dere". Meaning that when a group conscripts jazz for their own causes, they realize "your cow ain't a damn bit more sacred than theirs"[187]. Considering the ways in which jazz music turns societal

[183] Werner 132
[184] Werner 134
[185] Werner 132
[186] Werner 132
[187] Werner 132

norms on their heads one might even turn Timmon's quote to say that your cow is just as damn devilish as theirs.

After a society girl is killed in a car crash on Basin Street after leaving Nick Duquanese's club, the police begin to close down the district. All the businessmen and patron are forced to leave. As the Original New Orleans band prepares to play its last set at the Cabaret. Satchmo instructs everyone to eat well for his or her last meal and he offers one last tune to accompany his or her departure. The crowd asks Holiday's Endie to "make up some words" to the melody the band is playing. She improvises: "Pick out your steamboat, pick yourself a train. You sang the Blues, tried to amuse. Here's how they paid the bill. The law stepped in and called it a sin to have a little fun." The crowd joins in repeating her phrases and melody as they begin to file out of the building and begin their sojourns to a new destination. For Duquanese and the Original New Orleans band, that new destination is Chicago. Here we see the progression of the music through their forced migration or exile.

Murray explains how the churchgoing crowd seemed to think of the blues music and dancehalls or any place of secular dancing as a "House of Sin and Folly, a Den of Iniquity, a Writhing Hellhole, where the weakness of the flesh is indulged to the ruination of the mind and body.[188] Basin Street is viewed similarly in the film. This is to say that satisfying or indulging the flesh in such a ritualistic manner was damming to the soul, mind and body. Dance halls were the subject of many sermons. Albert says that there was also an implied connection, which may have seemed explicit to some, between good luck charms, love potions and other tools of conjuration, which were also very popular at the

[188] Murray 23

time.[189] While the music and clubs were attacked there were rarely sermons that talked against the use of conjuring, charms and potions, fortunetellers, voodoo madams and snake doctors.

Club owners were often called out by name and castigated in Sunday morning sermons at "downhome churches".[190] This might recall the cinematic portrayal of such a scene in Steven Spielberg's "The Color Purple", 1985, where the dance hall, called juke joint, was located across the river from the church and the clergy and congregation were very aware that the sermon being given was targeted against that particular venue. They also knew the names of the charged club-goers. Similarly there was a ubiquitous contention between the Christian preacher and blues musician. One reason is because the musician was able to "generate the merriment through incantation and percussion".[191] The church saw the blues invocation as bringing forth the devil himself to wreak havoc on earth. He explains that there is good time music being played in the church and the dance halls.

Saturday night rituals of purification and affirmation in the dance halls also included "rituals of resilience and perseverance through improvisation in the face of capricious disjuncture"[192]. There are many ways in which the Saturday night rituals were performed and functioned. Confrontation, improvisation, affirmation and celebration happened at many different times throughout the ritual. It is also reasonable to expect that

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[189] There is a an entire section on p. 18 in Murray's book that connects Armstrong's music to conjure. There is one photo Armstrong with a caption that says "[Armstrong] could conjure up good times with the magical art of music". The page also has a picture of four album covers which are connected by a small album-like picture that reads "DECCA records, 'You've Got Me Voodoo'd' Louis Armstrong and his orchestra".
[190] Murray 24
[191] Murray 24
[192] Murray 38

Saturday night revelers would attend a Sunday service as well or at least encounter a preacher's sermon at a funeral. The dance performance of the dance hall reveler reflects the quality of the blues being played, the meaner, the more low down and dirty the music the more sensual the dance becomes. The blues can be an aphrodisiac, but the "merriment" is not associated with the "sensual abandonment of the "voodoo orgy" or the ecstatic trance of religious possession.[193] A distinctive aspect of the music is its "unique combination of spontaneity, improvisation and control. Sensual abandon is "over indulgence in drugs and alcohol or another sort of disintegration".[194] The blues dance is elegant and about coming back together. It's a cycle of sickness, confrontation, and resolution, or as Werner would call it, survival. Armstrong went on to make a secular rendition of the song "When the Saints Go Marching In". He was famous for his irreverent, iconoclastic stance as a jester whose caricature juxtaposed his musical genius. His "post cemetery jazz" presents a secularization of this sacred song marked by parody.[195]

In the film, it is in Chicago that we see the name ragtime haphazardly transform into jazz spurred on by a slurring drunk whom Duquanese can barely understand. He changes the band name to the Original New Orleans Jazz Band. Similarly, the music began to grown and change. In a scene where Meade Lux Lewis is playing a feverish "Honky Tonk Train Blues", Armstrong looks on inspired by the new melodies in this new city. He goes on to explain how the band members have chosen to move on to different cities like Kansas, Memphis and Harlem, spreading the music and expanding the

[193] Murray 50
[194] Murray 50
[195] Murray 30-6

style. Duquanese is offered an opportunity to corner the jazz music market in Chicago, when he refuses and reiterates once again, "This music belongs to everybody. Nobody has got a corner on this music."

Nevertheless he opens a string of venues while Armstrong tours with his new jazz band, going from Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, Spokane, Minneapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and finally Paris. Now jazz is worldwide. And as this happens all white bands begin to headline their own jazz concerts.

Werner says that jazz transforms noise into music and challenges us to hear the music in the noise. Jazz demands that the listener pay attention and remember the themes so well that she can catch the variations and get the jokes.[196] It never stays in the same place: "jazz loves to think about itself, play changes on ideas as well as sounds".[197] This quote reflects the solitary world of the jazz artist and even the separation between its spin-offs, because everything is separated, individualistic while being aware of the community around it. Werner argues that conceptually, not much separates jazz from the modernist avant-garde harboring a "fierce desire to make it new, to shatter the idols of the market place, to explore the deepest recesses of human experience"[198]. He says it is not just another "cut off the modernist bone"; the difference comes from the ways in which the ancestors are honored, and gospel and blues roots are remembered.

The film *New Orleans* underwent many changes in which storylines were added then taken away. Finally, the war began, and Welles was asked to make a film supporting

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[196] Werner 134
[197] Werner 134
[198] Werner 135

Pan American relations. Coincidentally, he dropped the film, *The Story of Jazz* in favor of a film called *The Story of Samba*, which assumes the same structure and goals, but would document the social origin of the music and its rise to popularity of South American music. Technique is only half the story in jazz. Finding your voice is the most important part of the process and it comes from confrontation without illusion or evasion and that's who you really are.[199] The malleability and generate powers of transformation in jazz becomes more evident as we begin to see the ways in which it interacts with and changes Brazilian music in the next chapter.

[199] Werner 136

Chapter Four: Candomblé, Samba, Bossa Nova, and Axé

The city of Salvador in the state of Bahia, Brazil was one of the main slave ports in the country beginning in the mid-sixteenth century. It was here that all the various African nations arrived and were grouped together. Among these different nations, or nações, in Salvador were the Congo-Angolan from the Central African region and West African ethnic groups. These two groups fused and became known as the Nagô.[200] The Fon and Ewe people, voduns, were called Gêge.[201] They also fused parts of their culture with the Yoruba and became known as the Gêge-Nagô. One's particular ancestral spirits identified each of the nações: *orixa* (Portuguese spelling) for the Nagô, *voduns* for the Gêge and *inkisses* for the Congo-Angola. These ancestors have all come to influence Candomblé. [202] Like most syncretic religions, many devotees of Candomblé are devout Catholics who also pay homage to their ancient ancestors.

Rachel Harding, in her book *A Refuge in Thunder* describes Candomblé as "a rich poetic complex of ritual action, cosmology, and meaning with deep and obvious roots in several religious traditions of West Central Africa".[203] Port cities like Rio de Janeiro and Salvador da Bahia usually contained a large amount of colonial or imperial headquarters, military and clerical equipment and personnel as well as a large variety of European nations, free and freed people of mixed race, people African and Indian descent and thousands of enslaved Africans of various nations or nações. These cities allowed for more physical and economic autonomy for enslaved Africans and they were able to secret

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[200] Some Afro-Brazilians associated with Nagô call themselves Quêto, Kétou or Kétu, which refer to the Yoruba speaking nation-states of Benin and Nigeria.
[201] In Afro-Brazilian culture the Gêge are also known as Jeje.
[202] Henry 13
[203] Harding xiii

themselves away whether in mud huts, streets, plazas or forested areas, and have private gatherings. It is in, what Harding calls, these "re-created" spaces where blacks were no longer slave or subaltern, that they were able to reimagine a new identity in the New World.[204] Candomblé helped reestablish some aspects of identity while creating new aspects. It also worked to reestablish kin relationships through ethnic alliance and shared devotion: "Candomblé provided a means of re-membering and (re) creating an identity of value and connectedness – to Spirit, to a pre-slavery past, to ancestors, to community".[205] Part of the power of Candomblé is *axé*.

Axé is understood as creative energy bestowed by ancestral guardians. This divine creativity creates continuity in the diaspora. Found in both sacred and secular realms, axé is generated and increased through artistic expressions of music and dance. The energy of axé also helps one accomplish goals. Axé is a Yoruba concept and links Brazil with West Africa. In the sacred realm axé is generated in ceremonies, where participants communicate with ancestral spirits. Although the creative energy of axé is embodied in several types of expression, such as art, wisdom, lineage etc., it is nurtured in Candomblé, and these musical rhythms are found in popular music as well. This is part of the significance of blackness, looking at how African religious music and dance traditions are reinvented and re-interpreted in various socio-political frameworks in Brazil.

The heritage of African Diasporic religions includes Brazilian Candomblé, Haitian and New Orleans Vodou, Cuban Santería and Trinidadian Sàngó. All of these religions involve the worship of an ancestral pantheon. This ancestor worship is a manifestation of an African diaspora spiritual and historical memory, which is expressed through artistic

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[204] Harding xv
[205] Harding xvi

creative symbols, dances, music, tales, and talismans that "channel an imagined source of power and creative energy from West African *àsé*[206] . . . In these religions practitioners communicate with ancestral spirits through extensive singing done in call-and-response patterns, polyrhythmic drumming, and ring dancing".[207]

In the *ringshout*, the dancers form a circle in the center of the floor, one in back of another. Then they begin to shuffle in a counterclockwise direction around and around, arms out and shoulders hunched. A fantastic rhythm is built up by the rest of the group standing back to the walls that clap their hands and stomp on the floor. The shouting preacher, whose varying cry is answered by the response of the congregation, leads Wave after wave of the song. Suddenly religious hysteria starts to spread among the congregants.

This is actually a West African circle dance. It survived more or less by accident. The protestant religion forbids dancing and defined as crossing the feet, and in this religious ceremony of West Africa the dancer never crosses her feet. Clapping and stomping can easily improvise further percussive sounds. The only difference is the preacher shouting and moaning and groaning in English words that are not only religious but also deeply satirical.[208] The perceived chaos continues as a congregation member becomes possessed, the people around her take care of her making sure that she doesn't hurt herself. This kind of possession also happens in African and the West Indies and Haiti. The possession is the whole point of the occasion. But there is a correct way to do it, for this is a sacred ritual that seems to offer emotional release. This is similar to the

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[206] The West African spelling of axé.
[207] Henry 17
[208] Stearns 13

way Albert Murray sees the effects of blues and jazz music: "The ringshout is so important because it means that an element of West African music are preserved, more or less in tact in the United States . . ." rhythms, and blue tonality, through the falsetto break and the call and response pattern, to the songs of allusion and even the motions of African dance".[209] The ringshout is a reservoir of West African qualities that are continually giving new life to Jazz.

Rich artistic expression emerged from bittersweet combination of religious, cultural and musical ideas. "Reinvention has been a major sociocultural process of artistic innovation and ingenuity in black experience in Brazil and other parts of the African diaspora".[210] Music and dance were fundamental in helping the Africans form new sacred and secular landscapes in the New World: landscapes that linked them with their home societies and ancestors.[211] Muniz Sodré explains that jazz and samba work in a similar way urging movement: "De fato tanto no jazz quanto no samba atua de modo especial a síncopa incitando o ouvinte a preencher o tempo vazio com a marcação corporal -- palmas, meneios, balanços, dança".[212]

> *In fact both jazz and samba have the syncopation that urges the body to fill the empty spaces with clapping hands, swaying and dancing.*

This unstoppable movement or the generation of *axé* foments a transformation of identity in colonial and post-colonial contexts. In the history of Afro-Brazilians the meetings and the drumming were the objects of frequent persecution by police and the disdain of white authorities. But the resistance was skilled and solidly implanted in strategic places with

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[209] Murray 13
[210] Henry 18
[211] Henry 18
[212] Sodré 11

little vulnerability.[213] Since space was so limited people of African descent were forced to hold all manner of meetings in one space. In these places they would have parties or family meetings or religious meetings where dances and religious themes would intersect creating a newly institutionalized sociability in the group and interethnic and interracial contact as white people were also admitted into some of these home.

One of these places was the house of the *mulata* Hilária Batista de Almeida, also known as "Aunt" or Tia Ciata who was married to a black doctor named João Batista da Silva who would become the chief of staff for the police chief in Wenceslau Brás. The home of Tia Ciata, babalão-mirim[214] was respected and symbolized all of the strategies of musical resistance used to raise the curtain of marginalization against blacks after abolition. The dances done in the front of the house were the better-known and more respectable dances; in back, the older or more elite blacks that were nimble on their feet and able to dance to the complex drum rhythms danced samba. The rhythms and dances of these older Afro-Brazilians were religious in nature, an amalgamation of all the blended ethnicities, whose cultural performance was hidden from view.[215] In fact, it was in Tia Ciata's house that Donga, João da Baiana, Pixinguinha, Sinhô, Caninha, Heitor dos Prazeres and others recorded the first samba, "Pelo Telefone". This not only became part of the African diaspora history in the state of Bahia, but also in Rio as many former slaves migrated to Rio after abolition when the capital changed from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro.

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[213] Sodré 14

[214] A babalow is a title for a Yoruba Priest or father who is a practitioner of Ifá – a system of divination and the verses of the literary corpus Odú Ifá. Here the phrase babalão-mirim literally translates to little babalow.

[215] Sodré 15

Religious and artistic expression informs black identity in Brazil. Therefore the black experience in Brazil and other African diasporic countries and locations, the black experience has informed many cultural and artistic traditions. And as the experience changes so does the tradition. Allan Hanson explains that tradition is more an act of invention constructed for contemporary purposes than a stable heritage being passed down.[216] Traditions like samba are always a matter of spontaneous invention and reinvention or improvisation through the generation of axé thusly.

In his book *The Mystery of Samba* Hermano Vianna tell us that the genesis of Samba is still very mysterious. For him, this mystery does not revolve around the oft debated topics like the etymology of the word samba, the birthplace of the music, the names of the first sambistas or a list of definitive samba players who composed "Pelo Telephone", which was held out as the first samba. His questions are concerned with samba being branding as part of the national identity of Brazil or *brasilidade* (Brazilian-ness). Samba went from being a cultural idea that was heavily repressed, limited to the popular classes of Brazil and "sequestered in the favelas of Rio" to a commercial success in radio and at carnival, establishing relationships with "all sectors of Brazilian society, constituting a new image" of the country for both national and international consumption.[217] It's quite a leap from outcast to national symbol.

For Vianna, the mystery is situated within the context of the encounter between Gilberto Freyre and Pixinguinha and their respective friends. Freyre, a young Brazilian anthropologist from Pernambuco, had just returned to Rio after concluding his university studies in the United States and touring several European states when he met the

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[216] Hanson1989
[217] Vianna 10

sambistas (samba players). He and his friends simply decided to go listen to some guitar music. In Freyre's company were intellectuals and "practitioners of fine arts" from good white families: historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Rio district attorney and well-known journalist Pedro Dantas Prudente de Moraes Neto, and classical composers Heitor Villa Lobos and Luciano Gallet. It was during this evening of guitar music, they had an encounter with the black and mixed-race sambistas Patrício, Donga and Pixinguinha. Donga and Pixinguinha would go on to become immortalized in the pantheon of Brazilian popular music. Their music would come to symbolize what was most Brazilian in the 1930's. At this time Freyre was just beginning his work on *Casa Grandes e Senzalas* (The Masters and the Slaves, 1933), which would become "fundamental to the definition of modern Brazilian identity". [218]

In order to grasp the gravity of this encounter, we must understand the history of race relations and racial identity in Brazil. Just before abolition, in 1870, racial ideals were related to predominant social ideology. Brazilian thinkers worried that their history of miscegenation, which resulted in a racially mixed population had doomed them a perpetual third world status. How would Brazil position itself for national development if they could manage an "ethnic redemption"?[219] Although slavery would not end until 1888, there were many free Afro-Brazilians, mostly mulattoes, at that time. Neither race nor slavery was considered as a regional problem and after abolition no new problems among Afro-Brazilians occurred. They had already been granted access to the highest reaches of society still in accordance with their marginalized status. In the 1872 census,

[218] Vianna 1999 p.2
[219] Skidmore 7

only 38 percent of the population identified as white, twenty percent said black and the rest were mulattoes or *pardo*.[220]

Between 1870-1888 the liberal ideology conquered the younger generation. The culmination of its influence was abolition in 1888 and the establishment of the republic in 1889. The liberal writings did not discuss race per se but slavery and included the following ideas: 1.) No one really believed in biological inferiority so abolitionist rarely refuted racist ideas. Slavery was defended because of economic gain and people argued that Afro-Brazilian slaves were treated more humanely than workers in Europe. Rarely were Afro-Brazilians seen as being in perpetuity 2.) Abolitionist did worry about the illiteracy rate of Afro-Brazilian slaves, but they did not consider social consequences of abolition. Most considered European immigrants as the solution to the post-abolition labor problem. There was an urge to end slavery so as to not turn-off European immigrants. 3.) Abolitionist believed miscegenation would whiten the race, and thereby upgrade the Brazilian population.

So while the Brazilian abolitionist and most of the elite did not believe in biological inferiority they did believe in racial influence: the whiter the better. Occasionally, race was seen as cultural and not physiological. There are instances when famous dark-skinned black Brazilians have become white by reaching a particular social status of fame or becoming very rich.[221] Intermarriage was the easiest way to do this. So, miscegenation was also seen as culturally regenerative. Because of this whitening boost it

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[220] Skidmore 8

[221] Two popular examples of this are the famous soccer player, Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as "Pelé*"* and the musician Seu Jorge.

was assumed that black and mulatto reproduction was low, and the black and mulatto element was slated to disappear.[222]

Race thought changes drastically after 1888 when people realize that whitening was not working out the way they imagined. Intellectual influences from abroad began to affect Brazilians. European thinkers began talking about biological difference in the races and assigning superior and inferior markers. But because there were not universities in Brazil during this time, the racial theories of Europe did not spread as quickly here as it did in other Latin American countries. Social-Darwinist doctrines were dominant in England and the U.S. Although Brazil did not focus on inferiority during slavery, after abolition they had to focus on race and try to keep up with European ideals. So they started performing race experiments, mostly anthropologic but some laboratorial.

Nina Rodrigues attempted to catalogue African social customs as slaves transmitted them to Brazil. He also studied the social behavior of blacks and mixed bloods. Euclides da Cunha saw the caboclo (white/European and Indian/ indigenous) as the backbone of a new unique race in Brazil especially outfitted to deal with the particular conditions of the interior of the Brazilian Northeast. But the black and mulatto were seen as useless degenerates.[223] Baron Rio Branco, Brazil's foreign minister from 1902 to 1912, worked in Europe and was well informed of the racist ideologies there and instituted a "whites only" policy in recruiting diplomats and special envoys for missions abroad.[224] During these years Brazilian intellectuals were also feeling inferior to European and U.S. scholars. Thomas Skidmore argues that Brazilians were not

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[222] Skidmore 9
[223] Skidmore 11
[224] Skidmore 12

intellectually equipped to argue against these theories and that their insecurities permitted this kind of thinking to flourish. So the focus turned to immigrants who were cheaper labor than blacks and white.

However, there was an innate contradiction between Brazil's new racist ideologies that said whites were superior to blacks. Because Brazil just took on these racist ideas without having any evidence or meaningful discourse, some antiracist writers came to the fore, pointing the way out of the determinist trap of racist thinking. A few of these writers were Alberto Torres, Mauel Bomfim, Alvaro Bomilcar and Gilberto Amado. They explained history though environment and not race. Torres cited Franz Boas, who would later become Gilberto Freyre and Zora Neal Hurston's teacher and mentor, proving that biological theories of race were being refuted. Torres and Bomfim looked at history and social habits that were historically ingrained to explain the "relative backwardness of Brazil".[225] They posited that there were no inferior or superior races or advanced and retarded races, but everyone could get ahead if they chose: there was no inherent reason why they could not "catch up". These ideas were largely unpopular, obscure, ignored or read skeptically before WW1. But they had an effect; they offered an escape from "the straitjacket of racism".[226]

The younger generation born with the Republic and abolition were more skeptical of racist theories. Gradual discrediting of European and U.S. scientist also began around this time. Franz Boas and Jean Finot were also providing evidentiary support for refutations of the racist theories, and Brazil saw the social effects of systematic discrimination against blacks in the U.S. The personal experiences of a land full of

[225] Skidmore 17
[226] Skidmore 17

miscegenation made it impossible for Brazilians to relate to or accept "such dehumanizing and absolutistic system, especially when it came to the mulatto".[227]

Between the 1920's and 1930's the idea of whiteness was consolidated and more elites and intellectuals accepted this. But others also wrote celebrating Brazil's African heritage. For instance Gilberto Freyre had an optimistic interpretation of national culture and miscegenation. At the same time, German Nazism was embraced as a tool to indict Jews and blacks. F. J. Olivera Vianna, a lawyer historian was one of the most widely read interpreters of Brazilian reality between the wars. He had an open admiration for the "masters of racist European thought".[228] Although he used the language, he said that the ideas of inferiority and superiority are not absolute. There was a compromise Brazilians made in order to reconcile their multi-racial reality. So Vianna created levels of inferiority; this was the "central concept in his interpretation of Brazil's racial evolution".[229] He used census records from 1872-1890, which showed decreasing numbers of people identifying as Afro-Baiano, Mestiço, Cabloco and Indigenous. And in the year when this study was published, 1920, there was no section for race demographics on the census. This assured him that Joaquim Nabuco's vision of whitening through immigration was successful. Olivera Viana was seen as a transitional figure between the scientific racism prevalent before 1914 and the environmentalist-social philosophy popular after the 1930's.[230]

There was an amazing shift in attention toward Afro-Brazilian heritage in the 1930's. Arthur Ramos, a physician from Bahia, published series of books on Afro-

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[227] Skidmore 18
[228] Skidmore 19
[229] Skidmore 18
[230] Skidmore 20

Brazilian culture that drew upon materials collected by Nina Rodriguez.[231] Gilberto Freyre, a principal organizer of the first Afro-Brazilian Congress (1934) in Recife, published *Casa Grande e Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves) in 1933; it was a social history of the slave plantations of the Northeast in 16th and 17th centuries with the sugar economy as the focus of a multi-racial society. The book focused on the intimate personal relations between the planter families and the slaves. Freyre insisted that Brazil's racial and cultural potpourri was an immense asset.[232] *Senzalas*, an "intimate social history of a patriarchal society", was the first scholarly examination of Brazil national character with unabashed optimism.[233] The evil consequences of miscegenation did not stem from race mixing so much as it was a result of the unhealthy relationship of the master and slave under which it occurred. His work also focused attention on the value of the African as a representative of a high civilization in his own right. The African qualities that Freyre praised were the African's gift of food and music.[234] He considered the races (African and European) as equally valuable in their own way.

Now with this historical sketch, we can see for Vianna, the nationalization of samba is the work of Brazilian elites who wished to unify the disparate communities and backgrounds in the country, solidifying them under one national identity. Vianna is very invested in the relationship between intellectuals and popular culture. Scholars like Gilberto Freyre, Antônio Cândid and Mario Andrade perceive music "more than any other sorts of artistic expression, as having the potential to break down barriers of race

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[231] Skidmore 21
[232] Skidmore 21
[233] Skidmore 22
[234] Needell 57

and class and serve as a unifying element, a channel of communication, among diverse groups in Brazilian society". [235]

Using the music of the favelas and favelados (those who live in the favela) masked the racial domination and injustice that was happening in Brazil. The internalizations of racial hierarchies in Brazil ensured white superiority. What is so interesting about this art form and its rise is that samba is an example of upward influence in the culture. This music "practically confined to the favelas and poor peripheral neighborhoods won over the whole country".[236]

The cultural production of music corresponds to Brazilian institutions and is congruous to a socio-cultural context, or as Jonathan Grasse explains, "theorized textual meanings engage distinct yet overlapping cultural authorities emerging from socio-historical necessity".[237] These necessities are the modernist vision of the state, intellectuals and the elite, mass media, musical innovators and the *favela*. The musical innovations of Brazil are allegorical texts and represent an interpretation of social history and Brazilian experience often conflating or conflicting. The *favela* is held as the cultural authority for samba, so it is interesting to see how bossa nova enters the samba-rooted world of Rio de Janeiro favelas and ultimately carnival! Grosse says, "symbolic references of these styles engage with issues of racial and national identity, *brasilidade* . . . notions of modernity and state authoritarianism".[238]

This is so clearly expressed in the hybrid musical form of bossa nova as there are several distinct forms of the genre that also connect to ideas of national and racial

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[235] Vianna 13-4
[236] Vianna 11
[237] Grasse 291
[238] Grasse 292

identity. Rio's jazz scene in the 1950's and 60's gives us strong clues about the influence of blues music on popular music in Brazil. Although bossa nova is accused of whitening samba, bossa nova players know that by incorporating blues they were connecting African American music to the Brazilian experience or idea or modernism. Bossa nova offered experimentation and a chance to connect to the roots of a parallel music tradition.

The bossa nova triumvirate Antonio Jobim, Vinicius de Moraes and João Gilberto played a key role in shaping bossa nova. Jonathan Grasse explains, "this Brazilian marriage of jazz chromaticism and samba rhythm variations marked a significant watershed in the twentieth century popular music".[239] Part of this watershed is the production of such bossa nova classics as Jobim and Moraes' 'Garota de Ipanema' ("The Girl From Ipanema, 1960). But there is a less well-known group of musicians and music critics who influenced the music as well. These critics wrote carefully and passionately about various styles of music including jazz, blues, choro, and samba in the magazine *Revista da Música Popular*. They put to rest any theories of North American popular music imperialism and cultivated enthusiasm for blues and swing and bebop as both music and a larger cultural phenomenon. They were interested in blending the influences.

Both the U.S. and Brazil had already incorporated European and African music with syncopated hand drums with a ring of clapping and singing. Sacred music incorporated Congo and Yoruba influences while secular music included subtle humor and double meaning. This became blues in the U.S. and samba in Brazil.[240] Samba did not have a heavy blues influence before the 1950's. Atlantic trading patterns, mass print of sheet

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[239] Grasse 294

[240] McCann, Bryan. "Blues and Samba: Another Side of Bossa Nova History". *Luso-Brazilian Review* 44.2 (2007): 21-49.

music, the emergence of recorded music in radio, the popularity of Hollywood and the Good Neighbor Policy[241] encouraged a cultural exchange between the two countries.

One of the most identifiable blues' characteristics is the 12 bar AAB form, which is rarely used in hybrid Brazil jazz formulas in the 20's and 40's. Bossa nova changed this, making it a standard element in its repertoire. An ascending major blues scale and the insertion of blue notes, notes 1 and ½ step down from their relative position in a major scale, are often achieved by bending the reed or string or vocal melisma allowing the player to shift microtonally between notes. Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Art Blakey and Bessie Smith are a few artists known to use this affect in their music.

The blue note or flattened fifth in this scale is often called the "blue note". It sounds the most dissonant in relation to the rest of the notes on the major scale. A consistent emphasis on it challenges the rules of western classical composition because of its dissonant qualities. Europeans would refer to it as "devil's music". The use of the tritone or blue note is what made blues so blatantly different from European music. Jazz emerged from blues and drew from its structure, the blues scale and the flattened fifth in particular. The blues scale provided the basis for much of the individual improvisation, which was an increasingly important element of the genre. Jazz musicians would improvise over compositions that did not use the 12 bar blues structure, and they would still "play riffs" from a blues scale increasing harmonic complexity an exploratory aspect in jazz.[242] The Blues scale and the pentatonic scale provide the basis for jazz improvising through the 1960's. The blue note or flattened fifth in Brazil was used particularly in

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[241] A foreign policy of U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt's administration that encourage reciprocal exchange with Latin American countries and create economic opportunities through mutual trade agreements and assert U.S. influence.

[242] McCann 24

biaão – a form similar to blues but not structured on the blues scale – capoeira ladrinhas or other folkloric genres characterized by melisma bent notes and used microtonal shading. Bossa nova really brought the blue note and the blues scale to the fore, using it often as a basis for improvisation, creating harmonic structures that lent themselves to use of the blues scale. And they look to New Orleans jazz and its basis in blues to do this.[243]

In the neighborhood of Copacabana there was bossa nova of a different variety in the streets near Praça do Lido. People gathered to hear local musicians play in the grey zone between jazz and samba. This music was different from the bossa nova of Gilberto, who known for producing renditions of Moraes and Jobim's music, such as "Chega de Saudade", "Só Dança Samba" and "Desafinado". It was hot brash and up-tempo featuring instrumental improvisation. Musicians in Copa new they were experiencing something different than the "faddish bossa nova" of de Moraes, Jobim and Gilberto.[244] They even used different terminology. They called it samba jazz. This difference in musical style and name created a separation between the *cool* and *hot* bossa nova. McCann argues that there was no true separation as each group grew and learned from the other's style. In fact, there became a range of approaches subsumed under the title bossa nova. It has come to be a term that represents everyone who indulged in and improvised with the music. Musicologist André Luis Scarabelot says bossa nova's foundations not only include Jobim and Gilberto, but also the Copa jazz players.

One of the clearest examples of U.S. jazz on Brazilian bossa nova is Booker Pittman. Pittman, the grandson of Booker T. Washington, played both saxophone and clarinet and helped teach Brazilian musicians how to play blues along with other

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[243] McCann 25
[244] McCann 26

musicians who had prior extensive experience in the subtleties and possibilities of the genre.[245] Pittman became a working jazz musician in Brazil playing clarinet, alto and soprano sax. Born in 1909, Pittman had become an accomplished clarinet and saxophone player while living in the U.S. playing with greats like Louis Armstrong and Count Basie. He even traveled to Europe to play. In 1933 he went to France and sat in with the Sul-Americano jazz band led by Romeu Silva. Pittman returned to Rio de Janeiro with Silva two years later, playing at Rio's Cassino Atlântico.[246] He made a few recordings in Argentina but mostly stayed in Brazil. He suffered from tuberculosis as a result from heavy drinking, cocaine and marijuana use. Staying away from the limelight, he was mistakenly reported dead twice in local Brazilian newspapers. In 1955 he appeared in Paraná playing Dixieland blues and boogie-woogie in illegal gambling clubs in Lodrina and surrounding towns. He found his way back to Rio in late 1956. *Revista da Música* called it "the return of an icon". [247] In his rendition of *Samba da Benção* debuted at *O Encontro* in August 1962, de Moraes also confers blessings upon Booker Pittman for his contribution to the music.

Nevertheless this was not the state sanctioned bossa nova that would go on to receive international acclaim in film and through collaborations. There are two socio-political attempts of homogenizing black culture that take place in Brazil: the first is the conservative modernism associated with the sociological theories of Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande e Senzalas* and correlation to the discourse on *brasilidade*. The second is the *Estado Novo* (New State) regime instituted by President Getúlio Vargas (1937- 1945)

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[245] McCann 29
[246] Ross 1977.
[247] McCann 30

and its influence on popular music's crisis of authenticity, which carried on into the 1950's. The elite sector in Brazil pushed towards a homogenization of mass media and public expression while establishing the context for social ideology and cultural atmosphere. The *Departamento de Impresna* (DIP or Ministry of Propaganda) helped to forge images of a centralized cultural homogeneity and historical identity. DIP censored broadcasts, samba lyrics, and publishing. Rio's carnival became institutionalized with surveillance of *escolar de samba* activities and lyrical content of carnival songs was screened. Composers were forced to add "work ethic themes, denunciation of the *malandro*[248], and the 'exaltation' of Brazil's citizenry, natural beauty, power and charm – *samba exaltação*.[249]

Three trends coincide in the 1930's: the Vargas regime, the arrival of samba and carnival in Rio as a national culture and the widespread use of radio as a way to spread and control culture. The result of a state-brokered culture was stifling and the result was a moribund modernism that struggled with ideas of primitivism, which were being categorized by elite artists and intellectuals as indigenous Afro-Brazilian cultural expression. Ironically enough, it was during the Vargas dictatorship that Orson Welles came to document Brazilian culture for his OIAA-sponsored (Office of Inter-American Affairs) film pilgrimage to Rio de Janeiro. In his film *It's All True*, Welles eventually depicted carnival as "black", which was not tolerated by the Vargas nationalist propaganda machine that had carefully constructed an identity of *mestiçagem*[250]. The staleness of the de Moraes and Jobim brand of bossa nova and a state sanctioned carnival

[248] A drunk, or vagabond usually nicely dressed in order to deceive; a popular image for sambistas
[249] Grasse 295
[250] Mixed race national identity

led to a crisis in authenticity. The predictability of media and music left many looking for spontaneity.[251]

Moraes, an experienced and respected film critic, was asked to participate in Alberto Cavalcânti's *Commissão Nacional do Cinema* (National Film Commission) convened by President Vargas. Its purpose was to create a national film institute and further develop and stabilize the nation's film industry.[252] The subsequent President Juscelino Kubitscheck (1956-1961) also appointed Moraes to his *Comissão Federal de Cinema* (Federal Cinema Commission) in 1956. It was Moraes, who was clearly an elite member of Brazilian society who attracted French production interests, some of whom were former Parisian colleagues and associates. It is interesting because one can see that bossa nova as a textual window into ideas of Brazilian society as *favela* life is portrayed in films like French director Marcel Camus' *Orfeu Negro* (1959), and Brazilian director Carlos Diegues' *Orfeu* (1999). Both are closely based on the 1953 play *Orfeu da Conceição*, and all three productions are adaptations of the classical Greek Myth or Orpheus and Eurydice. Their doomed love is allegorical, symbolizing the human condition and the soundtracks to these films engage ideas of the Brazilian condition being shown through imagery.

Camus' *Orfeu Negro* won the 1959 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film and the *Palm d'Or* at the same years' Cannes Film Festival. It not only solidified the world's love of Rio de Janeiro and carnival, but also launched bossa nova internationally, exposing it to millions.[253] It is very likely that Camus and Moraes had a vested interest in

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[251] Dunn, C. *Brutality Garden*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001.
[252] Johnson 66
[253] Grasse 293

a favorable portrayal of *favelas,* as Kubitsheck provided tremendous support for the film. As a result, although the film had a French director, it was very much a Brazilian project. The film's success also bolstered the careers of Mores and Antonio Carlos 'Tom' Jobim. This film was the vehicle for the Brazilian cultural internationally. There are others who do not hold the film, which included an all black cast over a beautifully filmed city, in such high esteem. Eventually, Moraes and Diegues along with cultural icon, singer, composer and Diegues' musical director for *Orfeu*, Caetano Veloso openly expressed their dislike of Camus' film. That is to say that Camus' film received little if any of its international acclaim in Brazil.

João Gilberto was seen as the true innovator of bossa nova with his 1931 release of 'Chega de Saudade' (often translated as 'No More Blues'). Grasse describes this revolutionary Brazilian music as "a sophisticated internationally consumed urban popular music boasting extensive cross-stylistic, cross-cultural sources". [254] Bossa nova represents an innovative fusion between Brazilian traditions such as *samba-canção* (samba song), *modinha* (little song), and *batida* (a guitar rhythm that sounds like a beat or strike).[255] As bossa nova was first called *samba-jazz*, a clear North American musical influence is also prominent in bossa nova. There are three major concerns along the spectrum of interpretations for bossa nova: the role of the genre in popular music traditions, its similarity and dissimilarity to samba, and it's place in subsequent musical

[254] Grasse 294
[255] *Samba canção* is a commercial urban genre from the Golden era of 1930-1950. *Modihna* is a varied Luso-Brazilian popular song tradition, and the stammering guitar sound of *batida*, is also called *violão gago*.

movement like *Topicália*[256]; its place in literature and poetry, French existentialism and its ability to work as a protest song; the genre's relationship to "economic development and modernist cultural expression and ties to class structures altered by middle-class growth" and the upscale optimism of the elite in the 1950's.[257] Charles Perrone succinctly sums up these concerns: "The capacity for diversification within the bossa nova framework accounts for its continued significance in the sixties and seventies". [258]

Bossa nova's role in Camus' *Orfeu Negro* was seen being anachronistic, in that was used to represent *o povo*[259], or the common people of the favela. It morphed the samba foundations and attempted to mingle them with a legalizing modernist force – bossa nova- in the favelas. Therefore the style began to represent the capitalization of commercial potential. The music of bossa nova as the music of *o povo created a polemic*. Although bossa nova was similar to samba in rhythm and meter, its new connection to the favela suggests more of cultural authority of the marginalized people of the favela as well as samba and carnival. The modernism of bossa nova's international engagement is seen through its purposeful inclusion of jazz, a genre in which bossa nova has been canonized. Its success in the U.S. began with Stan Getz's LP *Jazz Samba*. As Vianna reminds us, "transculturation occurs not only internationally but also among culturally diverse groups

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[256] A cultural movement of the late 1960's headed by musician Caetano Veloso and other singer/ composers like Gilberto Gil, Tom Z´e, and Gal Costa. Similar to the counterculture or hippie movement in America, Tropicalist wanted to shake up ideas of brasilidade by mixing oppositional ideas - foreign and domestic, poor and elite, modern and archaic - in their music.
[257] Grasse 298
[258] Perrone xxvi
[259] Literally translated as the people, but it may refer more specifically to favelados and Afro-Brazilians.

in the same society".[260] This kind of intra-societal transculturation that crossed racial, socioeconomic, regional, and religious boundaries is central to the development of popular music in Brazil. Grasse argues that the use of bossa nova in *Orfeu Negro* adds " in its luxurious quietude of modernity, a commercial wholesomeness" and "marketability" to the film with its diverse fusion of styles that give it a "white cosmopolitanism".[261] The anachronistic musical style never made its way fully into the *favela* neither in performance style no radio, television or live performance.

In terms of not drawing any special attention to racial identity in Brazil, many scholars seem to agree that it is not only unnecessary, but impossible favoring a national identity instead. Livio Sansone says that while he thinks Brazil's true beauty lies in its people (black and brown specifically) he does not think that political mobilization around race and ethnicity will bring about an intrinsic liberation. The myth of racial democracy is now called *morenidade* (a celebration of the light brown mestizo as a synthesis of the Brazilian race). He argues that the construction of the myth cannot be treated as if it were a masquerade imposed from above to conceal racism or a kind of false (ethnic) consciousness- as it has, too often, been dealt with by social scientist. This myth coexists in lower class communities alongside efforts to minimize racial difference in daily life activity and intra-racial intimacy. But these strategies are problematic because they are seen as attempts to manipulate black appearance in daily life (i.e. hair straightening).[262]

When choosing to re-write modern Brazilian history as an ethnic history, researchers encounter problems. Here hybridity is celebrated in both high and lowbrow

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[260] Vianna 36
[261] Grasse 301
[262] Sansone 2

culture so it is difficult to try and parcel out race and ethnicity like we do here in America. Also people are not supposed to notice racial difference in Brazil. And there is a failure to acknowledge that race is related to social mobility and to modernity.[263] Charles Taylor argues: that there is a psychological desire for one to express his ethic/racial diversity in an individual and collective process of identity recognition. But his argument has been "brilliantly" critiqued by Paul Gilroy and Richard Handler who say, "identity is not a cross-cultural concept", that ethnic border are not immutable throughout time and space.[264] If ethnic identity is not understood as essential then it must be conceived of as a process affected by history and contemporary circumstance: "Ethnicity is, therefore, a never-ending story".[265] Alejandro Frigerio says that we are dealing with a dynamic rather then an entity, and that maybe it should be called "ethnicization".

Livio wants to compare the formation of a black Brazilian identity along with others in the black Atlantic. He argues that Brazilians did not a have a non-polar color continuum and exercised a certain restraint in taking on overt forms of polarizing ethnicity.

A renewed international interest in race and ethnicity in Brazil takes into account three intervening factors: "the role of mass media and globalization; changing political agenda in the academy; and the lack of a mature international comparative perspective on race relations and ethnicity in Brazil".[266] Globalization disseminates symbols of identity, and while this can lead to marked heterogeneity it can also lead to homogeneity in the

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[263] Sansone 3
[264] Sansone 3
[265] Sansone 3
[266] Sansone 4

cultural domain. Sansone cites Jan Nederveen Pieterse's "global memory"[267]: this symbol bank provides individuals around the world the opportunity to identify with youth sub cultures, musical styles, and other spectacular forms of nationalism as long as they can purchase the objects and copy the style that symbolize the given group".[268]

Sansone argues, that being of African descent, poor and even discriminated against are not enough to claim some sort of black identity. This is obvious in the Afro-Latino world where black identity has tended to be more episodic than a steady political and electoral factor"[269]. He seeks to find the relative specificity of Black cultures in relation to other forms of ethnic cultural production and identification:

> Black culture can be defined as the specific subculture of the people of African origin within a social system that stresses color, as an important criterion for differentiating or segregating people. The existence of a black culture supposes the transmission of specific cultural patterns or principles from one generation to the next, within certain social groups, which might include a variety of phenotypic types of people of (mixed) African descent.[270]

Nevertheless, Black Diasporic communities in the New World, Caribbean and Europe produce cultures and identities that relate to a local system of race relations and historical international similarities deriving from a common experience with enslavement, deportation and plantation society. Africa has been used as a symbol bank from which

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[267] Pieterse 74
[268] Sansone 5
[269] Sansone 10
[270] Sansone 10-11

cultural objects and traits are drawn in a creative way. One way is through the generation of axé by invoking the ancestors who span the hemispheres of the New World.

In the introduction of *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* Stuart Hall explains the link between representation and culture by saying that language is the medium through which cultural meaning is communicated. It acts as a "representational system" where signs and symbols represent concepts and ideas. These conveyed cultural meanings do not only exist in one's mind, but they "organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects".[271] Vehicles of communication not only include spoken languages, but also music and performance. Through these communicative forms cultural meaning is "produced – constructed- rather than simply 'found'".[272]

The carnival afro-bloco, Olodum in particular and Afro-Brazil as a whole is constructed as representations of an African heritage and a new Pan-African center through popular culture and music. Various cultural meanings can be found in the music and performance of the group Olodum. Olodum is an internationally known Afro-Brazilian *bloco* or cultural group based in Salvador, Bahia that participates in carnival and various community based initiatives. Their performance and programs highlight black pride, cultural activism, and African heritage, and uses these tools in the fight against racial discrimination. Their musical band, often a full band of percussionist and dancers, their theater group, and their inner-city school are employed as means of conveying a modern collaborative Pan-African identity and agenda or *reafricanization*.

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[271] Hall 3
[272] Hall 5

Osmundo Pinho interprets the term reafricanization as "a new inflection given to the social, political and cultural afrodescendant agency in Salvador" and is marked by symbols, which are linked to an African identity.[273] This new inflection is especially noted in the performance of *afro-blocos* during Carnival where black bodies "overstep the boundaries" of certain public spaces by "subverting the meaning normally attributed to it by the stereotyping".[274] Thus, it creates a public space where blacks may represent themselves.

The Carnival space is its own particular space. Whether it is a street, school, alley or club it is a space that represents the dichotomy of home and the street. Even when a space is well defined it is transformed for Carnival, it comes to represent something else entirely. One example it the business district of Rio which becomes a promenade where people walk about in their Carnival costumes. During this time this business district becomes the *center*. Where people would normally leave the district and head to the beaches of Leblon, Ipanema or Copacabana and even Icaraí and Niterói, people head toward the center Carnival. Even the bus ride that usually considered a "hellish nightmare" transporting underpaid workers to strict deadline becomes festive and merry as people on the bus dance, sing and play drums. The bus is encompassed by Carnival! The reversed movement and displacement becomes part of the festivity as well. It becomes a moment of high creativity, as the conscious displacement and movement marks a ritualized inversion.[275] The Carnival space is manifold where "All can intermingle and change places, creating the possibility for a relativization of social

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[273] Pinho, 2005
[274] Pinho 3
[275] DaMatta 82

positions that . . . is typical of truly popular spectacles, in which the populace both depicts and plays itself".[276] The conversion continues, as men (homosexual or not) dress as women and the glorification of Carnival is what happens below the waist as opposed to "repressive bourgeoisie primacy of the soul".[277] DeMatta explains that when one is asked who owns Carnival, the response is usually, "*Cada qual brinca como pode. O carnival é de todos"* meaning everyone plays Carnival as they can, Carnival belongs to everyone.[278]

Olodum has yearly carnival themes that focus on black power and social movements in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora. The importance of black representation in a predominantly black state may seem inconsequential, but a link to an African heritage was heavily rejected and even outlawed in Bahia. Kim Butler's historical accounts tell us that although there was no legal form of segregation in Brazil in the early part of the twentieth century, Afro-Brazilians "were made to feel unwelcome, and generally did not frequent public parks"; simply putting their bodies in public spaces was read as an act of resistance.[279] As a result, in Salvador the primary forms of resistance were cultural as opposed to political.

This happened for two reasons: First, the predominantly black state of Bahia was divided between ethnicities or *nacões* and not race. There were African born blacks, Brazilian born blacks, black Angola Candomblé practitioners and middle class Brazilian mulattoes to name a few. As Brazil continued to import slaves until 1890 there was still a

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[276] DaMatta 85
[277] DaMatta 86
[278] DaMatta 87
[279] Butler 115

considerable amount African born blacks living in Bahia during the first quarter of the 20th century. Individual African nations were able to bond together and maintain their specific cultural practices. Second: "discrimination against Afro-Brazilians was directed at cultural expressions of the *nacões* and not uniformly against all 'black' people".[280] An example of this is the Africans street vendors who wanted to sell their food, jewelry and clothing. Discriminatory fines and laws regarding public solicitation often obstructed the selling of African wares. The multitudes of street vendors were accused of giving Salvador the appearance of an African market.

African heritage served as a point of collective identity for a portion of the Afro-Brazilian community. It was the descendants of these African-born Brazilians that started the first cultural groups or *blocos*. These *afro-blocos* became so popular at the beginning of the 20th century that they were contracted out for performances by neighborhoods or social organizations through press advertisements.[281] Butler explains that this fully expressed African presence on the public streets during Carnival was considered the greatest transgression. In these performances, the *afro-blocos* "crossed a tacit boundary, unleashing a floodgate of anger at what was perceived as the Africanization of Bahian culture".[282] As a result *Batuque*[283], especially in Candomblé ceremonies, was outlawed. The enactment of this law "excluded an entire class of people whose culture was cast as an individual choice of criminal nature".[284] Those laws were overturned in during the 1930's revolution in the early stages of the Vargas era, which sought to imbue Salvador

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[280] Butler 209
[281] Butler 180
[282] Butler 169
[283] Drumming
[284] Butler 182

and Brazil as a whole with the exotic charm of an African presence. Supporting cultural Anthropologist and Sociologist Freyre's ideas in his seminal text *Casa Grande e Senzalas*, which upheld miscegenation as part of Brazil's charm, president and dictator Getúlio Vargas pushed to turn Brazil's black heritage into a commodity.

Laws outlawing Samba and batuque were overturned and African-ness or blackness could be freely expressed, especially during Carnival, the nations leading export. Other cultural enterprises like Candomblé houses, Afoxés and *blocos* were developed in Salvador. These *afro-blocos* paraded in Carnival and were involved with community projects. Historian Christopher Dunn asserts that joining an *afro-bloco* was "an opportunity for young Afro-Brazilians to affirm their racial and ethnic identities …[and] Carnival, then, is not about display and dance and body only—but the actual reclaiming of a certain ritual space, the mobility of traditional orisha practice and identification of a particular link between community".[285]

Through the use of various musical inventions and hybridizations that call forth a diasporic pantheon of ancestors – by name or through an awareness of the cultural history of the musical tradition – and a jazz impulse identity is improvised.

[285] Dunn12

Conclusion: Musical Improvisations of Africa Continue

A presupposition in many comparative race relation frameworks asserts that Brazil's miscegenation offered Afro-Brazilians social mobility, whereas U.S. segregation marginalized Afro-Americans.[286] This postulation supports a Brazilian myth of racial harmony while suppressing arguments of racial injustice because race is considered inconsequential. Yet, bourgeoning Afro-Brazilian musical cultures influenced by U.S. Civil Rights and Black Power Movements are working to dispel the myth. Just as blues and jazz transformed spaces, samba and bossa nova also directly shifted cultural identities based on its close connection to an expression of ADRT – a direct connection not only to Africa, but also African Americans culture in the U.S. The improvisational, transformative powers of jazz and blues went on to influence other musical styles like r&b and hip-hop, which have continued to inspire the evolution of new musical movements and styles in Brazil.

As diasporic centers continue to fluctuate, African American fight for equality in the U.S. has influenced a radically emboldened black identity and musical culture among Afro-Brazilian youth in the musical trends of Fank Carioca and São Paulo Hip-Hop. These two currently emerging musical cultures are the direct progenies of Black Rio[287]. Black Rio was one of the most noted musical movements that drew directly from African American experiences. During a time of dictatorship and repression in Brazil, Black Rio served to protest the myth of a racial utopia. Also called the "black soul" movement,

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[286] Toplin, Robert, 1971

[287] Black Rio is a musical movement that took place in Rio de Janeiro from 1969-1974. North American soul and funk music was introduced by a white radio DJ named Big Boy who played soul music on his show *O Baile Pesada* in 1967. The popularity inspired positive black consciousness and racial identity. Some notable Brazilian artists of the era are Tim Maia and Banda Black Rio.

Black Rio was characterized by the soul and funk music of North America, Afro hairstyles as a designator for having a black politic and positive black consciousness that prizes African features and cultural legacy. Brazilian bands echoed the sounds and sentiments of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements music. After a time of importing and utilizing U.S. soul music Afro-Brazilians began making their own brand of soul music incorporating the rhythms of Samba and traditional Afro-Brazilian instruments for a tropical soul sound that was distinctly Brazilian but embraced a Pan-African identity.

Black Rio and the self-defined black identity connect them with the African Diaspora. In mirroring the subsequent waves of "black" expression, São Paulo Hip-Hop has a strong resemblance to North American Hip-Hop, embracing the elements and political stance of early U.S. Hip-Hop. The Civil Rights and Black Power eras spawned black cultural and political institutions, black arts and a black aesthetic in the U.S. Black Power's radical outlook inspired African American recording artists like James Brown and Marvin Gaye who subsequently influenced musicians in Rio de Janeiro's Black Rio movement and African American hip hop artists. They are ancestral musical traditions in that they give a direct nod or point to the styles and performances that came before.

Fank Carioca has a sound and cultural politic akin to Miami bass music to be specific, marked by heavy percussive rhythms and the performance of the body through sexualized moves. Although this musical movement does not have the same stylistic attributes or politically charged "black" lyrics of Black Rio, it continues to point to black consciousness in explicitly profound ways, particularly in its performance and style. Reflecting on the under-explored influence of U.S. liberation movements on the musical

representation by an Afro-Brazilian identity, Fank Carioca São Paulo Hip-Hop are connected and generally disseminated throughout the country (with Fank Carioca amassing great attention). Each movement uniquely responds to the conditions of its state and the country at large, as Funk Carioca, currently, draws attention to the predominantly black economically depressed segments of and an expanding, distinct, "black" consciousness in Rio de Janeiro.

The energy of axé or the energizing agitation of *balanse* as they appear in various musical genres gives birth to the jazz impulse of redefinition and improvisation, which has manifested as an emotional balm and physically and emotional purifying exercise and experience around the world, and a cultural symbol that continues to signify a foreign black identity in Brazil. If we listen, inside the music is a conversation that interacts with history, cinema, social science, philosophy, art, literature and many other subjects. It is inter-disciplinary teaching and learning in practice. The words and the stories being told through lyrics, rhythm, performance and appearance offer much: cultural artifact and historical document.

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