PROTEST AND PROPHECY:

MULTIMODALITIES OF SIGNIFICATION

IN THE SOUNDSCAPE OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

by

JESSICA COUCH

(Under the Direction of Carolyn Medine)

ABSTRACT

A theomusicological cartography of the interaction between what is said and what is silenced, between what is seen and unseen, between the here-before and the there-after in the soundscape of the Southeastern United States. Pairing soundscape studies with the theoretical foundation of signification from Prof. Charles H. Long, this cultural mapping of meaning-making continues to build upon an embodied un-suturing of systems of sociocultural oppression, in order to sign and situate a narrative that echoes the patterns of the Athens, GA, and Southern United States soundscapes, and resonates our Song to the world.

INDEX WORDS: Soundscape, Soundscape Studies, Signification, Charles H. Long, Acoustic ecology, narrative theory

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my infinite Sunshine, Phoebe: you are my light, my song, and my inspiration. May we always inspire each other to be whatever we want to be.

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I want to acknowledge, first and foremost, the tireless and magnanimous effort Dr. Carolyn Jones-Medine has expended to have taken me under her wing, since 2011. I do not believe there is a medium sufficient to express my gratitude for all you have done for me as a student, as a scared single mother, and as a friend. Under your care, my curiosity and bother with the world has exceeded whoever I thought I could become, and you have opened the way before me. Furthermore, there is no way to ever properly thank you for introducing me to, in text and in person, may his soul rest in peace, Dr. Charles H. Long. Few have moved me like Long's work has, and you have made it a labor of love to carefully learn and digest his perspectives of history and theories of religion. I can only hope our continued resonance can make an impact in our community and institution.

In the same breath, I want to recognize the ascendant growth both Dr. Sandy Martin and Dr. Jean Kidula have given to me throughout my graduate career here at the University of Georgia. With Martin, I have been able to finally conceptualize religious history in the United States with your careful processing of cultural and theological trends that influence other trends, and in the microcosm of the Americas. You helped me to hear the echoes of Spirit throughout American music. Dr. Kidula has also facilitated this exploration, in the United States, but has also opened my ears and heart to even more musics around the globe, and how they all echo within one another.

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be made of the patience and grace my advising supervisors, Dr. Diane Miller and Greg Kline have shown in my pursuit of this degree while working simultaneously in their office. Their belief in me and my dreams as part of the mission of academic advising as a developmental practice at the University of Georgia has given me the space and meaning-making I have needed as a advisor-practitioner of education.

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Finally, I would be remiss to not acknowledge the companion who has been by my side since 2006, through thick and thin, and has listened to every piece of music (repeatedly) I've played loudly at home and academic tirade I have made, and still loves me: my sweet old man, Bam Bam.

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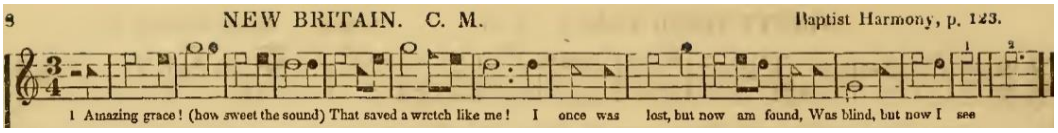
Prologue:

Soundtrack for the American Dream

"All de night long twell de moon goes down,
Lovin' I set at huh feet,
Den fu' de long jou'ney back f'om de town,
Ha'd, but de dreams mek it sweet."

Paul Laurence Dunbar
Twell the Night is Pas (1901)



The American Dream as an ideology and ethos is multivalent and polysemous; put more succinctly, it is an ever-evolving process. An array of value systems is associated with the term, and its meaning shifts with time and individual/collective perspectives, but after 200 years its ubiquity in the United States is self-evident. Even if the formal term, "the American Dream," itself did not crystallize until the mid- 20th century, the idea has been with the nation since its founding. Because the concept is loaded with ideological, economic, and socio-cultural baggage it serves as a cumbrous (yet still wieldy) lens through which to understand American history, and it continues to develop with our religious, ethnic, and civic sensibilities. Like a dream, the ephemerality of the concept and its amelioration allow it a mutability that challenges its definition, as the original popularizer of the term suggests, "possibly the greatest of these struggles lies always just ahead of us at the present time – not a struggle of revolutionists against

the established order, but of the ordinary man to hold fast to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' which were vouchsafed to us in the past in vision and on parchment."[1] What are the discursive limits of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness if it is ideologically bound to a tesseractive[2] container that is our history? How do we chart these limits?

The historical method I employ in this musicological and religiological review is one I conceive of as *tesseractive*. A tesseract is a geometric concept, a four-dimensional analog of a cube, also known as a hypercube. Assuming a Euclidean topology of space, a tesseract can be unfolded in space into 8 separate cubes, each of which can rotate to reveal 261 nets – which is a mathematical way of saying there can be hundreds of ways in which to view the tesseract and its interaction with space. In the historical perspective, the historical event is the cube within the hypercube, and the hypercube is the way in which we observe the historical event, the past. We are impressed by our perspective in the interaction of an event in space, our observation of history simultaneously effects the way we are affected by time happening upon us. Which is a complicated way of saying, our understandings of ourselves and our progression through time is prepossessed by our observation of history and our perspectives at said time of observation.

SEGUE – unfolding, unsuturing through deep listening

In brief, the American Dream is a concept that encapsulates the unfolding of America, signifying simultaneously a rugged individualist economic and political autonomy and continual social mobility. The idea of "America" as a polity is itself an experiment, an attempt at recreating and improving upon democratic governance as representative of order, or as Governor John Winthrop labeled it in 1630, establishing the "shining city on the hill,"[3] the standard whereby all

[1] James Truslow Adams, "Preface," to *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1931).
[2] A term borrowed from geometry to highlight the multivalent process of a concept evolving with and through time.
[3] "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us,

future countries would measure themselves. The ideals by which we constructed our representative democracy are rooted in the idea of opportunity with fewer social and political barriers to the individual, where "all men are created equal." This *sense* of self-actualized equity, whether manifest or not, undergirds the concept of the American Dream. It is this supposed equity through which opportunity should flourish, with only the mere application of hard work. Therefore, the term presupposes the viability and positivity of growth and progress of its peoples.

This introduction seeks to explore the history and concept of the American Dream via the cultural product of music. Using the intersectionality of methodologies used by New Musicologists, I will develop a musical hermeneutic of the American Dream. Employing the musicological rhetoric of scholars like Susan McClary, this correlative discussion will confirm that music is a meaningful, ethos-building activity, "a medium that participates in social formation by influencing the ways we perceive our feelings, our bodies, our desires, our very subjectivities—even if it does so surreptitiously, without most of us knowing how."[4] In order to explore the concept through this perspective, I will frame a historical review of the musical generation of the American Dream within the parameters of resonance. The experiment of Americas was about seeking a new resonance of old ideas in a different space: in democracy, which includes personal sovereignty over one's own decisions, and communal responsibility for all participants in the community, and the balance between.

In this light, we should conceive of identity as a melody, an ever-evolving composition of the moments that make us, which shapes our interactions with the symphony of the world – both

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we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world." John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in *A Library of American Literature: Early Colonial Literature, 1607-1675*, Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson, eds. (New York: 1892), 307.

[4] Susan McClary, "Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music," from *Queering the Pitch*, edited by Peter Brett, et. al (New York: Routledge, 2006), 211.

exterior and interior. We tune ourselves to the frequency that our collective resonates in, from the passage of shared time (measured and kept by the National Institution of Standard Time), to the patterning of our political speech into party platforms, to the flow of meaning that develops between our communications both in person and digitally. This "tuning to the world" is integral to our shared survival and growth of our societies on Earth, the United States being no exception. This tuning has been going on in every living thing on the planet since consciousness evolved. We use the sympathetic vibrations with our environment to determine physical safety and the viability of evolution. A Western Classical symphony tuning to the concertmaster is a microcosm of what we do in our everyday interactions within culture. And as we exist in various positions in time, we experience not only different tuning systems to attune our actions and knowledges to, but then build patterns of behaviors based on this tuning which gathers into modes of being. These modes may not resonate in perfect pitch to all others around them, but they interact within their modal resonance, whether they resound in concordance, consonance; or in discord, dissonance. Like the music of the spheres, all interactions between beings on this planet vibrate in proximity to one another and form the basis of our communication on all levels. Dissonance represents the miscommunication we can suffer, especially in our globalized interconnections. All localities have a resonance, and this dissertation seeks to piece together the parts that construct the cultural resonance that is the Southeastern United States.

To do so, I will examine the nature of consonance, dissonance, and harmony within the broad spectrum of Southeast American musical history. I have further subcategorized this analytical format through various, integrated cultural identities: religious, ethnic, and civic. Consonance, or the sympathetic relationship between two frequencies (in music) or ideas/opinions (in society), allows for community building and socio-moral supervision.

Dissonance assumes an incongruity of expression, in tone or perspective, with self or others. Social and cultural dissonance, much like musical dissonance, can be a means by which development is achieved, but there is a great deal of noise to wade through, and a silence that undergirds it all. I will conclude my introduction with a review of cultural harmony, where I argue that evolution of tonality from a fixed center to a modal, decentralized concordance can provide a more accessible resonance of ideas and ideologies in the American soundscape.

Developed in his musicological treatise, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, R. Murray Schafer explores the breadth of the concept of the soundscape and soundscape studies as a discipline. In essence, the soundscape is the "sonic environment, any portion of which one can regard as a field for study."[5] He takes care, in his seminal book, to explore the physics of the acoustic environment with detailed analyses of perceptual ground of aurality, sounds as symbols (sonic and scriptural), the context and stake of noise, as well as the reflections of the natural soundscape in cosmological myths and religious ritual. For Schafer, the realm of musical possibility exponentially expanded with the modern composer John Cage's philosophy of "music from any combination of sounds," citing specifically Henry David Thoreau's essays from Walden Pond delighting in the acoustic space of Nature. While I do not seek to reify Schafer's notion that music can be wholly indicative of social maturity and developmental phase of civilization, the soundscape projects the realm of meaning from their linguistic containers to their sonic ones as well. The ultimate goal of soundscape studies is to answer the final question, "is the soundscape of the world an indeterminate composition over which we have no control, or are *we* its composers and

[5] R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1977), 274.

performers, responsible for giving it form and beauty?"[6] I will use this prologue and dissertation to answer this question in the affirmative.

One can conceive of the soundscape as a perceptual sphere, akin to Jurgen Habermas' public sphere[7] and Arjun Appadurai's -scapes framework in his treatise *Modernity at Large*.[8] Habermas describes the public sphere as the socially designated liminal space where private citizens discuss public concerns, where the private meets the public. Pairing this concept with Arjun Appadurai's framework of "-scapes", I am seeking to expand the concept to detail how civic attunement and harmony is found in the interactive flow between sonic spheres of meaning, in private and in public. Though Appadurai specifically focuses on the cross-cultural realms that build the globalized world: ethnoscapes (the flow of people), ideoscapes (flow of ideologies), mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes (flow of capital), I believe the soundscape holds just as much significance to our globalized communication. Soundscapes are tonal, lyrical, and phenomenological centers where the voices of people, their media and their ideas flow, and reflects the sonic ethos of a community in space and time. While the mission of soundscape studies is one of a conscientious acoustic ecology, this dissertation is focusing on the impact the interactions of sound-creators to their acoustic space and how it shapes narrative meaning, or storying, space- and meaning-making.

Consonance is the agreeance between two or more tones, and harmony in community took a significant role in the countenance of the family and village. While the Protestant Europeans arriving in the New World were bringing their own foreign melodies to a novel

[6] Ibid., 5.
[7] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1991).
[8] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1996).

acoustic space, they were seeking an arena through which they could create their own consonant community, where outside dissonance was not tolerated and silenced as noise. The popular *Ainsworth Psalter* from the English was quickly replaced with the first book published in British North America, a hymnal popularly known as *The Bay Psalm Book*. The change was specific, both musically and socially: meter and rhyme were polished in an effort to seem more authentic to the original Hebrew language and form, but the tunes, otherwise, stayed the same. It is important to note that musical notation in the 17th century was relegated to prose, as the printing of musical notation was too costly. Although Ainsworth was a theological separatist,[9] the music was learned in community throughout various congregations, through oral tradition of hearing their forebears and congregations sing old church hymns and popular European folk songs, performed in community, and whose meanings were reified by the community via the hymnal. Learning tunes from community, lining out, meant the melodies rarely changed within isolated units but varied from congregation to congregation, divine election notwithstanding; the tunes themselves began to change when musical notation was more financially accessible to publishers in the New World. Standardization through publishing allowed congregants multiple versions of common tunes and lyrics.

The song *Amazing Grace*, the musical epigraph for this chapter, for instance, as it is known in its quintessentially American character today, evolved from a composition entitled "New Britain" by William Walker. He set to music the verses written by and detailing the conversion of English clergyman and abolitionist John Newton, a former enslaver whose reformative experience caused him to seek the abolition of slavery in Britain. This piece was set in lyrics first in a hymnal common to evangelicals as the *Olney Hymns*. Walker published the

[9] In pre-colonial Protestant theology, which promulgated that certain individuals and specific Churches were elected by God as righteous, and all others are illegitimate.

song in *Southern Harmony*, a shape-note singing manual, a pedagogical tool used by American singing schools. Shape-note as a musical notation system is constructed to facilitate community in layering voices and harmony. Preceding this, most church congregations followed the Scottish example of *lining* out, where one person (almost exclusively male in rural Southern churches), sings out a line of a tune which is repeated by those gathered. It is interesting to note that the harmonic construction of *Amazing Grace* in the text *Southern Harmony* follows the hierarchy of the congregants: the notated melody is in the tenor's voice, and this heterophonic practice persists to this day in African American churches and Old Regular Baptist churches in Appalachia. Akin to the structure of lining out, in shape-note singing, the only instruments are human voices, the only way to learn is from another practitioner, and pitch and rhythmic progression is contingent on the group and how they attune to each other. Also known as *Sacred Harp*, from the book of the same name,[10] the tradition became wildly popular within the American South from the 1700s and persists to this day, mostly in Primitive Baptist, Churches of Christ, Southern Baptist, and United Pentecostals. Shape-note singing, in spite of the cultural segregation of the South, was non-discriminatory, and was used by both African American and white congregations, and sometimes in integrated settings before Jim Crow.[11] Through a combination of publishing in the new notation and reified melodies in a range of regions, denominations, and local churches, Amazing Grace developed an essential American character that echoes in the soundscape still today. It has grown alongside the spirituals that also came synonymous with our sonic temperament.

[10] Benjamin Franklin White, *Sacred Harp* (Huntsville, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing, 1991).
[11] Derrick Fox, "African American Practice of Shape-Note Singing in the United States," *Choral Journal* 56:5 (Dec. 2015), 40.

In addition to employing shape-note singing and lining out from Scottish and English origins, African American Christian communities were responsible for evolving the call-and-response musical patterns inherited by their West African ancestors into spirituals beginning in the 1700s and developing into gospel, reaching its golden age in the mid-20th century. Spirituals constitute two realms, both in folk song and religious music. Coming from adjuration of Ephesians 5:19, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord," the music developed in both formal and informal sacred gatherings, in church and in camp meetings and family gatherings. Like the Anglo-American development of shape-note singing, spirituals simultaneously grew from and generated community. In addition to spiritual consonance engendered, this allowed spirituals to also function as a vehicle for subversive messaging, or a secret dissonance as it were, as they were used not only by abolitionists in propaganda, but by conductors on the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was said to use "Go Down, Moses," as a song indicating she was a liberator like Moses. One particular spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* is known for its ideological critique of slavery and encoded message of escape, and it also functions as a significant influence to the blues, specifically via *Bad-Luck Blues* (1927), and to gospel, a popular tune for the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Liberation theologian James Cone, in his work *God of the Oppressed,* clarifies that the River Jordan is more than a Biblical river for African Americans, but a liminal border between oppression and freedom – the river is death or transcendence.[12] In more practical terms, historians posit the music was often sung at safe river crossings. The song is placed as the first entry in the widely published collection of African American music by abolitionist

[12] James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997.

propagandists[13] William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison in the 1867 *Slave Songs of the United States.*[14] Published two years after the Civil War, McKim Garrison and her partners collected these songs and presented them in musical notation alongside phonetic English for consumption by a more musically literate (in terms of Western notation) audience. The desire was to humanize the formerly enslaved to better integrate into a free society, and the abolitionists believed art was a key bridge between the two. The consonance created through spirituals and gospel served to encode freedom and establish key social networks in religious and secular groups of African Americans. Further, music served to build community, especially in bonding through the emotional processing engendered by the performance and sharing of spirituals. These all served to provide a musical link to the American Dream for African Americans.

Abolitionists often used music in their mission to coalesce American society after the Civil War. The musical director and treasurer of Fisk University also sought a musical link as a bridge to serve freed peoples who wanted to pursue education at their institution. To raise funds for the school, White gathered nine vocalists to tour along the historic Underground Railroad circuit and named them 'Jubilee' after the Biblical practice of setting the enslaved free. White sought a religious resonance with the American peoples through the Old Testament, a laurel to all in the community who held that text dear, including their Jewish brethren.

The dream of religious resonance brought more than Protestant Christians, from the early 19th century into the 20th Jewish immigration flourished and brought to American shores

[13] It is important to note here that this text is not the first hymnal or collection of written music for African Americans. Rather, this text served a white, abolitionist audience. Richard Allen (1760–1831), founder and a minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, published the first hymnal designed for African Americans, *A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs from Various Authors* in 1801.
[14] *Slave songs of the United States*. William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison, eds. (New York: A. Simpson & Co., 1867).

renowned cantors, prayer leaders who employed music and vocal intonation of Jewish scripture. Predominantly emerging from Reform Jewish communities in New England, the dissemination of their music was rapid and vast, as cantors such as Ukrainian-born Mordechai Hershman toured the States and produced a multitude of albums, radio broadcasts, and even film. Josef "Yossele" Rosenblatt appeared in the first "talking picture," *The Jazz Singer* (1927), performing his own composition "T'ka B'shofar." Also known as *hazzan*, these prayer leaders developed a Jewish resonance in the American soundscape.

Most notably in the case of Jewish influence on the American soundscape is the development of the Eastern European musical form that came to be known as *klezmer*. During the diasporic spread East, this musical form evolved with its repeated interactions with its sonic environment. Some believe it originated in Poland, whereas other musicologists trace it as far back as Israel, but most scholars agree that this form comes from the Ashkenazi peoples and influences of Eastern Europe, including Israel, the Ottoman Empire, Byzantine, and their Slavic roots. They popularized the soundscape that comprises *klezmorim* in their the United States diaspora. Even in the performances in New York today, you can hear influences of Old-World Galician rhythms, Romani and Hungarian melodies echoing east through Germany and France, the heterophonic practices blending and influencing one another. At first the genre was not popular in the United States, especially after the Pittsburg Platform "update" in 1885 attracted those Jews who sought to modernize their theology and practice with their surroundings and scientific progress. Therefore, the genres popular in the United States were adapted in their burgeoning cultural style by the new Jewish communities. The term klezmer itself is from two Yiddish words meaning "vessel song," but did not find its American vessel until clarinetists Dave Tarras and Naftule Brandwein took on the ritualistic role of the Cantor, which the violin

had previously been the preferred instrument. This clarinet influence and "crying" style shaped Leonard Bernstein and Benny Goodman's performances and compositional styles in the emerging Big Bang jazz styles.[15]

Given the broad acoustical scope of the American soundscape, and its integrative nature, even more religious resonances are possible especially when combined with popular North American vernacular or musical forms. In the case of Catholicism, under pressure from declining church attendance, the Second Vatican Council issued the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963). This constitution was approved and promulgated by Pope Paul VI and focuses on a renewal and active participation by laity in liturgy and music. The Second Vatican Council believed in the power of music to build the bridge to spiritual evolution. The document purports,

> sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites… The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches; but bishops and other pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that, whenever the sacred action is to be celebrated with song, the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs.[16]

The Catholic Church, under the Second Vatican Council, was explicit in the relationship between music and the general consonance required of church participation. Therefore, in the United States, the typical Gregorian antiphonal style, wherein one group of the congregation responds to one another in a ritualistic structure, was amended with, in addition, a responsorial,

[15] Richard O. Nidel, *World Music: the Basics*. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 299.
[16] Vatican Council II, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," from *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Promulgated by Pope Paul VI, December 4, 1963.

call-and-response style popular in Christian services throughout the country. This responsorial style was then echoed in the emerging Catholic liturgical folk movement.

Like Jews and Judaism, Catholics were compelled to modernize their religious soundscape with the surrounding environment. Klezmer integrated into jazz and neo-classical styles as well as musical and movie soundtracks, and Catholic liturgy found its home in folk music. The *Musicam Sacram*[17] of the Second Vatican decrees details that music could be played during the sacred liturgy on "instruments characteristic of a particular people." For the United States, this was on guitar and through the voice, and folk styles were a natural outgrowth of that in the early 1970s. Most notably among these were the composing collective known as the St. Louis Jesuits.

Ethnic consonance was another dimension through which the American soundscape manifested the Dream. The Frontier Thesis, as conveyed by historian Frederick Jackson Turner in a paper delivered to the AHA in 1893,[18] emphasizes the process of moving Westward as a pivotal cultural and democratic maturation for the American peoples and nation. The *frontier line*, as he called it, was the border by which society was separated from the "wild." It is the inherent human need for control and domination of nature, Turner believes, that spurred Americans to push West. But given the risk, the westward journey was best made in groups, in spite of the hyperindividualist character the Frontier seems to emanate, and the interaction of said groups, typically organized around family and ethnicity, grew the hybrid aesthetic associated with the United States. European Folk music, with the people who carried it, met

[17] Vatican Council II, *Musicam Sacram: Instruction on Music in the Liturgy*. Accessed February 9, 2021. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_instr_19670305_musicam-sacram_en.html

[18] Frederick J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1893*, pp. 197-227.

different musics along the frontier. The encounter of German and Polish migrant workers with Northern Mexico (within what is now Texas today), created the musical genre of Música Norteña. Constructed of a mixture of European and Mexican instruments, e.g., the accordion and the *bajo sexto* (a Mexican stringed instrument), Norteña has been popular since the 1860s. The song form *corrido* in Norteña is an extant musical form that is still in use today. Eastern European immigrants brought *klezmer* to American shores, and the 1920s saw a brief rise in popularity of klezmer clarinetists. And although the form was not initially popular, continued use by American clarinetists and composers solidified its ethnic consonance in the form of jazz. George Gershwin is said to have adapted his composition *Rhapsody in Blue* from the instrumentation of two pianos, to piano with orchestra, with the klezmer-tinged clarinet solo featured in the orchestration. Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, two highly popular big-band leaders, derived inspiration from klezmer clarinetists and the ethos of this musical form grew organically with jazz.

Jazz herself represents a significant development of ethnic consonance, originating with African American artists and maturing through the continued engagement with artists of all ethnic backgrounds. As discussed previously, jazz evolved from the religious consonance of spirituals to the blues. The blues form is an inherently American form, originating with pianists at the turn of the 20th century. It is important to indicate here that jazz also represents a shift in tonality of the American soundscape. Most musical forms in the United States were of fixed tonality, using only one harmonic mode (Ionian) adopted from predominant European musical forms. Jazz introduced the practice of multimodality as a medium of improvisation. Improvisation is limited in one mode, but jazz artists employed modal systems from the soundscapes of West Africa and ancient Greece, allowing for a greater preponderance of musical

expression and expansion. In fact, some musicologists argue through the Greek historian Herodotus that the Western musical tradition is a Greek essentialization of African modal soundscapes.

Civic consonance is most visible in the amelioration of national anthems and songs. Given, as Jurgen Habermas stipulates, that the public sphere serves as an extension of authority, consonance in the public sphere is required for governance.[19] In order to maintain consonance, the power structures must listen to the public. In doing so, two popular songs effervesced as "official" public songs. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" grew from the religious consonance in camp meetings, especially during the Second Great Awakening, a significant protestant revivalist movement in the early 19th century. Used extensively since the Civil War, as an anthem for the Union and abolitionists, its popularity in the public sphere has not waned. The tune was used for lyrics about an abolitionist (and future protest song by Pete Seeger), "John Brown's Body," which was "a-mouldering in the grave," but "his soul was marchin' on" after his role igniting the Civil War. Its lyrics were used in several of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches, including a significant theme in his "How Long, Not Long" speech. This speech in particular is also called by one of the Battle Hymn lyrics, "Our God is Marching On." It is even used as the fight song for University of Georgia's "Battle Hymn of the Bulldog Nation," whose familiar lyric is morphed into "G-E-O-R-G-I-A."

Our current national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner" was originally written by Francis Scott Key around 1814, as *The Defense of Fort McHenry*, serves as a productive example of the evolution of social tuning that the song, its consonance and dissonance, and the tension between as a development of multimodality. As was typical of the time, the poem was set

[19] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into the Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. By Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

to a popular British folk tune, an ode to the Greek poet Anacreon by John Stafford Smith. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson signed an executive order for "The Star-Spangled Banner" to be used in military exercises, events, and parades, confirmed by Congress in 1931. The mixture of consonance and dissonance in the anthem is notable: a British drinking tune valorizing the British attack of the United States. Nationalists opposed it as the national anthem, given its origins; religious people and Prohibitionists use as a drinking song, objected to its glorification of violence. Even further, a fifth stanza was added in response to the start of the Civil War, by physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.:

> When our land is illumined with Liberty's smile,
> If a foe from within strike a blow at her glory,
> Down, down with the traitor that dares to defile
> The flag of her stars and the page of her story!
> By the millions unchained, who our birthright have gained,
> We will keep her bright blazon forever unstained!
> And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave
> While the land of the free is the home of the brave.[20]

The scope of meaning that is embedded in the battle of, for, and against this one song as a civic identity belies its resonating character. It undulates and swells in consonant stasis but develops through dissonance and sheer range. Even in modern times it is contested, the national conversation focusing on the merits of patriotism and the sacrality of space (to preclude protest,

[20] Chloe Veltman, "The Star-Spangled Banner Verse You've Probably Never Heard" [Radio Broadcast] July 4, 2017. NPR:KQED https://www.npr.org/2017/07/04/518876922/the-star-spangled-banner-verse-youve-probably-never-heard

an American trait) when the song is performed. Given the tensions of resonance in the anthem, it has made an indelible mark on our soundscape.

In spite of our multiplicity of consonances, the United States has more than its fair share of dissonances in its soundscape. Seeking to "civilize" the Native American tribes, especially those American Indian interlocutors he deemed corrupt, President Ulysses Grant's administration instituted the so-called "Peace Policy," which substituted Christian missionaries as Native leaders on their reserved land. This policy effectively obliterated religious and political autonomy for tribes and severed ancestral and cultural practices from their societies. The Sun Dance and other representative musical and dance forms were forbidden, and missionary societies joined the national government through the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs in order to supplant Native American practices with Christian ones. This spiritual and geospatial displacement was necessary to eradicate a culture, but in the character of the American Dream, Native Americans resisted by working to keep their cultural identity. The result of these conversion attempts was syncretic blending of Christian ethics and belief systems with Native American ones. Joel W. Martin summarizes the long, painful road to assimilation, after massacre, disease, forcible relocation, and usurping of political autonomy, "Dominated by the United States, surrounded by Europeans and Africans, and infiltrated by missionaries, a significant number began converting… Without forgetting the Corn Mother, they began praying to Christ, reading the Bible, and going to Christian churches. For better or worse, they helped write a new chapter in the religious history of their peoples." [21] The Sun Dance did not return to common use until after 1978's passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.[22]

[21] Joel W. Martin, *The Land Looks After Us: A History of Native American Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 60.
[22] American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, Public Law No. 95-341, 92 Stat. 469.

The loss of memory, embodied in the land and art, including music and natural rhythms, cannot be overstated. In this example, as in the development of African American cultural assemblage, the act of silence and the "voice of silence" speaks greater volumes than the act of silencing itself. In this, I cite the work of historian of religion Charles H. Long: "one must also take account of those peoples who had to undergo the 'creativity' of the Western world – They were present not as voices speaking but as the silence which is necessary to all speech. They existed as the pauses between words – those pauses which are necessary if speech is to be possible – and in their silence they spoke."[23] To be relegated to the margin, to the space between human proclamation and communication, is to music as a pause or caesura is to the experience and interpretation of the created world. This stands apart in this theoretical framework of resonance as something within which something resonates, the empty space, the Silenced. The act of Silencing punctuates the soundscape as an emptying, and the absence of any form of resonance.

Sometimes religious dissonance is deliberately employed for a specific means. One example includes Communists using church music as propaganda in Alabama during the Great Depression. Although Communism eschews religious proclivities, Marx famously exclaiming that religion was "the opiate of the people," Communists in Alabama were driven by anti-segregationist ethics, and, therefore, decided to make Communism their own political movement, replete with Church engagement. Music effervesced from the secret meeting places, abandoned houses and backroad Churches, echoing the patterns of Church meetings including singing hymns. Robin D.G. Kelly contends,

[23] Charles H. Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 1995), 65-66.

> In addition to standards such as "The Internationale" and "Solidarity Forever," rural blacks in and around the Party transformed popular spirituals into political songs with new messages. "We Shall Not Be Moved" and the ever popular "Give Me That Old Time Religion" [a Fisk Jubilee staple] were stock musical forms used to create new Party songs. In the latter, the verse was changed to "Give Me That Old Communist Spirit," and Party members closed out each stanza with "It was good enough for Lenin, and it's good enough for me."[24]

According to folklorist Richard A. Reuss, emerging from the Great Depression and New Deal projects were the infrastructural keys that opened the door to Communist politics in rural areas, but also the folk-song revival in the mid-1930s made way for the political turn of things. As such, it was "predicated on the discovery that in certain regions the folksong idiom was a convenient musical avenue of transmitting revolutionary propaganda. Once this was recognized, the way was paved for the extension of the Left's limited agit-prop concern into outright aesthetic appreciation of traditional music and the further idealization of other aspects of folk culture (tales, games, dances, arts, and crafts, etc."[25] Sociologist William G. Roy commented that the left-wing political dissonance cultivated cultural production like music.[26] This aid to covert civic dissonance was not to last, however, as the party eventually disbanded in Alabama, and McCarthyism in the early 1950s rooted this out. Folk music found a revival after disassociating itself with the Communist sentiments of the post-war years and focusing instead on "topical" secular songs of protest, for civil rights.

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[24] Robin D. G. Kelly, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 104.
[25] Richard A. Reuss, "The Roots of American Leftwing Interest in Folksong," *Labor History* 12 (1971), 259.
[26] William G. Roy, *Red, Whites, and Blues: Social Movements, Folk Music, and Race in the United States*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 81.

At the same time as the Communist use of sacred musical propaganda, another example of religious dissonance emerged in the reaction to secular music of the cities during the Great Migration, the diasporic movement of black Americans from their rural homes in the South to urban centers in the North. Milton C. Sernett argues in *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* that there was tension amongst the new city-dwellers regarding the form of Church music: "the notion persisted that once the migrants set foot in Chicago or New York City or some other big city, they joined the battle between the church and 'the Devil's music' more fully."[27] Those that were attracted to the secular music, the blues and "jumped up" jazz (that were present in their Southern homes, just maybe not on Sunday), found home in Sanctified and Holiness churches of the North, which seemed a refuge between the dangers of the secular city and echoing the rural folk culture from which they had come. Sernett highlights professor and poet laureate's Sterling Brown's justification: "Jazzed-up gospel hymns provide a different sort of release from the old spirituals; the blues reflect the distortions of the new way of life."[28] This dissonance allowed a wider berth from which music could emerge in church. From this modern gospel was born.

The most visibly egregious example of ethnic dissonance is the minstrel show industry popularized in the 19th century. These began as comedic interludes to review shows in the Northeastern States, but eventually became their own spectacles, attended by families and reifying racist tropes. The mark of minstrelsy is the use of black-face, and there was often an effort to muddy the narrative waters, so to speak, about the institution of slavery and its practice. Predominantly white actors would don exaggerated stage make-up and act out caricatures and

[27] Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration (The C. Eric Lincoln Series on the Black Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 200.
[28] Sterling Brown, "Negro Folk Expression: Spirituals, Seculars, Ballads and Work Songs," *Phylon* (14: January 1953), 60.

sing bastardized forms of African American folk music. The mimetic character of minstrel shows and its music developed an animus that haunts the United States today. Nevertheless, the prevalence of this cultural vilification and dissonance waned by the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 and made way for the more popular form of vaudeville. Further, the consonance engendered by their counterparts, the Fisk Jubilee Singers for example, worked to drown out the hateful noise.

In spite of the many consonant voices interacting on the sonic landscape of the U.S., it has always had its share of hateful rhetoric expressed in music, a witness to more ethnic dissonance. The most accessible example to our time period involves what the Southern Poverty Law Center terms "Hate Music" of white supremacist groups. Especially in the early 1990s, hate music implanted itself in the American soundscape, taking cues from garage band subculture of early 1980s British hate groups. While the post-2010s soundscape of hate music consists predominantly of alt-punk and black metal genres, it has a range in the span of American genres, including folk. "As a subculture, the scene plays a pivotal role, re-propagandizing the aesthetics and esoteric and the bigotry and brutality of the Nazi party," warns the SPLC.[29] While analysts have seen a drop in hate music centers in the past year, one cannot underestimate the force the soundscape has on ethnic dissonance, which as we have seen in recent protests, reverberate into civic dissonance.

A prime example of civic dissonance within the United States occurs between the generational divide between jazz "Big-Band" leaders and the emerging jazz artists known as Be-Boppers in the 1940s. Bebop musicians established a new style on the skirts of the Dance era, where touring and the show were the encompassing part of music-making, not the conversation

[29] "Hate Music," Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed 12 April 2021. https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/hate-music

that jazz could engender in its emphasis on improvisation and multimodality. Boppers felt that jazz had stagnated under big bands, and there was no connection to the common person, let alone the inner-workings of how the music moved them. And while their interpretive role was at the fore, Boppers were known for reaching out beyond their own communities to connect with the world. Some embraced the burgeoning Pan-African movement. "Indeed," as Richard Brent Turner states on his disquisition of African American Islam and Jazz, "the interplay between musicians and local cultures during [their] travels exemplified the musical and spiritual experimentation and the global diasporic consciousness fostered by African American religious internationalism as well as important black counternarratives describing the struggles and tensions of the Cold War era."[30]

Music has also been a powerful vehicle in which to express political and civic dissonance. This best exemplar of this is protest music, and the American character is steeped in it. Since its founding, the United States has had protest music. The British soldiers were said to sing "Yankee Doodle" in jest of the "Yankee" soldiers they had to fight alongside in the French and Indian War prior to the Revolutionary War. But to their chagrin, the Colonists renewed the song as one of defiance and it was played at the British surrender of Saratoga in 1777. Protest music surged after electronic music and radio broadcasts were more accessible to the general public. Post-World War II radio rang out with folk protest music and culminated in such artists as Jimi Hendrix, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan protesting the Vietnam War and the military industrial complex of the United States in the 1960s. As I will elucidate in a further chapter, the genres of folk, rock, punk, and hip hop made significant strides in the category of civic dissonance.

[30] Richard Brent Turner, *Soundtrack to a Movement: African American Islam, Jazz, and Black Internationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2021), 134.

Mapping and tracing the interplay of these resonances is a gargantuan task, but one soundscape studies sees as a socially progressivist objective: our goal is toward euphony. The social dynamics involved in the various sonic interactions require a combination of consonance, silence, and dissonance in order to develop communal harmony. Soundscape studies in America can trace the flux between the individual and communal by investigating tonality as it shifted throughout American history with fixed or motile centers. One can interpret the historical impact of urban migration in World War I and Interwar years to the proliferation of sonic messages and ethos to the world with the advent of radio transmission, and how Americans auricularly identified themselves leading up to and during the second World War. This introduction is meant to lay the framework of soundscape studies to a meaningful engagement with narrative theory, history, and religion studies – and through this I hope to map the American dream as it modulates through our soundscape. I seek to develop a theoretical method of resonance employing the work of R. Murray Schafer and Charles H. Long to demonstrate the multimodalities of significations and silence. The first chapter, entitled "Of Sorrow Songs and Silence" will explore the links between W.E.B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* including musical notation and lyrics with his prose, and the act and agency inherent in Silence/ing. This chapter will be a historical disquisition into the American understanding of musical meaning and must conscientiously engage those instances of Silence/ing and marginalization, and how this too shapes the American dream.

My second chapter, "Carving Mountains and Riding Rivers," will elucidate the role of the soundscape in transmitting and preserving ethnic and religious resonances from various communities in and around the Blue Ridge Mountains. By geospatially situating Appalachian soundscapes, one can carve the shape of the mountain from their echoes. The following chapter

will explore the character of protest, propaganda, and prophecy in the musical ethos created by artists during the Vietnam War and Civil Rights movement. Special consideration will be taken when discussing the growth of global communication and the stake of identity in the face of internationalism. This will segue into my penultimate chapter entitled Global Griot – Hip Hop in the World. Given the scope of this dissertation in the Southeastern United States, I will limit this chapter to narrative interlocutors of Southern Hip Hop and their interactions with the global narrative about America and its peoples.

This dissertation will culminate in chapter five with one of my project's case studies, a hyperlocal ethnomusicological analysis of the soundscape of the South via Athens, Georgia, and the metro-Atlanta areas, and the burgeoning genre of hip hop within each city. Athens is known in the United States as one of the birthplaces of alternative rock and wildly popular American bands such as R.E.M., B-52s, and Pylon. Due to these bands and their musics dominating the cities' soundscape, the history of Southern music and in our current time, the Hip Hop scene was once rendered peripheral in the college town, and up until the last decade, nearly invisible. But what is less commonly known is that Athens' hip hop scene was born and grew alongside alternative rock. When Andre 3000 extolled on the 1995 *Source* awards, "the South got somethin' to say," his statement was made to enlighten the world of the fact that hip hop has bloomed in the Southeastern United States regardless of the white supremacist noise drowning out other(ed) voices. Athens is no exception, boasting a solid coterie of hip hop artists and sound engineers who have formed a simultaneously tight-knit but inclusive community. Their art and actions in the community--through the *Athens Hip Hop Awards*, in political office, and in spear-heading educational, mental health, and spiritual betterment initiatives, hip hop artists in Athens are saying what they got to say.

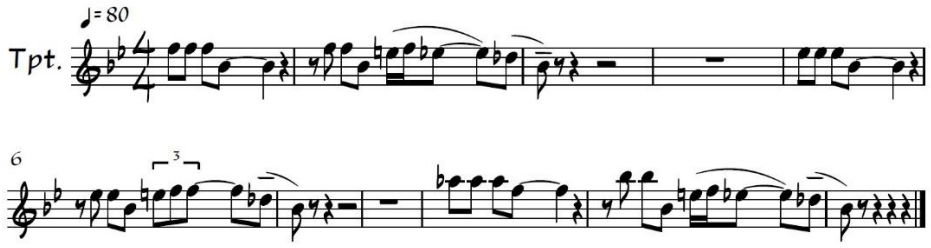
Given the environment of Covid, the 2020 Presidential election, and the sense of national distrust in the "truth" and "facts," I believe hip hop artists, their genre and medium, and their *signifyin'* are key parts of shaping the regional and national narrative, both religious and political. In addition to this, I am seeking to incorporate the research methodologies of the Athens Music Project conceived by UGA ethnomusicologists, one of whom I am honored to have on my committee, Drs. Jean Kidula and Susan Thomas into my work on the multimodalities of signification. What I hope to find is further evidence of my conclusion of hip hop as the future of music as a globalizing communicative force.

Chapter I

Of Sorrow Songs and Silence

Music often transports me like a sea!
Toward my pale star, under a canopy of fog or in a vast ether, I set sail…
I scale the backs of towering waves that the night obscures from me.
I feel vibrating in me all passions of a ship in distress –
The good wind and the tempest with its convulsions
Over the immense gulf, cradle me.
At other times, dead calm, great mirror of my despair![31]

Charles Baudelaire
La Musique, from The Flowers of Evil



Jubilee, like a bell, echoed throughout the American soundscape, for years after the Emancipation Proclamation was formally signed by Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, resounding in waves and repeated per annum. Year after year, congregations of the formerly enslaved would gather and celebrate the bell that would not be unrung, the unequivocal statement of freedom for those once considered capital. Repossessed of their personhood, the Freed Peoples

[31] Translation by the author.

sought to tune themselves to a new world that should listen to them, which had forcibly silenced them, and forced their signifying into the shadows. But these echoes grew quieter as they rippled from their first resounding. By the turn of the century, dissonance replaced the uneasy social tuning, carpet bagging and Jim Crow had done their business, and the social tension resulted in mass delocalization: The Great Migration. The pursuit of resonance was foremost in the mind of W.E.B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* published in 1903 prior to the height of the migration. In his "After-Thought" he entreats the reader to hear him, "Hear my cry, O God the Reader; vouchsafe that this my book fall not still-born into the world-wilderness. Let there spring, Gentle One, from out its leaves vigor of thought and thoughtful deed to reap the harvest wonderful. (Let the ears of a guilty people tingle with truth, and seventy millions sign for the righteousness which exalteth nations.)"[32] To be heard, in more ways than one, in multiple facets and modes, is what Du Bois sought. This is why Du Bois included textual and musical epigraphs to deliberately set the tone for each chapter and allow an intertextuality for all kinds of readers to approach his seminal sociological treatise.

Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* has had an impact that, like the soundscape, has rippled outward tesseractively through time. When published, Du Bois' work represented not only the marriage of prose and a foundational sociological study of the stake of African Americans in the United States, particularly in the South, but as an exemplar of the exemplars Du Bois hoped to assist in cultivating their significance and presence in the country and throughout the world (reap the harvest wonderful). As its messages resonated throughout America, through the Great Migration and into the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, its impact cannot be overstated with the ongoing struggle for racial equity and justice. Combining autobiographical narrative,

[32] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 165.

sociological and historical analyses, and social critique, Du Bois sought a wholeness of spirit by recognizing, and therefore calling out, the cleave of consciousness African Americans must endure in the Other World, the diasporic Americas. It is here that Du Bois coined the term *double consciousness*, citing,

> …the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.[33]

It is this cultural psychological phenomenon that Du Bois recognizes as a means through which to "listen to (and communicate) the striving in the souls of black folk,"[34] and is the thesis he uses to investigate the function of various social ideals of the time, including the color-line in location, wealth, and education, the Atlanta Compromise of Booker T. Washington, and the stake of the black church as a social center. Du Bois relies on this double-consciousness in his use of two different styles of epigraphy for each of his chapters, in musical notation and lyric/poetry as a companion to his prose.

Du Bois knew double-consciousness allowed him an inherent intertextuality with a range of his readers. Each epigraph includes a short text of poetry, Biblical verse, or quote, mostly in English but one in German.[35] Accompanying this text was musical notation of what he termed "ten master songs," that gave context to the companion epigraphy and chapter text, but also that echoed older sentiments and knowledges that were encoded into the double-consciousness of the African

[33] Ibid., 2.
[34] Ibid., 7.
[35] Ibid., p. 37 – from Friedrich Schiller's play *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, Act IV, scene 1.

American. It is important to note that the text partnered with the musical notation is not the lyrics of or explicitly related to the song quoted. In fact, none of the musical excerpts include or contain their associated lyrical companions. Du Bois deliberately uses music as a message without linguistic form that still delivered its meaning, whether the reader could articulate this or not. He assumes at least some familiarity with the reading of musical notation. This reifies his burgeoning thesis of the Talented Tenth carrying on the culminations of the culture of black folk, that those that were responsible for the progression of African Americans as an attuned group, the tuning tones upon which all others would adjust their resonances, could by default, read music. At the time of his publishing, most familiarity with musical notation came from church gatherings, which is why most of the examples are spirituals. He includes "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen," You may bury me in the East," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Or as he put it,

> [And] so before each thought that I have written in this book I have set a phrase, a haunting echo of these weird old songs in which the soul of the black slave spoke to men. Ever since I was a child these songs have stirred me strangely. They came out of the South unknown to me, one by one, and yet at once I knew them as *of me and of mine*... The songs are indeed the siftings of centuries; the music is far more ancient than the words, and in it we can trace here and there signs of development.[36]

But he is deliberate in explaining that the lyrical containers no longer hold the essential form the messages that the combination of tones were originally imbued. He acknowledges the inevitable "blending" and influencing the geospatial sharing had upon the music itself. This, he explains, is why the music is familiar, but he dares not contain it further with words that may have been twisted by the natural development of message throughout time: "In these songs, I have said,

[36] Ibid., p. 155 and 157.

the slave spoke to the world. Such a message is naturally veiled and half articulate. Words and music have lost each other and new and cant phrases of a dimly understood theology have displaced the older sentiment."[37] He uses his final chapter in *Souls of Black Folk*, entitled "The Sorrow Songs," to delve into a musical analysis of the emotive qualities of the tones and repetitions, the context of improvisation in secret gatherings, and the borrowing and flow that words, in American English, reveal and disguise.

Foremost to the structure of this chapter and dissertation is its attempt at an homage to W.E.B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* incorporating epigraphs and a few bars of a melody that I consider pivotal to contextualize the chapter and any echoes of those multimodalities situated above the text. For example, the musical epigraph of this first chapter is the first of two main themes in William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony* (1930),[38] played in the first movement by a Harmon-muted trumpet, evoking an archetypical blues melody. Still himself also employed poetic epigraphs for his symphonic movements, using works from Paul Laurence Dunbar, a late 19th century African-American poet, one of which is emblazoned on the prologue of this dissertation as an echo of the American Dream. All of these are Signs, subtle or not, that indicate the interconnectivity of the American voice. Du Bois highlights this interconnectedness by hearkening to the wisdom and spirit of our ancestors, and "the hope that sang in the songs of my fathers well sung."[39]

Understanding the meaning behind musical messages without their lyrical containers may seem like a daunting errand; and Du Bois' epigraphy is made all the more complex by a companion text that may or may not have explicit intertextual references to the music or the chapters' subject.

[37] Ibid., p. 159.
[38] William Grant Still. *Afro-American Symphony* : Revised 1969. Study score. Novello Orchestral Series, 1970.
[39] Ibid., 163.

Hereto follows in this dissertation a historical disquisition into the American understanding of musical meaning-making, and how these significations resounded throughout the soundscape, and what happens in the spaces between text and sound where signification occurs. Our historic hearing is mediated in various tesseractive echoes, from our personal experiences situated in regional and cultural context, socio-political and economic circumstances, and by phonological development. Du Bois' epigraphy assumes a self-reflexivity inherent in double-consciousness, and this dissertation will rely heavily on the nuance between hearing and listening.

Hearing and listening are two concepts that require delimiting in order for their distinctions to serve our goal. Hearing refers to the physical ability to receive sound input, typically via audition through an organ, typically the ear. Auditory stimuli affect the environment by vibrating molecules in various media into the shape of waves, which in turn is perceived by sensation of the primary auditory context in the frontal lobe of the brain. Hearing is a passive process and requires only sound wave(s) vibrating throughout the ear. Hearing serves an important biological function of awareness of the environment, but with a constant array of stimuli, the brain relegates much of this sense to passivity and acts when sound meets impulse. The ear has a unique sophistication, much like the eye in sight or the tongue in taste, in that an ever-developing predisposition learns to focus on stimuli it regards as self-resonant. Resonance ripples outward from phenomenological events, cultivating depth and color of sound from recognizable acoustic environments and sonorities. The threshold of sound exists at 20 micro Pascals, and the ear can detect frequency changes at 3.6Hz. The ear is as much constituted by the acoustic space as it constitutes the space with recognizable connections and sibilances. The ear can distinguish between relationships of intervals, tone, intensity, flow, and timbre. Even further than timbre, the ear can also conjure spectral content in the harmonic series of music, pure tones and overtones interacting in an environment, in any given

moment. The classically trained Western ear is socialized with the Stuttgart pitch, A440Hz, a standard tuning of music performance, and finds interactive comfort in patterns of tension and relief, harmonically, rhythmically, and melodically. An ear musically cultivated in another tradition may be more sensitive to modality shifts and frequency modulation. And while I use the term ear, it is important to note that the ear itself cannot be trained, but rather there is a "cultivation of musical mind,"[40] in the listening that takes place. Listening is where interpretation happens, outside of time.

Listening, on the other hand, is the seeking of impulse from sound. It is an active process of focusing on the frequential synchronization and resonances around us and the interpretation of their meaning that follows. Listening is the ear meeting and reflecting on the environment that resounds around and within it. Hearing is merely the first act of listening, where listening requires the intentionality of seeking the sign, the signification. Jean-Luc Nancy differentiates these two terms as "in all saying (and I mean in all discourse, in the whole chain of meaning) there is hearing, and in hearing itself, at the very bottom of it, a listening. Which means: perhaps it is necessary that sense not be content to make sense (or to be *logos*), but that it want also to resound." He clarifies further, "to listen is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible… listening strains toward a present sense beyond sound."[41] Listening requires an engagement with the perceptual stimulus as well as the resonance of its meaning as it shifts meaning in the mind. Listening can be further deconstructed into active and reflective, for awareness and acknowledgement on the one hand, and for comprehension and retention, on the other, though both are systematically interconnected to mnemotechnological cognitive processes. Jean-Luc Nancy makes this distinction with the nuances between *écouter* and *entendre*, capturing

[40] Pauline Oliveros, *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice* (iUniverse, Inc., 2005).
[41] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press), 6.

sound for transmission (without necessitating its meaning), and understanding within exchange (between language and speech), respectively. *Écouter* summons the reception of sound regardless of intent, whereas *entendre* recalls *tendre de l'oreille*, a stretching, tuning of the ear inside a sonic field. This stretching of self is the interpretation, the in-between. He puts it simply, "communication is not the transmission, but the sharing."[42] The sharing is, therefore, intimately subject to the delay, from the stretching of self to the connection to the reconstitution of self. Listening happens in between, in the echoes. Or, in our connection to historical hearing, in resonant echoes from the past into the future. Where hearing is vibration meeting the (ear)drumhead, listening is reaching into and presupposes Silence.

Silence is the absence of sound or noise, the void upon which all molecules vibrate. In an absolute sense, silence is not possible to perceive, by the nature of things in their movement, the interaction of bodies upon a plane will always produce a vibration. Even if humans deliberately seek silence, in an anechoic chamber, a room designed to slow and mute these vibratory patterns with acoustic paneling and foam, one can still hear their heart beat with the rush of blood through our ears, or the movement of air around the ear drum. Thus, sound and its perception function a posteriori, silence and sound are dependent on their experience, their signification.

This, then, creates a double-edged sword in the act and agency in Silence and by turn, Silencing. While we create sound and signify our world upon the plane of silence, its generative qualities are contrasted by its marginalizing qualities; utterance resounds from Silence and can represent peace and quiet. While for others, the amplitude of Silence beleaguers an utterance, it can represent agreement or acceptance, or disapproval and erasure. But, as it is in its theoretically

[42] Ibid., 41.

absolute form all the way up to the most complex symphony, silence is not merely the absence of sound, but the space between that allows sound to exist. And even silence echoes.

German philosopher Walter Benjamin, in his essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History," suggests that history is not a linear progression of events, but rather a series of fragments and echoes of soundings and silencings that reverberate through time. Benjamin argues that the victors of history create the dominant narrative, and that the voices of those who have been silenced are often lost or ignored. However, he suggests that these voices can still be heard in the form of echoes, which persist through time and can be heard by those who are attuned to them. Those who are oppressed and marginalized in society have a history that is "not one of those which are written by the victors," but rather one that is "written in the cracks and the ruins." Therefore, it remains the task of the historian (and ethnomusicologist) to listen for these echoes and to uncover the hidden histories of those who have been silenced. By doing so, he argues, we can gain a more complete understanding of the past and the present, and work towards creating a more just and equitable future. Listening, *deliberately listening*, must conscientiously engage those instances of Silence/ing and marginalization, and how this too shapes the American dream.

Charles H. Long describes African peoples, who are an "involuntary presence" mastering "the necessary pause" of speech in the Colonies and Americas after crossing the Atlantic sound in the Middle Passage. Engaging humanity as a participative, performative reality that humans share in search for ontological somebodiness, Long draws out the ontological field of being upon which the oppressive system, the "creativity of the Western world,"[43] speaks and enacts agency and power. He refers to marginalized peoples inheriting the trauma of slavery as Silence but not absence: "they were present not as voices speaking but as the silence which is necessary to all

[43] Long, *Significations*, 65.

speech. They existed as the pauses between words – those pauses which are necessary if speech is to be possible – and in their silence they spoke."[44] As the silences that envelop all language, upon which all reality has its existence, "silence is a fundamentally ontological position, a position which though involved in language and speech exposes us to a new kind of reality and existence."[45] Thus Long's definition of religion as orientation[46] took on a new realm of meaning for this project, an ontological plane from which to engage the consonance and dissonance of meaning-making: the flow of being on the acoustic plane and how one is oriented by and to it. The movement and flow on this plane is an important factor in this theory, the self as sound or silence as it moves forward in space and time, accompanied by all other anthropophonies on the acoustic plane. Just as Long affirms Victor Turner's sense of *communitas*, human togetherness in flux, on pilgrimage or in diaspora (in the space of the no-longer but not yet), as one of the primary influences of religious orientation, the Silence that envelops language system guides the Speech. Silence is an orientation. In other words, Signification requires the Other to speak, even through its Silence, therein distinguishing the Signified and Signifier.

Which is not to say that those "involuntary peoples" on colonial shores were mute and unheard, but rather their social and political status was dictated by the act of Silencing dissent or dissonance, suturing the atrocities of white supremacy by controlling the narrative, by acting as the Signifier in the game of Signification. The Signifier dictates the ontological being and the rules it is held to and excepted from, wherein "personhood as ownership" is the prevailing narrative that has shaped American history. Or as Long puts more eloquently, "Signifying is worse than lying because it obscures and obfuscates a discourse without taking responsibility for

[44] Ibid., 65-66.
[45] Ibid., 69.
[46] "Orientation in the ultimate sense, that is, how one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one's place in the world." – Ibid., 7.

so doing. This verbal misdirection parallels the real argument but gains its power of meaning from the structure of the discourse itself without the signification being subjected to the rules of the discourse."[47] DEVELOP

A linguistic or sonic system can use rhythm, repetition, and rhyme and impose upon the Signified any ontological state of being. It is from soundness of self that one can twist and transform the sonic plane of meaning and identity.

Upon the philosophy of Charles S. Peirce's semiotic chain, Long elucidates the interconnectedness between what manifests in the social from the individual to the collective in his Prolegomenon to a Religious Hermeneutic in *Significations*. He acknowledges forthright how the manifestation of religious (or ontological) orientation has double meaning – in that it has concreteness in reality, as through some object or symbol of cultural life, as well as the hidden "mode of being that is prior to and different from the ordinary cultural categories."[48] Long is situating this text as an analysis of the sense of myth to culture (via Eliade and van der Leeuw), but we can superimpose musical logic with the same symbolic logic he employs. A sign as anything perceived by an observer creates an effect in the observer via the medium of an object. For our purposes, sound, utterance, or music is the Sign, and the object, or the idea or message initiated by the sign creates an effect and chain of meaning from sign to object to sign in relation to the observer; vis-à-vis, messages transmitted sonically or through silence echo, in the realm of meaning and in the Self.

It is key to note the doubleness in Silence – the sense of marginalization, and on the other side of the coin, interiority. From both its generative and destructive agency, silence can still allow a space for introspection and social reflection. Silence can mute the noise, from the

[47] Ibid., 1.
[48] Ibid., 31; originally published in *History of Religions* 6, 3 (February 1967): 254-64.

exterior world and in the interior mind, from the individual to the collective. Silence can cultivate a stillness and an interiority that functions as a location from which to rebuild narrative and social solidarity. Listening to the Silenced and those that have been able to signify through Silence is an explicit goal of this project. Therefore, Kevin Quashie's theories on the sovereignty of the interior will rise to the fore of this theoretical tapestry of resonance. Quashie, an English professor and cultural critic, explores the sonorous navigation of African American peoples cultural and social spaces through this plane of Signification.

Quashie builds a compelling argument on the publicness of resistance in black culture and race as a concept that was created and is sustained in the public sphere. This is the realm of the signified, relegated only to its exteriority, its place as Other. W.E.B. Du Bois called this double consciousness, Darlene Clark Hine terms it "dissemblance."[49] The interaction between what is said and what is kept interior is itself an ontological mode of signification, a further modality, or fold of history. A consciousness whose "dogged strength"[50] can maintain subjective interiority in the face of forced exteriority – in the case of Hine, of rape – may find "resistance [as] deeply resonant with black culture and history, but" as Quashie exhorts, "it is not sufficient for describing the totality of black humanity."[51] It is not resistance in Signification that solicits his project, but rather tracing the patterns in historiocultural sonic development to engage the sake of the Silenced, the Quiet, and the Sonorous. Quashie endorses "[a] rethinking of signifying … because it points to what is lost in understanding expressiveness only through a discourse of publicness. The concern here is that the ways we interpret these central idioms of black culture – doubleness, signifying, dissemblance, double consciousness, masking – assume that black

[49] https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/journals/signs/pr/200331
[50] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 2.
[51] Kevin Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 26.

expressiveness is exclusively public. This assumption is troubling because it ties black expression to the discourse of resistance… the lingua franca of black culture." Deep listening, if it is to be a valuable tool, must account for the twofold nature of Silence – of displacing and dis-storying of voice, but also the quietude of the interior, and where meaning manifests from its chain of effect.

Sound and its resonances, from its origin to the effects of its echoes, is a powerful tool for meaning-making. The sonic plane allows for communication through language as speech, non-verbal utterance as elaborative, and music as the resonance of these linguistic and tonal containers patterned in behavior. Music has been employed to preserve and develop, to express and oppress, and connect and divide culture, all through attunement. Historical musical analysis allows our endeavors here to illuminate the preservation or erasure of cultural heritage, the development or deterioration of society through musical messages, and identifying the interconnected nature of their influences on one another and culture writ large. Nevertheless, ethno/musicologists and historians alike need to be careful to delineate their locations and orientations. This project is couched in the methodologies of New Musicology, in which the emphasis is in contextual and cultural factors that influence not only the reception of music, but its creation in turn, and the cycle this engenders. New Musicology gathers a range of interdisciplinary tools, not least of which is ethnomusicological in approach, but with a wider contextual net from which to derive ethnographic data. Which is to say, New Musicology's methodology allows a greater net from which to examine power dynamics and social structures through history that shape music and musical practice. The danger is an orientation of determinism that fails to account for the agency of individual musicians.

This is where I find Paul Gilroy's authenticity of sound discussion helpful to this dissertation's mission. Arguing against the totalitization that musical analysis of history can create Gilroy is specific in emphasizing the movement and gesture of sonic meaning-making as an anti-essentialist posture. He "[approaches] the music as a *changing* rather than unchanging same."[52] DEVELOP Music is a common theme, a unifying power, an assemblage not based solely on exteriority (race) or interiority (Self), but from the interaction between the two for evocation and signification of Self on the sonic field: "Though this identity is often felt to be natural and spontaneous, it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily significations, desires. These significations are condensed in musical performance, although it does not, of course, monopolize them."[53] In this critique, he calls out the myth of authenticity as a traumatic response of black music to European colonizers essentializing, particularly for capital gain, and suggests approaching music as a constantly evolving tradition that echoes all the musics and messages that came before. This movement of identity implies a movement of narrative, a flow of sonic identity, what he describes as *kinetic orality.* The term originates from Dr. Cornel West's article "Black culture and postmodernism,"[54] and refers to the ways in which African American signifiers use gesture, movement, and rhythm to communicate meaning and connections. Its deeply connected with the "unchanging same" principal as it reflects influence of African oral traditions, subversive messages in pre-Emancipation abolitionist and Civil Rights movements, and all anti-essentialist performative gestures.

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[52] Paul Gilroy, "Sounds Authentic: Black Music, Ethnicity, and the Challenge of a 'Changing' Same," *Black Music Research Journal* 11:2 (Autumn 1991), 131.
[53] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 110.
[54] Cornel West, "Black Culture and Postmodernism," in *Remaking History*, ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani. Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1989, 87–96.

The culminating line of Morrison's novel *Song of Solomon*, is "If you surrendered to the air, you could ride it." [55]Morrison testifies to this by harnessing the electricity of the kinetic orality[56] inherent in the African American tradition, to create a consonance of self in her characters. Most of her work has a musicality to it – of narrative, form, and meaning. The self is the breath, the air that creates meaning that imprints on the soundscapes and drives the creation and process of culture. She traces the various strategies that a dispossessed and displaced people, faced with the signification of their silence, would nonetheless keep improvising and making themselves new, and therefore living their lives in the consonance of their selves. Their kinesis bloomed and echoed in the quiet places, the daily moments, in the periphery. Their lives resonated music in every gesture, every step toward the concept of the self, each going-with-the-flow. Milkman learns of and uncovers the mysteries of his past through song, Pilate surrendered to the air of her grief as she sang her eulogy of mercy to Hagar. Morrison's characters, from Pilate in *Song of Solomon* to Felice in *Jazz*, confirm her mission for restoring the articularity of sound. Music allows both her reader and the character to be lifted from the weight of nominal meaning and into the realm of substantive, embodied meaning. Meaning that exists in music and the joy of creating it, if only it is to be hearkened. The music is the air that lifts them up: lifts Robert Smith

[55] Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 337.

[56] "Though more usually raised by analysis of sports, athletics, and dance it ought to contribute directly to the understanding of the traditions of performance which continue to characterize the production and reception of diaspora musics. This orientation to the specific dynamics of performance has a wider significance in the analysis of black cultural forms than has so far been supposed. Its strengths are evident when it is contrasted with approaches to black culture have been premised exclusively on textuality and narrative rather than dramaturgy, enunciation, and gesture." – from Paul Gilroy's "Sounds Authentic," 113.
"The concrete, everyday response to institutionalized terrorism – slavery or Jim-Crowism – was to deploy weapons of kinetic orality, passionate physicality, and combative spirituality to survive and dream of freedom. By kinetic orality, I mean dynamic repetitive and energetic rhetorical styles that form communities, e.g., antiphonal styles and linguistic innovations that accent fluid, improvisational identities… By passionate physicality I mean bodily stylizations of the world, syncopations and polyrhythms that assert one's somebodiness in a society in which one's body has no [perceptible] public worth, only economic value as a laboring mechanism." – from Cornel West's "Black Culture and Postmodernism," in *Remaking History*, ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1989), 93.

to jump from No Mercy Hospital, lifts Solomon back to Africa, raises Milkman to his most intimate connection with his ancestors and self. What each character must realize is how to surrender to the music of their lives in harmony, both of self and community, and in healing.

Morrison employs the kinesis of identity on the sonic field in her efforts for consonance of self and resonance of the past: "Contrary to what you may have heard or learned, the past is not done, and it is not over. It's still in process. Which is another way of saying that when it is critiqued, analyzed, it yields new information about itself. The past is already changing as it is being re-examined, *as it is being listened to for deeper resonances*. Actually, it can be more liberating than any imagined future, if you are willing to identify its evasions, its distortions, its lies, and are willing to unleash its secrets." [57] It is through this liberation of the past, in re-storying, in learning to live, Signify, and improvise self upon the natural flux of how our pasts are re-membered, re-assembled, observed, and interpreted, that leads to knowledge of self – a key element in Hip Hop theory.

George Yancy confronts the impact of black bodies and narratives being forcibly silenced, in the name of Eric Garner, when he asked "One wonders if the white police officers heard Garner's cries. And if they did hear them, why didn't they respond responsibly? What is it about a Black male body, in this case pleading for help, that occludes a sympathetic response? Did they hear his suffering? … Did they hear his effort to speak to his reality, what he was doing outside that store, that he was not selling illegal cigarettes? One might even ask, was he really hearable or seeable?"[58] Yancy conceives of the white imaginary needing a conceptual space that occludes and silences any site of vulnerability in the ethnic system – the system requires consistent

[57] Toni Morrison, "College Commencement Address, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts" delivered 28 May 2004, emphasis my own.
[58] Yancy, "White Suturing, Black Bodies"

suturing, covering, smothering, muting. The recording of these cries, from cellphone cameras and microphones to the world on a 2 second delay, the sounds of bare life uttered upon the sonic plane, yields consistent redundancy in our modern soundscape, and yet the dominant system consistently sutures any site of vulnerability and silences it. Yancy prescribes psychosocial un-suturing for the oppressing system that is white supremacy. To counter the supremacist noise of the Southeastern soundscape, I seek to amplify the social frequency response of the caesuras, pauses, and quietude in the record of the soundscape. The project requires a practice of embodied un-suturing by deep listening to the resonances and absences in the soundscape.

This dissertation seeks to listen to and record the impact of this Signifying, and the various mechanisms employed for creating counternarratives or narratives of alterity. As a rhetorical device, Signifying inherently relies on the relationship of what is spoken and what is silenced. It is through this doubleness, between the public and private, the exterior and the interior, that Signifying occurs and the one who controls the structure or frame of the language game is the Signifier. It is the ability to resist and speak in the prevailing system in the dominating soundscape using the duplicitous nature of the rhetorical devices of a Signifier, that I call the multimodality of Signification. "One must be adept in the verbal arts either to signify or to keep from being signified upon."[59] Grasping the various modes through which narrative is created, observed, and developed and harnessing this for consonance of self is the subject of this project's investigations. In a sense, it could be described as musical narrative theory, or the sonic dialogic.

Multimodality here refers to the use of multiple modes or channels of communication to convey meaning upon the soundscape, or plane of Signification. A mode of communication is a specific means of expressing or representing information, such as language, images, sound,

[59]Charles Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora, CO: The Davis Group, 1995), 1.

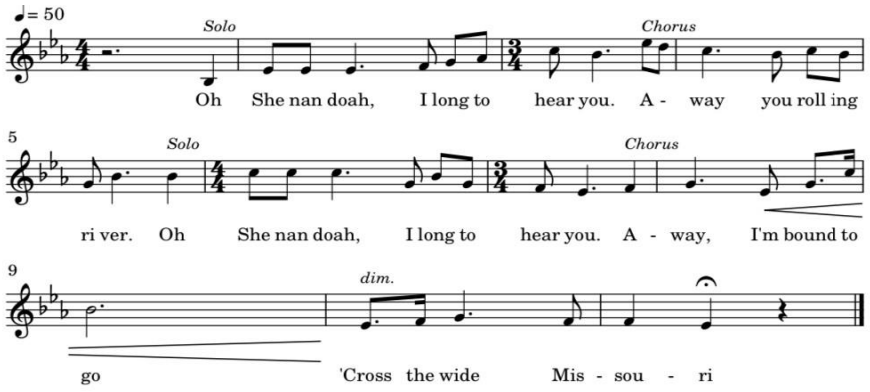
gesture, or spatial organization. In multimodal signification, different modes are combined or integrated to create a complex and nuanced, historically-embedded message. A Signifier's speech is multimodal, combining words with tone, facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning. Multimodality is also an important concept in fields such as linguistics, semiotics, and media studies, where scholars are interested in understanding how different modes of communication interact and combine to create meaning. By analyzing the multimodality of Signification, this works strives to gain insights into the complex ways in which people communicate and make sense of the world around them. If music is an interplay of meaning between what is possible and what is actual, in what is said and what is silenced, then music represents a frame of reference to interpret and improvise upon cultural meaning. In the game of Signification, what can we learn from the multimodality of Signifyin'?

Chapter II

Carving Mountains and Riding Rivers

Gather stories like harvest and sing honor songs
Save the seeds to carry you through the winter…
There are stories caught in my mother's hair
I can't bear the weight of…
It's what she doesn't say that could destroy me
What she can't say
She weeps milk

- Qwo-Li Driskell, *Walking with Ghosts*, 2005



This chapter will elucidate the role of the soundscape in transmitting and preserving Southern prophetic and protest history and story-telling arts. This will include the ethnic and religious resonances from various communities in and around the Blue Ridge Mountains, as well as the hybrid voices created within. By geospatially situating Appalachian soundscapes, one can carve the shape of the mountain from their echoes. I will establish my thesis of how populations

and soundscapes congregate around rivers and how stories flow like and amongst them. From the spiritual *Wayfarin' Stranger* to the *Ballad of John Henry* to the folk ditty *Darlin' Cori*, I will unfold, ripple by ripple, the echo of messages gliding down the Chattahoochee, the New River, carving the people and the mountains within them. This chapter will include a detailed historiocultural account of religious developments, as heard through its music, against the terrain and social fabric of the region. It is here that I want to situate my investigation into how the echoes of Africa can speak through American musicians. This soundscape invokes the "Devil at the Crossroads," banjo story coming from both African and Biblical sources and representing the Mason-Dixon line, and traces how the South faced many crossroads in the musical development of Southern iterations of blues and folk, country and rock and roll.

The foundation of this project's theoretical framework relies on the concept of the *soundscape*. Composer and environmentalist R. Murray Schafer defines the term simply as "the sonic environment." He takes care in his seminal book to explore the physics of the acoustic environment with detailed analyses of perceptual ground of aurality, sounds as symbols (sonic and scriptural), the context and stake of noise, as well as the reflections of the natural soundscape in cosmological myths and religious ritual. Through these schematics I conceive of the soundscape as a perceptual sphere, akin to Jurgen Habermas' *public sphere*[60] and Arjun Appadurai's *-scapes* framework in his treatise *Modernity at Large*.[61] Habermas describes the public sphere as the socially designated liminal space where private citizens discuss public concerns, where the private meets the public. Coupled with this is Appadurai's sense of 'flows of influence,' in finance, technology, and the three -scapes most pertinent to my research:

[60] Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, translated by Thomas Burger, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1991).
[61] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1996).

ethnoscapes (flow of people), mediascapes (flow of media) and ideoscapes (flow of ideas), moving about the globe. Soundscapes are tonal, lyrical, and phenomenological centers where the voices of people, their media and their ideas flow, and reflects the sonic ethos of a community in space and time. The stake of flow and movement factors in heavily with the liminality of the discursive space in the qualitative structure of my work. In his introduction, Schafer extols the development of sonic studies, from environmental designers considering the acoustic impacts on lived and public spaces to otology to semiotics to music therapy. I endeavor to pair the theoretical lens of soundscape to plot the patterns and flow music makes throughout the Southeastern United States history and religious developments (signification in religioscapes), as well as from ethnomusicological and ethnographic collection.

In his commentary on the impact that technology had on the acoustic space, Schafer claims that composer Arthur Schoenberg's development of atonality in the early 20th century, in which music no longer repeats itself and revolves around no tonal center, was seeking to eschew systemic redundancy because the advent of the recording industry provided repetition and redundancy for them. He says in this way there was a paradigm shift in the desire to make and use music: "for the vast majority of humans today music no longer functions as the antennae of the spirit but as a sensory anchor and stabilizer against future-shock."[62] This was my entry into the lens of soundscape studies to religious studies. I want to explore how human meaning-making shifts with the ebb and flow of soundscapes interacting with one another in the Southeastern United States religioscapes, and how these narratives, these messages reverberate throughout the globe.

[62] Schafer, 114.

For Schafer, the realm of musical possibility exponentially expanded with the modern composer John Cage's philosophy of 'music from any combination of sounds,' citing specifically Henry David Thoreau's essays from Walden Pond delighting in the acoustic space of Nature. This theme has been explored in depth by acoustic ecology composers such as Harry Partch, Pauline Oliveros, Barry Truax, Bernie Krause, and others. It is because of this I want to situate my religiological and ethnomusicological analysis geo-spatiotemporally. While I do not seek to reify Schafer's hierarchicalizing notion that music can be wholly indicative of the psychological or social maturity and developmental phase of civilization, the soundscape projects the realm of meaning from their linguistic containers to their sonic ones as well. This allows a synthesis with narrative theory and signification. The ultimate goal of soundscape studies is to answer the final question, "is the soundscape of the world [or region, in the case of this project] an indeterminate composition over which we have no control, or are *we* its composers and performers, responsible for giving it form and beauty?"[63] The objective of my project is to endorse a philosophical practice of embodied un-suturing through deep listening of the interactions of/within soundscapes through American history.

Exploring the soundscape of American history can provide us a valuable perspective on the past and follow the patterns of the development of its modality of meaning far into the future. Sound and music transmit messages uncontainable in language, conveying emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that can be difficult to discern from written record alone. Even the growth of technology and media have been transformed by advances in sound recording and broadcasting technologies, and these technologies in turn shaped the people and the messages they

[63] Ibid., 5.

transmitted. The symphony of time is punctuated by musical themes and meanings that reoccur and recapitulate by various voices in various times.

This dissertation posits that the multimodality of signification that music is characterized by in the United States, and more specifically to this project the Southeastern soundscape, tends to congregate geospatially around river centers and flows along their land-carving masses. Not only do people gather around water sources, but they follow their flow as well in movement of people and their ideas/messages. The historic New Orleans Jazz Festival is held on the Mississippi River and the Delta blues was whistled amongst its reeds. The great Shenandoah River of the Virginias that empties into the Appalachians rushed with sailor songs, bowline chants, and sea shanties, not least of which includes the popular folk song, "Oh Shenandoah," that saw waves of revival and eventually recorded by Paul Robeson in the 1930s, who is also known for his performance of "Old Man River" in the musical "Show Boat." Rivers played a key role in religious revival movements, often incorporating a river as a body of water from which to cleanse one's soul of sin.

A history of music in the United States is a history of African American peoples, not merely of their culture or events that effervesce upon their soundscapes, but in their pursuit of selfhood and voice in an ontological landscape that seeks to Silence them. Not only this, but music has always accompanied religious development throughout the U.S., the African American derivations of such withstanding. Music has been intimately bound to religious expression and exploration, from incidental or merely enlivening events, to imbuing melodies and lyrics with implicit messages and infusing meaning to rites of passage.

Like the semiotic chain of Peirce and the multimodality of signification, history is enacted by and upon African American peoples influenced by their perspectives of historical

events that preceded them. For the enslaved, it was the Middle Passage; for the freed, enslavement, with the echo of the Middle Passage; for the Freed Person living in Reconstruction, it was emancipation from enslavement as a cultural product of the Middle Passage, and so on and so forth. Music in African American religious expression has functioned the same way. After being forced to traverse the largest acoustic field on our globe, the ocean, and being linguistically disordered by splitting families and their dialects apart, call-and-response speech patterns and social use remained. From call-and-response, music developed tesseractively to spirituals, which echoed their call-and-response events, but in the Christian perspective. In the context of early spirituals, call and response served a number of functions. First, it allowed for improvisation and variation within a song, and thus served as a container for social emotional processing. The leader could introduce new lyrics or melodies, while the group of responders could adapt and respond in real time. This allowed for a degree of spontaneity and creativity within the performance. This helped generate a sense of community and shared experience among the singers. By responding in unison to the leader's call, the group could create a sense of solidarity and unity, reinforcing the community. Call and response also functioned as a microcosm of sacred communication, the direct interaction between the leader and the group of singers, created a powerful and emotional connection between the music and the spiritual experience.

Spirituals synthesized with ragtime and conversational style of melody developed into Blues as well as Vaudeville, and its dissonant echo, minstrelsy. Encompassing new derivations of the same rhythmic patterns and religious connection, Blues and Vaudeville reverberates in historically informed fashion in Gospel and Jazz. These forms then gave rise to Rock and Roll, electronic music, and Hip Hop. This is where I believe the tesseract of music history and religion in America exists now, in Hip Hop. If you unfolded this hypercube, you would find echoes and

echoes of call-and-response, spirituals, blues, jazz, and rock and roll reverberating throughout its sonic field.

Given my perspective of tesseractivity, it is assured that I am firmly on the side of Herskovits in the Frazier-Herskovits debate. In the 1930s and 40s, anthropologist Melville Herskovits debated with Morehouse professor E. Franklin Frazier about the role of African cultural heritage in the development of African American traditions; the former emphasized that although Africanisms, or African survivals (à la a preceding anthropological theory by E. B. Tylor) were systematically wrenched from the enslaved peoples during and after the Middle Passage, some things (in a bricolage) survived and evolved into something new. Frazier however, as a sociologist, wanted to highlight the ability of individual identities, and by relation their cultures, to be reborn, from a kind of tabula rasa, and emphasize the environment in developing a people. My method assumes that while the trauma of enslavement and violence enacted within was deeply damaging, fractalizing of the tesseract even, the peoples that emerged from Middle Passage and that suffered through enslavement were not tabula rasa. They were conscious agents in the unfolding of history, and they did so by the protection of community. In spite of the tactics deployed by enslavers to wrench identity from enslaved African and Afro-Caribbean peoples, least of all the insidiousness of renaming and silencing, connections remained. Family was forged in dispossession, joining together was not only a means of survival but of reintegrating memory, re-membering. Memory and identity were not wholly erased, only obfuscated. Even still, on the nature of the origins of call-and-response style preaching and ritualistic preference, Frazier's argument has more merit for Eugene D. Genovese in *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* regarding the theological and stylistic choice of Baptists over Methodists. He contends that call-and-response is indeed originally African, but there were other factors for the

preference of Baptists. It was not solely some African survival that caused the enslaved to shout, but also the emotionalism of the Baptists that brought parts into a whole. It is here where we can see call-and-response oral traditions developing from field songs and camp meetings to ring-shouts and the spirituals.

Call-and-response, as Genovese contends, hearkens to parts constitutive of a whole, a decidedly religious sentiment, a 'calling out' as an individual and a response from the whole of creation. The practice itself has origins in the democratic conversation style of West African communities. "The slaves' insistence on shouting harked back to Africa in both form and content. The style, which subsequently came to dominate American popular dancing in a variety of versions, could not have been more clearly African. The same might also be said about the insistence that the community worship God in a way that integrated the various forms of human expression – song, dance, and prayer, all with call-and-response, as parts of a single offering of beauty which pays homage to God." [64] Ritual, then, assumes the epistemological and soteriological stance of parts seeking wholeness. Integrative wholeness, as a spiritual goal, created a rhythmic style of preaching and singing in camp meetings. The chanted sermon, as it reverberated from the sundown gatherings, set the preacher's "words to a regular beat reinforced by the congregation's shouts of 'Amen' or 'Preach it.' Finally, he reached an emotional peak in which the chanted words of the sermon merged with the singing, clapping, and shouting of the congregation. The effect of this style of sermon was to heighten the emotional power of the preacher's message as he and his congregation spurred each other's religious fervor by their mutual interaction."[65]

[64] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 234.
[65] Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 47.

Another form of the individual being healed and protected by the whole is in field-songs or work-songs, colloquially known as "hollers." Hollers have a different significance with the individual seeking self-expression in the whole. Calls of the one helped the many, the melismas of the crier, the leaning on the end of the beat as a retarding effect, gave measured ease to the repetition of work. "The masters encouraged quick-time singing among their field slaves [sic], but the slaves proved themselves masters of slowing down the songs and the work,"[66] To lessen the impact a higher speed of back-breaking labor, the enslaved and chain-ganged enacted agency and social protection through song. The implicit state sanctioned religion of the colonies was decidedly Christian, but Islam too held sway on the musical influences on the enslaved. Ethnomusicologist Gerhard Kubik asserts that the melisma of hollers and their wavy intonation bear striking resemblance to the Qur'anic recitation and call-to-prayer styles of African Muslims and the flexible tonality of Maghrebian modes.[67] In another sense, it is a call to participants to a new mode of time-keeping.

This one grasp over time-keeping proved fecund, from an amalgam of call-and-response, field-hollering, and chanted sermons the ring-shouts and spirituals arose from the synthesis of Protestant hymns with African rhythms and expressivity. "Spirituals were not only sung, but they engaged the whole body in hand-clapping, foot-stamping, head-shaking excitement… As they circled around in a ring, the slaves moved into states of religious trance that left them renewed in spirit."[68] Their lyrics were based on familiar Biblical stories, on customary chord progressions and chorus, but still followed the call-and-response form and time-arresting rubato. These led to the rise of Sorrow Songs, a distinct variety of spirituals that gave the enslaved specific sonic

[66] Genovese, 324.
[67] Gerhard Kubik, *Africa and the Blues* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1999).
[68] Raboteau, 48.

space to comment on their daily lives, lament suffering and burdens, and feel heard by the community. W.E.B. Du Bois commented that through the seemingly innocuous act of singing, "the slave spoke to the world. Words and music have lost each other and new and cant phrases of a dimly understood theology have replaced the older sentiment. The words that are left to us, cleared of evident dross, conceal much of real poetry and meaning beneath conventional theology and unmeaning rhapsody… Over the inner thoughts of the slaves and their relations one with another the shadow of fear ever hung, so that we get but glimpses here and there, and also with them, eloquent omissions and silences."[69] Not only did spirituals and sorrow songs allow the enslaved to process their trauma sonically and socially, but they did so under new significations of meaning in the spirituals. Canaan Land was more than heaven, Jordan was more than a river in Galilee, it is here, Canaan Land is just beyond the River, to the next shore. The poignancy of the human condition existed in the sounds, the act of singing, the stories, and the words, and messages mingled within their melodies.

In fact, it was because of this word-of-mouth ability to carry messages that spirituals were then used in the transmission of messages in the creation and conduction of the Underground Railroad. It cannot be overstated here the role churches and free African societies and clergy had on the procession of this abolitionist framework to dismantle Slavery in the United States. Both the North and South regarded their cause as just and blessed by God. The enslaved wrestled with the theology of the enslaver, seeking to obey God's command over the command of man. Abolitionist churches and congregations funded the private networks of safe houses and guides on the Gospel Train. Some spirituals functioned as "map songs," typically indicating direction, following rivers, or keeping a certain constellation to one part of your

[69] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 159-160.

journey, whereas others identified safe guides, Harriet Tubman claimed the moniker Moses from the song "Go Down, Moses." From Sarah Bradford's 1869 account, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, Tubman would use song as one of the two alert messages for her passengers – "After nightfall the sound of a hymn sung at a distance comes upon the ears of the concealed and famished fugitives in the woods, and they know that their deliverer is at hand. They listen eagerly for the words she sings, for by them they are to be warned of danger or informed of safety. Nearer and nearer comes the unseen singer, and the words are wafted to their ears." [70] Knowing the context of the Biblical story and how the spirituals were used, in communal safety and personal catharsis, the enslaved sought manumission through their tesseractive engagement with the sounds of their forebears. The sounds reverberated through history.

Abolition and the burgeoning ideological divide it entailed either strengthened or tore churches and their congregants asunder. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Wesleyan Methodists, and Reformed Presbyterians, and Congregationalists joined the progressive missions of abolitionists as well as the Free African Society of Philadelphia. By the 1780s, this society, organized chiefly by free-born and manumitted Africans, had become involved with Quaker theology and Methodism. In 1844, the Methodist Church experienced a schism between Northern and Southern congregants, resulting in the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Baptists experienced similar, leading to the Southern Baptist Convention a year later. Ideological battle lines were being drawn in music. The Battle Hymn of the Republic grew as an official Union song, from the religious consonance in camp meetings, especially during the Second Great Awakening, a significant Protestant revivalist movement prior to the Civil War. The song was utilized extensively throughout and since the Civil War, as an anthem for the

[70] Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman,* (Auburn, NY: W.J. Moses, 1869), 25-26.

Union and abolitionists, and its popularity in the public sphere has not waned. The tune was used for lyrics about an abolitionist, "John Brown's Body," which was "a-mouldering in the grave," but "his soul was marchin' on" after his role igniting the Civil War. This song, as well as others seeking the justice of the Lord, formed the musical background to the bloodiest civil conflict on American soil. The echoes ripple out through history: songs of labor become songs of sorrow, which in term become songs of subversion and emancipation, and finally of justice. Booker T. Washington remembered the echoes of Emancipation, "As the great day grew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring, and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom. True, they had sung those same verses before, but they had been careful to explain that the 'freedom' in these songs referred to the next world and had no connection with life in this world. Now they gradually threw off the mask; and were not afraid to let it be known that the 'freedom' in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world."[71]

In the Torah, Jubilee is a special cycle of time where God performs mercy upon the world and had specific impact on the ownership possessions in the Land of Israel, including the Israelites themselves. Emancipation brought about the end of the cycle of American chattel slavery, hence the Day of Jubilee when the Emancipation Proclamation was heard throughout the land. And Jubilee echoed from the day the Proclamation was read, January 1, 1863 to what is now known as "Juneteenth," June 19, 1865, over two and half years later, when the enslaved of Galveston, Texas were finally made aware of their manumission. Founded the year after the Civil War was ended and through the American Missionary Association, supported and funded by the United Church of Christ, one of the abolitionist churches, Fisk University was one of the

[71] As quoted in Raboteau, 62.

first historically black institutions to be created in the South (the first being Atlanta, now Clark Atlanta, University). To keep their mission alive, musical director and treasurer George L. White toured nine African American vocalists, students at the college, along the historic Underground Railroad circuit. The Fisk Jubilee Singers hearkened back to the music of the enslaved, the spirituals that cradled the dispossessed and communicated subversive messages to the liberated. The significance of the spirituals echoed from their initial application into the memory of African Americans, and into the burgeoning identity in Reconstruction. While white performers caricatured the echo of their conception of the African American in blackface minstrelsy, the Jubilee singers were briefly marketed as minstrel, but their calling was quite the opposite - to reinstate their dignity. The arranger of the spirituals sung by the Jubilee Singers, Ella Shephard, commented "[the spirituals] were sacred to our parents, who used them in their religious worship and shouted over them...It was only after many months that gradually our hearts were opened to the influence of these friends and we began to appreciate the wonderful beauty and power of our songs."[72]

Reconstruction is marked by tensions between those who want to remember authentically and those who want to re-member a deceit, a make-believe of who was heard, the most public example of which being minstrelsy and vaudeville. At its peak of popularity, minstrelsy and vaudeville audience participation was equaled only by churches and public schools among the nation's public spheres. Identity was at risk here; in minstrelsy, the stake of political and social presence was up in the air, and through that extent, civil personhood. Whose story would be remembered and how? Even some intellectuals dis-remembered the role of music. The turn-of-the-century mathematician and Howard University professor, also known as the "Bard of the

[72] Sandra Jean Graham, *Spirituals and the Birth of a Black Entertainment Industry*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 19.

Potomac," remarked in his 1914 treatise *Out of the House of Bondage*, "This race uttered the burden of its soul in these songs of sorrow without the slightest tinge of bitterness, animosity, or revenge," [73] But vaudeville was a means of Signifyin' back to the prevalent narrative, to caricature the social roles being worked out in the secondary diaspora of formerly enslaved peoples out of the Southern United States and into the North. But this sense of Signifying, as we see in the interaction of Northern churches to vaudeville, was that it was a duplicitousness to be distrusted, even by some of its agents.

The flux of residential diaspora being predominant, Reconstruction was also shaped by Revivalist movements, not least of which represents the Third (and longest) Great Awakening in the United States. Spirituals were still employed, the voice calling out to the congregation and the wholeness of the Supreme. In the primacy of voice, in person, there was little duplicity, it was in innovation, in instruments and the burgeoning recording industry, phonographs that one should be wary. Pastors of more conservative AME and Baptist churches admonished the use of all other things beyond singing, even eschewing hand-clapping, foot-stamping, and dancing. Even the dancing of the ring-shouts was careful to distinguish themselves from the innovation of the flesh, dancing, claiming their feet did not cross, therefore they could not be dancing. "The voice [sings] to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants."[74] The voice broke the barriers, from the self to the whole, that the religious put their consent of signifying in. Amanda Smith, the Singing Pilgrim, an African American traveling evangelist, credited her blessing of voice to the equalization of women in the leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal church. "If ever the Lord did help me, He helped me that day. And the Spirit of the Lord seemed to fall on all the

[73] Kelly Miller, *Out of the House of Bondage*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971) ,39.
[74] Isaiah 42:10.

people. The preachers got happy. They wept and shouted "Amen!" "Praise the Lord!" At the close a number of them came to me and shook hands, and said, 'God bless you, sister. Where did you come from? I would like to have you come on my charge." And so it went. So, after that many of my brethren believed in me, especially as the question of ordination of women never was mooted in the [1870 AME Nashville] Conference." [75] I include this not to preclude that gender equity and ordination was produced by the voice, but the primacy of truth and authenticity that swells from the voice played a role in the development of acceptability in African American social order via music. The voice had a sense of authenticity to it, to the Northern U.S. churches, that could not bear Signifying unless by Word of the Lord.

But African Americans at this time did not trust all kinds of music, especially after experiencing the white supremacist noise seeking to reinvent the past and besmirch their moral character in minstrelsy. Furthermore, it was through the lens of the Social Gospel that instruments and innovations were being scrutinized, but not outright rejected. "The fiddle and the banjo were the devil's tools. You communicated with him by playing, and simultaneously you had a good time yourself. Devil's tools or no, plantation preachers did not hesitate to double as fiddlers at parties in the quarters."[76] For example, the "Devil at the Crossroads" story is a popular legend that describes the supposed meeting between blues musician Robert Johnson and the devil at a crossroads in Mississippi. According to the legend, Johnson sold his soul to the devil in exchange for exceptional musical talent and success. While the story is often told in a mythical or allegorical context, it has also been interpreted as a representation of the Mason-Dixon line. The Mason-Dixon line was a boundary line that was drawn in the 1760s to resolve a dispute

[75] Amanda Smith, "The Travail of a Female Colored Evangelist," *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, edited by Milton C. Sernett (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 280.
[76] Genovese, 218.

between the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania over their shared border. The line became a symbolic boundary between the North and South during the Civil War and has since been associated with divisions between different regions, cultures, and values in the United States. In the narrative of the "Devil at the Crossroads" story, the crossroads represents a meeting point between different cultural influences and traditions. Johnson was said to have learned the blues from African American musicians in the Mississippi Delta, but he also drew on European musical forms and techniques. The devil, in turn, represents a kind of supernatural force that bridges the divide between these different cultural influences, offering a shortcut to success and fame. By linking the story of Robert Johnson to the Mason-Dixon line, the American myth can be interpreted as a commentary on the complex cultural and social divisions that have shaped American history. It suggests that the meeting point between different traditions and influences can be fraught with danger and uncertainty, and that the pursuit of success and fame may come at a steep price, and thus authenticity of re-membering and re-storying become pivotal to the transmission of the message. At the same time, the story also celebrates the creativity and resilience of African American musicians in the face of oppression and adversity. What is often overlooked, however, is the narrative power of the crossroads, particularly as it pertains to West African mythic traditions that sawm up and down the rivers of the South, in this case the Mississippi Delta. The song's second verse contains an allusion to "sun-down towns," in the decrying, "sun goin' down now boy, dark gon' catch me here."

Genovese claims here that good and evil were games of signification, played deftly but involuntarily by the African Americans in Reconstruction, and were understood to not be "easily separated in the projection of discrete personalities."[77] This sense of the duplicitous nature of

[77] Ibid., 219.

truth further reverberated into the Great Migration. "Believe half of what you see and none of what you hear," rural pastors warned their wayward congregants that the lies of the phonograph, the radio, and instrumental music were demonic tricksters disguising the truth in "wire and string," to lead traditional values astray into urban centers. In *Bound for the Promised Land,* Milton C. Sernett contends that there was tension amongst the new city-dwellers regarding the form of Church music: "the notion persisted that once the migrants set foot in Chicago or New York City or some other big city, they joined the battle between the church and 'the Devil's music' more fully."[78] Those that were attracted to the secular music, the blues and "jumped up" jazz (that were aforetime present in their Southern homes, just maybe not on a Sunday), found home in Sanctified and Holiness churches of the North, which seemed a refuge between the dangers of the secular city and echoing the rural folk culture from which they had come. Sernett highlights professor and poet laureate's Sterling Brown's justification: "Jazzed-up gospel hymns provide a different sort of release from the old spirituals; the blues reflect the distortions of the new way of life."[79] This dissonance between truth and lived experience allowed a wider berth from which music could emerge in church.

Labor songs and protest music had its home in the church, especially those of working means throughout the South. Like their agricultural centers, churches tended to gather geospatially around rivers and fertile lands, and sharecroppers had an important role to play in the interweaving of righteous protest into the political character of the black churches of the South. Pertinent to note here is the example of the Sharecropper's Union disseminating Communist messaging through the agency of music to gather people together, participate in

[78] Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration (The C. Eric Lincoln Series on the Black Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 200.
[79] Sterling Brown, "Negro Folk Expression: Spirituals, Seculars, Ballads and Work Songs," *Phylon* (14: January 1953), 60.

collective meaning-making, and then disperse this message like osmosis up and down the Black Belt and Bible Belt. Communist meetings were by default organized like church meetings, as its structure tended to efficiency of messaging. "Birmingham [had a] rich tradition of labor songs and the extent to which black industrial workers – including Communists – were involved in the regional gospel quartet circuit, not to mention the contributions of Southern radical songwriters Ella May Wiggins, Florence Reece, and 'Aunt' Molly Jackson."[80]

Labor movements found gospel music a powerful vehicle, regardless of the sentiments regarding the role of religion in some political ideologies, to inspire and motivate workers in their struggle for more equitable working conditions and fair treatment from landlords and governments. Gospel spoke of freedom, of a promise over the river Jordan. Community solidarity took its cue from singing together, where workers and their families could connect not only in their shared plight, but in the strength of their voices. From this modern gospel was born.

This double nature of religion and music, reflected in the tension between rural and urban, was what Thomas A. Dorsey, called the Father of Gospel, inherited from his Villa Rica, Georgia beginnings as he embraced the truths music brought him. Michael W. Harris notes this dissonance that resonated in him from very early, from his parents even: "[His father's involvement with religion] represented the priestly calling or vocation; Etta's [his mother], the simple avowal of beliefs. This variance between the religious outlooks of the two principal figures of his childhood likely made his earliest conception of religion dichotomous… He imitated the former and 'drank in' the latter – able, as children seem to be, to accept the presence of such antithetical models without perceiving their inherent inconsistency. The idea of religion as paradoxical, as an entity comprising two competing inclinations, nevertheless had been

[80] Robin D. G. Kelly, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 105.

implanted. Later in life, however, the question of which was to dominate would lie at the root of the several religious crises he would face."[81] Most notably of these was his conversion experience after touring with Ma Rainey, also known as the Mother of the Blues, from 1923 to 1926. Having become a popular band leader and pianist after migrating to Chicago, Dorsey began touring with Gertrude "Ma" Rainey (née Pridgett) in the Wild Cats Jazz Band. He was attracted to her style of blues singing that reminded him of the "moaning" he heard in churches that his parents would visit. Her command over the emotive power of music enraptured Dorsey, "When she started singing, the gold in her teeth would sparkle. She was in the spotlight. She possessed her listeners; they swayed, they rocked, they moaned and groaned, as they felt the blues with her. As the song ends, she feels an understanding with her audience. Their applause is a rich reward. She is in her glory. The house is hot." [82] Even while riding high on the popularity and growing economic reward of "moanin' blues," which Harris attributes specifically to the range of styles and musical influence Dorsey brought to their arrangements and compositions, Dorsey was experiencing great tumult of spirit, even considering suicide. After receiving spiritual restoration in a Pentecostal faith healing, Dorsey attested to the universality and inseparability of music and religion in the African American church, and that blues were a religious music. He re-members the role of blues through the spirituals: "They were just let out of slavery or put out, or went out, but they hadn't gotten used to freedom. Their spirituals had a kind of feeling, you know, a depressed feeling. They poured out their souls in their songs… Blues is a digging, picking, pricking at the very depth of your mental environment and the

[81] Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19.
[82] Harris, 89.

feelings of your heart. Blues is more than just *blues*. It's got to be that old low-down moan and the low-down feeling; you got to have feeling."[83]

Moaning or groaning was a performance practice that grew out of the emotive practice of churches and labor songs, and was eventually used in the Civil Rights movement as a way to express pain, frustration, and anger, and stir this up in the audience. It was a vocal technique that involved making a deep, guttural sound, similar to a moan or a groan, often used in response to acts of injustice or violence. The practice of groaning emerged as a way for African Americans to express their collective grief and suffering in the face of systemic racism and violence. It was used in a variety of contexts, including during protests, rallies, and church services. "That moan… is just about known only to the black folk. Now I've heard them sing like this when I was a boy in churches, and that kind of singing would stir the churches up more so than one of those fast hymns or one of the hymns they sang out of the book [shaped note.]" Groaning was often accompanied by other forms of performance, such as singing, chanting, and clapping, and was intended to create a sense of communal solidarity and resistance. By using their bodies and voices to express their pain and frustration, African Americans were able to create a powerful and emotionally charged performance that helped to galvanize support for the Civil Rights movement. Overall, groaning was a performance practice that played an important role in the Civil Rights movement by giving voice to the collective struggles and experiences of African Americans, and by creating a sense of community and resistance in the face of adversity.

One of the most influential gospel artists of the 20th century, Mahalia Jackson, was inspired by Thomas Dorsey's intimacy with music and religion. Like Dorsey, Jackson was born in the South, New Orleans, to devout Baptist parents. She was drawn to the lined-out singing her

[83] Thomas A. Dorsey, "The Thomas A. Dorsey Story: From Blues-Jazz to Gospel Song" (unpublished typescript from 1961) quoted in Harris, 98.

congregation practiced, the long tonal centers moving and swaying with one another as notes and rhythms changed at the behest of the internal intimacy of those singing. She was also, similar to Dorsey, impressed by the musical practice of Pentecostals healing through singing, expressing, "Everybody in there sang, and they clapped and stomped their feet, and sang with their whole bodies. They had a beat, a rhythm we held on to from slavery days, and their music was so strong and expressive. It used to bring tears to my eyes."[84] Jackson met and was mentored by Dorsey in Chicago, and their collaboration would grow the performance practice of solo singing in blues gospel. Both Dorsey and Jackson are considered to have resonated the new echo of their musical heritage, the gospel blues. Gospel Blues began to be accompanied by more instruments than the typical pipe organ, guitars and even electric guitars began to make their appearance in spiritual gatherings. The most notable of these examples includes Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Born in Arkansas, Tharpe traveled the South as an evangelist with her mother, who was a missionary of the Church of God in Christ. COGIC inherited its penchant for rhythmic musical expression in spirituality through their founders' interest in Amanda Smith, the Singing Pilgrim. Tharpe and her family eventually settled in Chicago, where the burgeoning connection with blues and jazz with churches influenced her singing and playing style. Her performance of "Down by the Riverside" is a prime example of her influence on rhythm-and-blues musicians as well as the nascent rock-and-rollers, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and B.B. King.

From the Great Migration effervesced the cultural revolution of the Harlem Renaissance, and spirituals and ragtimes evolved into blues, gospel, and the new Jazz. Alain Locke, in his introduction to the 1925 anthology *The New Negro: An Interpretation,* remarked that the creative ebullience that the closeness of energies, words, and sounds had on the evolution of the African

[84] Viv Broughton, Black Gospel: An Illustrated History of the Gospel Sound, (London: Blanford Press, 1985), 52.

American cultural genius, from spirituals to gospel to jazz which were "suppressed for generations, secretive, half-ashamed, until the courage of being natural brought them out."[85] The Harlem Renaissance was a rebirth, a re-remembering, drawing from the cultural wealth of their forebears. The earth-shifting art revolution featured such prominent names as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Asa Philip Randolph, Jacob Lawrence, all of whom used the musicality of African American experience in their writing or painting. Bass-baritone singer and performer and actor Paul Robeson represents a pinnacle of Black achievement in the Harlem Renaissance. Robeson had a difficult relationship with his inheritance, once remarking that African Americans were plagued by an inferiority complex, not honoring the sheer wealth of creations their ancestors bequeathed. "I believe the Negro can achieve his former greatness only if he learns to follow his natural tendencies, and ceases trying to master the greatness of the West."[86] This would seem to be a rejection of Western imperialism, and Robeson was predominantly interested in becoming more familiar with his African and African American roots. He plumbed the emotional depth of West African rhythms and modes as well as African American spirituals with his deep, churning voice in films such as *Song of Freedom* (1936) and *Show Boat* (1936). Robeson believed, though a law graduate and identified in *The Crisis* as one of what Du Bois called the "Talented Tenth," elite, that music and singing was the way to civic and spiritual freedom and made his entire career from his voice. Crediting sermonizing as helping him find his voice, Robeson often commented on the musical awakening spirituals and gospel blues conferred to African Americans.

In fact, Robeson is known for re-popularizing spirituals and blues, echoing old sentiments in new rivers of meaning. For example, Robeson performed and revived the American folk

[85] *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, edited by Alain Locke (New York: Touchstone reprint, 1999), 4.
[86] Paul Robeson, as quoted in "Black Greatness," 8 September 1933 *The Border Cities Star*.

spiritual, “Wayfarin’ Stranger” in his widely-acclaimed return tour of the United States, the most significant of which was the first Peekskill concert. "Wayfaring Stranger" is a traditional American folk song that has been recorded and performed by many musicians over the years. The song tells the story of a traveler who is wandering through a world of sorrow and pain, searching for a better home in heaven, since the current one is filled with “sickness, toil, and danger” and they are “alone.” The significance of "Wayfaring Stranger" lies in its themes of spiritual longing, personal transformation, and perseverance in the face of hardship. The song's themes resonate with many people, and it has become a beloved and enduring part of the American musical tradition. The song has been interpreted in many different ways, and its lyrics have been adapted and expanded upon by different performers over time. Robeson’s timing of its use was apropos to his context – the concert was given as a benefit to the Civil Rights Congress, an organization with which his political ideals aligned. The United States was deeply divided over issues of race, class, and political ideology, and Robeson was a controversial figure who had been targeted by the FBI and other government agencies for his political activism. The concert at Lakeland Acres was met with opposition from conservative groups and local law enforcement, who saw it as a threat to public order and security. On the day of the concert, a mob of several thousand people attacked the concertgoers, pelting them with rocks and stones and setting their cars on fire. The violence sustained into the evening, resulting in numerous injuries and arrests. Robeson's performance of "Wayfaring Stranger" at the concert took on a deeper significance in light of the violence that followed. The song's themes of spiritual longing and perseverance in the face of hardship resonated with many of the concertgoers, who saw it as a message of hope and resilience in the face of violence and oppression. The song also represented a form of cultural resistance, as Robeson's powerful voice and emotive performance challenged

the conservative values and beliefs of his opponents. The cadential plea of the song's message is of rest, "I'm just going o'er the Jordan, I'm just going o'er home." The song's simplicity and universality have also contributed to its enduring popularity. With its haunting melody and evocative lyrics, "Wayfaring Stranger" speaks to the human condition in a way that transcends time and place, touching on universal themes of longing, loss, and redemption.

Robeson, like Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Mary Mcleod Bethune, and even E. Franklin Frazier, believed in the ideals of Pan Africanism, and endorsed a return to Africa which evolved into the fight for the rights of colonized peoples throughout the world and the creation of an international identity. Like the West African concept of Sankofa the advocacy for return was to retrieve – retrieve their heritage, their unity, their shared destiny. Africa was more than a continent or an origin, it was a pivotal part of reconstituting African American memory. Art Blakey, a prominent jazz drummer, said of his 1947 return, "I didn't go to Africa to study drums – somebody wrote that – I went over there to study religion and philosophy. I didn't bother with the drums, I wasn't after that. I went over there to see what I could do about religion. When I was growing up I had no choice, I was just thrown into a church and told this is what I was going to be. I didn't want to be their Christian. I didn't like it. You could study politics in this country, but I didn't have access to the religions of the world. That's why I went to Africa. When I got back people got the idea I went there just to learn about music."[87] Robeson's disavowal of the hypocrisy in American democracy and subsequent approval of Chinese and Russian political parties ultimately proved his downfall and silencing from history – McCarthyism swept up Robeson and much of the ideological legs of the Pan African movement with the disbanding of

[87] Art Blakey quoted by Herb Nolan, "Art Blakey," DownBeat Magazine, November 1979, p.20.

the Council on African Affairs in 1955 by portraying African Americans as being un-American, Communists even, as we embarked upon the Cold War.

Country music has its roots in the traditional music of the Southern Appalachians, which adjacent to the Tennessee River and the Cumberland River Valley. As discussed in the prologue, the music was heavily influenced by the Scots-Irish settlers who arrived in the region during the 18th and 19th centuries with their shape-note texts and Anglo-Christian performance practices, as well as by the African American blues tradition. The region itself was characterized by economic and political isolation, and poor infrastructure, often congregating around water centers, which led to a strong sense of interconnected community and a deep connection to the land. People in the region relied heavily on music as a form of post-labor entertainment and self-expression, and they developed their own unique musical style that reflected their experiences and way of life. Typically played on acoustic instruments, such as the guitar, fiddle, banjo, and mandolin, the texture reifies the primacy of the voice in the calling out. The form is recapitulated from hymnal couplets and quatrains that the tonal center begins to coalesce into a repetition of chords, I – IV – V (7) – I/i. The pattern was writ, all progressions derive from its hierarchy, much like the hierarchy of voice in Sacred Harp/shape-note singing prioritizes the tenor/lead voice, the chordal progression precedes as root, subdominant, dominant (with optional leading tone), back to the root. Herein represents a growth from an origin, the root chord, followed by a chord that contains the root note as its dominant tone (the fifth), that expands into the fullest version of the roots overtones in the dominant chord, and then returns back to the original tonal center. The lyrics often told stories of rural life, including farming, hunting, and fishing, as well as themes of love, loss, and heartbreak. The music was often performed in a distinctive style, featuring tight harmonies and a distinctive vocal twang. As people migrated out of the region and

into cities like Nashville, country music began to evolve and take on new forms, always repeating those same tonal centers and chord progressions. Even more genres and performances practices intermingled, and country music had incorporated folk storytelling and Christian preaching/gospel influences to their lyrics and performance styles. Before long, radio broadcasts and recordings allowed country music to reach an even wider audience, and it began to gain popularity across the country, growing up alongside its rebellious cousin, rock and roll.

During the Cold War, country music played an important role in shaping American identity and promoting American values both at home and abroad. The genre was often used as a tool of cultural diplomacy, with the United States government promoting country music as a way of showcasing American culture and values to audiences around the world. It's style of delivering musical messages was popular, and so was also used to promote American patriotism and support for the military during the Cold War. Many country songs from this period celebrated the bravery and sacrifice of American soldiers and encouraged listeners to support the US military in its fight against communism. One example of this was the 1958 tour of the Soviet Union by a group of American musicians, including country singer Tex Ritter. The tour was organized by the US State Department as part of a larger effort to promote American culture and values in the Soviet Union, and country music was seen as a particularly effective way of reaching audiences in rural areas. At the same time, however, country music also reflected some of the social and political tensions of the Cold War era. Many country songs from this period dealt with themes of economic hardship, social inequality, and the challenges of rural life. Some country musicians, such as Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard, also expressed criticism of the Vietnam War and other aspects of US foreign policy.

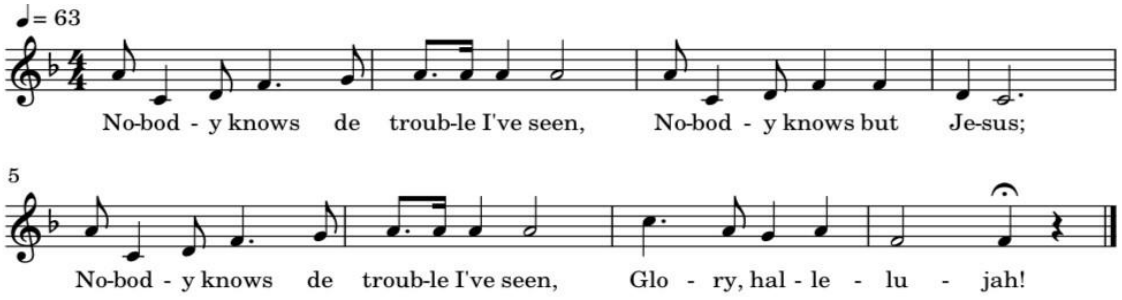
The most salient connection between the two genres of country music and rock and roll is their shared roots in African American musical traditions, particularly the blues. Early rock and roll musicians like Chuck Berry and Little Richard were heavily influenced by the blues, and many of their songs featured bluesy guitar riffs and vocal stylings. While Elvis is called the King, Chuck Berry and Little Richard were some of the architects of rock and roll. Similarly, many early country musicians, including Hank Williams and Jimmie Rodgers, were influenced by the blues and incorporated blues elements into their music. Their shared focus on storytelling and emotional expression decries a signification of a medium that transmits messages. Country and rock and roll music have often influenced each other over the years, with many artists borrowing elements from both genres to create new sounds and styles. For example, rockabilly, a subgenre of rock and roll that emerged in the 1950s, blended elements of country music and rock and roll to create a high-energy, danceable sound. Nevertheless, with the development of wider broadcasting technologies came the inevitable commercialization of the music as a vehicle of meaning.

Once again, we see the history of the United States is enacted in the echoes of African American selfhood as it echoes from its call-and-response roots, through spirituals and gospel, reverberating in gospel blues, folk, country, and rock and roll music derivations. In each reiteration, the meaning is in the medium of the message, it resounds upon the soundscape as a means of transmission. As we will see in the next chapter, the integration of sound technologies in broadcasting will forever shape the flow of political protest and spiritual prophecy.

Chapter III

Protest and Prophecy

"God has wrought many things out of oppression – He has endowed his creatures with the capacity to create —and from this capacity has flowed the sweet songs of sorrow and joy."
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., foreword to the 1964 JazzFest Berlin program



The Civil Rights Movement was a wide-ranging and comprehensive movement of the mid-1950s through the late 1960s culminating in the signing of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and finally the 1964. It is important to delineate this juncture temporally in the development of the musical and social ethos of the United States. Protest was the critical element of the movement and its character of commitment to the everyman was reflected in the musics deployed onto the soundscape, as it had been in the civic movements that came before. The musical ethos of protest, utilizing both propaganda and religious prophecy, represents a radical re-tuning of value systems by musical artists during the Vietnam War and Civil Rights movement, and their meaning reverberates into time as samples in protest musics of the future.

One of the most famous anthems of the Civil Rights Movement is "We Shall Overcome" from a work song used in the South Carolina tobacco fields in the 1940's, echoed from the Baptist spiritual "I'll Overcome Someday," composed by Charles Albert Tindley. Folk artist Pete Seeger adapted and popularized the term with many records sold. Even today, the anthem is used for civil rights protests all over the world, in Lebanon, North Korea, and Hong Kong. This wasn't the only slavery era song employed – hymns, spirituals, and songs were resurrected and/or had their lyrics adjusted to sound out the new fight for civil freedom. The messages of strength and emotional fortitude in the face of suffering passed through the music over time and from generation to generation. This, along with other protest anthems, evolved into Freedom Singing. Martin Luther King, Jr. once wrote of music,

> "Much of the power of our Freedom Movement in the United States has come from this music. It has strengthened us with its sweet rhythms when courage began to fail. It has calmed us with its rich harmonies when spirits were down. And now, Jazz is exported to the world. For in the particular struggle of the Negro in America there is something akin to the universal struggle of modern man. Everybody has the Blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs to love and be loved. Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy. Everybody longs for faith. In music, especially this broad category called Jazz, there is a stepping stone towards all of these."[88]

Music represents one of the most direct ties between the Civil Rights movement and the church. As we have traced in the previous chapter, justice and equality remained a site of peace just beyond the river, one that can be achieved in community action and joining of voice. Freedom Singing, and by extension the mission of the group known as the Freedom Singers, was signified

[88] Martin Luther King, Jr. foreword to the 1964 JazzFest Berlin program.

by its communal sharing and its likeness to its progenitor, spiritual sharing in church, the key component of which was the performance together, with simultaneous hand-clapping, foot-stomping, and praise interjections. In church especially, many African Americans turned to music, once and over again, to cope with the consistent atrocities inflicted upon them by American imperialism. In the midst of the Civil Rights movement, South Carolina native Esau Jenkins remarked, "They sometimes sad. But they're trying to get rid of it. If you could come and see them how they look when they singing and shouting, you can see they singing for a better day, shouting for a better day. And that's the thing that make them keep on shouting." [89] Protest rang out from pulpits and choir-boxes alike, and each congregation used music as both sacred and secular tools. Drawing upon the lineage of spirituals having a double meaning in the abolitionist movements prior to and during the Civil War, protest music kept the container of hymns and anthems, but employed their multimodality of signification to assist in signifiyin' political autonomy and social personhood. Spirituals and gospel, as Du Bois had argued, were made as containers to be encoded with messages of hope and alterity.

Spirituals, gospel, folk and rock and roll played a significant role in marches, sermons, and throughout established radio and television networks. This was a heyday of musicological archival, particularly with folklorists and ethnomusicologists touring the United States, and the Southeast in particular, interviewing, recording and ethnographizing musical subjects. It must be noted here that even ethnomusicological research can affect the soundscape, for instance, Alan Lomax's interactions with Jelly Roll Morton, Muddy Waters, and H. William "Lead Belly" Ledbetter. Lomax and his son are credited with amplifying these artists and helping to preserve musics and

[89] Esau Jenkins, 1964 interview, "Shouting for a Better Day," *Ain't You got a right to the tree of life?: The people of Johns Island, South Carolina – Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs*, editors Guy and Candie Carawan (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 67.

voices that may have otherwise been silenced by the turning of history. His preservation efforts helped found the Association for Cultural Equity and has an established musical archive in the Library of Congress's American Folk Life Center. Nevertheless, Lomax is critiqued for recording only imprisoned African Americans and for directing his field recorders to seek "authentic performances" by not disclosing to the artists their roles and recording devices.

"When phonographs began to augment and replace live performances and/or musical scores at the end of the nineteenth century, they created a glaring rupture between sound and vision. Both performer and score clearly provided some discernible human origin for sounds… The phonograph suggested a machinic materiality, one that acutely destabilized any notion of an 'absolute music' and called attention to other forms of aural embodiment. It is precisely this conflict between the phonograph's material and ephemeral dimensions, as well as the machine's worrying of the immediate connection between sound and writing, that makes it such a crucial site for the articulation of black cultural practices in the twentieth century. For, in many ways, the phonograph refracts technosonically the shape-shifting textures of the blackness in Western modernity as hyper(dis)embodied and (in)human." [90]

These music recordings and production, as well as new amplification technologies played a critical role in the Civil Rights movement. Protest music of the South was recorded and disseminated throughout the country. Telephones began to be used en masse to organize meetings, rallies, and marches, as well as the everyday needs of a protest movement, food, first aid, finances. Radios echoed out in homes of news reels, the new medium of voice commercial advertisements and announcements, and the sound media started to get smaller and more available to the everyday American. Records emerged onto the scene and with each pressing, much like its musical notation

[90] Alexander Weheliye, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 29.

publication echo, disseminated a new artist seeking a new signification. “Race Records,” a collection and genre of 78-rpm records helped develop the economy and technologies in the early days of the phonograph. The segregation between white and black audiences was a product of social and racial engineering of musical markets in the late 1920s all the way into the early 1950s, but due to their meteoric rise in popularity amongst the general public, “race records,” where they had once used subpar recording equipment and microphones, started to invest in higher quality production values and therefore new musical inventions. The microphone, as innocuous as it seems, owes its sophistication to the popularity of music, even though it was segregated. In fact, music was the great connector and served as one of the sharpest tools for protest and antiwar sentiments that had already been rumbling since the mid-1950s, and artists such as Seeger, Joan Baez, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and Bob Dylan had been writing and recording antiwar ballads at hundreds of concerts in the United States. More African American men were being drafted into the Vietnam conflict, and before long, Edwin Starr was proclaiming, “War! HUH! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!” by 1970. Much like their predecessors, not only did protest music have an intertwined character with the church, but the message was reiterated in genre after genre – from spirituals and gospel blues, to rhythm and blues, soul, funk, and folk. Music brought people together, the meaning is the message. It allowed soldiers deployed overseas to sense a connection to home and family, in an otherworldly and violent environment of active war. Music couldn’t drown out the sounds of war, but it allowed the soldiers to feel some sense of normalcy when all rules of engagement in war were being renegotiated on the bodies of the soldiers of both sides. Further, soldiers also ended up listening to and connecting to music of Vietnamese artist, like Trinh Cong Son, who echoed the antiwar sentiments in his work. His prolific output was influenced by American recording demand, Vietnamese folk music and stories, the French

chanson style (as indicative of the colonial influence Vietnam still felt), and even American folk which he had heard on soldier's recordings.

One notable event of protest music remains Jimi Hendrix's performance of the "Star-Spangled Banner" at the Woodstock Music Festival in 1969. Representing the duplicitous nature of the music, its history and mythic status, Hendrix incorporated extra-musical effects, like feedback and distortion with the amplifying speakers on his guitar, to sound like moans and screams of violence of war into the national anthem. He did so to highlight the futility and harm in violence and transformed the sense of patriotism it engendered into a wider sense of Americanness – of those aspects we should keep fighting for, if not with guns and bombs, but with our words on an even playing field.

The original "soul sister," Sister Rosetta Tharpe, gained her popularity in the 1940s with her gospel recordings, incorporating not only spirituals and gospel blues like Dorsey and Franklin, but also the electric guitar. As we had seen in the previous chapter, there was sincere distrust of particular instruments and burgeoning technologies being used in the church setting, but this did not slow her popularity. Rather, her blending of sacred and secular elements gave her a cachet with secular audiences and she fell out of favor with the gospel circuit. Nevertheless, her Church of God in Christ and Black Pentecostal upbringing gave her deep connection to rhythm and praise through dance and getting happy. Her 1944 single released by Decca, "Strange Things Happening Every Day," an old spiritual flew up the gospel and R&B charts and crossed over from the "race record" charts into the mainstream American soundscape. This single has become known as one of the most salient progenitors of rock and roll. Tharpes' influence on the soundscape of gospel, R&B and eventually rock and roll has made her a key signifying center from which innumerable

artists after her benefited. “Oh, these kids and rock and roll — this is just sped up rhythm and blues. I've been doing that forever.”[91]

Another artist who deftly blended his interactions with gospel, spirituals and blues into his illustrious career. At his peak, he was combining all these genres together and breaking musical chart hits with a country song, and three albums of different genres in 1959. This simple, blind musician from Albany, Georgia was able to transcend racial boundaries in music and its subsequent economies. While the nascent genre of rock-and-roll can also attribute some R&B and soul influences directly from Charles, his radio appeal tended to wane as rock-and-roll became the predominant voice in the soundscape. He was a vocal supporter of the Civil Rights movement, and like Hendrix, made a deliberate artistic choice to renegotiate another patriotic song for the purposes of Civil Rights protest, his gospel-influenced “America the Beautiful” released on the bicentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1976. Elvis Presley, too, used this song in several performances during this year, but not with the same impact of Charles. Nevertheless, the rising popularity of rock-and-roll and soul paved the way for further protest musicians to make their sign on the soundscape.

Mahalia Jackson, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, was a primary model for the development of the gospel music economy and blending on gospel-blues. In so being, she represents one of the pinnacles of influence to rock-and-roll and R&B, and her performance at the March on Washington in 1963 was an important moment in the Civil Rights movement and musical history. Jackson was one of five women allowed to speak/sing from the dais at the organized protest, along with Rosa Parks of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, Daisy Bates, NAACP chapter president, Odetta Homes, singer, and Lena Horne, actor. Jackson’s voice, in its strength

[91] As quoted by Gayle Wald, *Shout, Sister, Shout!: The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 168.

and primacy, resonated deep with the attendees, the vibrations of her voice ringing from the loudspeakers onto the reflecting pool between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. As a close, personal friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and strident Civil Rights supporter and icon, she brought a dimension of prophecy, pulling on her spiritual roots through the vehicle of gospel to bring the heartache and hope that resonated in her heart and into the hearts of the protestors on that sunny Wednesday. The summer beat on, and the heat amidst the crowd was pervasive, but the vibrations of Jackson's voice spilled out from the speakers interspersed throughout the crowd, and her low moaning, singing the way Job would have pled to God in the Bible. "I've been buked, an' I've been scorned/ You know I'm gonna tell my Lord, when I get home/ Hallelujah! / Stand by me, Lord/ Lord I can't stand this old storm/ Lord if you leave, if you leave your child, I cannot make it home." In her reverberating hum the audience erupts in passionate cheers, pulsing with the sense that her voice and our voices together, standing by as steadfast as her faith, can bring us through to the other side of the Jordan.

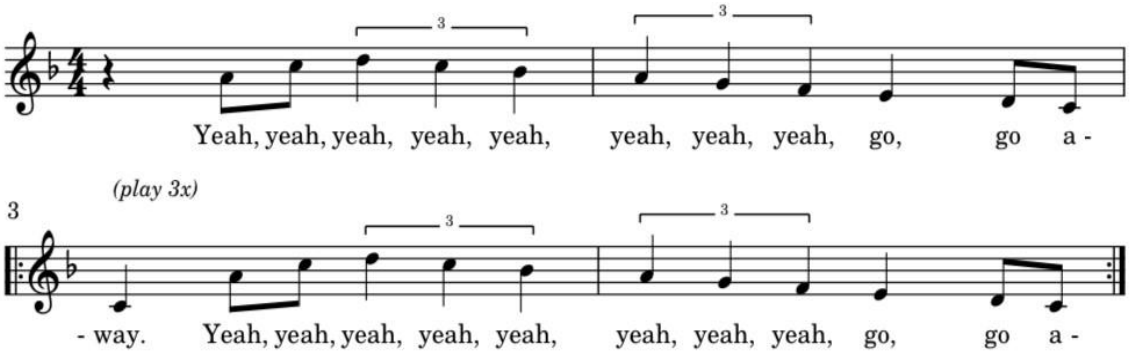
We must not overlook the signification radio and television broadcast of these protests, marches, examples of police brutality and violence, as well as for distribution and wide dissemination of the message in speech and song. Even Martin Luther King's oratorial command hearkened to the role of the voice to convey the embodied message that needs to be listened to. This is not to mention the use of phone networks and coordinated media efforts to shape and sign a message and a narrative of a people who seek audience with their government. Even so, one of the founding fathers of the new genre, hip hop, extolled "the Revolution will not be televised." Gil Scott Heron and revolutionary politic poets inheriting the Civil Rights message and estate after the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and used their embodiment of voice to turn signifyin' into a game of voice on the global canvas.

Which is to say that the primacy and embodiment of voice and the authenticity that that confers is the field upon which Hip Hop currently signifies, in the face of the growth of global communication and the stake of identity in the face of internationalism. The current iteration of the long lineage of African American music is Hip Hop. Born from the block parties that hearkened back to the 1920s rent parties populated by jazzers, Hip Hop experienced its inception in the 1970s Bronx. Synergizing all the elements that the African American cultural heritage has entrusted on the new generation, Hip Hop seeks a coalescence of emotion, spirit, form, melody, dance, lyric, rhythm, and history in the modern genre. Through sampling, Hip Hop artists are able to reinvigorate the cultural birthright of African Americans, for example Chance the Rapper's use of gospel blues (of particular Chi-Town flavor) in his 2016 self-released album *Coloring Book*. Kanye West, also from Chicago, has spiritual and gospel influences throughout his hip hop oeuvre, and recently released a gospel album upon which he raps, 2019's *Jesus is King*. For many modern hip hop artists, sacred and profane and the dichotomy between them function as rhetorical tools used in the ultimate goal of being beyond or outside of systemic, racist, diametric opposition in order to give voice to the deafening Silence.

Chapter IV

Global Griot: Hip Hop in the World

"I would say nice to meet you, but I don't believe in time as a concept,
so I'll just say we always met."
- Darius, portrayed by Lakeith Stanfield in FX's *Atlanta*



Nearly a half century after its birth, Hip Hop now represents the latest innovation in the multimodality of signification that the Southeastern American soundscape has produced. Inheriting the challenges of a once hopeful movement of Civil Rights, the decay of political autonomy through the various modes of justice and the legal system, the 1970s and 80s could not silence the new Harlem and Bronx Renaissance that would once again traverse down the urban and phonologic rivers of meaning from the Northeastern coast to the South and across the Mississippi into the Western Americas. This period is marked by its energetic effervescence of

kinetic orality, and their origins decry this electricity. Block parties, moments of communal sharing, of food, space, and beats, became the lifeblood of communication, hosted by DJs in the South Bronx like Kool Herc, also known as Clive Campbell, Afrika Bambaattaa, and Grandmaster Flash, also known as Joseph Sadler. Not only did they commune a message, but could reiterate, repeat, return, and slow a message for effect, sampling from their forebears and from international musics that flowed alongside African American communities in the Bronx, like diasporic Jamaicans or Puerto Ricans. Another mode of this signification included the practice of 'backspinning' the record so as to repeat the whole of the sample or parts. Furthermore, these block parties led rise to two arts marked not only by their kinesis, but by their shared embodiment, of voice and body respectively in MCing or rapping and breakdancing, or b-boying. One can find direct correlation between the enslaved practice of *hamboning,* an act of making the body a vessel of rhythm, to rapping and breakdancing. These forms acted like sponges, absorbing the increasingly international influences as well as within one another. As many African Americans began to move South, reversing the geospatial effects of the Great Migration and suffusing new cultural and tonal centers with these world sounds, the 1990s into the early aughts found new homes for hip hop to flourish, Houston, Memphis, and Atlanta being the most popular. This gave the hip hop artist all the echoes of culture one could reverberate – the ability to speak as a globalized voice.

The modern Hip Hop artist intrinsically functions, given their sphere of influence in the soundscape, as global griots employing multimodality as a decentering force and represent effective agents in signification on the various global -scapes. The West African profession of story-teller, or griot, is venerated as a human repository of history and sacred wisdom of our forebears. Hip Hop artists honor their history by refreshing and reinventing old sounds into new

knowledges, theirs is a lineage from rock and roll to jazz along the river of time to gospel and spirituals, back to call-and-response and West African polyrhythmic speech and song patterns, all infused in the culmination of the Silenced message here and now. They hold in tension the space of the no-longer but not yet, between what is Signified and What Signifies, and as consummate signifiers, passing between what is said and what is silenced to construct a (sonic) identity. "Due to their ability to praise or critique individuals with their oratory skills, griots have traditionally held an ambiguous social status, both revered and feared."[92] Griots sing praise songs, recount histories of families for marriage ceremonies, recite rhythmic poetry for dance ceremonies and coming-of-age celebrations. Rappers do all of this within the contexts of their soundscape, first in the United States and then back to the world. The mark of a griot is verbal/sonic command and aporetic flow.

Monica Miller explains aporetic flow as a "means of capturing the social spaces where nonpassages are turned into creative expression."[93] She is speaking here of the legibility of the black body as presence or absence, or in our perspective, sound or silence, and the significations that are made from this state of being, this flow between. Miller employs Jacques Derrida's sense of *aporia*, the internal impasse, between what is said and what is unsaid. The story-teller, the rapper, the Signifier, are "those who k(no)w where to go in turning illegibility into forced recognition." While Miller calls culture the "cartography by which black bodies struggle for recognition,"[94] my project focuses on the mapping of sonority and resonance of self /identity on the plane of signification, a musical microsphere of culture. To forward these aims, I will briefly

[92] Patricia Tang, "The Rapper as Modern Griot: Reclaiming Ancient Traditions," in *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World* edited by Eric Charry, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 80.
[93] Monica Miller, "Real recognize real: Aporetic flows and the presence of New Black Godz in hip hop," in *Religion in Hip Hop: Mapping the New Terrain in the U.S.*, edited by Monica Miller, Anthony B. Pinn, and Bernard 'Bun B' Freeman (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 199.
[94] Ibid., 202.

explore several performance practices of both the griot/story-teller and that of the musician, especially of hip hop, that allow the vibratory message to resonate throughout the soundscape and within the bodies of the audiences who hear it live and indirectly from recordings.

Given my theoretical framework of multimodalities of signification and silence in the Southeastern United States soundscape that culminate in the womanist notion of consonance of self that is akin to Hip Hop theory's knowledge of self, it is best to conceive of performance practice, in both sacred and secular music of African Americans, as a matrix of habitus. The matrix consists of the who, what, when, where, and how of the acts of musical signification, and shifts within the geo-spatiotemporal progression of the soundscape. Who are the interlocutors allowed to perform music? At what locations is music being performed and how does it and the messages it transmits reverberate throughout the soundscape? What musics are they creating and at what time is this music-making appropriate? How do they keep time and space in music-making? And the actual gestures involved in musical meaning-making, the physical, vocal, and spiritual movements engendered by interaction with music These questions should situate an ethnomusicologist before and during the participant-observer relationship with the subject and must be continuously re-examined in the field as it evolves through the flow of the soundscape.

My project focuses on the patterns of protest and prophecy in the South through the medium of music. As such, my investigations will center on the musical messages created to influence civil and spiritual meaning-making acts. How do musical artists assist in the establishment of individual personhood in the eyes of the State, how do they communicate these messages amongst many people, and how does the spiritual stake of personhood interact with the civil? This inquiry requires a theoretical framework to give audience to a historiocultural and religiological analysis of musical practice and performance. The performance practices of

African American and American religions through music are many and varied. To explicate the tools that our modern storytelling interlocutors use, I shall explore several here to clarify how Hip Hop shapes the artist and community, calling upon new manifestations of old performance practices.

Vocalizing, either by singing, humming, or speaking, holds primacy in African American music, both sacred and secular. The intimacy of voice with the entire breadth of music-making cannot be overstated. Whether by song, shout, moan, call-and-response, the use of voice is a predominant practice in both American and African American religious and musical practice. At its basic level, sounding upon silence signifies survival, the utterance, the calling upon the sonic field, and at its most complex, it is a conversation with one or more partners. Since the beginning of the United States, singing has been the response to silencing; even during enslavement, when speech-conversation was banned and families were split apart as to disentangle linguistic sharing, the enslaved were still allowed to sing in specific contexts. To keep rhythm during work and practice religious faith was permissible, so singing, call-and-response, shouting, and hollering were practiced for creating communal connections. The horrors of slavery enacted upon an individual was only mitigated by the connection of the one to the many. Call-and-response developed from field labor practice to sermonic procedure which in turn infused the singing together with the nature of individual reaching out to and being embraced by the many. Call-and-response evolved into various musical practices in the United States, secular and sacred, a prime example being the sharing of music via lining-out. One individual sings or calls out each line of the hymn and the congregation echoes their melody and words. This in turn developed into the publishing of *Sacred Harp* hymnody[95], notated by shape-notes, which I

[95] Benjamin Franklin White, E. J King, Thomas J Denson, and Paine Denson. *Sacred Harp*. (Haleyville: Sacred Harp Pub. Co., 1936). Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/68040523/

highlight here not to call attention to the practice of printing music so much as I want to emphasize its use in pitch. Sacred Harp singing does not use absolute pitch, since it is a capella and communal in nature, pitch is determined by the sharing.

Furthermore, the voice was a powerful vehicle for emotion and lens for authenticity and connection to the spirit. The gospel style of singing, influenced by Thomas A. Dorsey's Gospel Blues, inherited Dorsey's sense of "moaning." As Michael W. Harris explains, "'Moaning' was prompted by 'something from within' and not tied to an arbitrary set of musical or ecclesiastical situations: 'I've heard my mother and other folk get together, get around and get to talking and then start moaning.' At church, the congregation would sing a spiritual or a hymn, 'then they [would] moan it out.'"[96] This extended to R&B and Soul, the Queen of Soul herself, Civil Rights activist Aretha Franklin used a moaning style in both gospel and soul recordings, inherited from a long line of blues singers. The voice seemed to have a more direct connection to the emotions and the spirit, as well as the stories and truths that emanate from these. It is for this reason that instruments in the African American tradition favor the vocal. From the bajo, trumpet, and saxophone, the sense of conversation these instruments can create in melody that sounds like a human voice speaking to you. Lift *every* voice and sing.

The voice broke the barriers, from the self to the whole, that the religious put their consent of signifying in. The voice was the most direct channel to authenticity, especially via testifying. Amanda Smith, the Singing Pilgrim, a 19th century traveling evangelist, credited her blessing of voice to the equalization of women in the leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal church. "If ever the Lord did help me, He helped me that day. And the Spirit of the Lord seemed to fall on all the people. The preachers got happy. They wept and shouted "Amen!"

[96] Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1992), 22.

"Praise the Lord!" At the close a number of them came to me and shook hands, and said, 'God bless you, sister. Where did you come from? I would like to have you come on my charge." And so it went. So after that many of my brethren believed in me, especially as the question of ordination of women never was mooted in the [1870 AME Nashville] Conference." [97] The desire to represent one's truth and witness to the world can be attested in Mrs. Belle Green, of Johns Island, South Carolina, explains – "Now I can't testify like I used to. 'Cause I ain't able. My heart been bad for so long. I just trying to hold up. But they *know* me: all them at Moving Star Hall know me. I'm full of fire too. I been way down, but the Lord lift me up. Make me feel good the week out. I just pray to make my voice come back. Give me my voice back as I does been, one time before I die."[98] She goes on to explain her voice gave her the ability to sing her emotions, her friendships, and her families' stories. Singing as testifying, both to the emotional and spiritual core of religious community, has its roots in the Christian evangelical tradition, particularly the Holiness and Pentecostal congregants. Additionally, Holiness practice involved the speaking in tongues, from the Biblical dictum, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues." This practice assumes the Holy Spirit breathes the air of inspiration into the believer and they therefore speak and or sing or shout in tongues. Even when the lyric is not discernable, the voice takes predominance in the American and African American religious practice.

[97] Amanda Smith, "The Travail of a Female Colored Evangelist," *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, edited by Milton C. Sernett (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 280.
[98] Belle Green, "All My Own Gone," *Ain't You got a right to the tree of life?: The people of Johns Island, South Carolina – Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs*, editors Guy and Candie Carawan (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 28.

Lindon Barrett, in his 1999 *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double* reiterates the predominance the African American voice had particularly as a 'sly alterity' of the embodiment of voice in the multimodality of signification:

> "The African American singing voice emphasizes – rather than merely glances at – the spatial, material, dative, or enunciative action of voice. Singing voices undo voice as speech per se. By highlighting the enunciative or vocative aspect and moment of voice, singing voices mark the absence that allows iteration and repetition. They imprint above all the pure sonorous audibility of voice, and not a seeming absolute proximity to fixed meaning and identity."

Lyric, however, as a container of meaning that could be crafted is an important component of African American and American religious practices, from the words of the spirituals and the Bible to stories learned and repeated over oral and textual tradition, voice, song, and message contained in poetry or prose were a channel through which one can engage in the dialectical act of signifying. As I have explicated in the theoretical question, Signifying is a rhetorical device that relies on the relationship of what is spoken and what is silenced. It is through/via this binary, *between* the public and private, the exterior and the interior, that Signifying occurs and the one who controls the structure or frame of the language game is the Signifier. It is the ability to resist and speak in the prevailing system in the dominating soundscape using the duplicitous nature of the rhetorical devices of a Signifier, that I call the multimodality of Signification. "One must be adept in the verbal arts either to signify or to keep from being signified upon."[99] For African American and American religions, lyrics could sound like one thing but mean another. Tubman called herself Moses and directed the freedom-seeking

[99] Charles H. Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*, (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 1995), 1.

with spiritual lyric, indicating a song of warning or a song of proceeding. The Civil Rights movement used the game of signification between lyric and meaning with protest songs sung in the 1950s and 60s. The hymn "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written for Abraham Lincoln's birthday in 1905 and adopted by the National Associate for the Advancement of Colored Peoples in 191 as the "Black National Anthem," the hymn was used in Civil Rights marches from a Biblical understanding of life triumphing suffering and death, and a Promised Land (of legal equality) awaiting – "Lift every voice and sing/ Till earth and heaven ring/ Ring with the harmonies of Liberty/ Let our rejoicing rise/ High as the listening skies/ Let it resound loud as the rolling sea./ Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us/ Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us/ Facing the rising sun of our new day begun/ Let us march on till victory is won."

But one must be careful to distinguish not only between lyric and meaning but also between the song, language, and text that was attributed to African Americans as opposed to those created and published by African Americans. *The Slave Songs of the United States* collection of spirituals, by Lucy McKim Garrison, William Francis Allen, and Charles Pickard Ware was gathered by white abolitionists writing lyrics in perceived African American vernacular and notating the songs using fixed pitch (and not the lined-out shape notes that didn't rely on absolute pitch.) However, the hymnal published by founder minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Richard Allen, *A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs from Various Authors* was specifically designed for African Americans and contained no notation at all. Those who used the AME hymnal placed familiar spiritual tunes with the lyrics. But even if these texts were composed by white hymnodists, arrangements like the *Harp of Zion* (1893),

eventually represented a stylistic shift in notation that finally indicated in ink the influence of African American churches on music. The appearance of syncopation, clapping on the 2 and 4.

Complex rhythm and the manipulation of time is another performance practice gifted to the Americas by the African American cultures. This is inherited from many sources, including African polyrhythms, as well as from the effect of field laborers, in effort to lessen the pace of the grueling work, leaning on the end of the beat when keeping time instead of at the front of the beat, and the caller elongating time and tones in melisma, that Gerhard Kubik considers a carryover from Muslim call to prayer. Not to mention the gospel practice of altering of rhythmic sequence to emphasis the text of the melody[100]. Jazz and blues artists too utilized complex rhythmic structures, from the syncopated shift of time to the sharing of Afro-Caribbean and Latin rhythms in their compositions and improvisations. This is further compounded with the embodied nature of music in African American culture and churches, where physical movement, stirring and dance are not uncommon. The manipulation of rhythm and time is indicative of a spiritual space, where liminality structures ritual use of the beat, both musical and heart. Physical movement, including sometimes dance, and music were intimately intertwined, and the sharing of music often became an embodied practice. Music connected the body to the spirit and made you happy.

Another feature of performance practice in African American religion is the ring or circle, where the community shares music and the messages embedded within. The key to this practice is the communal nature of it, one (heart) beat is established to hold together, and singing, dancing, and other embodied forms of musical practice are used. These range from hush harbor circles, healing circles, cyphers, and ring shouts. For instance, “rooted in the African

[100] Harris, 74.

circle dance, the ring shout involves stamping, clapping instead of drumming, and feet shuffling, involving a shuffle step where one did not cross legs, a no-no for those Baptists who were against dance; and a hidden protest of counterclockwise movement in opposition to the sun's movement. The movement symbolized the singers' long, grueling days of arduous work during enslavement."[101] The ring circle itself has evolved into the *cypher* and form of rap battling.

Therefore, Hip Hop has a rich legacy of performance practices from which to plumb identity, community, and meaning (as music and cultural modes). As a direct embodied practice against the social and economic deterioration that the post-Civil Rights Acts landscape and cultural heir of the Harlem Renaissance, jazz, blues, gospel, folk, spirituals, and rock and roll, hip hop developed as the seventh son of the seventh son of black cultural style in music. Profs. Monica Miller and Anthony Pinn define the structure of performance practice in Hip Hop via five cultural modes: rapping or emceeing (orality), DJing (aurality), breakdancing (physicality), art and fashion as the visual, and knowledge of self on the plane of sacred/secular signification. The voice is a dominant feature in modern Hip Hop, on equal footing with rhythm, much like its forebears. Additionally, rappers write and "spit" lyrics as moldable containers of meaning, typically playing with linguistic entendre. While the rapper or MC is by no means the most important figure in the performance of hip hop, they do engage the emotionality and testification that the voice confers, "the possibility of witnessing religion in hip-hop is equally available to all potential consumers of the music via the mainstream portals of radio, cable television, compact discs, and MP3s and iPods, as well as live in concert. A variety of religious ideas, beliefs, practices, themes, and figures have been substantively represented in

[101] Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, "Sacred and Secular in African American Music," *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and the Arts*, edited by Frank Burch Brown. (Oxford Handbooks Online, Feb. 2014), 501. https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195176674.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195176674-e-036

hip-hop music via lyrics and imagery since its entrance into mainstream popular music and culture with the release of the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" (1979), the first commercially distributed hip-hop song." [102] As well as function as the leaders in a contemporary call-and-response, e.g. "When I say hip, you say hop, Hip!" "Hop!" They also interact with the DJ's rhythmic flow and sampled melodies. As I had indicated with the heritage of musical signifying, "African American hip-hop embraces African philosophy that finds fluidity between sacred and secular and engages irony and paradox… Hip-hop involves a rich legacy of improvisation, sometimes framed by contradiction."[103] Hip Hop artists are wordsmiths that comment on the world around them, testifying but signifying unacceptable social conditions. Rappers and DJs alike love to manipulate the beat of the song and the rhythmic structure of the drums and voice, using rubato and syncopated rhythms, and the melismatic structure of melody persists in not only Muslim Hip Hop but echoed in the blues and gospel moaning in R&B elements mixed in Hip Hop. Break-dancers (B-boys and B-girls) are also consummate rhythmic specialists, embodying the practice of being moved by music. They often perform, like ring shouts, in a circle. So too, do rappers perform in a circular performance space of signifying through lyric called the cypher.

These practices shape the artists through their engagement with American culture writ large. Given Hip Hop grew up in the electronic age, it has always had the benefit of phonographic repetition redundancy, but the detriment of a brutal capitalist market that seeks monetary redundancy. This in turn creates various affects of rap, effervescence of emotion in sound and lyric. Gangsta rap is a sonic processing of environmental and physical concerns, but there's a core of family and community in their pronouncements. It is even speculated that the regional

[102] Josef Sorett, "Black Religion and Hip-Hop," Oxford African American Studies Center online journal, (Oxford Handbooks Online, Sept. 2012).
[103] Kirk-Duggan, 513.

antagonism was exacerbated or overinflated by the record producing companies. Even the current iteration of Dirrrty South rap, mumble is derided as incomprehensible, but one could contend that this too is a linguistically minimalist commentary on the state of metro Atlanta politics and economics. Migos, a hip hop collective group from Lawrenceville, one of the perimeter cities, is the best example of this kind of rap genre, and gained considerable commercial success with existentially provocative lyrics, especially those that called out the hypocrisy of culture based on the inevitability of degradation with poor economic and social mobility. Beyond communicating their own story and the story of the community around them, Hip Hop artists function as vital interlocutors of connection, bringing together their family and community through their music and the places in which they perform them. Hip Hop artists are echoing a long song sung by a people who are perpetually Silenced in the United States. They take up the torch from Freedom Riders and Civil Rights activists, they preach with the help of a beat.

The mark of a griot is verbal/sonic command and aporetic flow, and while this chapter may seem to give preference to the text and lyric, it is merely as a container of meaning to amplify to the world. The conclusion of this chapter will rest upon a systemic understanding of the way Americans have sonically embodied themselves and their stories about themselves. It will rely on a firm analysis of the role of storyteller in culture and the stake of being and significance that said person confers.

The Hip Hop that lives now was born in 1970s in New York's Bronx neighborhood but can trace its genealogy from disco and funk to rag-time and the blues, all the way to call-and-response of West African griot story-telling forms, mirrored in the call-and-response used during chattel slavery in the United States. Yet by the turn of the century, Hip Hop's center of gravity

shifted, due to broadcasting and phonologic economies grew to fruition, and especially after the hyper-commercialized regionalism of East Coast vs. West Coast passed from popular favor, from New York and Los Angeles to the Dirty South[104]. From the early 1990s to the present, Atlanta, Georgia is the one of the salient driving forces behind the international growth and depth of Hip Hop today.

Atlanta's past echoes into each moment of the present. The names of the streets are a dissonant mix of confederate names[105] and Civil Rights leaders' names, interspersed with an incalculable number of 'Peachtrees.' The organization of the neighborhoods still reflects the racial segregation enforced during Jim Crow. Even in her music, Atlanta's resounds with memory. One of the top three cultural centers for country music in the 1920s, the age known for jazz, Atlanta's soundscape clearly communicated the contrasting cultural and political landscape. What evolution(s) took place in this soundscape to make this city a sonic center for Hip Hop?

Atlanta is the example of what passes for a "city" in the Southeastern United States, a sprawling, kudzu-like metropolis, with rolling hills and many trees, earning it the moniker, 'the City in a Forest.' Even after General Sherman famously burned the city down in the Civil War, this wide swath of land is not known for any proclivities toward overt historical preservation. Even Boyd Coons, executive director of the Atlanta Preservation Center contends that Atlanta is a "tear-down city."[106] People are pushed and allocated around with construction or neighborhood rejuvenation projects (covert gentrification), all geared toward the economic incentive to maintain the status and connections of an international city. This means a huge population of people

[104] Goodie Mob, "Dirty South," *Soul Food* (Atlanta: LaFace Records, 1995).
[105] Pete Corson, "Some of the most visible memorials to the Confederacy found in metro Atlanta's public spaces" Atlanta Journal Constitution, July 13, 2018.
https://www.ajc.com/news/local/photos-confederate-memorials-metro-atlanta/FH1y7URHRaoVx9xofRbqjP/
[106] Nick Van Mead, "The Lost City of Atlanta," *The Guardian* October 23, 2018.
https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/oct/23/lost-city-of-atlanta-historic-building-parking-lot

connects on a regular basis with a large population of international peoples, coming and going through Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. With this type of spatiality and many peoples and cultures and languages mingling, the soundscape is a heady, intoxicating blend of Southem ruralism and global cosmopolitanism. As the inheritor of a plethora of musical genres and forms, as well as a versatile mode of political and economic communication in multiple vernaculars, Hip Hop is Atlanta's natural mirror form.

Several figures have mapped or are attempting to map the connection between sound and space within Atlanta. Georgia State University's ATLMaps[107] team has various public projects mapping the impact of stadiums, the airport, and churches, as well as a private project headed by Adnan Rasool called Rap Map of Atlanta[108]. In Rasool's description,

"The Rap Map project in ATLMaps explores how Metro Atlanta has influenced not just the artists that call the city home but a whole genre of music by spatializing that impact. The Rap Map highlights the disconnect between the rapid pace of development in the city and its negligible impact on how hip-hop music engages with the city's geography. It is as if Atlanta's economic renaissance, skipped whole portions of the city and that is where Hip Hop in Atlanta was born."

Similar mapping projects are happening all over the South. Dr. Holly Hobbs at Tulane University is mapping New Orleans' bounce genre within Hip Hop in Louisiana[109]. A3C[110], from "All 3 Coasts" denoting East, West, and South coasts as an amalgam of Hip Hop, runs a festival and Hip Hop History project. Through their sponsorship, New York born artist Jay Shells[111] extended his art installation, "Rap Quotes," in a street exhibition in Atlanta. Although initiated as

[107] https://atlmaps.org/about
[108] Adnan Rasool, "Mapping Atlanta's Rap Footprint: A Spatial Anatomy of the City's Hip Hop Influence," Atlanta Studies, https://www.atlantastudies.org/2018/02/13/adnan-rasool-mapping-atlantas-rap-footprint/
[109] https://digitallibrary.tulane.edu/islandora/object/tulane:p16313coll68
[110] https://www.a3cfestival.com/
[111] http://www.jayshells.com/

artistic project to mark geographic locations mentioned in rap lyrics on signs installed throughout the city, Shells admits that the project took on a register of historical and cultural significance through connecting the geospatial atmosphere with the words grown from experiencing said environment. "I find that there's a connection between the overall vibe in the city and the music that is coming out of it. It *feels* like the music, man."[112]

Other artists are keen to tap in to the tangibility of Atlanta's environment with Hip Hop. In September 2018, rapper T.I., known as one of the architects of the subgenre of Hip Hop called 'trap,' opened a Trap Museum and Escape Room[113] (not to be confused with 2 Chainz Pink Trap House) in east of Bankhead in Atlanta. Originally conceived as a pop-up museum and publicity stunt to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of his album, *Trap Muzik,* the public history and artistic exhibition shows no signs of indifference. The museum and escape room will continue to function as long as visitors want "the experience." The museum, curated by T.I. and other collaborators, notably of LaFace Record fame, features the environment and soundscape of trap music's origins. T.I. and trap music's significance is also mapped using Atlanta police maps of zones[114] in the city. T.I. and the museum are located in Zone 1, and these geospatial identifiers are thus inserted in the discourse that makes the music tangible.

In spite of its tangibility, Atlanta's music now faces the de-personification of the Internet and the global music economy, with the advent of streaming platforms. Even with the existence of such maps and their places, most people in Atlanta and the United States as a whole, consume their music through the digital landscape, and less often through physical forms. While several venues

[112] Jay Shells, video interview, "Rap Quotes ATL: Dirty South Edition," published by AnimalNewYork on May 20, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=150&v=11A6D18lGM0
[113] https://trapmusicmuseum.us/
[114] Thomas Morton, "Known Zones: The Noisey Guide to ATL's Trap Map," *Vice Media*, February 9, 2015. https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/7b7yag/known-zones-0000575-v22n2

and festivals still ignite the artistic embers that drive Hip Hop forward, artists themselves must contend with a host of complications, with streaming services and production companies making the significant moves in the musical economy of the South and the globe. No longer can you park at Lenox or Greenbriar malls[115] and listen to fresh rappers sampling their own tapes on their car stereo systems. All of Jay Shells' *Rap Quotes* signs have been stolen and are no longer on display. T.I.'s museum teeters on the edge of being a cultural landmark and a sordid escape room experience.

Nevertheless, some artists have responded to this depersonalization with homages to Atlanta herself. Donald Glover, known in the Hip Hop scene as Childish Gambino, wrote, produced, and directed the hit show *Atlanta* for the television channel FX. The series follows Earn(est) Marks, a struggling rapper living in various locations throughout Atlanta, detailing the Hip Hop economy and production game with a surreal mixture of real issues facing Atlantans today (police brutality, internet trolling, homo- and transphobia) and comedy. Its criticism of the role and accessibility of money in the Hip Hop economy of Atlanta is as poignant as it is infuriating and tangible. This is where Atlanta's Hip Hop scene sits, at the cusp of tangibility and global obscurity. The projects, maps, museums, art installations, and television series are an attempt at connecting these poles, making Atlanta accessible to the globe, and making its mark on history, whether or not Atlanta ends up preserving it.

[115] Christina Lee, "Straight Outta Stankonia - Greenbriar and Lenox Square malls," *Creative Loafing*, April 10, 2014. https://creativeloafing.com/content-232558-Straight-Outta-Stankonia--Greenbriar-and-Lenox-Square-malls

Chapter V

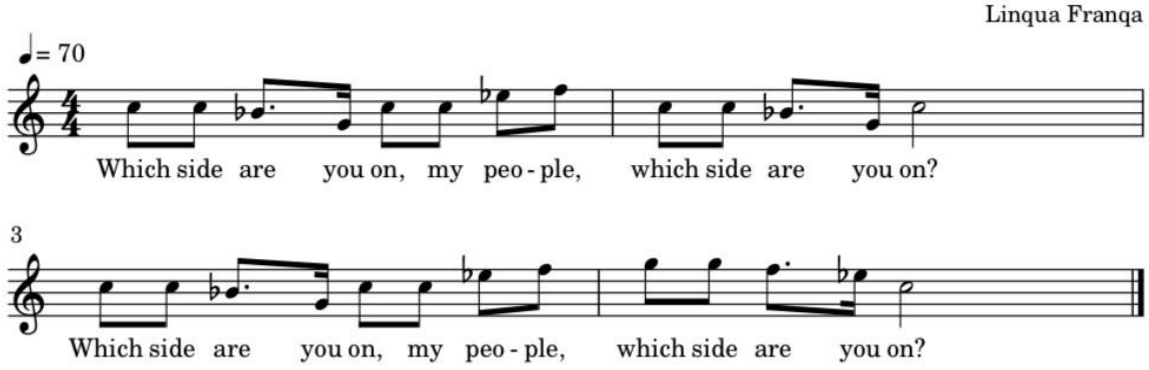
In the Space of the No-Longer but Not-Yet:

Hip Hop in Athens, GA, a Liberatory Practice

"I thought that I heard you laughing/
I thought that I heard you sing/
I think I thought I saw you try

But that was just a dream"

"Losing My Religion" by R.E.M. (1991)



The musicians and artists of Athens, Georgia know that they have had a lot of forebears build the scene before them and that the work to get the microphone is just as significant as keeping it – to extol a message that isn't a monolith but remains unified. It's echoed in the #blacklivesmatter movement, it's echoed in their work with education and youth outreach in the community, and in the city's administration of redress and reconciliation to the victims of the Linnentown erasure and

the relocation of the sign of the confederacy in downtown Athens. Using Elizabeth Grace Hale's narrative *Cool Town: How Athens, Georgia, Launched Alternative Music and Changed American Culture* as a model of voice in oral history, this chapter is a hyperlocal ethnomusicological analysis of the soundscape of the South via Athens and the metro-Atlanta areas, which hinges on collecting and archiving the oral histories of several Athens hip hop artists popular on the scene today, as well as live performances and interviews with artists and audience alike. Given the environment of Covid, the 2020 Presidential election, and the sense of national distrust in the "truth" and "facts," I believe hip hop artists, their genre and medium, and their *signifyin'* are key parts of shaping the current regional and national narrative, both religious and political. Therefore, this particular project's mission is to investigate the role of art, in this case hip hop in Athens, in the act of signification; as a creation of an exit, not a retreat, to remake and resound the message of who we are. To be free in tight spaces, as Dr. Medine puts it, and to hear what harmonies emerge from these artists' work and joy. Performance practice, in both sacred and secular music, is a matrix of habitus. The matrix consists of the who, what, when, where, and how of the acts of musical signification, and shifts within the geo-spatiotemporal progression of the soundscape. Who are the interlocutors allowed to perform music? At what locations is music being performed and how does it and the messages it transmits reverberate throughout the soundscape? What musics are they creating and at what time is this music-making appropriate? How do they keep time and space in music-making? And the actual gestures involved in musical meaning-making, the physical, vocal, and spiritual movements engendered by interaction with music. As we have seen in popular debate lately, some people believe monuments and officiated physical landmarks of the past are ways to read and teach history. This project reads history through music and tries to disentangle the signs and significations from the stories.

In 1872, one of the first monuments to the Confederate dead was erected in a place of honor in Athens, Georgia, between College Avenue and Washington Street. It was eventually moved directly across from the symbol of the city's flagship institution, the Arch of the University of Georgia. The obelisk was commissioned by the Ladies Memorial Association, but historians have noted that the money for the monument was actually raised by the white wealthy men of the city as a symbol of defiance to black voting rights of the time and as a rallying point for the Ku Klux Klan.[116] The monument stood in direct confrontation to the University and as a reminder to any person of color in the college town to stay in line. Civic policies before and after the official desegregation of the University, in 1961 by Charlayne Hunter-Gault and Hunter Holmes, reflected the implicit message of the supposedly commemorative stone. Even as the first three people of color walked through the gate as students of the University, the monument cast its shadow.

In fact, the gate of the University, modeled after the Seal of the state, was likely smelted, and erected by the hands of black local laborers, which made the November 2015 discovery and mishandling of African American remains buried beneath one of the University buildings all the more galling and familiar an experience the Athens African American community has had with the University. With the help of UGA's Anthropology and Archaeological Sciences division, investigators uncovered at least 105 grave sites, 30 of which have confirmed DNA of black citizens of Athens, likely formerly enslaved. Instead of reaching out to those community members who could be descendants of these people, in order to ensure a respectful reinterment in line with the family's wishes, the University followed the State's

[116] Scott Nelson, "The Even Uglier Truth Behind Athens Confederate Monument," *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, (23 June 2020), https://www.journalofthecivilwarera.org/2020/06/the-even-uglier-truth-behind-athens-confederate-monument/

guidance to transport the remains quickly and surreptitiously to a historically-segregated cemetery on campus, Oconee Hill, and reburied overnight. The opaque response from the University was yet more evidence of the poor treatment of people of color in the so-called "progressive" bastion this side of Atlanta. Within this context, **the** broadcasted murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, three months into the Covid pandemic, was the straw that broke the camel's proverbial back. Several protests were rapidly organized and took place over several days, including caravans, socially-distanced and masked rallies, and stopping downtown traffic.

On Sunday night, May 31st, tear gas cans were launched at Black Lives Matter protestors in direct view of the Arch and obelisk. After a string of local police altercations wherein another unarmed person was murdered in our city, tensions with the penal authorities were high as our screens and headphones called out Mr. Floyd's last words, "Mama, they'll kill me," or in the harried footsteps of Ahmaud Arbery, who found his video-recorded end less than a hundred miles away in Brunswick, GA. The gall and rage induced by this incident ignited more Athenians to the Black Lives Matter cause. And at the forefront of it all, local hip hop musicians who seek liberation. With a strong sense of community and connection to labor causes, Athenian hip hop artists are versed in their location's rich archive of musical performances and recordings that shaped the city as well as their art today.

Even before 19th century, music played an important role in the social and cultural life of Athens, Georgia, which provided ample opportunities for local musicians and music lovers to gather, perform, and socialize. Churches were key centers of musical activity in Athens during this time, with many churches having choirs and holding regular musical events. The First Baptist Church, for example, had an active choir that performed at worship services and special

events throughout the 1800s. The turn of the century blossomed composer and playwright Robert Allen Cole, born to former slaves who had settled in Athens after the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation. His influence on African American art movements cannot be overstated with his savvy collaboration, performative prowess, and prolific model for popular songwriting and musicals in the early 1900s, revitalizing black theatre. It was his insistence to break minstrel norms of musical and theatrical presentation of stereotypes, like the exaggerated length of intoning in dialogue or the usual setting in a plantation or agricultural location. His contention of traveling musicianship wed financial success with the collaborative quality of movement. In addition, traveling musicians and performers would often come through Athens and give concerts or performances, providing entertainment and cultural enrichment for local residents.

The Hot Corner was a prominent African American business district in Athens, Georgia, that was a hub for black culture, commerce, and music in the 20th century. The area was home to a number of black-owned businesses, including music venues, clubs, and restaurants, that catered to African American customers. One of the most notable aspects of the Hot Corner was its connection to the Chitlin' Circuit, a network of performance venues that catered to black musicians and entertainers during the era of segregation. Many prominent African American musicians, such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, James Brown, Ray Charles, and Otis Redding played at Hot Corner venues like the Morton Theatre and the 40 Watt Club when they were starting out or in the height of their careers. These venues and network of safe connections played an important role in the development of African American culture and music in Athens, providing a safe space for black artists and audiences to come together, amidst a sea of "sun-down towns" and enjoy music, fellowship, and entertainment in a supportive environment.

Athens eventually became internationally known for its vibrant and diverse music scene, with a particular focus on rock and roll and alternative music in the 1970s, with bands like The B-52's and Pylon emerged from the local music scene and gained national attention. In the 1980s and 1990s, Athens became a hotbed of alternative rock and indie music, with bands like R.E.M., Widespread Panic, and Neutral Milk Hotel achieving widespread success. Today, Athens continues to be a hub for music and art, with a thriving local scene that includes a wide range of genres and styles. The town has a number of music venues, including the iconic 40 Watt Club and the Georgia Theatre, and hosts several annual music festivals, such as AthFest and the Twilight Criterium. The University of Georgia also has a strong music program, with several music-related organizations and events, and the Hot Corner is celebrated as an important part of Athens' cultural heritage, and efforts are underway to preserve and promote its legacy. The music scene in Athens, Georgia has a rich and storied history and continues to be an important part of the town's cultural identity.

Athens, Georgia is known in the United States as one of the birthplaces of alternative rock and wildly popular American bands such as R.E.M., B-52s, and Pylon. Due to these bands and their musics dominating the cities' soundscape, the history of Southern music and in our current time, the Hip Hop scene, is rendered peripheral in the college town, and up until the last decade, nearly invisible. But Athens' hip hop scene was born and grew alongside alternative rock. When Andre 3000 extolled on the 1995 *Source* awards, "the South got somethin' to say," his statement was made to enlighten the world of the fact that hip hop has bloomed in the Southeastern United States regardless of the white supremacist noise drowning out other(ed) voices. Athens is no exception, boasting a solid coterie of hip hop artists and sound engineers who have formed a simultaneously tight-knit but inclusive community. Their art and actions in

the community--through the *Athens Hip Hop Awards*, in political office, and in spear-heading educational, mental health, and spiritual betterment initiatives, hip hop artists in Athens are saying what they got to say.

Hip Hop blossomed in Athens starting in the early 1990s, much like in its birth, around community engagement, block and porch parties, and various local venues that seemed to echo the Hot Corner in the beginning of the century. By the turn of the 21st century, hip hop was established in the city with Lo Down and Duddy performing their style of Southern hip hop to the nation, and with Ishues, also known as Ishmael Cuthbertson, was featured in KRS-One's *Life* album. Ishues reflects on the development he had from the early 2000s to now, "It's a different time now. When I was coming up, you had to be ready to perform on the spot. In the late '90s, we did a lot of battling… So you had to be well-versed in freestyle."[117] It was this ability to construct contextual and "conscious" rap lyrics "off-the-dome" as it is called, that rose from the communal signifying hip hop allowed. It was the generative ability of musical artists in Athens that developed the hip hop scene.

This is the next phase of this project's case studies is to assist in growing a hyperlocal ethnomusicological analysis of the soundscape of the South via Athens and the metro-Atlanta areas by collecting more interviews and archiving for UGA's *Russell Special Collections Library* the oral histories of several Athens hip hop artists popular on the scene today. Given the environment of Covid, the 2020 Presidential election, and the sense of national distrust in the "truth" and "facts," I believe hip hop artists, their genre and medium, and their signifyin' are key parts of shaping the regional and national narrative, both religious and political. In order to elucidate the role of prophetizing and politicizing in hip hop, and hip hop's impact on the

[117] Ishmael "Ishues" Cuthbertson, "Ishues" interviewed by Jimmy Ether, *Record Plug Magazine*, March 2023 (Clarkston, GA).

national narrative, these histories will include such voices as Mariah Parker, stage name Linqua Franqa; Torrance Wilcher, known popularly as Squalle Shottem; Life the Griot; Ishmael Cuthbertson, also known as Ishues; Cedric "Amun-Ra" Huff; and Kxng Blanco; as well as several others. All of these artists have publicly expressed interest in supporting the health and safety of those in the Athens community and the South at large, as well as functioning as political interlocutors for their communities. In addition to this, I am seeking to incorporate the research methodologies of the Athens Music Project conceived by UGA ethnomusicologists, one of whom I'm honored to have on my committee, Drs. Jean Kidula and Susan Thomas into my work on the multimodalities of signification. What I hope to find is further evidence of my conclusion of hip hop as the future of music as a globalizing communicative force.

Most Athens hip hop artists are highly active in our community. Torrance "Squalle Shottem" Wilcher, has kept his spiritual community and his youth advocacy alive throughout the Covid-19 pandemic through founding League of Step. "We use step to teach discipline and confidence and self-esteem," Wilcher says. "A lot of these kids are dealing with peer pressure and trauma. A lot of them come from poor backgrounds, such as myself, so, step gives them confidence in themselves." In addition to instilling confidence in the youth, Wilcher is deliberate to incorporate community service as a way to build intimacy to where they live and who they live with.

Lemuel, "Life the Griot" LaRoche and Ishmael "Ishues" Cuthbertson, are hip hop artists who focus on the family as a vehicle to community connection, stating, "We impact communities by impacting families," and they do so by leading a social club for Athens youth and their associated familial networks called Chess and Community. Since 2012, LaRoche and Cuthbertson have used chess as an entry point into getting young people to not only engage the

game as an intellectual puzzle and challenge, but also as a metaphor for life to develop perspective: "You understand how the pieces on the board move, then you move those pieces off the board and put your life on it… Where are your castles? Your community. Where are your bishops? Your churches and spiritual foundation. Where are the knights? The police and that community security. And the pawns, your friends. The chessboard gives you a different worldview." "Ishues" works with this program as well as assists in organizing protests and marches throughout the Athens area.

Cedric "Amun-Ra" Huff also highlights education, "Amun-Ra is for the children," his common refrain. He discusses the act of learning, that can be done both on the federal grid and at home, as a key pathway to knowing one's self, the fifth element of hip hop, saying, "it's cool to raise your children [in Athens], there's some racism, but not enough racism to cause me to shut down or not be able to flourish… because I knew what it was from what my parents taught me. My dad always taught me to be my self and never be a follower, so I look out for my people first. My music may display a lot of pro-black information, but it's not racist, it's to awaken our people to what's going on." [118]

Kxng Blanco, though he be biologically young, has a wisdom he unrolls in his lyrics and associated media. In an interview with other artists earning a Defiance Award from the Morton Theatre, a historically black entertainment institution in Athens[119], Kxng wrests with the idea of growth as proof of his humanity, complaining that while he knows to take responsibility for his actions, authorities and especially those espousing white supremacist views, lack this

[118] Cedric "Amun-Ra" Huff, "Interview with Cedric Huff (Amun-Ra), December 17, 2019" by Montu Miller. Athens Music Project, Oral History Collection, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia. https://ohms.libs.uga.edu/viewer.php?cachefile=russell/RBRL379AMP-101.xml#segment212

[119] "Our History," *Morton Theatre* https://www.mortontheatre.com/history

ability, saying "no one ever stands on [their] actions when they're perpetuating this kind of violence." It is because of this notion that the rapper feels the desire to put people in the shoes of witnessing. In a sense this can be seen as a public service, but he does not limit his work to one dimension of art or another. Blanco wants it all, and the Athens community has been supportive of this.

Mariah Parker is one of the more recognizable hip hop artists because of her 2018 win for County Commissioner of District 2. Mariah is an openly queer artist, stage name "Linqua Franqa," and a has their PhD in linguistics from UGA, whose culminating dissertation project was the writing, performing, and producing of a hip hop album, *Bellringer*. [120] As County Commissioner, they focused on creating economic stability and racial justice as well as criminal justice reform and raising the minimum wage, but they are also known for being a brilliant community organizer dedicated to transformative politics and civic engagement. Mariah is also co-host of "Waiting on Reparations," a show on iHeartRadio about Hip Hop and politics where they explore our political reality and the role of Hip Hop in shaping our political future. One of their more recent accomplishments with their political patience (they lament that politics takes a lot longer than it should, but they are dedicated to waiting and witnessing for people) is the Linnentown redress and reconciliation project. While it took them two years of constant work with the former residents of Linnentown neighborhood, the Athens-Clarke County Commission passed a Feb. 17, 2021 resolution for recognition and redress for the victims of a cruelly executed "urban renewal" project of erasure. It is the first act of reparations to be passed in the state of Georgia. In addition to this, the County Commission that Mariah sat on was key in dismantling and relocating of the Confederate monument across from the Arch to a different,

[120] Linqua Franqa, *Bellringer*. Ernest Jenning Record Co. B09R2WRM4R, 27 January 2022.

more appropriate, site. Since Georgia law prohibits the movement or destruction of these Confederate memorials, the city removed it on grounds of impeding traffic. [121]

The black artists of this college-dominated town just want to reignite the warmth of the historic Hot Corner, no matter what musical genre it resonates with. They merely want the capacity to call out into the world, to give voice to their stories in the spaces where so much silence existed. As Larry Gresham, Jr., known in Athens as his stage name, LG, explains, "I hope that it shines a brighter light on hip hop. There are some negatives on it, but we want things to be right for our people."[122] This is where the project of Montu Miller, local hip hop historian and key voice in the archival of hip hop memory in all associated projects, including the Athens Hip Hop Harmonic, is situated and why it is so important to the sense of multimodal signification. And most importantly, these musicians and artists know that they have had a lot of forebears build the scene before them and that the work to get the microphone is just as significant as keeping it – to extol a message that isn't a monolith but is unified. It's echoed in the #blacklivesmatter movement, it's echoed in their work with education and youth outreach in the community, and in the city's administration of redress and reconciliation to the victims of the Linnentown erasure and the relocation of the sign of the confederacy in downtown Athens. Therefore, this particular project's mission is to investigate the role of art, in this case hip hop in Athens, in the act of signification; as a creation of an exit, not a retreat, to remake and resound the message of who we are. To be free in tight spaces, as Dr. Medine puts it, and to hear what harmonies emerge from these artists' work and joy.

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[121] Kim Kelly, "Linqua Franqa Is Fighting for a Better World, Onstage and at the Picket Line," *Rolling Stone* 17 October 2022. https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/linqua-franqa-wurk-rapper-labor-organizer-1234587457/

[122] Larry "LG" Gresham, Jr., as quoted in Margaret Pfohl's "Athens hip-hop artists explore racial inequality, police brutality on the stage." *The Red & Black*, 25 March 2019. https://www.redandblack.com/athensnews/athens-hip-hop-artists-explore-racial-inequality-police-brutality-on-the-stage/article_b873c938-3d9b-11e8-83d6-77089fc49ee5.html.

Epilogue

American Coda: "(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay"

"Tabi ni yande/ Yume wa kareno wo/ Kakemeguru –

Sick on my journey
my dreams go wandering
this desolate field."

- Matsuo Basho, 1694

Frantz Fanon said "the greatness of a man is to be found not in his acts but in his style. Existence does not resemble a steadily rising curve, but a slow, and sometimes sad, series of ups and downs."[123] It is from this presupposition that I endeavored here to include a thorough historical analysis and a sonic-cartographic view of the cultural context that lead to the development of soundscape studies in the study of American religion. History is not merely the record of the acts that occur but the investigation as to the tesseractive significance between our interactions with it and the patterns, or styles, that emerge from them. Elaborating on some methods of New Musicologists in cohort with Religious Studies, I have built this theoretical method on the plane of signification upon which is set History as it unfolds. As "the South got something to say," this

[123] An inscription to his brother, Felix, in his 1951 unpublished psychiatric thesis.

dissertation merely represents the introductory work on recording the signifiyin' impact of the progression of history, especially one so fractured and very much in constant flux.

I've sought to demonstrate the power of music for meaning-making, storying, and signifying one's personhood through song on the soundscape of humanity, but through the lens of the Southeastern United States. As we have noted in the historically informed theoretical development, America, like all other countries before and beyond her, sings for more than entertainment, but for making meaning and self onto this plane of signification. The foundation in soundscape studies partnered with Dr. Long's understanding of religion as orientation and signification and its action of Signifyin' serves to situate the musics of Southern peoples not as incidental creativity of a peoples who happen to populate a certain space, but deliberate act of resonance. And this resonance serves to not only signify one's self upon the plane of signification, but to also echo and recall the meaning-making and space-making of those that came before and those that will carry on the tunes after. Music is a socially significant activity for remembering our ancestors, our struggles and challenges, our silences, and our triumph. It is a rejoinder of time to make meaning in place and space. For as Simone Weil accounts, "music is a time one wants neither to arrest nor hasten,"[124] but to join the march of time and the morphology of a message.

It is precisely because of this resonance, this echo of meaning and messages that we can posit that identity is a melody, an ever-evolving composition of the moments that make us, which shapes our interactions with the symphony of the world – both exterior and interior. These melodic identities intertwine with those that resound in consonance and dissonance in the general location of each melody. By performing protest and prophecy via the medium of music, Americans, including but not limited to those Southern ones noted here, make meaning and story through

[124] Simone Weil, *The Notebooks of Simone Weil*, trans. by Arthur Wills (London: Routledge, 2014), 39.

multiple modes of signification. Each mode echoes the history of its creators and those that carry it forward.

Otis Redding, born from sharecroppers in a little old town in Georgia, loved to sing since he was a boy, and often found himself in the church or singing gospel over the radio, since his father was an itinerant preacher around the foothills. In his early music career, he visited Athens through the Chitlin' Circuit, and crooned at the Morton Theatre. He has a bridge named after him in Macon, his home as well as Little Richard's (the architect of Rock and Roll) birthplace, one of his influences. Mr. Redding's life, in deepest respect, can be seen as an analogy of the American Dream, and how it resonates in our collective minds. He sang only what he knew, and much of his lyrics contained references to Georgia or the South. His debut album, which rocketed his career to stardom, was released the same year that singer and Civil Rights activist, and another musical influence of Redding's, Sam Cooke, died. He was able to climb the charts with *Pain in My Heart*[125], and soon found himself in such venues as the Apollo in New York. But he kept to his roots, recording in Memphis at Stax Studios and living in Georgia, and was known as a family-man and community leader. He even planned to use his musical wealth to start and run a philanthropic organization for disadvantaged youth. He was away from Georgia, sitting on a rented houseboat in California, enjoying the waves, when he wrote one of his most iconic, and posthumous, songs, "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay." The story changes based off of who tells it[126], but Redding recorded the song twice, the final recording including the fading whistle for which the song is so famous, completed the Thursday evening before he was to die in a plane crash the following Monday. Redding lived and died in the style of Georgia, America. He signified

[125] Otis Redding, *Pain in My Heart*, ATCO Records, 33-161, 1964.
[126] Stuart Miller, "Inside Otis Redding's Final Masterpiece '(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay.'" *Rolling Stone* 10 December 2017. https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/inside-otis-reddings-final-masterpiece-sittin-on-the-dock-of-the-bay-122170/

through song and a lonesome whistle, the series of ups and downs the American Dream engenders. It has no future judgment, but a fading away into the future. The hopes, dreams, pain, and joys echo through the melodies of call-and-response, through spirituals, through gospel, into gospel-blues, through jazz and rock-and-roll, and finally through its current culmination, hip hop. Via the multimodalities of signification that resound through each performance of every musical entreaty, the dream resounds, and carries on.

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