ORKESTRA RUMPILEZZ:
MUSICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF AFRO-BAHIAN IDENTITIES

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
(Ethnomusicology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

March 2014

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between music and politics of black identities in Salvador, Bahia (Brazil), an epicenter of Afro-Brazilian culture. It focuses on discourses of blackness and on the role of grooves, instruments, symbolism, and perceptions of carnival music, *candomblé*, and jazz in the construction of black identities in Bahia.

I propose a model that integrates discourses of black primitivism and empowerment with seven notions commonly associated with black and African music: rhythmicity, percussiveness, spirituality, communalism, embodiment, traditionalism, and closeness to nature. My contribution uses a Foucauldian interpretation of these notions to explain how they work together to form discourses of blackness, not on the notions themselves for they are all widely known. The model accommodates a wide range of interpretations of these themes offering more flexible views of blackness. A Bahian big band called Rumpilezz that blends jazz with various forms of Afro-Bahian music (such as *candomblé* and *samba-reggae*), serves as my laboratory for applying this model. Aspects of public self-representation, performance practice, music structure, and musical reception are analyzed. Taking a constructivist approach, this study aims to respond to the following questions: 1) How do the most influential preconceived ideas about “African” music and culture impact musical activity in Bahia?; 2) What opportunities emerge when musical forms perceived as Afro-Brazilian encounter others seen as foreign?; and 3) How does music in Bahia express discourses of blackness?

This work, based on ethnographic research, historical, cultural, and musical analysis, demonstrates that, in promoting black empowerment, Rumpilezz emphasizes the themes of rhythmicity, percussiveness and spirituality, and downplays the notions of closeness to nature and embodiment. In doing so, the orchestra reinforces the place of Bahia, and particularly of Bahian *candomblé*, as diasporic centers of black tradition. Finally, Rumpilezz is located in a broader tradition of jazz bands in the diaspora that appropriates African-diasporic music to promote black pride.
Preface

This research project was designed and executed by the author under the supervision of Professor Michael Tenzer. The various phases included writing a research prospectus (between September and December 2011), conducting fieldwork in Salvador, Bahia (between January and June 2012), analyzing data (from July 2012 to July 2013) and writing (from October 2012 to February 2014). Date collection in a previous visit to Salvador between June and August 2009 is also used.


Ethics clearance to conduct fieldwork in Salvador, Bahia for this project was approved on December 8, 2011 by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (ID: H11-02541) and completed on December 12, 2012. The title of the approved project was “Musical Africanization and Re-Africanization: Strategies for Producing Locality in Bahia” with the Principal Investigator being Professor Michael Tenzer.

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Glossary

*Afoxé*: Carnival ensembles from Bahia that use *candomblé* instruments (*atabaques*, *agogôs*, and gourds covered with beads) and play *candomblé* derived grooves, particularly *ijexá*.

*Agogô*: A double-mouthed bell used in *Ketu candomblé* drumming ensembles, *capoeira*, and other Afro-Brazilian ensembles. In *candomblé* it is also known as *ferro* or *gã*.

*Aguere*: A *Ketu candomblé* groove for *orixá Oxossi*.

*Alabê*: A title given to initiated male master drummers in *Ketu candomblé* traditions. He usually plays *rum*.


*Atabaque*: Generic name of sacred drums in *Ketu candomblé* ensembles. There are three types with different sizes and functions: *rum*, *rumpi* and *lê*. *Atabaques* are also featured in other Afro-Bahian groups such as *capoeira*, *samba de roda* and *afoxés*.

*Bloco Afro*: Purely percussive carnival ensembles from Bahia linked to black consciousness. Typically featuring *fundos*, *surdos*, *caixas*, *repiques* and *timbaus*, they parade in Salvador's streets throughout the year.

*Caixa*: Snare drum used in *bloco afró* ensembles.

*Candomblé*: A generic name given in Bahia for various types of syncretic Afro-Brazilian religions.

*Candomblé-de-caboclo*: is a syncretic religion where Amerindian spirits (*caboclos*) are worshiped in conjunction with *orixás*. Although *candomblé-de-caboclo* and *umbanda* are considered as separate cults, some claim that the former is the Bahian version of *umbanda*, a generic term applied to other syncretic cults across Brazil (Carvalho 1993:9).

*Capoeira*: An Afro-Brazilian art mixing dance, martial arts, music, and ritual.

*Capoeira Angola*: A style of *capoeira* developed in Bahia that is considered by practitioners as more traditional and closer to African culture.

*Caxixi*: A rattle used in *capoeira* and other Afro-Brazilian ensembles.

*Ketu*: Neo-African nation of Yoruba origin in Bahia.

*Lê*: One of the accompanying drums in *Ketu candomblé* drumming ensembles.

*Ijexá*: A *candomblé* groove for *orixá Oxum* in various *candomblé* houses and also by carnival *afoxés*.

*Jejê*: Neo-African nation of Ewe-Fon origin in Bahia.
**Mestiço:** A term used in Latin America for people of mixed ancestry whose traits are not “obviously” traceable to a single African, Amerindian, or European heritage. The perception of mestiços varies form place to place. Sansone (2004a) documented dozens of mixed categories in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, how different labels are used or imposed, and how they may overlap (or not) with black identities in specific contexts.

**Orixá:** Generic name of Ketu deities

**Oxalá:** A oldest orixá in the Ketu tradition who represents wisdom and fatherhood.

**Oxossi:** The Ketu orixá of the forest and hunting.

**Oxum:** The Ketu orixá of beauty and fresh water.

**Ramunha (or avaninha):** A toque used at the beginning and ending of Ketu candomblé ceremonies. Also the timeline pattern (x..x..x…x.x…) played by the agogo in this toque.

**Rum:** The lowest sounding and lead drum in Ketu candomblé drumming ensembles.

**Rumpi:** One of the accompanying drums in Ketu candomblé drumming ensembles.

**Samba de Roda:** A traditional style of samba indigenous from Bahia. Although instrumentation may vary according to the occasion, it frequently features atabaques, pandeiros, and agogó. Songs in call-and-response, verse improvisation, and dance in the middle of a circle are integral to the style.

**Surdos:** The lowest sounding drums in bloco afro carnival ensembles.

**Terreiro:** A compound where candomblé communities store ritual objects and celebrate ceremonies.

**Timbau:** A light conical drum with plastic head used in carnival ensembles. Not to be confused with timbal or timbales, a set of two shallow single-headed drums with metal casing used in salsa and other Afro-Caribbean music.

**Toque:** Groove in Afro-Brazilian styles such as candomblé, capoeira, and carnival music.

**Umbanda:** an Afro-Brazilian religion blending candomblé with Catholicism, spiritism, kardecism, and Amerindian religious practices. Despite enjoying more national popularity than other Afro-Brazilian religions, umbanda is sometimes criticized by black activists and purists for being considered a “whitening” of the African tradition in Brazil (Carvalho 1993).
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the result of a long journey in which I have been blessed by the company and support of countless individuals. Hence, these lines inevitably confront me with the anxiety of leaving names out. I must begin with my supervisor, Professor Michael Tenzer. It is impossible for me to imagine a better mentor than him. With patience and kindness, he provided me with invaluable guidance throughout my doctoral program. I felt challenged and stimulated by his curious and penetrating mind, constructively confronted by his bald honesty and criticism, and kindly guided in the moments of darkness.

I am also grateful towards the members of my committee, professors Nathan Hesselink, Gage Averill, Kevin Mcneilly, and Alejandra Bronfman as well to external examiner, Professor Jason Stanyek, for enriching this dissertation and my perspectives with their generous and astute comments and suggestions. Other professors at UBC contributed in various ways to forging key analytical and musical capacities for this project, notably Kofi Gbolonyo, Fred Stride, and John Roeder. In general, the entire UBC School of Music with its vibrancy and diversity provided an ideal environment for my intellectual development. Many thanks to my peers I Wayan Sudirana, Rodrigo Caballero, Juliane Jones, Jonathan Adams, Robin Attas, Tyler Kinnear, and Maisie Sum for sharing their Ph.D. journeys with me.

I am eternally indebted to dozens of musicians and informants in Salvador, Bahia, who not only offered me their friendship, but also helped me with patience to understand their music and what it means for them. I am particularly grateful to my friend Sandra Lima who opened the doors of her house for me and introduced me to the sacred world of candomblé. Mestre Cobra Mansa's wisdom was a vast source of knowledge of Afro-Brazilian culture. Most of what I know about candomblé and carnival music comes from my music teachers Gabriel Guedes, Macambira, and Renato Kalile towards whom I am also very grateful. Professor Laila Rosa of the ethnomusicology program at Federal University of Bahia and fellow graduate students Flavia Diniz and Tiago Maia provided a space for academic reflection while in Salvador. The International Capoeira Angola Foundation led by Mestre Valmir provided a family-like environment where I trained capoeira on a weekly basis.
The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Killam Trusts provided generous funding to complete my dissertation and allowed me to move between Canada, Brazil, and Norway, where I spent one year writing. The Department of Musicology of University of Oslo with its rich mixture of historic musicology, music theory, and ethnomusicology, provided a friendly, supportive, and stimulating environment. I am especially grateful to professor Anne Danielsen, who generously took me under her wing and assumed the role of local supervisor. Her intellect, productive criticism, and knowledge are spread throughout the pages of this dissertation. Kjetil Klette Bøhler, who read the text and offered valuable suggestions, stimulated me with deep discussions and soothed me with his friendship and kindness.

Words can hardly express my gratitude to my family and friends. Quietly my parents have followed my steps throughout this process in full support and loving presence. I am also immensely grateful to my Canadian family Eliane Michel, Georgia Marvin, and Jeff Chernoff for providing me with the warmth and love of home. Special thanks to Amanda Procter for encouraging me to better myself and for believing in me. Last, but not least, thanks to Yerina Rock for being my teacher and student in what is most important in life.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This is something that comes from my mother, my great-grandfather, my grandfather who was a slave. From my godfather from Ilha de Itaparica who was an ojé1 at the candomblé de ogum house which I never saw. Therefore, my blood is a great mixture. The mixture of Africa. I am Africa! I am Bahian Africa! (Macambira, p.c. Salvador, Bahia, March 31, 2012)²

This dissertation is about the relationship between music and the politics of black identities in Salvador, Bahia. My interest in this topic dates to 1998 when I began practicing capoeira³ in my hometown of Medellin, Colombia. Soon after I realized that capoeira belonged to a larger Afro-Brazilian cultural complex that shared songs, dance moves, instruments, and ritual elements with candomblé,⁴ maracatu,⁵ samba de roda,⁶ baião,⁷ and other Afro-Brazilian styles. But it was not until my first encounter with Mestre Cobra Mansa⁸ in 2005, and particularly my visit to Brazil in 2006, that I experienced the importance of these forms as mobilizers of black identity, especially in the state of Bahia.

One of the things that fascinated me most were the stories portraying capoeira as a tool of resistance developed by enslaved Africans against Portuguese colonizers, particularly those stories staged at the iconic Quilombo dos Palmares⁹ in the 17th century. Fragments of these stories were built into capoeira song texts and integral to many practitioners' discourse. Studying in Bahia, the “cradle” of capoeira, I realized that these stories are not always historically documented. Furthermore, many of the narratives of capoeira's origins seemed to rub against each other, such as the way capoeira is portrayed as a direct continuation of a particular combat

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1 Ojé or odé is a title held by helpers of priests in the Yoruba-derived egungun cult (cult of the ancestors) in Bahia.
2 All personal communications by Macambira took place in Salvador, Bahia.
3 Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian practice mixing dance, martial arts, music, and ritual.
4 Candomblé is an umbrella term used in Bahia and other places in Brazil to refer to various Afro-Brazilian cults.
5 Maracatu is a term referring to two distinct performance genres of Afro-Brazilian origin found in the northeastern state of Pernambuco: maracatu de nação (nation-style maracatu) and maracatu rural (rural-style maracatu).
6 Samba de Roda is an Afro-Brazilian folk style of samba indigenous from Bahia.
7 Baião is a term used in northeastern Brazil to refer to a common rhythmic formula (x..x..x.) and to a wide range of genres that feature it, including forró, coco, and embolada. Its origins are traced to native peoples in the northeast incorporating indigenous, mestiço, African, and European musical influences.
8 Mestre Cobra Mansa's family name is Cinézio Feliciano Peçanha. In capoeira Mestre is a title held by prestigious senior practitioners.
9 Quilombo dos Palmares was a community of runaway slaves located in the mountains of the Northern state of Alagoas throughout most of the 17th century. It was the largest and most organized of such communities and considered today as a symbol of black resistance in Brazil.
game in Angola (e.g. *N'golo*), or as a martial art disguised as dance developed by enslaved Africans in Brazilian territory. The discourse that connects capoeira with black history and identity thus combines myths and historical facts.

In *Capoeira: The History of an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art* (2005), Matthias Röhrig discusses six competing master narratives about the origins of capoeira that he claims reinforce national identities, and local and diasporic black identities. For him these narratives are set forth by a combination of facts and myths. For instance, he points out that many practitioners claim that maroons (runaway slaves) invented capoeira in *Quilombo dos Palmares*, “transforming for instance Zumbi, the famous icon of black resistance, into a capoeira fighter” (Röhrig 2005:6). While it is a fact that *Palmares* was “a federation of maroon villages that resisted colonial authorities for almost a century in the mountains of Alagoas in North-Eastern Brazil” (ibid), there is no evidence that capoeira existed or was used as early as in the seventeenth century in this or any other part of Brazil. Linking capoeira and maroon resistance is, however, a powerful strategy to support Afrocentric narratives and boost Afro-Brazilian identities (ibid: 20-27). Most interestingly, he points out that the mixture of facts and myths is not restricted to “a close knit group of practitioners uninterested in historical research” but “frequently reproduced in magazine articles, books and even academic journals and dissertations” (ibid:5). He sees myths as a crystallized, quintessential form of pre-conceived ideas about the development of capoeira or history in general. A myth is one of several available resources to reinforce the attraction of a particular master narrative, supporting the latter through its apparent logic and naturalness. (ibid:9)

Such preconceived ideas also shape how African diasporic music is created, performed and perceived. For instance, African and Afro-diasporic music is often portrayed by musicians, audiences, and authors as rhythmically complex. The central hypothesis of this dissertation is that these idealized notions of what is “African” and “African diasporic” music reinforce discourses of black identity. Instead of seeing these notions as a combination of facts and myths (per Röhrig), I treat them as “performative utterances” used to perform a certain kind of action (Austin 1962). They thus have no truth-value (ibid), but act to reinforce black identity.

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10 The hypothesis that Angolan dance-fight *N'golo* is the single ancestor of Brazilian capoeira was first put forward by Angolan artist Albano Neves e Sousa during his first visit to Bahia in 1965 (Röhrig 2005:22-23, 49). It was quickly embraced by most Bahian *capoeira Angola* masters and also supported in scholarship (e.g. Cascudo 1967 and Obi 2008).
Like Röhrig, I deconstruct these notions to understand their significance for the formation of black identities and the circumstances of their emergence. My deconstruction, however, is not meant to “free the art with such a rich past and complex traditions from the rigidity that these versions of its origins and history impress on it, and that can turn its practice into a superficial performance of platitudes” (Röhrig 2005:8). Rather, I see discourse surrounding these ideas as integral to the agency that allows musicians, audiences, authors, media, and others to maintain and revitalize tradition. In this sense my work connects with Patricia de Santana Pinho’s “myth of mama Africa,” which establishes that “black people around the world are connected to one another as much as they are to an imaginary entity from which the past, the traditions, the characteristics, and the ‘character’ of all afro-descendants purportedly emerge” (2010:2). My objective is to examine how this entity (whether it is real or imaginary) impacts (and is constructed through) contemporary black musical activity.

**Delimitation of the Research Project**

The principal question guiding this dissertation is: *What is the relationship between Afro-Brazilian music and the politics of black identity in Salvador, Bahia?* Three subsidiary questions reflect dimensions of the inquiry: 1) What are the most influential preconceived ideas about “African” music and culture in Bahia and how do they impact musical activity?; 2) What possibilities emerge when musical forms perceived as Afro-Brazilian encounter others seen as foreign?; and 3) How does music in Bahia express discourses of blackness?

I systematize ideas circulating among authors, activists, musicians, and audiences to see how they work as a whole reinforcing the idea of blackness. Identity is always context-determined, malleable, and motivated by ideologies of difference. Blackness is certainly no exception. My strategy combines social constructivism in the Brazilian context with acceptance of the idea that much was inherited from Africa. As for the former, Paul Gilroy (1993) and Livio Sansone (2004a) and many others point out that black identities in the diaspora are largely constructed by reappropriating symbols and elements from what is perceived as “African” and “Western.” However, this does not deny the fact that some cultural and musical practices were “retained” in the diaspora as many authors have thoroughly demonstrated (e.g. Kubik 1979, Ortiz 1940, Herskovits 1941), and that they are important in contemporary experience. My approach is
aligned with Gilroy's anti-antiessentialist approach and with Pinho’s. Both argue for a social constructivism that still acknowledges the importance of essentialist positions for the affirmation of black identities (Gilroy 1993:100, Pinho 2010:1-2). Although deconstructivist, my approach tries not to neutralize discourses of black empowerment.

A study of the interactions of musics perceived as Afro-Brazilian and others perceived as foreign is central to my overall project as these musical contexts evidence how categories of otherness are negotiated, how discourses of blackness are played out, and how hybridity and mixture may serve the formation of black tradition. Relying on historical, musicological, and ethnographic accounts I discuss how the perception of “foreign” forms has evolved in Brazil and Bahia since their inception, and their role in the construction of Afro-Brazilian music.

A contemporary Bahian big band called Orkestra Rumpilezz that combines jazz with various forms of Afro-Bahian music is my laboratory for applying these models of discourse formation. I consider aspects of its musical structure (e.g. grooves and melodies) and of performance practice (e.g. instrumentation, approaches to music notation, and so on). I am particularly interested in the process of creation and performance of musics used to mobilize Afro-Brazilian identities in today's Salvador to see if and how players, arrangers, and composers rely upon idealized notions of Africanness. I am also attentive to how these notions register in audiences' discourses.

Overall, I am more interested in how “Africa” is imagined than in tracing traits (Africanisms) of contemporary Afro-Bahian music practice back to colonial times or to other nodes of the black Atlantic network. African retentions are, however, seen as part of a discourse of blackness emphasizing tradition, past, and respect for the ancestors.

As mentioned, my arguments engage with those of Pinho (2010) who studied the various narratives and discourses that enable the production of blackness in Bahia. In her book *Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia*, she argues that “reinventions of Africa have been tremendously important for black communities in the diaspora and have frequently spurred black resistance, but they simultaneously helped perpetrate preestablished notions of blackness” (Pinho 2010:1). These notions of blackness and their relationship to “Africa” constitute the center of my inquiry too. Pinho and others (such as Sansone 2004a, Johnson 2002) deconstruct notions like
embodiment and closeness to nature in the conventional context of candomblé terreiros and carnival music. My works takes a different route, as I look at seven popular notions of blackness both within and outside these context. My aim is to deconstruct the music of a big band to see how these notions function in a more overtly contemporary cosmopolitan setting.

**Evolution of the Research Project**

Inspired by authors who have studied the revival of black popular culture of Bahia (Crook 1993, Sansone 2004a, Sigilião 2009), I at first tried to frame the musical changes and Afrocentric discourses that I observed during visits to Bahia as part of the so-called process of re-Africanization of Carnival in Bahia. This was aligned with how other revivals of African culture in the diaspora were treated by authors (such as Feldman's study of Afro-Peruvian music, 2006) and seen by some as an important ethno-political ideal across the diaspora (Sansone 2004a). Ingrid Monson, for instance, wrote that “people of color are very interested in trying on the musical, cultural, and spiritual tropes from diverse regions of the African diaspora and finding themselves through intersections with others with whom they believe they have an entwined destiny” (1999:57-58), a clear reference to Pinho’s “myth of mama Africa.” However, many in Salvador reacted strangely when I mentioned the term re-Africanization because they challenged the assumption that Bahia ever stopped being “African” (as the prefix of the term suggests). Consider Macambira's (one of my percussion teachers in Salvador) declaration in the epigraph. For him, once Africa was planted in Bahia by his ancestors, it could not be uprooted because it survives in all their descendants even if racially mixed.

This kind of reaction, also common among many capoeira and candomblé practitioners, led me to reconsider my approach. Sansone (2004a) was useful as he points out that African revivals in the diaspora are ideologically linked to an Afrocentric discourse that emphasizes spirituality, respect for the ancestors, and participatory communalism. From my conversations with musicians in Salvador I realized that there is a fuller set of notions underpinning this discourse. Instead of taking them as mere strategies to Africanize or re-Africanize black culture, I framed them as themes in the discursive formation of blackness. After all, Africanization is just one of many strategies to reaffirm blackness.
**The Object of Study**

As for the object of study, the most obvious choice seemed to be Bahian carnival ensembles like *blocos afro* or *afoxés*, given their long relationship with black activism dating to the late 19th century when the first *afoxés* paraded in Salvador promoting black pride. Many have shown the crucial role that *blocos afro* played in the dissemination of the Unified Black Movement (MNU) in Bahia since the late 1970s and how their grooves contributed to denouncing racism, raising black self-esteem, and construct Afro-Bahian identities (Carvalho 1993, Guerreiro 1999, Sigiliano 2009, Filho 2004, Pinho 2010). Another plausible choice was a style associated with black tradition in Bahia such as *capoeira*, *samba de roda*, or *candomblé*. These forms are also linked to black activism and embody the most idealized notions of Africanness, largely because they were used as models of Africanness in the first place.

In 2010-2011 I composed the “Suite Afro-Brasileira,” a five-movement piece where I set up a jazz big band with the instruments and syntax of *capoeira angola*, *candomblé*, and *samba-reggae* as interlocutors. Shortly after the performance on April 5th, 2011, I wrote a paper reflecting on the potential of the project as a tool for research. I became aware that composing the Suite reflected bi-musical “moments of... subject shift, when one acquires knowledge by figuratively stepping outside oneself to view the world with oneself in it, thereby becoming both subject and object simultaneously” (Titon 1995:288). The deconstruction and combination of multiple musical syntaxes allowed me to see my knowledge reflected in the score as a patchwork with each thread of the music fabric embodying my understanding of each style. Cross-cultural

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11 *Blocos afro* and *afoxés* are purely percussive carnival ensembles from Bahia linked to black consciousness. *Afoxés* are characterized for using *candomblé* instruments and playing secularized versions of *iêxá*, a *candomblé* derived groove. According to Patricia de Santana Pinho, these carnival associations are among the major producers of discourses of blackness in Bahia (2010:2).

12 The *afoxé* Embaixada da África was the first black ensemble parading Salvador, Bahia in 1885. In their first appearance they wore clothes imported from Africa. *Pândegos da África*, another famous *afoxé* ensemble, was founded in 1886.

13 The “Suite Afro Brasileira” was written and revised between Sep. 2010 and Mar. 2011, rehearsed between Jan. 2011 and Apr. 2011, and performed at the Recital Hall of the School of Music of the University of British Columbia on April 5th, 2011. Over fifty musicians participated in the performance, including the UBC jazz ensemble led by professor Fred Stride, the samba school Sambata led by Paul Bray, fifteen members of the UBC Capoeira Angola study group, singer Anna Baignoche, and *cavaquinho* player Aquizamin Garcia. The name of the five movements are “Ladainha,” “Samba Estrela,” “Funky Capenga,” “Caboclagem,” and “Fechando a Roda” and are inspired respectively by *capoeira angola*, *samba-reggae*, funk, *candomblé*, and *capoeira angola*. The performance can be seen at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbg1ARfgnc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbg1ARfgnc), [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aQrwEKfiyw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aQrwEKfiyw), [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HFjcBmaejw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HFjcBmaejw), [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWHZ3ZZh4Fg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWHZ3ZZh4Fg), [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjzHvRcIHMa](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjzHvRcIHMa).

14 Diaz M., Juan Diego. Unpublished “Reflections on the Composition of the Suite Afro-Brasileira: Another Way of Doing Ethnomusicological Fieldwork.” This paper was part of my comprehensive examination on July 27/28, 2011.
composition thus appeared the most effective way to internalize Afro-Brazilian musics. This is particularly true when one of the styles involved is perceived as foreign, which in contrast allows one to see the origin of each element more clearly and indicate the composer's aesthetic and political motivations.

With these ideas in mind I traveled to Salvador in January 2012, when I discovered Orkestra Rumpilezz. I decided to work with them after hearing a performance, which included the same types of cross-cultural composition as my Suite Afro-Brasileira. Letieres Leite, the founder, composer, and conductor, is very outspoken about his compositional method—something rather unusual in Brazil—and proved to be an excellent collaborator. Through Rumpilezz I have been able to incorporate analysis of candomblé and carnival music from Bahia with their stylistic, aesthetic, and political elements, yet in the environment of a jazz big band.

**Hemispheric Views of Jazz**

In his article “The Jazz Tinge in Dominican Music: A Black Atlantic Perspective” (1998), Paul Austerlitz wrote “The two world wars spread North American popular culture along with U.S. hegemony, and jazz was subsequently domesticated worldwide” (Austerlitz 1998:1). He continues, “Especially fertile fusions of jazz and local music’s developed in African-influenced music cultures” (ibid). He situates his research on jazz and Afro-Dominican music alongside the work of Averill (1989) on Haitian dance bands, Coplan (1985) on South Africa, Pickney (1989) in Puerto Rico, and those who have studied Afro-Cuban jazz in the U.S. This dissertation can be situated within this broad scholarly tradition. Orkestra Rumpilezz relates to jazz that explicitly utilizes the music and symbolism of African diasporic religions such as Afro-Cuban jazz and various forms of Brazilian jazz. Such use of black sacred music in jazz settings is related to a broader diasporic discourse that imputes maximum authenticity to ceremonial and sacred music (see for example Averill 1989:208).

Rumpilezz has many predecessors that combined jazz with grooves, songs, and instruments of _candomblé_ and _umbanda_.15 This includes Abigail Moura’s Orquestra Afro-Brasileira, a big band that operated in Rio de Janeiro between 1942 and 1970 with an explicit Africanist agenda; and Moacir Santos’s jazz compositions, particularly his works from the 1960s (like his album _Coisas_

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15 _Umbanda_ is a syncretic cult blending elements and symbols of _candomblé_, Catholicism, native Brazilian belief systems, spiritism, and occasionally kardecism.
[Forma, 1965]), which exhibited a more hemispheric view toward blackness (Dias 2010, Vicente 2012). More loosely, Rumpilezz also connects with the *bossa nova* movement in Brazil and the U.S. of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which mixed samba (an Afro-Brazilian style) with jazz. In their collaboration with Brazilians, American jazz musicians like Stan Getz, Charlie Byrd, Quincy Jones, Cannonball Adderlay and many others contributed to a style that, among other features, was rhythmically guided by timelines (such as the so-called *bossa nova* pattern: x..x..x…x..x..). As will become clear, this emphasis on timelines is central to Rumpilezz’s project.

Afro-Cuban jazz, arguably the earliest form of Latin jazz, emerged in the early 1940s with New York-based Cubans Mario Bauzá and Frank Grillo “Machito.” Bauzá’s arrangements included Afro-Cuban instruments such as congas, bongos, and cowbells, and rhythms like the *guajeo* and *clave*. He is credited by many to have been the first to write an original jazz piece overtly based on *clave* (“Tanga” 1943) and laid the foundations for jazz based on Afro-Cuban timelines (Salazar 1997). Thus, Leite’s timeline-based compositional method (and his rhetoric around it), have antecedent in Machito and Bauzá’s music in New York’s 1940s. In subsequent years Machito, Bauzá and other Cuban musicians like Chano Pozo collaborated with American jazz musicians such as Charlie Parker (e.g. “Mango Mangue,” 1948 and “Okidoke,” 1949) and Dizzy Gillespie (e.g. *Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods*, Pablo 1975), contributing to Afro-Cuban jazz in the U.S. David Garcia (2007) explains that the relationship of bebop to Afro-Cuban jazz was not only driven by shared artistic interests, but also commercial, ideological, and political ones. This relationship helped black musicians from both styles to “challenge the status quo in American racial politics following World War II” by developing the technical and compositional complexity of their music (thus elevating their status), while at the same time asserting their connection with African diasporic culture (ibid). With regard to the famous collaboration of Pozo and Gillespie, Pozo was quoted saying: “Dizzy no speak Spanish, I no speak English, but we both speak African” (Gillespie and Fraser 1979:318).

More overtly, Rumpilezz connects with Dizzy Gillespie and Cuban Chano Pozo’s collaborations in 1947 as they were, perhaps, the first to feature instruments and grooves of Cuban santería in the rhythm section of a jazz big band. In pieces like “Manteca” (1947)\(^\text{16}\) they combined the

\(^{16}\) “Manteca” was released as a single in 1947 by RCA Label.
mentioned instruments and Afro-Cuban principles of rhythmic organization with bebop. I imagine that if Pojo and Gillespie could listen to Rumpilezz’s music today, they would agree that Leite “speaks African” too. Rumpilezz’s connections with Afro-Cuban jazz become even more patent by looking at Cuban band Irakere, founded in 1973 by Chucho Valdés and Armando de Sequeira. Drawing more explicitly on grooves, songs, and instruments of Cuban santeria, maintaining close observance of jazz aesthetics, and experimenting with odd metric structures, Irakere helped establish and popularize Afro-Cuban jazz in the island. Both Rumpilezz and Irakere glorify the African heritage of their countries with jazz and Yoruba religious music. A crucial difference between the two is the political environment surrounding them and the types of strategies they designed in order to create, perform, and disseminate their music. The degree of official control over musicians in Cuba during the 1960s through the 1980s posed challenges that Rumpilezz has not faced in Brazil since its foundation in 2006. Arturo Sandoval, a former member of Irakere declared in a recent interview “We wanted to play bebop, but we were told that our drummer couldn’t even use cymbals, because they sounded ‘too jazzy.’ We eventually used congas and cowbells instead, and in the end, it helped us to come up with something new and creative” (Meredith 2007). Jazz has been seen as a threat to nationalism in various moments of Brazil’s history too: when Pixinguinha mixed it with choro in the 1930s, during the first years of bossa nova (late 1950s and early 1960s), and during the first phase of the military dictatorship (late 1960s). Moura enjoyed some official support for his fusion project during the 1940s and 1950s because his overt references to Afro-Brazilian culture were well regarded by the highly nationalist governments of Getulio Vargas (Alberti et al. 2006:144). But Moura’s project was also supported by black enthusiasts, activists and intellectuals (Dias 2010).

Although varied, perceptions of jazz in today’s Salvador are generally positive with many according it art music status: “the classical music of America” (Leite, p.c. Salvador, Bahia, April 27, 2012).17 It is thus no surprise that Rumpilezz’s fusions have been well received, both in Bahia, and across the country. But due to a convoluted history of slavery, racism, struggle for social inclusion, and recent revivals of African culture in Bahia, artistic creation that makes reference to the Afro-Brazilian heritage is often highly politicized. The creation, performance and reception of Rumpilezz’s music is thus tightly linked to discourses of blackness. Through the lens of Afro-Bahian jazz, this dissertation discusses the particularities of these discourses in Bahia.

17 All personal communications by Letieres Leite took place in Salvador, Bahia.
Defining Key Concepts

In this dissertation I examine how music reaffirms black identities and generates black culture. This relationship between music and culture locates this project in contemporary ethnomusicological research. According to Timothy Rice,

> When ethnomusicologists think about the relationship between music and culture there has been a kind of shift. When we first started out we were trying really to link up musical structures to culture... and we used the expression that *music reflected culture*... Now we are in a different mode. We are trying to really make claims about the ways in which music generates culture. The way it constructs culture. (ArtisticHouseMusic 2012)

Since the advent of postmodernism, however, many have questioned the usefulness of culture as “a unifying rubric for ethnomusicological research” (Pegg et al. n.d.), mainly because of its wild dynamism and the difficulty of establishing clear boundaries between cultures in an interconnected world. Politics, power, identity, race, ethnicity, globalization are problematic concepts, too. While each term has distinct characteristics, we should pay more attention to the places where they overlap, to their dynamism, and to the processes governing change. In this section I explain my understanding of these concepts, as well as, “Africa” and the “West,” two charged conceptual geo-political spaces.

Power, Politics, and Identity

Power is the ability to influence people and its exercise is inseparable from human sociality. Foucault sees power as an everyday phenomenon and ubiquitous, as it is “diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them” (Gaventa 2003:1). This view of power as horizontally distributed transcends traditional conceptions of state politics and Marxists views of power as concentrated in the hands of ruling classes. Despite seeing power as available for everyone, Foucault also recognized asymmetric distributions of power, particularly when linked to knowledge: “the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power” (Foucault in Gordon 1980:52). Ian Hacking (1986) explains that for Foucault, power creates knowledge in two senses: 1) particular institutions of power make certain forms of knowledge historically possible; and 2) institutions of power determine the conditions under which scientific statements come to be counted as true or
false. Thus, institutions where knowledge is legitimized concentrate a form of power. Foucault's views are pertinent for me because they allow the integration of embodied aspects of power such as the creative self-fashioning and the pursuance of pride and dignity, both central to discourses of black empowerment in Bahia and other places of the diaspora. I foreground analysis of discourse because I assume that discourse underlies all forms of power and political action as “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart” (Foucault 1998:100-1).

I see politics as the negotiation of positions of power. Because power is ubiquitous, embodied, and discursive, political participation possesses these same attributes and is also available for all members of society. Political action may take place consciously, like when *bloco afro* Ilê Aiyê performed “Que bloco e esse” in the streets of Salvador in 1974 demanding a privileged space for blacks in Bahian carnival; or in less deliberate ways, like when percussionist Macambira performed *candomblé*-inspired grooves with his *bloco afro* “Da Cor” in Pelourinho in 2006. Although this project was primarily driven by aesthetic motivations, many Afro-Bahians celebrated seeing *candomblé* in a secular context (Macambira, p.c. May 2012). Despite Macambira's focus on aesthetics, many received his grooves politically as *candomblé* is the strongest symbol of black identity in Brazil. Though it was not his intention, I interpret his use of *candomblé* as a political act.

**Blackness: Race and Ethnicity**

The fact that a person is born in the heart of a particular community or society, or from the womb of a mother with a specific physical appearance, does not necessarily force that person to have a predetermined identity linked to any of those dimensions (Paixão et al. 2008:27).

This quote by Marcelo Paixão and Luiz Carvano illustrates the difficulties of defining identity exclusively in connection to race (physical appearance) or ethnicity (culture).

Ethnicity is an expression of group affiliation based on a shared social experience, cultural heritage, ancestry, history, homeland, language, and so on. Although anthropology has tried for a
century to swap ethnicity for race as categories of analysis, Brazilian anthropologist Osmundo Pinho claims that in Brazil “race, as a category of sociological analysis as well as an emic concept, still persists” (2008:9). Race and ethnicity, however, are frequently hard to distinguish from each other. Silvio Sansone, for instance explains that instead of calling themselves pretos, pardos, escuros, mulatos, or morenos, (shades of the term black in Bahia) as it was typical of their parents, most Bahian black youth today choose the term negro (black) as a way of self affirmation (Sansone 2004:56-60). In addition to generation, Sansone found that in Bahia class, education, and gender also influence these changes of terminology: “calling oneself as negro, preto, pardo, or escuro does not depend exclusively of color, but also of age and, to a certain extent, of level of instruction” (ibid:87). On the other hand, Pinho points out that in the eyes of others, black complexion may sometimes override cultural aspects of an individual’s identity: “social ascension, university education, and consumption of goods do not immunize subjects identified as negros of racism” (2008:14, italics added).

I see blackness and black identities as contingent ethno-racial categories in the sense of being both discursively constructed, and experienced through the lens of racialized perceptions of physical appearance.

While black identity is tightly linked to Afro-Brazilian identity, I do not equate the two. Many Bahians, Letieres Leite included, identify themselves as Afro-Bahians but not necessarily as blacks and vice versa. In Bahia neo-African nations such as Ketu (linked to the Yoruba), Jejê (linked to the Ewe and Fon) and Angola (linked to the Congo and Angola), are considered by many as ethnic variations of the Afro-Brazilian identity, but rarely outside of the Afro-religious context (Parés 2004). In Bahia blackness is sometimes linked to these nations. For instance Ilê Aiyê, a carnival association linked to black consciousness in Bahia, often invokes the Ketu nation to boost their legitimacy.

Although axiomatically based on ideologies of difference, black identities also overlap depending on the context. For instance, José Jorge Carvalho (1993) argues that various forms of black identity are expressed through music. He argues that Afro-Brazilian religious musics such as candomblé and particularly umbanda (a more syncretic version of the former) establish the most inclusive models of blackness where membership is not necessarily dependent on racial or color
distinctions but on ritual knowledge (ibid:4). Congadas\textsuperscript{18} offer a symbolic construction of blacks in opposition to whites according to a colonial model of black slaves and white masters (ibid:5). And Afro-Bahian carnival music expresses a more exclusive model of blackness by asserting black pride (ibid:14). These models are part of a broader blackness that stresses “Africa”, the diaspora, Brazil, and Bahia when asserting identity. Reaffirming black identities in Bahia is thus concerned with local, national, and international ideas of blackness, whiteness, Bahianness, Brazilianness, and Africanness. It is a political activity as it involves negotiations of power among contrasting and—most frequently—overlapping groups.

Carvalho's work also demonstrates that Brazilian black identities might be constructed beyond the white/black binary. In the more syncretic (and inclusive) Afro-religious cults of umbanda and candomblé-de caboclo,\textsuperscript{19} for instance, elements and symbols of Amerindian spirituality are central. The scope of this dissertation, however, is limited to African and European or Western.

\textit{Culture as a Resource}

I stress a view of culture as socially constructed by actors ranging from grassroots individuals to hegemonic institutions and subjected to the forces of prevailing political and socio-economical structures. In \textit{The Expediency of Culture} (2003) George Yúdice articulates a vision of culture that stresses performativity, empowerment, and economic benefit. He sees culture as expedient (suited to the matter at hand) because it is used to empower communities or to multiply commodities in local and global markets (2003:25). He argues that the context of globalization, which brings different social norms into contact with one another, “underpins performativity as the fundamental logic of social life today” (ibid:28) because an emerging logic of cultural economy speculates that the creativity of diverse cultures will bring economic improvement (ibid). For Yúdice, culture now occupies a central role in political and economic relations because the ascendance of the neoliberal doctrine promotes the exclusion of the social from direct governmental policy. As a consequence, nation states tend to increasingly relinquish programs

\textsuperscript{18} Congada is a folk drama of northeastern Brazil developed by enslaved Africans in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century which “expresses the conciliation between the social sponsor (the white man) and the devotee (usually, humble descendants of slaves and mulattoes)” (Carvalho 1993:5). The celebration involves music, song, street parades, elegant costumes, and the reenactment of royal scenes in ancient Congo which portray the theme of African resistance to Portuguese domination (ibid).

\textsuperscript{19} Candomblé-de-caboclo is a syncretic religion where Amerindian spirits (caboclos) are worshiped in conjunction with orixás. Although candomblé-de-caboclo and umbanda are considered as separate cults, some claim that the former is the Bahian version of umbanda (Carvalho 1993:9).
for the Arts, opening space for the market to use culture to manage the social through education programs, ethno-racial harmony work, cultural tourism, job creation, crime reduction, and profit (ibid). Yúdice also points out that the management and funding of cultural projects, once an exclusive territory of the state, is coordinated today by corporations and international NGOs too, and that this has created a transnational culture with homogenizing effects (ibid:17). For him national and regional differences of that transnational culture are instrumental for global commerce and activism (ibid).

This view of culture as a resource for empowerment has been used by authors who have studied black culture in Bahia such as Sansone (2004a) and Pinho (2010). Yúdice himself applied it to study the appropriation of funk by disenfranchised youth in Rio de Janeiro. Local artists, activists, and cultural producers from Bahia are also aware of this political dimension of culture. *Bloco afro* Olodum from Salvador, for instance, began as a grassroots artistic and activist carnival association in 1979 and developed into one of the most successfully organized cultural enterprises of northeastern Brazil. This transformation was due not only to the creativity, hard work, and commitment of its leaders, but mainly to their ability to establish effective partnerships both with the national government and transnational corporations. Through their artistic, educational, and activist work, largely funded by Petrobras (a powerful Brazilian multinational energy corporation), Olodum promotes black pride among disenfranchised black youth in Salvador. But this also means that Olodum has to harmonize its goals with those of funding corporations (e.g. by making emphasis on broader topics such as the promotion of citizenship), demonstrate palpable results within specific time frames, commit to ideals of efficiency, and adopt bureaucratic practices.

Over the last thirty years Olodum has been one of the main actors molding the new black Bahian culture. They created *samba-reggae*, a groove synthesizing local and international musics that came to represent the new black Bahian culture. They embraced diasporic ethno-political ideals and helped embed them into local black aesthetics. But as part of a global network of cultural associations that rely on state and corporate funding, they are subject to a certain degree of institutional homogenization. As Yúdice points out, they are also expected to *perform* a distinctive Bahian culture, as diversity is believed to bring socio political and economic improvement to all. Black culture as constructed by Olodum is thus tied to local, national, and
international politics, power relations, identity, and to the discourses that shape them.

The Local and the Global: Producing Locality

In *Modernity at Large* (1996) Appadurai proposes that various types of cultural forms flow rapidly across national boundaries, influencing and being influenced by local cultures. He argues that global, regional, or national hegemonic cultural forms are locally transformed into elements to produce difference or locality. Locality for him is a “property of social life, a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity that yields particular sorts of material effects” (ibid:182). Although the production of locality is strongly rooted in an ideology of situated community, it is importantly affected by translocal processes including 1) the efforts of the nation state to define all neighborhoods under its jurisdiction; 2) a disjuncture between territory, subjectivity, and the consequences of mass migration; 3) the erosion of the relationship between spatial and virtual neighborhoods brought about by electronic media; and 4) the role of imagination (ibid:189). The latter is not mere fantasy or escapism but

An organized field of social practices... and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility... The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order. (ibid:31)

Imagination is thus an intangible but valid social practice where power is negotiated. In this sense imagination is akin to discourse, with the difference that the latter happens between people and the former is mainly individual (although imagination can also be shared or overlapping).

For Appadurai locality is produced by reliable local subjects who use local (situated) knowledge to negotiate ideologies of situated community in the context of translocal interactions. Local subjects organize and recognize themselves within a community and thus “properly” belong (ibid:179).

Appadurai’s concept of production of locality offers a framework for understanding how the politics of black culture and identity in Bahia are entrenched in local, national, and international networks of power. To this end he stresses postnationalism, the idea that nation states and national identities lose importance in relation to supranational identities. This approach has been used by other theorist of the African diaspora such as Gilroy (1993), Monson (2000), and
Sansone (2004a). Musicians, dancers, listeners, and commentators who effectively assert Afro (and other types of) Bahian identities become local subjects. The effectiveness of their actions is dependent upon local knowledge—socially valid references, symbolism, discourses, and ways of music making. For instance, the particular ways in which symbols and traits from Brazil, the diaspora, Africa, and the West are reappropriated for the construction of blackness in Bahia are forms of local knowledge. Constructing black identities musically is thus a dimension of the production of locality in Bahia.

“Africa,” “Europe,” and the “West”

When I write “Africa” and the “West” between quotation marks, I do not refer necessarily to them physically but rather as imagined spaces constructed discursively. “Africa” provides a common narrative of slavery and despair for black Atlantic communities and serves as a source of symbols from which cultural traits are creatively extracted (Sansone 1999:5). Sansone contends that “Africa” and interpretations of things and traits held as being of “African” origin have been crucial to the making and commodification of black culture in Latin America because they evoke a romantic past that contrasts with the ideals of Western modern progress (ibid). This contrast is strategic in some discourses of blackness as “Africa” is constructed as a polar opposite of the “West.” In this dichotomy the “West” is associated with “whiteness,” “Europe,” colonialism, hegemonic power, industrialization, and modernism with its ideals of progress, organization, individualism, and secularism. The “West” is thus the abstract locus of the global with its alienating ideas—cultural homogenization or unscrupulous multinational markets. Despite this polarization, Paul Gilroy indicates that black culture also appropriates “Western” symbols and traits. He adapts the concept of double consciousness from W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) to explain that contemporary black culture is simultaneously within and out of “European” modernity (Gilroy 1993).

Research Methods

This dissertation combines research methods used in ethnomusicology such as musical ethnography, literature review, and music analysis. I also adapt theories and methods of cultural and musical analysis proposed by others. Empirical data was gathered through fieldwork in Salvador, Bahia in mid-2009 and between January and June 2012. I also had follow-up email and skype conversations with some of my informants after I left Brazil. I collected information
through participant observation, informal conversations, interviews, music, dancing, and singing lessons, and stored it in video and audio recordings, field notes, and music transcriptions. Since this work is not only concerned with the discourse of musicians and audiences, but also with that of scholars, activists, and institutions, review of selected texts concerned with African and Afrodiasporic culture is key. Music analysis relies on existing and proposed methods as well as on transcription of excerpts recorded in the field or commercially available.

Semi-structured Interviews and Informal Conversations
I conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants in Salvador such as my music teachers, the conductor of Orkestra Rumpilezz, audiences of Rumpilezz, black activists, and directors of Olodum. The open format of this type of interview allowed me to explore specific topics of my interest and to have the flexibility to divert in the directions desired by the interviewee. This flexibility was crucial as it permitted me to revise certain ideas and concepts I brought to the field such as re-Africanization. I usually prepared a set of questions or a guide in advance that I adapted according to each case. The interviews were audio or video recorded and subsequently transcribed and translated into English by the author. In this dissertation I quote them and paraphrase them and refer to them with the designation p.c. (personal communication).

In the more quotidian interaction with my drumming teachers, capoeira colleagues and teachers, Rumpilezz's audiences, and candomblé devotees I also obtained valuable information that I recorded in my field notes. In these cases I had less control of the themes discussed and was mostly attentive to the ideas brought up spontaneously by my informants and occasionally followed up with remarks or questions. Since none of these exchanges was recorded, or transcribed verbatim, they are paraphrased and also referred to as p.c.

Cultural Analysis
I adapt Michel Foucault’s (1972) method of discourse analysis for the study of blackness in the diaspora and particularly in Bahia. The method presupposes the existence of themes that are strategically used to reinforce a discourse and of a set of rules or “preconditions of possibility” that allows expressions to gain discursive meaning. I also use with Roberto DaMatta’s idea of displacement as the basis for symbolization (1991) to discuss different degrees of evocative power in Rumpilezz’s music. In my method I identify two discourses with seven themes and
discuss link the preconditions of the discourse to locality in Bahia.

**Bi-musicality: Music Lessons**

I took lessons in *candomblé* drumming and singing, carnival drumming, and of *capoeira angola*. For most of my time in Salvador in 2012 I studied *candomblé* drumming and singing with Gabi Guedes, an experienced private teacher, professional percussionist, and *alabê* (master *candomblé* drummer) at the well known *Ketu*20 (Yoruba-based) terreiro21 Casa do Gantois. During our weekly lessons we studied the ostinato patterns and variations of each of the *toques*, generally one per week. The method consisted mostly of rote learning and involved Guedes demonstrating patterns and correcting me while I tried to imitate them or play them against contrasting patterns. Although most of our sessions were one-on-one, several times we had group lessons. Being accustomed to teaching foreigners, Guedes was familiar with such concepts as meter and “the one (beat one),” and with counting and even subdividing complicated patterns in various ways. On a few occasions he even pulled out his “bad friend”—an electronic metronome—to regularize my tempo. He allowed me to audio record all of our two-hour (sometimes longer) sessions. After each class I transcribed the materials for further analysis and follow up questions. This relationship with Guedes was extremely productive because, being also the main drummer of Orkestra Rumpilezz, he could explain aspects of music creation, rehearsal, and performance. Through him I learned how *toques* were adapted by the orchestra.

I also took percussion lessons with Macambira22, a teacher I worked with in 2009, and also with Ricardo Costa, a master drummer of the *Angola* nation23 and professional percussionist. With Macambira I studied both carnival and *candomblé* percussion in a group environment with a less systematic pedagogy than that provided by Guedes. Macambira is a professional percussionist who played with big names of the popular music scene in Brazil and toured occasionally in Europe. Macambira leads a percussion studio at the heart of the historical district of Salvador and thus is specialized in teaching foreigners. He is attached to the Egungun tradition (a version of *candomblé* that focuses on the cult of the ancestors), but like most *candomblé* drummers, he

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20 Yoruba-based neo-African nations are referred to in Bahia as *Ketu* or *Nagô*. In this dissertation I use *Ketu* because this was the designation used by most informants in 2009 and 2012.
21 *Terreiro* is a compound where *candomblé* communities store ritual objects and celebrate ceremonies.
22 Macambira's family name is Marivaldo Pereira de Brito.
23 *Angola* is a neo-African nation linked to the Congo-Angola spiritual heritage.
knows the repertoire of the Ketu, Angola and Jejê nations. With him I learned slightly different versions of the orixá toques that Guedes taught me, plus samba de roda, ijexá, samba-reggae, and samba duro grooves. We developed an intimacy that afforded long informal conversations about candomblé, black culture, and the meaning of “Africa” and blackness in Bahia. Macambira also allowed me to record lessons.

**Transcription and Music Analysis**

I transcribed grooves and melodies from lessons, street performances, recorded rehearsals and shows, and commercially released albums. Following Danielsen (2010a), I assume that all musical phenomena is buried in musicians', dancers', and audiences' minds in the form of silent reference structures such as time signatures, modes, and tonalities. Transcriptions are visual representations of actual musical sounds but accommodated to some of those structures. There are, however, some structures that are hard to notate like patterns of microtiming for which I used a digital audio editor (Audacity 2.0.0) to zoom into sound waves and read note attacks with a precision of one hundredth of a second. Since Rumpilezz's music is groove-based and constructed upon timeline patterns, I designed a method of analysis based in timelines, layering, improvisation, and microtiming. All transcriptions are mine, unless indicated.

For musical analysis I adapt Christopher Washburne’s (1997) discussion of clave in Afro-Cuban music and jazz, to the Afro-Bahian context and to particularly to Orkestra Rumpilezz. I rely on Brazilian scholarship to justify the relevance of Washburne’s method in Bahia (Oliveira Pinto 1999 and 2001, Sandroni 2001, Lopes Carvalho 2011, and Lühning 1990). With their help and with ethnographic accounts I adapt terms and concepts. Based on authors specializing in African-derived groove based musics (such as Nketia 1974, Keil 1987, and Danielsen 2006), I propose a method of groove analysis with four categories: timelines, layering, improvisation, and microtiming. Letieres Leite’s descriptions of his own compositional method served to verify the relevance of these four categories.

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24 Ketu, Angola and Jejê are the names of the main neo-African nations reconstituted in Bahia by Afro-descendants. The former is linked to Yoruba, the second one to the Congo-Angola, and the latter to the Ewe-Fon.

25 Orixá is a generic name of African deities in Yoruba-derived religions, including candomblé Ketu.
**Embodied Listening**

For the discussion of the aesthetics of musical reception of Rumpilezz I adapt Richard Shusterman’s (1999) concept of somasthetics, which focuses on the embodied experience. In order to assess somasthetics’ relevance in the Afro-Bahian musical context I rely on ethnographic accounts as well as on the phenomenological discussions of Afro-Brazilian religious music by Luis Nicolau Parés (1997) and consideration of *capoeira* by Angelo Cardoso (2006) in, and of Flavia Diniz (2011) and Decanio Filho (2002).

**Participant Observation**

*Capoeira* was my entry point into Afro-Brazilian culture and, in many ways, the lens through which I have come to understand it. Despite not being the main focus of this dissertation, I decided to immerse myself in the Bahian *capoeira angola* community in 2009 and 2012, not only because it allowed me to maintain contact with practices and discourses but also because being active in this community opened many doors, like when fellow *angoleiros* who are also *candomblé* devotees took me to *candomblé* shrines or introduced me to percussion teachers.

As in 2009, during my visit of 2012, I chose Mestre Valmir's International Foundation of Capoeira Angola (FICA-BA) as my host *capoeira* group and from this vantage point I interacted with other groups. I also studied carnival music by taking music lessons, attending rehearsals and performances, dancing in street parades, and transcribing the patterns of *blocos Afro* that I recorded in the streets. One of the venues I attended consistently was the *Festa da Benção* at the Pelourinho district where *blocos Swing do Pelô* and *Dida* performed every Tuesday evening for a mixed audience of tourists and locals. Here local black dancers led choreographies of *Danca Afros* that large crowds followed to the beat of the drums. I alternated between observing dancers and percussionists, sometimes recording them, and mainly joining the collective dance. Through group dance I experienced grooves iconically associated with Bahian carnival and also to the slogan *beleza negra* or “black beauty.”

**Following the Path of the Orixás**

One thing was new in my visit of 2012, contact with *candomblé*. Thanks to Mestre Cobra Mansa,
I stayed with Sandra Lima, an Afro-Bahian dancer, former *capoeirista* and *candomblé* devotee who introduced me to the world of *candomblé* that had been elusive to me previously. Although most *candomblé* ceremonies are public, finding one's way to *terreiros* may be difficult as many are in hard-to-find places and disguised as (or behind) family houses, perhaps due to the official persecution they faced until forty years ago. The first *terreiro* I visited was located in Mussurunga, a suburb in the north of the city where public transportation is poor, particularly at the late hours of night when ceremonies usually finish. The house, which belongs to the Ketu nation, is located in a sloped secondary street, hidden from the main street and looks from outside like a regular family house. With Sandra I attended five ceremonies at this *terreiro*. Though observation and conversation I learned the protocol of participation, including dress codes, how to greet elders, where to sit, and when to clap, sing, or stand up. Since in most *candomblé* houses video or audio recording is forbidden and taking notes is inappropriate, I had to rely on my memory to record the innumerable details of the ceremony that included polyrhythmic drumming, antiphonal songs, dance, possession, costumes, ornamentation, etc. With the help of the literature (e.g. Carneiro 1991 and Cardoso 2006) and mainly through conversations with Sandra I was able to put most information in context. With her I also attended a ceremony at one of the most prestigious *candomblé* houses of Brazil, Casa Branca, a national epicenter of the Ketu tradition. Gabi Guedes, my *candomblé* drumming teacher, also opened to me the doors of Casa do Gantois, a *terreiro* to which he belongs.

Through contacts with members of the black community I visited other *terreiros* in the city. In the event *Africa por Africa* held in Salvador on May 23, 2012 for instance, Pai Raimundo invited me to an umbanda ceremony at his *terreiro* in Brotas and from there I was invited to the Ketu *terreiro* Alaketu in the same neighborhood. By this time I was more familiar with the protocols of these ceremonies and on some occasions, managed to pass as regular audience.

One of the most remarkable aspects of these ceremonies is the phenomenon of ritual possession. Sandra, who was still not initiated at the time, fell into trance or “received the saint” as she puts it, several times while in the audience. Our conversations along with the Ph.D. dissertations of Luis Nicolau Parés (1997) and Angelo Cardoso (2006) constitute my main frames of interpretation for this phenomenon.
Studying Orkestra Rumpilezz

After my first contact with Orkestra Rumpilezz at Teatro Vila Veha on February 2, 2012, I attended their rehearsals at the Xisto Bahia auditorium of the Barris public library every Monday evening. I sat quietly in the back of the room and took notes while observing the dynamics between the musicians, the negotiations of new rhythms, their approach to music notation, and the comments of the conductor and director Letieres Leite. I audio recorded most of the rehearsals. In addition to that first performance at Teatro Vila Velha I also attended and audio recorded performances at Teatro Castro Alves (February 10), Lauro de Freitas park (April 27), and a dress rehearsal at the Xisto Bahia auditorium (June 4). This last one was also videotaped. Letieres Leite conceded me a personal interview at his house in Itapuã (a neighborhood in Salvador) that I videotaped, transcribed and translated into English. I also had informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with audiences of Rumpilezz, particularly with Sandra Lima; with Makota Valdina, a candomblé spiritual leader and activist; with fellow capoeira practitioners; and also with Airton Moura, the Municipal Secretary of Reparation in Salvador. In these interviews and conversations I asked about Rumpilezz's music and what it represents for them.

My relationship with Guedes allowed me to ask more technical questions about the rhythms of the orchestra and their relationship to candomblé drumming. Guedes demonstrated patterns to me, deconstructed them, talked about his role, and gave opinions about the music and the idea of using candomblé rhythms outside the terreiro.

Having no access to scores for musical analysis, I transcribed the examples used in this dissertation directly from their album (Letieres Leite and Orkestra Rumpilezz, Biscoito Fino, 2009). Given the high density of the textures (20 instruments) I also relied on notes taken while observing their rehearsals and performances for these transcriptions.

Composition of the Dissertation

Of the eight chapters that follow, the first three provide a theoretical and historical background for the analysis that follows in the next four. The last is a final discussion. Chapter 2 theorizes African diasporic culture, identity, and political activism. With the help of Gilroy (1993) and Sansone (2004a) I define the African diaspora as a cultural space of social construction shared by
descendants of enslaved Africans in networks of communities across the Atlantic rim and beyond. I discuss how Bahia emerged as a historic center of black tradition, and the implications of this for Brazilian discourses of nationhood. A review of the debate of African retentions versus that of hybrid adaptations (and essentialism, anti-essentialism, and anti-antiessentialism) as discussed by Gilroy is followed by discussions of diasporic identity formation and a survey of Africanist and diasporic discourses of music. Finally, I analyze how the African American Civil rights movement, Rastafarianism, and the struggle for independence of African countries in the 1960-70s shaped cultural and political activity in the diaspora and particularly in Salvador. The chapter is meant to catalog the loaded political baggage linked to the adjective Afro-Brazilian.

Chapter 3 introduces a Foucault-inspired model linking seven idealized notions of Africanness to two discourses of blackness: primitivism and empowerment. In this model these notions are themes strategically emphasized or downplayed to reinforce these discourses. It thus shows how musical activity molds the politics of black identity. The chapter begins explaining my understanding of discourse, which I based on Austin's How to Do Things with Words (1962) and particularly on Foucault's The Archeology of Knowledge (1972). Subsequently I discuss the possible implications of reducing African music to African groove. After introducing the discourses of black primitivism and empowerment and the mechanics of the model, I examine how each of the seven themes is present in academic and oral discourses, what structural qualities and aesthetic values are frequently idealized, how are they socially performed, and how they operate in specific musical cases in Salvador.

Chapter 4 is devoted to understanding how ideas of otherness are negotiated musically in Brazil and particularly by blacks in Bahia. Despite their veritable indigenization in Brazil, Western art music and jazz are perceived by some Afro-Brazilians as music representing a dominant and imperial other. This otherness, while problematized by many, has been fertile soil for the musical construction of Afro-Brazilian culture. Encounters featuring Afro-Brazilian music and jazz receive special attention as these comprise Orkestra Rumpilezz's project. A reception history of otherness in the various genres Rumpilezz fuses allows me to depict how, in various combinations, they help construct black identity. This closes the theoretical section and opens the analysis.
Chapter 5 offers an interpretation of Orkestra Rumpilezz's public discourse and performance practice. Mixing jazz, *candomblé*, and carnival grooves, Orkestra Rumpilezz proclaims itself as a dignifier of Afro-Bahian music and claims that its music is “very close to its African roots.” I examine how this message is articulated in public interviews and talks, and performed on the stage. Performance practice—including instrumentation, approaches to musical notation, layout of musicians on the stage, color and style of clothing, speech between pieces, and bodily movement while playing—all have symbolic value.

Rumpilezz's influences and its own repertoire are analyzed in terms of four categories: timelines, layering, improvisation, and microtiming. This analysis is brought to bear in Chapter 6 on *candomblé* drumming and songs, Bahian carnival percussion, jazz big bands, and in Chapter 7 on Rumpilezz's own repertoire. While every track on their first album is given some consideration, “Floresta Azul” (track 4), serves as focus for more in-depth reading.

Chapter 8 addresses Rumpilezz' reception in Salvador. How are aesthetics and politics intertwined and linked to discourses of blackness?. Given that *candomblé* is crucial to Rumpilezz's music and considered the most traditional Afro-Brazilian practice, it receives particular attention. I suggest that Rumpilezz's performances are received with a somaesthetics (Shusterman 1999) that allows some *candomblé* adepts to have embodied experiences of similar quality to those leading to ritual possession. Somasthetics is a theory of aesthetics centered in the embodied experience (ibid:1999:302).

The final chapter discusses how Rumpilezz and its audiences construct black identities in Bahia and within the white-black binary and beyond it. Rumpilezz is placed in the context of other jazz groups that appropriate Afro-diasporic music. Differences and similarities are analyzed in terms of locality.

27 *Leitieres Leite and Orchestra Rumpilezz* (Biscoito Fino, 2009)
Chapter 2: Bahia in the African Diaspora

This chapter discusses processes molding cultural expressions in the African diaspora and their impact in Bahia. I make a broad review of the history, discourses, theories, and activism relevant to such a discussion. Given the complexity of these topics, and the large body of literature available, this review is necessarily selective. The chapter begins considering models of cultural circulation within the black Atlantic and locating Bahia within this transnational cultural network. Key approaches to the study of how black culture is maintained and reproduced are also discussed. This is followed by a review of the discourses linking music and diasporic religions to black tradition. I continue with discussion of the most influential movements and ideologies of black empowerment in the African diaspora and how they mold black activism and the production of locality in Salvador.

Circulation in the Diaspora

The Atlantic African diaspora is a group of scattered communities throughout the Atlantic rim that are descended first from the historic movement of peoples from Africa to the Americas and Europe, and later in all directions. Although the term technically covers dispersal through voluntary and forced migration at any point in history, it has been historically applied specifically to the descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade, which uprooted millions from their homelands in West and Central Africa between the 16th and 19th centuries.

In The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (1993), Paul Gilroy proposed that the classic model of diaspora which sees black communities dispersed throughout the Atlantic longing to return to a homeland in the African continent is insufficient to understand the reality of blacks and other African descendants in modernity, partly because today cultural flows are more multidirectional than ever. For him Africa should not be culturally or politically separated from its diaspora. He coined the term black Atlantic to refer to a de-centered space of transnational and cultural construction shared by the descendants of those who experienced slavery on either side of the Atlantic. Gilroy’s black Atlantic thus emphasizes the connectivity of black communities across the Atlantic.28

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28 Gilroy’s term black Atlantic excludes black communities in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Expanding upon Gilroy’s model, Heidi Feldman sees the black Pacific as a “newly imagined community on the periphery of the black Atlantic” (2005:206). For her, much of what Gilroy said about the black Atlantic applies to the black
This dissertation is concerned with Salvador, Bahia, a historical center of black culture in South America in direct contact with the Atlantic ocean. As will become clear, the politics and aesthetics of black music production and reception in Bahia are multiply linked to those of other black centers across the black Atlantic, including Africa itself. I use the term black Atlantic in the same way Gilroy does (a network of black communities in direct contact with the Atlantic rim), and the term African diaspora for black communities spread across the Americas and Europe.

Livio Sansone and Gilroy propose two different models for the study of cultural flows specific for the black. Sansone (2004a) argues that international flows within the black Atlantic tend to follow specific patterns: centers of production located in the U.S., the U.K., and Jamaica export black products perceived as modern. The periphery mainly imports modernity and, in some cases, exports black products perceived as traditional. In this picture black centers like Salvador, La Havana and others in the Southern hemisphere—including those in Africa—are receptors of modernity and producers of tradition. Crucially, he adds that local versions of black culture often assert their identities by appealing to both modern globalized and traditional cultural products. This is similar to Appadurai's model of indigenizing translocal cultural forms. In other words, the locality and black tradition produced in the periphery also have a flavor of “Western” modernity.

Gilroy uses the image of ships in motion crossing the Atlantic to propose a more balanced model of circulation where cultural forms flow multidirectionally, both during the transatlantic slave trade and now:

> Ships were the living means by which the points within that Atlantic world were joined. They were mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected. Accordingly they need to be thought of as cultural and political units rather than abstract embodiments of the triangular trade. They were something more—a means to conduct political dissent and possibly a distinct mode of cultural production. (1993:16)

In Gilroy's model there are no political or economic centers exercising overwhelming cultural

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Pacific. She claims that, in seeking inspiration from Afro-Cuban and Afro-Bahian music, the protagonists of the Afro-Peruvian music revival of the 1950s-70s “constructed the black Atlantic as a surrogate of Africa” (ibid:207). A vision of the black Atlantic linked to the black Pacific enriches the understanding of black politics. In this study I restrict my analysis to the black Atlantic due to the little historical connection of Afro-Bahian culture to the black Pacific.
influence over peripheries, because even in the most restricted circumstances (e.g. slavery or urban marginalization) blacks have demonstrated an “indomitable” capacity to assert human, democratic, and oppositional agency (ibid:219). Consequently, he attributes political agency to each node of the black Atlantic network valuing their cultural contributions accordingly. This position has been criticized by pragmatics who argue that Gilroy attributes more agency and power of choice to slaves and their descendants than what they actually enjoyed (Dayan 1996). The critique is, however, only valid if one understands power as concentrated, coercive, and being exclusively deployed by socially privileged agents. Drawing on Foucault, Gilroy sees power as discursive and embodied in quotidian life and thus available, even in the most disadvantageous circumstances. This does not mean that Gilroy or Foucault himself did not recognize asymmetrical distributions of power. As explained, Foucault saw power greatly affected by institutions where knowledge is legitimized. Despite granting agency to former enslaved Africans, Gilroy recognizes how their restrictions in comparison with their dominant masters molded black identity.

Sansone's and Gilroy's models of cultural circulation in the black Atlantic offer two different foci. Gilroy underscores political and cultural agency distributed across the black Atlantic. Sansone emphasizes the impact of economic and political power differences (particularly North-South). Real differences in control and access to mass media, entertainment industries, use of hegemonic language, position within the national context, and direction and amount of migratory flows among diasporic nodes, also have an impact on musicking. Chapter 3 shows how these forms of power and agency are negotiated discursively through music in Salvador and some other black Atlantic localities.

**Placing Bahia in the Black Atlantic**

Salvador houses one of the largest populations of African ancestry in the diaspora—some claiming that eighty percent of the three million *soteropolitanos*\(^{29}\) share this heritage (Garcia 2010). Most authors agree that Brazil is the country that received the most enslaved Africans and according to Peter Fryer “the most generally accepted modern estimate puts the total number of Africans transported to Brazil, over a period of 350 years, at about 3,600,000 ” (Fryer

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\(^{29}\) This is how people from Salvador, Bahia are called.
Estimates of the number of Africans that arrived through Bahian ports in the last century of the slave trade are also varied. According to the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), 409,000 Africans reached Bahia between 1781 and 1850 (19% of the total that arrived to Brazil in that period).\(^{31}\) Referencing David Eltis’s databases, João o Reis and Beatriz Momigonian say that 184,722 African reached Bahia between 1801 and 1856, (15% of the all arrivals to Brazil in that period) (Reis et al. 2004:77,79). The same authors assert that in this period, Bahia received most of the Africans of Yoruba origin sent to Brazil (ibid:78). For this and for other reasons discuss later, Bahia became one of the main Yoruba centers of Brazil and the Americas. Once in Bahia Africans were forced to work in a variety of settings including sugar plantations, mines, cattle handling, or domestic services. Some managed to develop their own economic activities with which they bought their freedom. During this colonial period a diverse and vibrant Afro-Brazilian culture developed in Bahia influencing virtually all aspects of life.

Sansone (1999:8-10) divides the post-abolition history of blacks’ struggle for socio-economic inclusion in Bahia in three periods. The first lasted from Abolition (1888) to the beginning of the Vargas Era\(^{32}\) in 1930. This period is characterized by scarce opportunities for social mobility for blacks resulting from a highly polarized society with a white elite and a massive black lower class, and official discourses and policies of cultural whitening. The second one stretches from 1930 to the last part of the military dictatorship in the late 1970s. Blacks entered the formal labor market in great numbers and movements of black consciousness emerged. The last period goes from the late 1970s to now. Here old channels of social mobility were shut as new forms of segregation emerged in an environment of modernity, free market, and recession. Access to mass electronic media and higher levels of education raised both expectations and nonconformity among many blacks. Somewhat paradoxically black culture became more prominent in official discourses of Brazilianness and Bahianess.

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30 Sansone asserts that authors offer estimates ranging between three and fifteen million Africans transported to Brazil I this period (1999:7). However, the figure given by Fryer actually matches many other contemporary estimates like those of Reis et al. (2004) and http://brasil500anos.ibge.gov.br/en/estatisticas-do-povoamento/desembarques-no-brasil, accessed on May 6, 2014.

31 The Vargas Era is the period in the history of Brazil between 1930 and 1945, when the country was under the leadership of populist president Getúlio Vargas. The period was characterized by deep political changes, exacerbated nationalism, and authoritarianism. Various cultural forms including samba and *capoeira* were officially promoted as symbols of Brazilianness.
Bahia has long played a central role in the making of “Africa” in Brazil and in the black Atlantic. Sansone explains:

In the past, this State (Bahia) and the region around its capital Salvador (Recôncavo) attracted the attention of travelers who depicted it in their accounts as the ‘Black Rome’—the largest concentration of what was considered African cultural traits and traditions outside of Africa, if only for the sheer size of its black population. Later, starting from the turn of the century, Bahia took a central place in the ethnographic prehistory of Afro-Brazilian culture through the work of Nina Rodrigues, Manuel Querino and Manuel Bomfim. From the thirties, it also took a pivotal position in the formation of modern Afro-American anthropology (cf. Ramos 1939; Frazier 1942, Herskovits 1943). Inspired by the pursuit of ‘Africanisms’ in the New World, several anthropologists and sociologists (Herskovits 1941; Pierson 1942; Verger 1957 and 1968; Bastide 1967) held Brazil, in particular the coastal region of the State of Bahia, as one of the areas in which black culture had maintained African traits to a greater degree than elsewhere. Hence, it was on Bahian soil that the debate among sociologists and anthropologists about the origin of black culture started in the thirties: is contemporary black culture a surviving Africanism or a creative contemporary adaptation to hardship and racism? In fact, Bahia has been historically central, not only in high-brow discourses, but also in popular constructions with regard to ‘Africa’ and Africanisms in Brazil. (1999:8)

Another important source of authority of Bahia in the diaspora is related to a former perceived hierarchy of authenticity that placed Yorubas at the top and the predominance (and performance) of Yoruba-based culture in Bahia. The first contingents of enslaved Africans that arrived to Bahia in the 16th century came mostly from the Congo-Angola area where the Portuguese established their first trade ports. Towards the end of the slave trade Bahia received most of the enslaved Africans coming from West Africa. Reis and Mamigonian assert that “For the best-documented period, 1801 to 1856, it is estimated that West Africa supplied just under 10 percent of the total number of slaves imported by Brazil. . . 88 percent of slaves leaving the Bight of Benin for Brazil landed in Bahia” (Reis et al. 2004:78). The main origin of slaves exported from West Africa (present-day Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana) was Yoruba, and to a lesser extent Fon and Ewe. The Yoruba were known in Bahia as Nagôs. Their cultural dominance over previous African groups in Bahia was due to their later arrival in great numbers, their continuous renewal, and the existence of trading routes between Bahia and West Africa at least since the early 19th century (Crook 2005:111-12 and Johnson 2002). The perceived superiority of the Yorubas in Bahia registered in the evolutionist writings of Nina Rodriguez of the turn of the 20th century and later on in the works of influential writers of Afro-Brazilian culture—Edison Carneiro and Artur
Ramos (Parés 2004:191). Nicolau Parés argues that this perceived superiority led many creoles and Afro-descendants from Bahia who were not of Yoruba ancestry to “choose to define themselves as Nagô” and to mold some of their cultural practices accordingly (Falola et al. 2004:10). This led to what Parés calls a “Nagôization of Candomblé” (ibid). All this contributed to the perception of Bahia as mainly Yoruba, and thus as a more authentic diasporic center.

The cultural dominance of the Yoruba in Bahia began to be counterbalanced by capoeira angola practitioners since the 1940s when they started to vindicate Angola ancestry (Rohrig 2005). The force of capoeira adepts' claims was endorsed and reinforced by national governments since the Vargas Era when capoeira was promoted as a symbol of nationhood (ibid). Samba, another national symbol of Angola origin, helped to establish the Angola nation on equal terms to the Ketu (Yoruba) one.

In the discourse of academics, musicians, activists, and governmental institutions from Brazil and the African diaspora, Bahia plays the role of “Africa.” When I asked percussionist Macambira his opinion about the growing interest of candomblé, capoeira, and carnival musicians for “African” elements, he responded laughing “what do you mean? . . . I am Africa! I am Bahian Africa!” (p.c. Mar. 31, 2012). Now let us see some of the implications in the context of discourses of Brazilian national identity.

In The Mystery of Samba (1999), Hermano Vianna noted that during the period of the First Republic in Brazil (1889-1930) racial mixture and samba gradually gained acceptance in academic, official, and popular discourse as “genuine” expressions of nationhood. The discourse tri-ethnic mixture asserts that Brazilian is the result of Amerindian, African, and European mixture. Vianna explains how this controversial discourse was theorized and developed during the first half of the 20th century by Brazilian intellectuals, most notably Oswald de Andrade and Gilberto Freyre, through writings and encounters between musicians and intellectuals. Since the Vargas Era (1930-1945) this discourse was adopted by Brazilian governments to implement cultural and economic policies, and marked the history of etho-racial relationships in Brazil, especially in Bahia. In some interpretations the strength of Brazilians comes from a racial mixture where “the best” of each component was filtered throughout history (Andrade 1928). Freyre (1933) proposed that Brazil is historically and culturally characterized by a racial democracy
where amicable relationships predominated among all, including between black slaves and their white masters.

Racial democracy, however, has been deemed a myth by Bahian black activists who stress the persistence of inequality and racism as proof of its faults. Furthermore, they claim that a discourse of tri-ethnic mixture does not apply to mostly black Bahia. Over eighty percent of people in Salvador are of African descent, including blacks and *mestiços*, and most live in poorly served areas, earn low incomes, and still struggle against discrimination (Garcia 2010). Better served areas and higher incomes are mostly in the hands of a slim sector who look whiter and seldom identify as African descendants (ibid). Racial democracy is considered an imposed and politically incorrect myth that needs to be unpacked if one is to implement a fair and ethnically congruent society. Black Bahians claim that the condition of the black Brazilian is either not recognized in national discourse or mystified in the discourse of racial democracy.

The nation-state has somewhat responded to Afro-Bahian demands, but just like anywhere else, the demands at the local level are greater than those the nation-state can afford. Since 2004 mandatory courses of African and Afro-Brazilian culture and history were included in the Federal public educational system. A system of quotas for Afro-Brazilian university students was introduced in 1999 as a way to raise levels of education among blacks. Several public institutions at municipal, state, and federal levels have been created to deal with issues specific to Afro-Brazilians. The Federal government has promoted university level student exchanges between Brazil and Africa, especially Portuguese-speaking African countries, with bi-directional flows of dozens of thousands over the decades. However, many blacks see these Federal efforts as small triumphs in a longer battle for true social inclusion.

Responses to Bahian black activism have been accompanied by further official discourses about black culture. The struggle for African decolonization of the 1960s triggered more positive official views of Afro-Brazilian culture resulting in a transition of Bahia's image from “melting

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33 The law 10.639 of January 9, 2013, establishes the topics “History of Africa and Africans, the black struggles in Brazil, Brazilian black culture, and [the role] of blacks in the formation of the national society” as mandatory in the official national educational curriculum. Olodum was one of many organizations that lobbied extensively to pass this law.

34 Among such institutions are the Secretary of Reparation of Salvador (SEMUR), the Secretary of Promotion of Racial Equality of the State of Bahia (SEPROMI), and the Secretary of Citizenship and Cultural Diversity of the Ministry of Culture of the Federal Government.
pot” to national epicenter of black culture and tradition (Teles 2005:22, 34). In fact, the international image of Brazil is today replete with references to Afro-Brazilian culture and Bahia. However, oftentimes these images are stereotyped, exploited, and hijacked by the entertainment and tourism industries. Therefore the so-called re-Africanization of carnival in Salvador could be seen either as a local strategy to boost black identity or a process of cultural exploitation whereby the nation-state and the private entertainment industry capitalize on blackness. The nation-state functions both as promoter and suppresser of locality.

Because of its historic, political, economic, and media national predominance, Rio de Janeiro's carnival is considered a manifestation of a national Brazilian culture (DaMatta 1991). While Rio's carnival has influenced carnival expressions across the country, peripheral cities like Salvador and Recife have developed more regional versions of it by reinterpreting national symbols like samba duro, boosting local forms like candomblé or maracatu, and embracing diasporic styles like reggae. As discussed by Almeida (2008), Henry (2008), and Sigilião (2009), since the 1970s carnival in Salvador underwent a process of re-Africanization that challenges the tri-ethnic nationalistic ideal in favor of a local black identity.

As Pinho (2010) argues, the idea of “Africa” as understood by scholars, national governments, activists, Brazilians, and Bahians themselves is central to the construction of identities and the production of locality in Bahia. Bahia negotiates its position as a center of black tradition with Brazil and national governments by embracing aspects of Brazilianness, by adapting symbols of nationhood such as samba and carnival, and sometimes by challenging the myth of racial democracy. A strategy in negotiating with the nation-state (and also with scholars and the diaspora) has been emphasizing Yoruba ancestry (Nagôization as per Parés) in the first half of the 20th century as it was perceived as a “purer” Afro Brazilian tradition. Later on Bahians redeemed the Angola ancestry as it is considered the origin of two important symbols of nationhood: samba and capoeira. These forms of negotiation are also part of the production of locality.

**Africanism, Creolism, and Essentialism**

The cultures and identities developed by African slaves and their descendants throughout their trajectory from slavery, abolition, marginalization, and struggle for social inclusion in contemporary societies have been subject of lengthy academic debate. Once slaves reached
American shores their socio-economic and political realities varied greatly both geographically and chronologically. For instance, in Bahia some slaves remained confined for most of their lives to sugar plantations while others worked in urban centers where they had more mobility and contact with other groups. In addition, through the centuries Africans and their descendants intermixed among themselves and with Europeans, Amerindians, and *mestiços* creating hybrid ethnicities that mixed cultural practices and sometimes adapted them to new socio-historical contexts. Nevertheless, some African descendants at different points in history have demonstrated keen interest in preserving musical practices perceived as traditionally “African.” This is attested by survivals of technology of instruments, patterns of music structure, or the language of certain ritual songs. The coexistence of cultural diversity and survivals across black communities has fueled debate between those who give more importance to African cultural *retentions* and those who underpin creativity, change, and hybridity when talking about contemporary black culture.

Stefania Capone (2011) explains that the modern study of African American religions developed around a debate on the origins of New World black cultures between Melville Herskovits and Franklin Frazier in the 1940s. While Herskovits (1941 and 1943) defended the existence of West African cultural survivals in the formation of African American cultures, Frazier (1942) endorsed the prevailing view of the epoch, arguing that enslaved Africans had been totally deprived of their own culture by the experience of slavery. Ever since, interpretations of African American cultures have been oriented by two major trends: on one side, the “Africanist school,” positing the continuity with African cultural heritage, generally identified as West African (e.g. Yoruba) or West Central African (e.g. Kongo, Angola), brought by African slaves to a given colony; and, on the other side, the “Creolist school,” stressing social constructivist approaches to identity.

Over time both Africanist and Creolist approaches have evolved toward an intermediate point. At the beginning, Herskovits, the champion of African survivals, proposed a scale of *intensity* of African cultural elements in the Americas, based on the extent to which *retained* Africanisms were evident in the cultural behavior of African descendants (Herskovits 1941:25). Authors of the Africanist school have questioned Herskovits “Africanisms” for being too literal and have proposed that instead of music forms or elements as such, what was transferred from Africa to the Americas were principles of musical organization (Maulstby 1979, Ferreira 2007, Burns 2010), or cognitive orientations (Wade 2009). Mintz and Price (1992), whose work is considered the
main example of the Creolist school, questioned Herskovits’s idea of the unity of West (and Central) Africa as a broad cultural area, precisely arguing for the existence of cognitive orientations and grammatical principles underlying and shaping behavioral response in African American cultures. In fact, many contemporary scholars like Falola et al. (2004) combine the Africanist and Creolist approaches arguing that the experience of African descendants has been shaped by the culture they brought during the slave trade and the creative ways in which they adapted it to new contexts and mixed it with other cultural forms.

Both Africanists and Creolists were committed to demonstrating that blacks in the diaspora had a valuable culture, be it for retaining aspects of their African past or for adapting it creatively to the new circumstances they faced in their forced relocation. They evaluated both continuities and creativity in positive terms as a way of counteracting negative stereotypes. But, as Matt Sakakeeny points out, “in so doing, they created their own stereotypes of what musical practices constituted black music and what did not” (2011). He continues:

The later anti-essentialist arguments that arose in Africa (Agawu 1995, 2003) and the diaspora (Gilroy 1993, Radano 2003) are not about denying the fact that cultural practices were “retained,” they are about demonstrating that scholars and other observers emphasized select practices with roots in Africa, de-emphasizing both the heterogeneity of “African” music (so thoroughly demonstrated by Kubik) and the heterogeneity of black music in the diaspora. Retention theories are selective and cannot account for the full spectrum of musical circulations, nor can they account for the re-circulation of stereotypes of black music “back” to each new generation of musicians. (ibid)

Besides these essentialist (focusing on retentions and ethnic absolutism) and anti-essentialist (focusing on social construction) approaches that have dominated debates of black music, Gilroy proposes a third position: anti-antiessentialism. While holding on to a social constructivist view of blackness, this approach criticizes antiessentialism for moving “towards a casual and arrogant deconstruction of blackness while ignoring the appeal of the first position's [essentialist] powerful, populist affirmation of black culture” (Gilroy, 1993:100). Gilroy continues:

Black identity is not simply a social and political category to be used or abandoned according to the extent to which the rhetoric that supports and legitimises it is persuasive or institutionally powerful. Whatever the radical constructionists may say, it [black identity] is lived as a coherent (if not always stable) experiential sense of self. Though it is often felt to be natural and spontaneous, it remains the outcome of practical activity:
language, gesture, bodily significations, desires. (ibid:102)

The anti-antiessentialist approach thus lies somewhere between essentialism and antiessentialism as black identity is understood “neither as a fixed essence nor as a vague and utterly contingent construction to be reinvented” (ibid). This approach promotes a type of deconstructivism that is careful not to neutralize black experience and black empowerment.

My approach, which stresses a view of black culture and Afro-Brazilian culture as resources, is primarily antiessentialist. This instrumentalization implies that individuals who identify as black or African descendants in Bahia use their creativity and local knowledge to adapt their cultural practices to new (often disadvantageous) socio-economic, historical, and political circumstances, be it for individual, communal, political, or economic benefit. They also use black culture for counteracting a long history of racism and for the assertion of ethnic and racial pride in environments of social repression—in other words, for empowerment. But as Sakakeeny, Maultsby, Mintz, Price, and many others have claimed, this does not deny that certain Africanisms may have been retained. My analysis does not aim to render black culture or black music as a mere social construction, but to understand how the mechanisms and discourses of black empowerment relate to black experience and to idealized notions. In that sense it aspires to be anti-antiessentialist.

Diasporic Identity Formation: Nationhood and Double Consciousness

Hybridism has been a paradigm for the construction of nationhood in Latin America and the Caribbean since the formation of modern nation states in the region—in most cases around the beginning of the 19th century. Promoted by governments and celebrated by intellectuals south of the Rio Grande (e.g. Andrade 1928 and Freyre 1933), the idea of ethnic mixture was used to establish the necessary difference between emerging nations and their former European

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35 By taking this stance, I embrace the notion that all cultural forms have a degree of hybridity. Thinking of cultural forms as hybrid, however, may lead to using them for purposes of deconstruction or reification. As Sakakeney (2011) explained, many authors have challenged and deconstructed negative stereotypes associated with black culture, but simultaneously created others that are also presented as stable and normative features. Equally, hybridity or mixture may help individuals to adapt practices to new socio-political contexts, as candomblé and santería syncretism attest, or not. For instance, the practice of the Afro-Cuban combat-dance mani, somewhat related to Brazilian capoeira, almost faded out for decades despite its hybridism, before being revived by folkloric groups in Cuba. The survival of this dance was not necessarily due to hybrid adaptations, but to the efforts of Cuban ethnographers such as Fernando Ortiz who documented their existence (1951), and artists interested in reviving Cuban African heritage.
colonizers and to symbolize social inclusion, too. Consequently, discourses of national identity in
the region have relied on the celebration of new *mestiço* cultures arising from the combination of
three encompassing ethnic groups: Europeans, Africans, and Amerindians (Freyre 1933,
Carpentier 1972, Wade 2000). However, since the early stages of these nation-states, many
people who identify as African descendants have viewed these discourses with skepticism
because the national promise of social inclusion and ethnic equality neither changed racist
attitudes towards them nor ameliorated their economic disadvantages. Instead, many blacks have
found it more useful to adopt and celebrate diasporic identities, sometimes in pan-Africanist
forms and others linked to specific homelands in Africa (e.g. Nagô, Jejê, Angola, Arará, Lukumí,
Rada, Petwo, and so on).

Matthias Röhrig explains that within the realm of African derived religion, “slaves and their
descendants did not primarily build pan-African, black or Brazilian (*mestiço*) identities, but rather
associated with particular, neo-African nations 'nações' that seemed more suited to express their
aspirations” (2005:37). These choices, he explains, are the result of the ethnic composition of
African slaves, patterns of internal geographical distribution, the social organization of former
black Catholic brotherhoods, and a struggle to maintain and adapt traditional African religious
practices to an environment dominated by Portuguese Catholicism (ibid:38). Analogous
processes characterized the scene in Cuba (see Ortiz 1940 and Cabrera 1993) and Haiti (see
Deren 1953 and Dayan 1998) with their own particularities. In other Afro-Brazilian contexts like
*capoeira*, *angoleiros* have used the *Angola* nation as a reference to reinvent their style since the
1940s by emphasizing the differences with more contemporary styles (e.g. *capoeira Regional*),
thus asserting a position of authority as guardians of the tradition (Röhrig 2005). Conversely,
practitioners of contemporary styles of *capoeira* who have enjoyed more official acceptance in
Brazil since the 1930s tend to embrace Brazilian *mestiço* identities. Ideas ranging from hybridism
to African “purity” are all available for African descendants' identity formation.

As stated, Africanist and Creolist authors have contributed to different degrees to reify a view of
black Atlantic identities in binary opposition to white European identities. While some of them
like Herskovits (1941) have problematized aspects of this dichotomy, it is postcolonial authors
like Agawu (2003) and Radano (2003) who have criticized this view more categorically. They
emphasize that the dichotomy was constructed by the “West” to justify and perpetuate
colonialism and unequal relationships of power and was subsequently internalized by Africans and their descendants. Social constructivists like Sansone (2004a) and Liv Sovik (2009) claim that with time blacks in the diaspora began to perform that difference (e.g. by emphasizing behavior constructed as “African”) as they struggled for social inclusion. However, these authors notice that this performance also includes emphasizing behavior constructed as “European.”

Gilroy offers a nuanced analysis of black Atlantic identities that de-essentializes this dichotomy. His anti-essentialism is deployed against the absolutisms of identifying racial categories (black and white) that pigeonhole people's cultural attributes. For him the experience of slavery, racism, and “ambivalence towards modernity” constitute the most distinctive forces shaping black Atlantic politics (1993:73). Andrew Blake summarizes Gilroy's argument:

The legacy of slavery, and the continuing pervasiveness of racism, means that black consciousness cannot depend (solely) on one of the pillars of modernism: nationalism. Instead feelings of placed identity are both local and African, mediated by the Atlantic as both the historic site of the middle passage and the current site of cultural interchange between the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe. (1997:229)

Gilroy understands Du Bois’ double consciousness as this tension between national identities attached to modern Western nation-states, and “African” identities linked to a real or imagined black Atlantic community. While the nationalist side of blackness strives to embrace modernity largely following Euro-American cultural and political models, the Africanist one is more interested in translocal connections and in shared histories with other communities of African descendants. Part of the ambiguity comes from the fact that modernity itself is also based on translocal connections.

**Music as Representative of Black Atlantic Culture**

In most academic and popular discourse music is seen as the most authoritative representative of Black Atlantic culture. Ingrid Monson wrote:

Music, more than any other cultural discourse, has been taken as the ultimate embodiment of African and African diasporic cultural values and as prima facie evidence of deep cultural connections among all peoples of African descent. One reason for this perception of the centrality of music surely lies in its ability to coordinate several culturally valued modes of expression, including song, verbal recitation, dance, religious worship, drama, and visual display. (2000:2)
For Gilroy music in the black Atlantic allows the expression of the unsayable, particularly the “unspeakable terrors of the slave experience” which were “kept alive – carefully cultivated – in ritualised, social forms,” and the identity dilemma inherent to black double consciousness (1993:73). For him this dilemma generates a type of anxiety difficult to express verbally because it has been sublimated. Being the only expressive mode that unseats “language and writing as preeminent expressions of human consciousness,” and in continuing and immediate contact with the sublime, music becomes the ideal means to express this condition (1993:74).

Gilroy also points out that “the self-identity, political culture, and grounded aesthetics that distinguish black communities have often been constructed through their music” (1993:102, italics added). He assumes that music became central to the construction of identity, because “Music and its rituals can be used to create a model whereby identity can be understood neither as a fixed essence nor as a vague and utterly contingent construction to be reinvented by the will and whim of aesthetes, symbolists, and language garners” (ibid). Despite his bitter criticism of essentialism and endorsement of social constructivism, Gilroy recognizes that one cannot fully understand black Atlantic identities without considering some form of “African” survivals because they are integral to the black experience (ibid). In other words, black identities are fed both from real and imagined worlds whether present, past, local, or foreign. Music, for its integrative nature, becomes the multimedia canvas on which strokes coming from each of these worlds may be painted.

I argue that the centrality of music also stems from its ability to accommodate idealized notions of Africanness at the service of discourses of blackness. However, the claim that music is the ultimate cultural expression of the African diaspora poses the risk of essentializing it. Ingrid Monson notes:

The idea of a unified black musical ethos, consequently, is partially dependent on the continuing experience of racism. The forging of a collective identity through opposition to a common enemy contributes, in turn, to the ease with which the complexities of the African diaspora dissolve into a binary opposition between black and white. (2000:2)

The very idea of a “black musical ethos” implies that people who identify as black or Afro-something have approaches to music making that are distinct from those who do not. The fact that
black music may reinforce dichotomous views, even in their damaging manifestations, however, does not debilitate the arguments of Gilroy and Monson. It rather forces us to examine them in the light historical particularism. Peter Wade's (2000) suggestion that black music in Colombia is imagined as a space where multiethnic tension can be negotiated resonates in certain historic moments of Cuba and Brazil. However, research in these three countries demonstrates that black music did not necessarily dissolve racism. This is not to say that musicians are responsible for solving structural social problems, but that characterizing the uniqueness of black music is problematic.

**Afro-Diasporic Religions as Representatives of Black Tradition**

*Candomblé* is an umbrella term referring to a group of syncretic Afro-Brazilian religions with—at least—West African, Catholic, and Amerindian influences. The main difference with their African counterparts is that in Brazil the cults of various deities originally separate in Africa were combined. Despite these amalgamations and the multiple syncretisms, *candomblé* houses in Brazil usually organize themselves into three main neo-African nations formed along imagined ethnic lines linked groups in West and West-Central Africa: *Ketu* (associated with Nigerian Yoruba), *Jejê* (linked to the Fon and Ewe from Benin and Togo), and *Angola* (from the area of Congo and Angola) (Röhrig 2005:22).

For most Africanist scholars, Brazilian *candomblé* and other Afro-diasporic religions rank highest on the scale of Africanisms (Herskovits 1941, Ortiz 1940, Verger 1957). Why? Here is Sansone's answer:

> In Bahia... from the 1920s to the 1950s, black culture was constructed as a religious culture and commodified mainly around the symbolic universe of the Afro-Brazilian religious system and its ‘African’ objects. It was largely due to the presence of *candomblé*, and to interpretations of black culture and even social life in general in Bahia as revolving around this religious system, that Bahia gained its prime position in Herskovits' scale of Africanism in the Americas: together with the Surinam interior and Haiti, it was the region in which African traits had supposedly been most retained (Herskovits 1941:27). This centrality of *candomblé* was given a most important further boost by the Afro-Brazilian Museum in Bahia founded in 1974, the first of its sort in the country. The collection has basically consisted of images and statues of *orixás* (deities),

36 These are not the only names used to refer to neo African nations in Bhaia. In his survey of *candomblé terreiros* in Salvador, Jocelio Teles documents 48 different nations (Teles 2008:22). However, most of them (42) combine names such as *Ketu-Angola* or *Angola-Caboclo* that include one of the three nations mentioned by Rohrig, and many others authors: *Ketu, Jejé* or *Angola* (ibid).
accessories, garments and music instruments used in *candomblé*. These objects are exhibited beside their West African ‘counterparts’—from ‘Yoruba’ cults—selected in Dahomey by the French photographer-ethnographer Pierre Verger, who settled in Bahia in 1942. (1999:20-21)

The centrality of *candomblé* is based on several facts and arguments. First is the indisputable fact that contemporary *candomblé* practice retains elements of slave culture traceable to West Africa (Africanisms). This is due to the inherent secretiveness of religious practice and an emphasis on preservation evidenced by the use of eighteenth-century Yoruba in contemporary ritual songs in Brazil and Cuba, where this language ceased to be spoken over a century ago. Second, scholars, enthusiasts, and local institutions posited parallels between religious objects from Salvador and West Africa. Carefully selected ceremonial objects from present-day Benin (Buarque de Holanda 2000) and Salvador were exhibited next to each other at the Afro-Brazilian Museum in Bahia to reinforce the idea that *candomblé* and contemporary West African religious practices share a common “African” ancestor. Third is the role of *candomblé* in fostering Bahia's link to a Yoruba heritage, which was considered a more pure African tradition. Not only were many *candomblé* houses of the early 20th century actually derived from the Yoruba culture, but *candomblé* was a domain used by many Afro-Bahians to seek and negotiate authenticity its so-called “Nagôization” (Parés 2004). Fourth, the argument that black cultural activity in Brazil always touches upon the sacred through an Afro-Brazilian religious concept called *axé* (Henry 2008). And fifth is the underlying idea that religion/spirituality is a strong marker of cultural difference that sets “Africa” apart from its putative nemesis: the “West.” Emphasizing the uniqueness of African music through a religious model is highly effective, as religion is an all-encompassing category that supposedly reflects deep, distinct cultural sensibilities. Clifford Geertz reminds us of the centrality of religion in culture:

[religion is] a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (1973:90)

When compared to the “West,” the uniqueness of “African” religion/spirituality is then taken to be emblematic of its otherness.

Nicolau Parés argues that in the early 20th century religious affiliation was more important than
ethnicity or kinship in defining one's membership to neo-African nations in Bahia (Pares 2004:186). He points out that some black or *mestiço* from Bahia identified themselves as Nagô “by virtue of their religious initiation, regardless of their ethnic ancestry” (ibid). He concludes “the concept of nation gradually lost its political connotation, becoming an almost exclusively theological concept” (ibid).

*Candomblé* and other Afro-diasporic religions are, in fact, excellent examples of black tradition not only because they are sources of Africanisms, but furthermore for their syncretic history of adaptations. Frigerio, for instance, documents that members of Afro-diasporic religions in southern Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina visit shrines in Bahia and in West Africa to renew their knowledge and gain legitimacy back home (2004). He labels this process as a “Re-africanization in second religious diasporas” (ibid). *Candomblé, santería, vodou, sango*, and many others developed to a large extent in black colonial Catholic brotherhoods where the simultaneous worship of African and Catholic deities testifies to their syncretic character. Despite the existence of so-called neo-African *candomblé* nations in Bahia that claim to follow traditions attached to specific cultural homelands back in Africa, syncretism among them with Catholicism, Spiritualism, and Amerindian spirituality always existed. Parés, for instance, shows that the *Nagô* (or *Ketu*) liturgy in Bahia was shaped by both Yoruban and non-Yoruban groups (Falola et al. 2004:10). Although perceived as a space where old traditions are maintained unchanged, *candomblé* is, in many ways, more about hybridity and adaptation than retention.

The role of African diasporic religions as places of black tradition can be interpreted following Herskovits' model of continuities or Gilroy's model of hybridity. In this work both are relevant. The former is the source of idealized notions of musical Africanness, which are reflected in actual black experience, for instance in how *candomblé* devotees experience the relationship between drumming, dance, and possession. As Gilroy himself concedes, although the Africanist approach is “often felt to be natural and spontaneous, it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily significations, desires” (1993:102). The model of hybridity, on the other hand, allows the deconstruction of idealized notions for the understanding of, for instance, how musicians use sacred drumming for black empowerment. In both cases, African diasporic religions are understood as adaptable practices embodying a model of black tradition and as repositories of local knowledge.
Outspoken Black Empowerment: Movements and Ideologies

This section discusses aspects of the most influential movements and ideologies of black empowerment that expressed and shaped the politics and aesthetics of culture in the African diaspora during the second half of the 20th century, a crucial period in the revival of black culture in Salvador and Brazil. The focus will be on how the African American Civil Rights Movement, the Rastafari Movement, the struggle for independence in African countries, and their associated aesthetics provoked a reassessment of African ancestry in Bahia. This reassessment brought ideas of black nationalism, Afrocentrism, and Pan-Africanism to the table, boosted black identity, and ultimately contributed to produce a sense of locality that was more internationally minded.

The African American Civil Rights and Black Power Movements

The African American Civil Rights Movement refers to the social and political movements in the U.S. aimed at outlawing racial discrimination against black Americans and restoring voting rights. The movement, which occurred between 1955 and 1968, was characterized by major campaigns of nonviolent forms of civil disobedience such as marches, boycotts, strikes, sit-ins, and voter-registration drives. By 1965 the emergence of the Black Power Movement, which lasted roughly from 1966 to 1975, enlarged the aims of the Civil Rights Movement to include black dignity, self-determination, economic and political self-sufficiency, and freedom from oppression by white Americans. Although its institutions disappeared during the mid 1970s due to officialist campaigns of condemnation as a separatist and anti-white movement, Black Power contributed significantly to improve social and political conditions of African Americans and its focus on cultural autonomy and self-esteem has survived.

Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael, and Malcolm X were notable political figures who supplied the rhetoric, style, and attitude of the movement. While Reverend King defended unconditional nonviolence and the “integration power” aims of the Civil Rights Movement, black nationalists Malcolm X and Carmichael condoned self-defense and opposed the idea of black integration on favor of separatism. Integration for them would lead to assimilation into U.S. mainstream society and subsequently to a diminishment of the “true roots of black identity” which they believed were contained in African American culture heritage and history.
In Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa (2007), Ingrid Monson illustrates how debates of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements shaped aesthetic debates and exerted a moral pressure on black jazz musicians to take action during the 1950s and 1960s. She shows how jazz musicians such as Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Randy Weston drew on influences of African diasporic musics, Western art music, and popular music to negotiate subjectivity and black political activism.

During the 1960s Black Power helped generate the Black Aesthetic Movement which subordinated aesthetic aspects of music to the political aims of Black Power (Danielsen 2006:28). Addison Gayle summarizes this aesthetic: “The question for the black critic today is not how beautiful a melody, a play, or a novel [is], but how beautiful the poem, melody, or novel made the life of a single black man” (1972:xxii). For Danielsen the central points of this movement are: 1) opposing the “white” mainstream; 2) the “encouragement of the black artist to give up working with the white public in mind”; 3) a literary style that partly took black music as a model; and 4) linkage with “African” culture (2006:29-30). Black Aesthetics during the 1960s were thus clearly anti-integrationist. Prominent black American musicians of the epoch including Aretha Franklin, Harry Belafonte, Nina Simone, Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie and Paul Robeson engaged with the political ideals of Black Power and contributed to aspects of its aesthetic ideals.

James Brown, often credited as the creator of funk, the “Godfather of Soul,” and an icon of Black Power, was skeptical of the radicalism of anti-integrationists as it made him lose white audience. Danielsen opened her book Presence and Pleasure with a quote of Brown saying that he worked hard to become as American “as apple pie” and that soul can be played by white and black artists because “nobody has a monopoly on soul” (2006:3). This statement is striking because soul was perceived as black par excellence. For Brown, however, American and black identities were not mutually exclusive because he was integrationist. Danielsen notes that since funk fits easily into the “African” model espoused by black activists, Brown's music was “often used to substantiate the linking of Africa and African American music” and ironically used as a model by black separatists (ibid:32). In negotiating this political tension, Brown wrote the funk “Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud” (1968) which became an unofficial Black Power anthem. In subsequent years the work of Brown himself, Stevie Wonder, and others contributed to the association of the all-encompassing R&B style with Black Power.
Soon after the movement developed in the U.S., the political ideals of Black Power and its associated aesthetics expressed via soul, funk, and R&B traveled to other black Atlantic locales and eventually contributed to the formation of a hegemonic global black popular culture (Sansone 2004a). This is evident, for instance, in the Jamaican Rastafari movement since the 1960s, which conflated the ethno-political messages of Black Power and the aesthetics of R&B, funk and soul with Marcus Garvey's pan-Africanist ideas of the 1920s.

The Black Aesthetics Movement has been particularly prevalent in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. Here is Claudia Sigilião's account of the process:

The black movement in Salvador was ideologically influenced by North American black movements. The soul music movement was created in the U.S. during the 1960s. Its music, meant primarily for dancing, was made by blacks and for blacks and celebrated blackness. That movement reached Brazil via Rio de Janeiro and soon was transformed into the Black-Rio movement. [Brazilian] funk, a more aggressive version of soul, was created by black-mestiço youths who gathered in the North side of Rio de Janeiro to dance to it . . . [T]he black movement contributed to reaffirm identities in Brazil as it triggered a new interest in Afro-Brazilian culture among blacks. In the first half of the 1970s, the Black-Rio movement arrives in Salvador, intensifying the relationship between Rio and Bahia. As most blacks and mestiços in the country reinterpreted black as afro, in Salvador soul was connected with ijexá. James Brown's soul, Jimmy Hendrix's rock, and Jackson Five's dancing choreographies were strong influences. A new black model was formed. Black Bahians who created Ilê Aiyê in 1974, used that North American aesthetic as an affirmative discourse, although rhythmically they maintained the mixture between samba and ijexá. (2009: 216-217, translated from Portuguese by the author)  

Vovô do Ilê, one of the founders and central figures of Ilê Aiyê, unsuccessfully tried to name the bloco Poder Negro in clear reference to Black Power (Canal Petrobras n.d.). After Ilê Aiyê's first appearance in carnival in 1975, a movement of blocos afro with similar aesthetics and politics emerged in Salvador. This movement strengthened their political stances by connecting with the Brazilian Unified Black Movement (MNU), a more strictly political institution created in 1978 to centralize the struggle of Afro-Brazilians against racism. In her Ph.D. dissertation Claudia Sigilião claims that the significance of the bloco afro movement is that they understood that the Bahian public was not very interested in protest songs, and thus invested more in the

37 All quotations of Sigilião are the author’s translations from Portuguese.
experimentation with rhythms to advance their political agenda (2009:15). In order to support this claim she argues that in disseminating messages coming from social and political movements, music in Brazil often “takes a bigger dimension than the ideology of the movement itself” (ibid). Her evidence is that in the 1980s bloco Olodum began criticizing social and racial inequality explicitly in their lyrics, only to distance themselves later from engaged lyrics (ibid). Whether or not this evidence is valid, her argument reflects the discourse of music-centrism in the diaspora and demonstrates how, during process of indigenization of North American politics and aesthetics, musicians and activists used local knowledge to produce locality in Salvador.

*The Rastafari Movement*

Rastafarianism is an Afrocentric spiritual and ideological movement that arose in Jamaica in the 1930s inspired by African and Christian themes. Despite a great diversity of beliefs, practices, and political affiliations, the literature suggests the following as a Weberian ideal type:

1) the idea that Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie (ruled 1930-1974) is the living God (Jah Rastafari); 2) belief that Marcus Garvey prophesied Selassie’s crowning; 3) emphasis on “livity”—righteous living in accordance with Jah and mother earth; 4) struggle against the racism and oppression of the west or “Babylon”; 5) wearing dreadlocks; 6) ritual use of marijuana; 7) belief in the transformative power of the spoken or sung word; 8) belief in the idea of Africa as home and/or repatriation to Africa; 9) symbolic use of red, yellow and green, and other symbols such as the Lion of Judah; and 10) an “ital” diet (generally vegetarian and a prohibition of the use of salt). (DeCosmo 2008:60)

Although Jamaican black nationalist Marcus Garvey did not identify himself as a Rastafari, many of his sociopolitical ideas deeply influenced the early Rastafari movement. Garvey was unique in advancing a Pan-African philosophy to inspire global mass movement and economic empowerment towards Africa (Jacques-Garvey 1986). The intent of his ideas and activism, at times perceived by other black intellectuals as radical and potentially damaging for the common cause of blacks, was for those of African ancestry to redeem Africa and for the European colonial powers to leave it.

The work of Jamaican singer/songwriter Bob Marley during the 1960s/70s was instrumental for

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38 Sigilião's claim that black musicians where more interested in rhythm than in song text clashes with Carvalho's assertion that “Words are very important in Brazilian popular music in general. People tend to follow texts quite closely, especially in romantic genres. Obviously, some genres are more wordy than others” (1994:3-4).
the world-famous association of the Rastafari movement with reggae music. Marley, who connected to Rastafarism during this period, was influenced by Garvey and by Black Power (Thompson 2002:159). Through his music and activism he promoted Rastafari values, particularly the ideas of repatriation of black people to Africa and the support of the struggles of blacks, in Africa or in the diaspora, against the oppression from “Babylon” (Survival 1979). His reggae was a synthesis of Afro Caribbean styles like mento and North American black music, particularly the soul style popularized by James Brown (his albums Soul Rebels [1970] and Soul Revolution [1971] are good examples). Marley's “My Cup” in Soul Rebels, for instance, is a cover of James Brown's “I Guess I'll Have to Cry, Cry, Cry” (I Guess I'll Have to Cry, Cry, Cry, 1968).

As in other parts of the world, the Jamaican Rastafari movement was introduced to Bahia during the 1970s via Bob Marley's reggae music. Despite not singing or promoting Rastafari ideas per se, Jimmy Cliff, another Jamaican reggae artist, greatly contributed to the diffusion of reggae in Bahia. During the 1980s and 90s he toured, recorded, and collaborated with renowned black Bahian artists linked to black consciousness such as Gilberto Gil, blocos afro Olodum, and Araketu. Bahian singer/songwriter Gilberto Gil, a black activist and promoter of Afro-Brazilian culture, began the indigenization of reggae music with his first Portuguese covers of Marley's songs (Realce 1979). Subsequently local black activists and artists like Lino de Almeida and Neguinho do Samba, who felt empowered by the Rastafari culture, helped to establish a long-lasting relationship between reggae music, Rastafari ideologies, and black politics and aesthetics in Salvador (Boyce-Carole 2008:633-34). A local circuit of reggae artists emerged, reggae bars opened, some Rastafari ideas became popular, many blacks and mestiços started to wear dreadlocks and colorful clothes associated with Rastafari, and Olodum created samba-reggae, a rhythm that became a signature of Bahian carnival.
Rastafari and reggae music brought about a revaluation of the African heritage in Salvador that is unique to its condition as a producer of black tradition and to the ambivalent relationship Rastas have with Afro-Bahian spirituality (DeCosmo 2008:52). While Rastafari and reggae music in Bahia represent black cultural resistance, it does not necessarily represent the views of orthodox or “ideal” Rastafari. For instance, Jamaican Rastafari hopes of return to Africa iconically celebrated by Bob Marley did not find fertile soil in Salvador, as local interpretations of Rastafari reinforced the view of Bahia as an alternative diasporic “home” (ibid). DeCosmo identified a large group of “cultural” or “political” Rastafari in Bahia who do not believe in the divinity of Haile Selassie, do not use marijuana ritually, and are not vegetarian. Instead, they use reggae and the symbols of Rastafari to assert black identity (ibid:61). In sum, Rastafari and reggae intensified the transnationalization of blackness in popular culture initiated by the Black Power movement. This deepened the ethno-political ideals of reparation already present in Bahia and provided more aesthetic possibilities for their realization.

Referring to Bahians' preference of reggae over other Caribbean diasporic music styles, Sigilião explains:

A first contact was already established between Brazil and Cuba during the 1950s and 1960s, as salsa was introduced and popularized into the Bahian music repertoire... Contrary to salsa, reggae was received as protest music. Despite the language barrier, its
essence was captured by black Bahians. Before reggae was significatively disseminated in Salvador via radio, black youth who were creating the blocos afro, appropriated the Jamaican rhythm with samba reggae. (2009:217-18)

Sigilião's citation suggests that the local knowledge used in Bahia to indigenize musics perceived as foreign was aligned with black aesthetics. Being perceived as committed to improve the conditions of blacks, reggae was better received than other black Caribbean musics.

_De-Colonization of African Countries_

All Afro-descendants around the world were deeply affected by the fight for independence of African countries of the 1960s and 1970s. You keep hearing that Angola is battling colonialism, that Ghana got freed... I believe that generated a type of pride and rebellious feelings because you realize what happened. All that manifested in specific ways, for instance in the poetry of Agostinho Neto, which was very popular among members of the MNU here in Brazil as well as in that African poet who became president... Léopold Senghor!

After a devastating history of European colonialism—initiated by Portugal in the 15th century, and continued by England, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, and Italy between the 16th and 20th centuries—, strong independence movements arose in Africa. After World War II, several African territories became independent from their European rulers, but former Portuguese colonies (Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique) were rebranded “Overseas Provinces” in a firm attempt by Portugal's authorities to preserve its African possessions and refuse any claims of independence. By the 1960s, organizations throughout Africa emerged to support Portuguese provinces’ claims to independence. Nationalist guerrilla movements created to combat Portuguese colonizers, received support from communist states and adopted Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies. The Portuguese Colonial War became one more stage of the Cold War conflict as the U.S. stepped in to support these guerrillas in order to neutralize the growing communist influence in the region.

There is a long tradition of black intellectuals and activists advocating the involvement of the diaspora in African affairs since at least the 18th century. African American abolitionists Prince Hall, Martin Delany, Henry Highland Garnet, and Edward Wilmot Blyden were followed by W.
E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X, Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, Molefi Asante, Abdias do Nascimento and many others in their efforts to improve the living conditions of black peoples around the world. To this end some of them founded and supported organizations such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (1914) and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (1909).

Several internationally recognized musicians from Africa and the diaspora like Fela Kuti, Hugh Masakela, Harry Belafonte, and Paul Robeson used their music to support African nations’ independence. Monson (2000 and 2007) points out that various African American jazz musicians in the 1960s who were negotiating positions with the Civil Rights movement, found inspiration in the African struggles for independence. Bob Marley was one of the most influential in Brazil and Bahia. *Survival* (1979), a defiant and politically charged album, features tracks such as “Zimbabwe,” “Africa Unite,” “Wake Up and Live,” and “Survival” in which Marley is explicitly supportive. His appearance at the Amandla Festival in Boston in July 1979 showed his strong opposition to South African apartheid, which he already had shown in his song “War” (*Rastaman Vibration*, 1976). In 1980 he also performed at the celebration of Zimbabwe's Independence Day.

Brazil, the first country to recognize Angola's independence in 1975, closely followed the struggles for independence in Africa, particularly in Portuguese-speaking countries. Since the early 1960s Brazil had sought to develop South-South relations as a way to gaining international recognition in a world largely dominated by a Soviet/U.S. dichotomy (Sansone 1999 and Teles 2005). Brazilian governments strengthened relations with African countries, built more positive official views of African and Afro-Brazilian culture, and provided unambiguous support for African decolonization and independence. This official support endorsed a growing sympathy for the African cause among black activists from the MNU like Abdias do Nascimento and from Afro-Brazilian artistic groups such as the *Teatro Experimental do Negro* and Ilê Aiyê.

*Samba-reggae* was one of the main vehicles used by Bahian musicians to engage with African

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39 Brazil’s sympathy with African independence has a direct parallel in Cuba in the 1970s. The Cuban government engaged explicitly in the Angola’s independence struggle by sending thousands of troops in 1975 to support the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola against the U.S. backed interventions by South Africa and former Zaire (Lowental 1977:3). According to Abraham Lowental, members of Castro’s government saw this intervention as “strengthening Cuba’s alliance with the USSR while increasing our own autonomy,” “strengthening Cuba’s ties with Latin America and the Caribbean,” “strengthening Southern solidarity and bargaining power,” and “normalizing Cuba’s relationships with the U.S.” (ibid:6-8).
politics. *Blocos afro* Olodum and Ilê Aiyê, the most popular carnival associations, hold annual contests to choose the song that will represent them in carnival. We know that the popularity of African themes in these competitions comes from a desire to assert diasporic black identities (Filho 2004:68). Olodum's 1987 album *Egito Madagáscar* mixed romanticized references to African Arabic countries (e.g. Egyptian pharaohs are presented as dignified ancestors of Afro-Bahians) with political statements denouncing apartheid and calling for liberty and equality. In *Canto Negro* (1989), Ilê Aiyê combines celebration of Congo and Senegal's culture with denouncement of colonization in West Africa.

*A Word on Pan-Africanism and Afrocentrism*

Like the three movements discussed above, Pan-Africanist and Afrocentric strongly impacted 20th century black Atlantic culture and politics. The following account summarizes the main ideas related to these two ideologies and the flavors they acquired in Bahia.

Pan Africanism emphasizes the unity, solidarity, and political integration of African people and their descendants. Imanuel Geiss links the “pre-history” of Pan-Africanism at the end of the 18th century with three pivotal developments:

In America the effective beginning of organized abolitionism and of organized activities by free Afro-Americans; in Britain the beginning of abolitionist agitation; and in West Africa, as an indirect result of abolitionism, the foundation of Sierra Leone, which was to make a significant contribution to the formation of the modern intellectual elites in British West Africa. (Geiss 1969:187-8).

Most authors place the official beginning of the Pan-African movement at the Pan-Africanist Conference held in London in 1900, which had the goal of connecting people of African descent all over the world and to fight for the freedom and independence of blacks (Geiss 1969 and Fergus 2010:32). Subsequent conferences (Pan-Africanist Congresses) in 1919, 1921, 1923, 1927, 1945, and 1958 solidified the ideology of the movement (ibid). Among its most prominent advocates were W.E.B. du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Kwame Nkrumah. The positions of these intellectuals and activists were not always unified. While sharing a preoccupation to “refute the charge of the Negro’s unchangeable racial inferiority, and to claim full equality for Africans and
African-Americans,” one group focused on demanding “full equality with whites and nothing else,” and the other promoted a type of reversed racism, claiming that “most great men and most achievements of civilization were essentially or at least partly African” (Geiss 1969:189). Garvey, who espoused the latter view, was very influential worldwide, but created divisions and was accused by Du Bois and others of making the achievement of political goals more difficult because of his radicalism (ibid:191).

In the early 20th century Marcus Garvey promoted the ideas of “a voluntarily united Africa under one government” and repatriation to Africa “as a Caribbean response to the exploitation of people of African descent inherent in the globalization forces of slavery, racism and colonialism” (Fergus 2010: 29). To this end he founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association in 1914 in Jamaica with the express intention to:

Establish a Universal Confraternity among the race; To strengthen Commisaries or Agencies in the principal countries of the world for the protection of all Negroes, irrespective of nationality; to establish Universities, Colleges and Secondary Schools for the further education and culture of the boys and girls of the race; To conduct a worldwide commercial and industrial intercourse (Mackie 1987, Garvey 1986, and Martin 1983 in Fergus 2010:31)

Although Pan-Africanism does not necessarily promotes a homogenized view of African people, Pan-African unity is important in various diasporian communities. This is especially so in the U.S. because the African ancestry of Afro-Americans is difficult to associate with specific identifiable African ancestral homes. Therefore, it has become necessary to minimize the differences between the various peoples of Africa in favor of a generalized heritage (Shivji 2008). As we have seen, groups like Olodum in Salvador invoke Pan-African themes of African unity that include Egypt, an undocumented source of black Atlantic culture. In contrast, candomblé houses and some capoeira groups prefer neo-African nations to unified Pan-African identities. DeCosmo suggests that this Afro-Bahian preference is due to the fact that: 1) abolition in Brazil occurred relatively late (1888); 2) African cultural practices were constantly renewed with newly-arriving captives replacing those who had died before they had a chance to reproduce; 3) Portuguese Catholicism was relatively tolerant to African religious practices as they shared belief
in saints as mediators between the human and the divine and acceptance of religious objects' mystical sacred powers; and 4) many Afro-Bahians went to West Africa after abolition to renew their ancestral knowledge (2012:107-108). For DeCosmo these conditions set Bahia apart from others places of the diaspora like Jamaica or the U.S.

More radical Pan-Africanisms advocate a racial redefinition of national identity, as opposed to multiculturalism. While rooted in 19th century abolitionist thought, particularly Martin Delany’s, black nationalism was prominent in Garvey’s thought and later among some anti-integrationists during the Civil Rights movement like Malcolm X. It accents themes of black unity, self-determinism, and repatriation of diasporic black communities to Africa. The modern North American version of it stresses the need to build separate communities that promote strong black pride and collectivize resources. As explained by DeCosmo (2012), the idea of repatriation to Africa has not been popular among black Bahians. However, ideas of black nationalism expressed in racial segregation are patent in the black-only membership policy of Ilê Aiyê and other blocos afro.

Afrocentrism (or Afrocentricity), in its American form, proposes an Africa-centered reassessment of world history and culture in which African heritage is glorified and European (and sometimes Arab) cultural influences denied or minimized. According to David Covin, Afrocentricity was officially created by African American scholar and activist Molefi Asante. In Asante’s

40 In explaining the 19th century bi-directional flux between Bahia and West Africa, Parés writes: “The trans-Atlantic communication between Bahia and the Mina Coast had been under way since the late eighteenth century but increased after 1835, with hundreds of African returnees settling along the Mina Coast each year, many of them in Lagos, contributing to the above-mentioned Yoruba renaissance, and others regularly traveling and doing business between both shores” (2004:193). These trips to Africa to obtain “authentic” objects and knowledge to recover religious tradition, became a foundational narrative to some Bahian candomblé houses and increased the prestige, religious efficacy and power of religious experts (ibid).

41 On February 24, 2012 I attended the theater piece “Namibia, Não!” at Teatro Castro Alves in Salvador, Bahia. The fictitious piece is based on an eponymous book by Aldri Anunciação (2012) and features two male Afro-Brazilians who face forced repatriation to Namibia by the Brazilian government in 2016. After debating the socio-political conditions in current Brazil and Africa, they conclude that life in Brazil is preferable. The piece was “the most seen theater piece in Bahia” in 2011 and the book received the Jabuti Award of Literature in Brazil in 2013 (Namibia, Nã o n.d.). The piece was performed before the publication of the book. The Film “Quilombo” (Diegues 1984), set in 17th century northeastern Brazil, focused on enslaved Africans who revolted and escaped plantations and who weighed returning to Africa versus joining Palmares. Most chose Palmares because they considered Brazil their new motherland: “I was born here and I don't know other lands. Africa is too far away.” In the film others asserted that “it is better to speak the language of whites so that we can understand each other” which underscores the idea of African unity under colonialism. The future leader of Palmares and icon of black resistance, Ganga Zumba, was one of the freed slaves who chose to stay. Therefore, the idea of choosing to stay in Brazil and resist colonial domination, as opposed to returning to Africa, is implicit in discourses of black empowerment that take Palmares as an example of black pride.
formulation “Afrocentricity is a way of life undergirded by a value system and a religious orientation, *Njia*” (Covin 1990:126-7). *Njia* (“The Way”) is a religious practice advocated by Asante, which involves a ritualistic ceremony that acknowledges the value of African cultural heritage (Assante 1968). According to Covin, Njia is designed specifically for the reality of black people in the U.S. and thus does not apply to the case of Brazil (Covin 1990:127).

From Asante and other Afrocentric thinkers, Covin distilled five features characterizing the movement:

1. People of African descent share a common experience, struggle, and origin.
2. Present in African culture is a nonmaterial element of resistance to the assault upon traditional values caused by the intrusion of European legal procedures, medicines, political processes, and religions into African culture.
3. African culture takes the view that an Afrocentric modernization process would be based upon three traditional values: harmony with nature, humaneness, and rhythm.
4. Afrocentricity involves the development of a theory of an African way of knowing and interpreting the world.
5. Some form of communalism or socialism is an important component of the way wealth is produced, owned, and distributed.
(Covin 1990:127-8)

Covin claims that these features are shared by “Asante’s Afrocentris, Karenga’s Kawaida, Nascimento’s Quilombismo, Negritude, Pan-Africanism, African socialism, Ujamaa, and various streams of Black nationalism” and the Black Unified Movement in Brazil (ibid).

The MNU was organized in units called Centers of Struggle which were formed in work areas, villages, prisons, *candomblé* and *umbanda* temples, *samba* schools, *afóxês*, *blocos afro*, churches, *favelas*, *capoeira* groups, and the like (ibid:131). Afrocentric ideas flowed in both directions: from the MNU central organization to its Centers of Struggle and vice versa, as Covin attests. *Bloco afro* Ilê Aiyê already exhibited Covin's parameters by the time of its foundation in 1974, four years before the birth of the MNU. Its founders claim that they learned about these ideas directly from the Black Power and Rastafari movements (Canal Petrobras n.d.).

**Products of Afro-Bahian Culture**

I use the qualifier *Afro-Bahian* for cultural products that help people who identify as black or Afro-descendant to produce locality in Salvador. This covers the cultural forms that are locally
perceived as representatives of local black tradition (e.g. candomblé, capoeira, samba de roda) or as part of the new Bahian black culture (such as samba-reggae). But more crucially, it includes creative adaptations and reinterpretations of global, diasporic or Brazilian cultural forms—whether they are perceived as black or not—to create the necessary difference of locality.

Focus on a big band that takes inspiration in candomblé and samba-reggae offers the possibility to study how local musicians produce black culture and locality mixing the most idealized black tradition with new Bahian black music and with a global musical form that has been already indigenized.
Chapter 3: Discourses of Musical Africanness

The rhythm of the white minister's speech was more halting than that of the Negro minister, and shaped to a less vigorous melodic line. The movements of the white congregation were more convulsive and jerky than those of the Negroes. This general contrast corresponds to the popular feeling that Negroes have greater sense of rhythm and greater freedom in bodily movement than white people. Such motor differences do not necessarily arise from differences in physical makeup, but may be to a large extent socially conditioned. (Herskovits 1941:42)

In 1941 Melville Herskovits published *The Myth of the Negro Past*, one of the most influential books about African descendants in the Americas. He argued that blacks in the Americas retained aspects of a culture that was as worthy of respect as that of their former oppressors. To this end, he tried to deconstruct negative assumptions that portrayed black culture as inferior, barbaric, and lacking a past. Herskovits was well intentioned and intended to break stereotypes, but he ended up reinforcing some and creating others. For instance, one commentator wrote “...the failure to grasp subjective ideas, the strong sexual and herd instincts with few inhibitions. . . , the tendency to seek expression in such rhythmic means as music and dancing... all these and many other things betray the savage heart beneath the civilized exterior” (J. E. Lind in Herskovits 1941:23). In contrast, in the epigraph the very same notions of the rhythmicity and physicality of “African” culture allowed Herskovits to portray blacks positively when compared to whites. Both Herskovits and Lind rely on the notion of African rhythmicity to articulate contrasting discourses.

Like Herskovits, other scholars, musicians, audiences, and activists also use popular notions about black culture and music to reinforce their intellectual or political agendas. The fact that these notions are, in Herskovits' own terms, “popular feelings” and “socially conditioned,” does not imply that they are unreal or that their impact in music activity is insignificant. For these reasons I call them idealized notions as opposed to features or traits of Africanness. This chapter discusses seven prevalent themes about “African” music circulating in the diaspora and proposes a model in which they feed two discourses of blackness: primitivism and empowerment. This interpretation, and not the notions themselves, constitute what I bring to the table for they are all commonly known in literature and popular circles. My analysis sees these discourses as constructions supporting an ideology of difference. My overall idea is to create a theoretical model that explains the relationship between musical activity and the politics of black identity.
After introducing my use of the term discourse, this chapter discusses how the popular reduction of African music to African groove sets an aesthetico-political framework that underlies discourses about black music and politics. This leads to the presentation of my Foucauldian model of discursive formation of blackness. In the final section I examine how each theme is present in academic and popular discourses, what structural qualities and aesthetic values are frequently idealized, how are they socially performed, and how they operate in specific musical cases in Salvador.

**My Use of the Term Discourse**

A thorough understanding of any cultural expression requires both the study of its defining properties as well as the forces that shape its transformation. As stated, I do not deny that some contemporary Afro-diasporic music forms retained a certain amount of African musical elements, cognitive orientations, or principles of music organization through conscious or unconscious effort of their practitioners as many authors have suggested (Ortiz 1940, Herskovits 1941, Waterman 1952, Mukuna 1979, Kubik 1979, Maultsby 1979, Burns 2010). However, here I am more interested in music as a social construction and resource for empowerment as I believe that music is a cultural and political space where people place themselves on the world map, fight their battles, and reinvent themselves. By emphasizing Afro-diasporic musics as social constructions, I focus on their contingence, flexibility, performativity, and dependence on the dynamics of black identity formation rather than on any inherent quality that they may possess or have retained. In other words, with this stance I give more weight to the way people imagine and portray Africanness through discourse than to the “actual” Africanness.

I treat musical expressions as “performative utterances” used to support discourses of blackness. For Austin (1962) performative utterances are types of expressions that are not used to describe reality but to perform a certain kind of action. They have no truth-value and thus can only be judged as either “happy” or “infelicitous” depending upon whether the conditions required for them to succeed have been met (ibid). Somewhat elaborating on this idea, in the *Archeology of Knowledge* (1972) Michel Foucault proposes a method of discourse analysis particularly useful for me because 1) it allows an understanding of the logic followed by individuals in determining the inherent boundaries of black identity; and 2) it renders visible the specific frames of
interpretation that emerge when expressions are uttered. Additionally, a focus on discourse allows more nuanced understandings of black empowerment as discourse may reinforce, undermine, and expose power (Foucault 1998:100-1).

Generally speaking discourse is a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts. For Foucault discourses are systems of thought and knowledge governed by rules, beyond those of grammar, which operate in the consciousness of individuals and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period (Foucault 1972). The rules of the discourse are preconditions for establishing the meaning of expressions (ibid:45). An expression thus has relative meaning depending on the particular discourse within which it is deployed and the particular rules that emerge. These rules or preconditions for Foucault must have a referent, a subject, an associated field, and a materiality. The subject is the producer of the utterance (e.g. members of Orkestra Rumpilezz) and the materiality is the means through which it is expressed. In my analysis I consider the following types of materiality: public rhetoric, performance practice (aural, visual, and kinetic expressions), and music (grooves and melodies). Referent is the specific element, located on an external domain (or domains), to which the utterance alludes or hints, for instance candomblé or capoeira are two possible domains to which Rumpilezz’s atabaques may refer. The associated field is the surrounding statements that attract a specific referent for interpretation; It is what makes us associate the atabaques of Rumpilezz with candomblé and not capoeira.

The themes of a discourse are strategic topics contained tacitly or explicitly in expressions. They are brought into being by the deployment of one or more strategic options on the part of the discursive subject. For instance, Lind, the racist commentator cited by Herskovits, reinforces a primitivist barbaric discourse of “African” culture by emphasizing the themes of rhythmicity,
embodiment and communalism. In the context of early 20th century psychoanalysis, a tendency to use rhythm, dance, and to act collectively were effective choices to claim that blacks were uncivilized and thus primitive. As we will see, a century later the same themes were strategically reinterpreted by Afrocentric writers to reinforce black empowerment.

The ensuing analysis shows how discourses of musical Africanness influence musical activity through various themes that are creatively and strategically reinterpreted by musicians. Because these ways of interpretation depend on their context to succeed, strategies must be informed by local knowledge—what is culturally valid and appropriate. Although I try to report when discourses and their themes either match or diverge from “real” situations as corroborated ethnographically, I do not attempt to identify their points of incompatibility or assess their historical, philosophical, or structural validity. Unveiling “true” musical or cultural links between Africa and its diaspora (a theme over-studied in ethnomusicology; see Butler 2010) would be the proper aim of comparative music analysis or historical research. My focus, by contrast, is on how these discourses and their associated themes are socially and musically performed, on understanding the contexts where they thrive, and on discovering how they help to create a sense of locality.

**African Music as African Groove**

In the last chapter I defined music of the African diaspora as that used by musicians, audiences, activists, or producers to mobilize black identities—musics used to reinforce ideologies of blackness as difference. Under this perspective, not all music activity by people who identify as black or Afro-descendant is necessarily “African,” like when Afro-Bahian classically trained trumpeter Joatan Nascimento plays a Beethoven symphony at the Symphonic Orchestra of Bahia. Of course, someone could make a case arguing that his approach to the performance of Western classical music is “African,” whatever that might mean. On the other hand, when the same musician plays at Orkestra Rumpilezz, a big band that tries to glorify Afro-Bahian music with candomblé and carnival inspired arrangements, one could more comfortably argue for such an “African” approach. By the same token, some music styles more overtly associated with the African diaspora are not always performed or received by each individual politically. For instance, despite its recognized African heritage, there are various narratives of capoeira that

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emphasize a Brazilian origin and downplay the African one (Röhrig 2005). A *capoeira contemporânea*\(^{44}\) master thus may claim that the music he plays and teaches is purely Brazilian and may not consciously subscribe to any black socio-political agenda or identity. In short, the rubric “music of the African diaspora” is not an obvious one as it may include or exclude debatable styles and ways of music making. It depends more on the context than in the sounds themselves.

Nonetheless, whenever the qualifier “African” or “black” is applied to a genre or a song, what one usually hears is a type of groove structured as a composite ostinato with variations. This common reduction of music to groove has a number of implications. In general terms, groove refers to musics where pulse entrainment results in strong embodied responses. Groove-based musics thus prioritize aspects of musical time over other music parameters such as melody, harmony, or form. In other words, grooves presuppose a centrality of rhythm and, by extension, of embodiment. In her study of funk grooves, Anne Danielsen argued that the accumulated intensity of the experience of *being in funk groove* may lead to sublime experiences where time seems to dissolve (2006:192) and where one feels that “one is fully present in time and space” (194), provided that one “surrenders to the event” (193). From a more culturally situated perspective she contends that “funk has been regarded as an expression as well as a means, of spiritual upheaval, of achieving strength and pride” (ibid: 204). These aesthetic and cultural interpretations of funk, and by extension of many black grooves (funk is considered as a quintessential form of black American music), suggest that the groove experience implies certain connections with the metaphysical or spiritual. She also claims that the groove experience requires and encourages full participation (ibid: 193), indicating that the notion of communalism is also central to the experience of grooves.

One does not need to take many steps to find parallels between this characterization of black grooves—rhythmic, embodied, spiritual, and participatory—and the more emblematic black grooves which are seen as models of black tradition in the diaspora: the Afro-religious grooves in Brazil, Cuba, and Haiti. In these paradigmatic cases, music ensembles are composed almost exclusively of percussion and singers, codified drumming patterns lead dancers to ritual spirit possession, elements of nature are used ritually (for the construction of instruments, animal

\(^{44}\) *Capoeira contemporânea* refers to contemporary styles of capoeira that do not follow strictly the *capoeira Angola* or *capoeira Regional* traditions.
sacrifices, ornaments, or healing) and symbolically (each deity symbolizes a natural element like the sea or the forest), communal participation is essential for celebrations and performances, and there is a strong emphasis on past repertoires, ancestry, and tradition.

Since the rhythmic structure of black grooves will be examined in detail in Chapter 6, here I will limit myself to an example of the multilinear structure of Barravento, a typical Bahian candomblé toque (groove) where various repetitive contrasting layers are temporally organized around a timeline that defines a period of four pulsations (refer to Figure 3.1). According to the Aurelio dictionary, toque Barravento accompanies the dance of inkice Zazi in the Angola candomblé tradition. When Gabi Guedes taught me this groove, he emphasized how important it was for him as a master drummer of the Ketu candomblé tradition to know how to play it correctly when spiritual leaders of Angola candomblé houses visited his own shrine. It was a show of respect for them and for their ancestors (p.c. Salvador, Bahia, May 2012). When performed at public ceremonies, dancers execute choreographies related to stories of this deity. As intensity grows with the rhythmic variations of the master drummer, dancers enter into deeper states of groove (possibly as described by Danielsen) and eventually get possessed by Zazi. At this point possessed dancers embody more unequivocally the character of Zazi, a warrior who rules over lightning and fire. A fuller discussion of the context of these ceremonies and of the embodied experience of possessed dancers will be provided in Chapters 6 and 8.

45 Inkice is the name of spiritual entities in the Angola candomblé pantheon. They are analogous to orixás in Bahian candomblé Ketu. Zazi is the inkice of lightning and fire.
46 All personal communications by Gabi Guedes took place in Salvador, Bahia.
Figure 3.1 Structure of *toque Barravento* (source: Gabi Guedes, Salvador, Bahia, Feb. 2012).

Table 3.1 Key for drum notation in Figure 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‼️</td>
<td>Open stroke on the <em>agogó</em> with a metal stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‼️</td>
<td>Slap on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‼️</td>
<td>Open stroke on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‼️</td>
<td>Ghost note on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Toque Barravento* illustrates how notions of rhythmicity, percussiveness, embodiment, traditionalism, communalism, closeness to nature, and, of course, spirituality underlie Afro-religious grooves. Now let's see what implication this may have in the arena of discourse formation.

**A Model for the Analysis of Discourses**

In *Representing African Music* (2003), Kofi Agawu critiques the ways in which African music has been constructed by Western scholars and writers since the 19th century, and subsequently by African scholars themselves. These scholars for him follow an ideology of difference between
Africa and the West that impedes productive comparisons and helps to perpetuate unequal North-South power relations (ibid). Whenever the adjective “African” is used to qualify black music, one can almost always find implicit or explicit references to an opposite “Western” attribute. Therefore, any idealized notion about African music bears force only when compared to its nemesis. For instance, the “Africanist” claim that African music is mainly rhythmic depends on an assumed “less rhythmic” Western counterpart. This difference is supplemented by the notion that Western music is more elaborate melodically and harmonically than African music. But does this notion hold when “complex” African rhythm is compared with a metrically unstable Western art piece such as Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring?

Identity formation is based on an ideology of difference. Black identity is not an exception. However, as Agawu warns us, it is imperative to unpack the assumptions underlying that ideology. I thus provide the following model that encompasses the two main discourses reinforcing this ideology. The first is the primitivist, which portrays African culture and life as simple, in a “natural” environment, and related to earlier periods of human history.47 This discourse, based on orientalist views of the other, is largely entrenched in a European urge of self-definition by negation (Danielsen 2006:21), which sets in relief binaries of nature/culture, tradition/modernity, communalism/individualism, body/mind, and so on.48 Primitivism has been associated to a variety of ideas ranging from barbarism to the positive idea that living closer to a natural environment is best. The second realm of discourse is black empowerment rooted in diasporic activism, which focuses on black agency. Following Foucault's views on power,

47 The primitivist discourse of blackness considered here is in principle different to the Western art movement that borrows visual forms from non-Western or prehistoric peoples. As an artistic movement, primitivism is an expression of a larger discourse that portrays non-Western cultures as not-yet-modern. Sieglinde Lemke, however, sees modernism as the “interplay between black and white” and argues that “several expressions of modernism assumed their form only through the incorporation of black forms” (1997:4). Given that black culture was often associated with primitivism, he re-named modernism as “primitivist modernism.” He also points out that “in the racist discourse of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it [primitivism] was infused with negative connotations and indiscriminately applied to peoples and objects worldwide (as well to African Americans, of course), but when referring to human conduct or manners, “primitive” was the antonym of discipline, order, rationality -the antithesis of civilized. The racist imagination conflated these two versions of alterity and defined people of African descent as irrational, uncivilized, and not-yet-modern” (ibid:4-5). Houston Baker Jr. introduced the notion of “African American modernism” to claim that the criteria used by Anglo-American and Irish writers to define modernism is antithetical with black art and culture (1987:xvi-xvii).

48 Defining oneself by other is not specifically European or African. The point is that Eurocentric anthropologic discourses have tried for centuries to justify an assumed cultural superiority of Europe over the non-European world, particularly over the formerly colonized non-white Southern Hemisphere where Africa is located (Said 1978, Agawu 2003). African descendants in other places of the Atlantic basin are frequently lumped in the same category. One of the main strategies used by European and American writers and scholars has been emphasizing or inventing, as some postcolonial authors claim (Agawu 2003), certain differences and presenting them in the form of dichotomies.
empowerment here not only includes organized activity aimed at attaining reparation, antiracism, or improvement of material conditions, but also more embodied aspects like pride, dignification and even positive interpretations of the primitivist discourse.

The discourse of black primitivism with its assumed dichotomies between “Africa” and “Europe” was well established by the time black empowerment writings, movements, and ideologies solidified in various places of the diaspora around the mid-20th century. Some of the most influential writers and intellectuals of the early 20th century who gave positive value to black culture in the diaspora were W.E. Du Bois (1903), Marcus Garvey, Gilberto Freyre (1933), Melville Herskovits (1941), Fernando Ortiz (1940), Jean Price-Mars (1928), and Frantz Fanon (1952). However, Herskovits’ quote in the epigraph of this chapter demonstrates that by the time empowerment discourses took force in the 1960s, African and African diasporic music was assumed to be as primitivists depicted it: rhythmic, percussive, close to nature, and so on, and this vision was not necessarily problematized. Even Afrocentric intellectuals like Amiri Baraka, Molefi Asante, and Abdias do Nascimento, linked to black movements in the U.S. and Brazil, recycled the same primitivist notions at the service of their new discourses. For instance, writings of the Brazilian Unified Black Movement state that “African culture takes the view that an Afrocentric modernization process would be based upon three traditional values: harmony with nature, humaneness, and rhythm” (Covin 1990:127). At the level of idealized notions of musical Africanness, black empowerment was not necessarily a subversive gesture. This is reflected in the overlapping area shown in Figure 3.2.

I have identified seven commonly known themes of the primitivist discourse that have been appropriated, reinterpreted, and reassessed by scholars, media, local subjects (musicians, audiences and activists) to advance discourses of black empowerment. They are rhythmicity, percussiveness, spirituality, traditionalism, communalism, embodiment, and closeness to nature.

49 The writings and movements of black empowerment following the ending of WWII are preceded by a long history of activism at least since the 18th century. Denouncement of slavery and racism and calls for change and unity of black communities existed since the very inception of colonialism, for instance in the writings of abolitionists like Prince Hall (1735-1807), Martin Delany (1812-1885), Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882) from the U.S.; Félix Varela 1788-1853, José Antonio Saco (1797-1879) and Anselmo Suárez y Romero (1818-1878) from Cuba; Luiz Gonzaga Pinto da Gama (1830-1882), Antônio Frederico Castro Alves (1847-1871), Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910) and Rui Barbosa (1849-1923) from Brazil; and Haitian Toissaint Louverture. Various revivals of African culture took place in the early 20th century in the U.S. (the Harlem Renaissance) and Brazil (Valoration of Things Black as per Freyre).

50 Each of these themes is emphasized in the film “Quilombo” (Diegues 1984) to portray African culture positively
Reinterpretations of these themes support the creation of the *difference* that black communities need to reaffirm identity. Since these reassessments are based in local knowledge, they also depend on, and help to *produce locality* across black Atlantic communities. In Foucauldian terms this means that we are dealing with two discourses that share seven themes. Each theme may reinforce either discourse, or both, depending on the strategic choices and the context (see Figure 3.2).

![Diagram of discursive formation applied to blackness.](image)

**Figure 3.2** Model of discursive formation applied to blackness.

but also in sharp opposition to whites: “how is it possible to be friends with the enemy if the happiness of whites depends on black slavery?” The soundtrack of the film features rhythm prominently; when musical activity is shown, blacks sing and play drums; Ganga Zumba, the leader of the community is shown dressed and possessed by *orixá Xango* and defeating the Portuguese with *capoeira* moves; Palmares is shown as sharing a communal system where “things and the land belong to those who need it”; all the members of the community are shown as having a harmonious relationship with flora and fauna; and members attempt to reinstate “African” traditional systems of trade, kinship, and so on.

51 Black identities not only assert their identities in contrast with white European or Western identities. In Bahia, black identities are also negotiated with Indian, *mestiço*, Bahian and Brazilian ones. In fact, black identities often overlap with these others. The proposed model makes emphasis on black and white because most of my informants highlighted this dichotomy, writers see double consciousness as a defining feature of black identity, and Rumpilezz's music influences are strongly associated to Afro-Brazilian or Western culture.

64
The following section examines how these themes reinforce primitivist and empowerment discourses in the context of Bahia and, occasionally, in other places of the diaspora. To see how this is done, I analyze academic and oral discourses as well as examples drawn from Bahian *candomblé*, *capoeira angola*, and carnival music and put them in the context of local, national, and diasporic interactions.

**Theme 1: African Music is Centered in Rhythm and/or Rhythmically Complex**

The idea that rhythm is the most salient feature of African and African diasporic music is so widespread that African music is often equated with African rhythm. The epigraph of this chapter shows that this notion has been used in the literature for over a century to reinforce positive and negative primitivist views. In fact, Agawu (2003) claims that this notion was constructed during the twentieth century, first by Western scholars who studied African music forms and after by African scholars themselves who internalized the idea that African music is fundamentally different than Western music, a tradition, in turn, portrayed as predominantly melodic or harmonic. As Western scholars (mostly anglophone) struggled to orient themselves while listening to dense polyrhythms in various parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, they invented the idea that the treatment of rhythm in all forms of African music is more complex and more sophisticated than in Western music. The underlying assumption was that “the complexity of African rhythm is emblematic of the otherness of Africans” (ibid:389). Agawu claims that this is a neo-colonial idea that other-fies Africans and justifies unbalanced power relationships rooted in centuries of colonialism (ibid).

Although there are multiple examples of writers and activists using the theme of African rhythmicity to reinforce black empowerment, this does not necessarily imply that certain primitivist views are neutralized. The already mentioned quote by Covin is instructive: “African culture takes the view that an Afrocentric modernization process would be based upon three traditional values: harmony with nature, humaneness, and rhythm” (1990:127). Although Afrocentricity is inherently linked to black empowerment, here rhythm and harmony with nature are seen as positive values of African culture, endorsing the primitivist view that a life closer to a natural environment is best.
Music can be rhythmically complex in many ways. It can be extremely dense, have very long periods, lack a sense of pulse, or be metrically unstable. However, the so-called complexity of African musics, as constructed by scholars, refers particularly to the multilayered textural processes inherent to grooves. This is a consequence of the assumption that African music is groove-based. In his article “Black Atlantic Rhythm...” (2002), Jeff Pressing borrowed the concepts perceptual rivalry and multiplicity from the field of optics to explain how an aural experience may unleash a process of cognitive dissonance where various interpretations of the same phenomenon (such as groove) seem to compete or even contradict each other, generating tension (298-99). A classic example is the perception of contrasting streams of pulse in a given groove. While a competent listener may enjoy moving between different foci, an inexperienced one may lose a sense of pulse based in the composite texture when focusing on a salient layer. Innumerable Africanists have reported these types of experience while studying African music, contributing to the notion of rhythmic complexity (Hornbostel 1928, Jones 1959, Koetting 1970, Pantaleoni 1972, Chernoff 1979, Merriam 1982, Locke 1982, Kauffman 1980, Stone 1985, Arom 1991, Berliner 1978). African diasporic musics have received similar assessments (Ortiz 1940, Herskovits 1941 and 1943, Carpentier 1972, Evora 1997, Seeger 2008, Béhague 2008).

Without subscribing to discourses of primitivism or empowerment, Preissing emphasized the theme of “African” rhythmic complexity. For him “perceptual rivalry and multiplicity are established foundations of African rhythmic design”; among the devices he mentions are asymmetric timelines, syncopation, overlay, displacement, off-beat phrasing, polyrhythm, hocketing, heterophony, swing, speech-based rhythms, and call-and response (2000:300-301). These are precisely the attributes that served scholars, Western and otherwise, to construct the complexity and centrality of African rhythm. French ethnomusicologist Simha Arom (1991) claims that the complexity of polyphony and polyrhythm in the Central African Republic comes from the way superimposed parts are interlocked in the structure of ostinato with variations. For him African and Western polyphony are opposed: the first is based on rhythm and the second on melody (ibid). Ghanaian Nketia seconds Arom by claiming that in African music rhythmic interest compensates for the absence of melody and that such rhythmic interest is manifest in timelines, hemiolas, cross-rhythms, overlapping, interlocking, and offbeat phrasing (1974).

52 Ghanian musician and scholar Kofi Gbolonyo demonstrated that an educated Ewe listener may comfortably subdivide the so-called standard pattern (x.x.x.x.x.x) in 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, or 12 pulsations, switch from one to other, and listen to variations without experiencing any cognitive dissonance (p.c. UBC African ensemble, Vancouver, BC, Nov. 2010).
Toque Barravento, used in candomblé de Angola ceremonies in Salvador, fits quite literally the type of rhythmic complexities attributed by Pressing to Black Atlantic music. In Figure 3.1, the patterns of lé, rumpi, and rum\(^53\) suggest three different pulse streams dividing the bell cycle in four, six, and three pulses respectively. As I was learning these patterns with Gabi Guedes, my candomblé drumming teacher in Salvador, I felt those pulse streams competing and often became disoriented. Gabi was amused to see me struggle to maintain my part because the coexistence of various beats does not pose any challenge for him. A more emic argument for the centrality of rhythm is that dancers, before and after possession, respond more to codified drummed rhythmic patterns and their variations than to songs, the other relevant musical element in ceremonies.\(^54\)

Dancing and possession are crucial in candomblé as they are the main ways devotees experience and relate to their gods (the orixás) and thus the treatment of drumming patterns is of paramount importance. In Gabi’s words, “in candomblé music is primarily meant for orixá dancing” (p.c. May 1, 2012).

The fact that the repertoire of candomblé drumming patterns has a variety of complex rhythms is, in fact, a source of pride and empowerment for Gabi:

In candomblé you have a variety of rhythms, songs and melodies. Even, odd, broken rhythms. Everything. Therefore, when you play a piece of music outside [of the terreiro] after having such encyclopedia of rhythms in your head... academic music becomes very easy. Also music played around the world [popular music or world music]. You can play now any piece of music you want and I will follow you. It is just a matter of listening and playing. It is very easy. Really. (ibid, translated from Portuguese by the author)\(^55\)

In addition to being a candomblé master drummer and teaching private percussion lessons, Gabi is a professional percussionist in the local circle of popular music. He is aware that his knowledge of “complex” black grooves from candomblé increases his prestige, value, and employability in the music market. Independently of (or in addition to) the symbolic and social importance of candomblé for Afro-Brazilian identity, rhythmic complexity is a source of empowerment for Gabi as professional percussionist.

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\(^53\) Rum, rumpi, and lé are the names of the three sacred atabaques in candomblé Ketu. The former is the largest, lowest-sounding, and leading drum, and the other two are smaller and have accompanying roles.

\(^54\) Although songs strongly evoke orixás in dancer’s minds and thus contribute to emotional responses, it is drum patterns that are believed to induce possession (Cardoso 2006).

\(^55\) All quotations of Gabi Guedes are the author’s translations from Portuguese.
At a broader level, the theme of rhythmic centrality and complexity as expressed in polyrhythmic candomblé grooves was also strategically used by black musicians to support black empowerment discourses during the so-called process of re-Africanization of Bahian carnival of the 1970s and 1980s. Afoxé carnival ensembles absorbed much of the aesthetics and symbols of candomblé by adopting toque ijexá (a sacred groove associated to orixá Oxum) as a signature rhythm, bringing atabaques\(^{56}\) and agogôs\(^{57}\) to the streets and combining them as in terreiros (i.e. following the same normative roles). Blocos afro, the other major Bahian carnival ensemble, also brought rhythmic elements from candomblé to the streets but less literally than afoxés. For instance, rum variations inspired rhythmic lines for repiques and surdos. By introducing these changes bloco afro and afoxé grooves not only evoke a local expression of Africanness based in candomblé and “sound” like it, but also accompany black activism. That is, they support black empowerment by being rhythmically “complex” as per Pressing.

This re-Africanization of carnival rhythms in Bahia can also be interpreted as way of producing locality. Samba duro, the signature groove of nationally dominant escolas de samba, is perceived as a style representing the tri-ethnic heritage of Brazil but with stronger emphasis on its African than on its Amerindian or European components. This style, from which afoxés and blocos Afro departed in the 1970s, is structured as an ostinato with variations and features aspects of the so-called African rhythmic “complexity,” but its links with candomblé are weaker. Blocos afro and afoxés re-Africanized themselves by maintaining this structure and by strengthening its rhythmic connections with candomblé, the main symbol of black tradition in the country.

Sigilião points out that blocos afro and afoxés consciously chose grooves over other forms of social discourse to advance their political agendas, as they understood that black Bahians were more interested in rhythms than in protest songs (2009:15). Choosing the theme of African rhythmicity was thus instrumental for those committed to black empowerment.

**Theme 2: African Music is Dominated by Percussion**

Drums made vibrate the most secret fibers of his [the black’s] sympathy. (Carpentier 1972:150).

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\(^{56}\) Atabaque is a generic term for the sacred drums in Ketu candomblé ensembles.

\(^{57}\) Agogô is a single or double-mouthed bell used in various Afro-Brazilian ensembles, including candomblé, afoxés and capoeira.
African drums have entirely disappeared in the United States, yet one who is familiar with African music in its original forms cannot hear “boogie-woogie” piano rhythms without realizing that there is little difference between the two except in the medium of expression. (Herskovits 1941:143)

Most of what has been said about “African” rhythmicity applies to percussiveness for these twin notions almost always reinforce each other. However, assigning a particular set of instruments, or ways of playing them, to a cultural area has certain implications. The most obvious one, is that with the exception of santeria bata drums, West African talking drums, xylophones, and other pitched-percussion instruments, percussion is more limited than other types of instruments in the production of a range of distinct pitches and thus of melodies and harmony.

Herskovits' quote suggests that percussiveness does not always imply the presence of drums but also ways of playing non-percussive instruments. With regards to the use of piano in “African” music, Nigerian composer Akin Euba stated that “the piano, being partially a percussive instrument, possesses latent African characteristics” (Omojola 2001:157). In talking about other “Western” instruments he claims that:

A number of Western instruments have been adopted by Africans and may be on the way to assuming new identities as 'African' instruments. The behaviors of the lead guitar, rhythm guitar and bass guitar in neo-African types of pop music in Western, central and southern Africa are examples of the successful Africanization of Western-originated musical instruments. The Western piano is to my mind, another instrument that may well assume African characteristics. (ibid)

For Euba these “African characteristics” are the stylistic ingredients of African pianism, a style of playing the piano ostensibly reflecting an “African” sensibility. According to him these ingredients are:

Thematic repetition, direct borrowings of thematic material (rhythmic and/or tonal) from African traditional sources, the use of rhythmic and/or tonal motifs which, although not borrowed from specific traditional sources, are based on traditional idioms and percussive treatment of the piano (ibid).

Euba's African pianism represents an indigenization of Western art music where the themes of
rhythmicity and percussiveness are strategically emphasized.

The notion of African percussiveness is intimately linked to that of rhythmicity and dates back to the first centuries of European colonization in Africa when colonial functionaries and missionaries began to report the large percussion ensembles they saw in parts of West Africa (Agawu 1995:394). Since the 1950s some anglophone scholars like Jones (1959), Koetting (1970), Pantaleoni (1972), Chernoff (1979), and Locke (1982) deliberately focused their studies on Ghana, particularly on the Ewe tradition, as it was the area where they found what was reported by earlier writers, what sounded more rhythmically complex in an “African way” (e.g. as per Pressing's perceptual rivalries), reinforcing the view that percussive instruments dominate African music. According to Kofi Gbolonyo, Ghana has been a common destination for anglophone ethnomusicologists, not only because of the existence of large polyrhythmic drumming ensembles, but also because of the language (Ghana was a former British colony) and its relatively stable socio-political situation (p.c. Vancouver, B.C., Nov. 2009). Despite other anglophone scholars who have focused on other parts of the continent where percussion is less prevalent (e.g. Tracey 1969 and Berliner 1978 studied mbira in Zimbabwe, Blacking 1967 on singing in South Africa, and Knight 1971 on kora in Gambia), the notion of African percussiveness put forward by Jones and company prevailed in the Americas and the Africanness of diasporic music forms started to be assessed using that yardstick. 58 Percussion ensembles from the Americas' portion of the black Atlantic (Cuba, Haiti, Brazil, and the Caribbean coast of Central and South America) which featured aspects of that “African rhythmic complexity” were deemed “authentic” survivals.

The notion of percussiveness is also prevalent in Bahia. In a conversation with Bahian dancer Sandra Lima she asserted that rum, rumpi, and lê—the three sacred drums of Ketu candomblé—are the instruments that best represent Bahian music (p.c. Salvador, Bahia, May 14, 2012). 59 This is, of course, consistent with the centrality of percussion in this Afro-religious tradition where the instrumental ensemble is exclusively composed by drums and bells, and with the generalized perception of candomblé as a genuine representative of black tradition. The important point is that these instruments and the rhythms they produce are a source of black pride for her (ibid).

58 Ethnomusicologists writing in other languages constructed their discourse of rhythmic centrality and complexity mostly based on the study of non-drumming African music traditions. French scholars, for instance, focused on horns and singing (Arom 1991 and Rouget 1956).

59 All personal communications by Sandra Lima took place in Salvador, Bahia, unless indicated otherwise.
During the 1970s and '80s Bahian *blocos afro* appropriated quite literally the theme of African percussiveness, to distance themselves from *escolas de samba*. The new black styles of carnival music in Bahia had to be played mostly by drums if they wanted to vindicate an African identity linked to the *candomblé* model of tradition. *Blocos afro* maintained the drums (*surdos*, *fundos*, *caixas*, and *repiques*) and ruled out guitar-like *cavaquinho*, popularly associated with the Portuguese heritage (Crock 2009:30), as well as other Brazilian emblematic idiophones such as *cuicas*, *reco-recos*, *ganzas*, *chocalhos*, *cabaças*, *pandeiros*, and *pratos*, many of them of demonstrated African origin (Kubik 1979, Mukuna 1979). The *agogô*, a *candomblé* instrument, appeared only sporadically in the street performances I attended in Salvador in 2006, 2009, and 2012. This emphasis on drumming was furthered with the inclusion of the *timbau*, a conical hand drum.

Although *blocos afro* parade most of the year with this purely drumming format, many famous *blocos* like *Olodum* began in the late 1980s to include a typical pop music rhythm section (keyboards, electric guitar, bass guitar, and trap set) and a set of horns (typically tenor sax, trumpet, and trombone). These sections of non-percussive instruments play riffs and vamps much like North American funk bands of the 1960s and '70s did in the U.S., a style that Danielsen (2006) characterized as “highly percussive.” With this mixed formation they perform carnival songs on street stages with themes referring to Africa ("Madagascar Olodum", 1987), to Afro-Brazilian history ("Samba do Recôncavo" [Samba from the Bahian Recôncavo], 1997), or to the diaspora ("O Reggae não Pode Morrer" [Reggae Cannot Die], 2000), all explicitly referring to black empowerment. Though the emphasis in this context shifts to a lead singer, percussion predominates as drummers are placed in the center of the stage executing flashy choreographies and often outnumbering musicians playing melodic/harmonic instruments.

*Blocos afro*’s establishment as “politically minded” and “authentic” black Bahian (as opposed to national) drumming ensembles has two phases with two distinct interpretations of the theme of percussiveness. Initially they purged their ensembles of everything but drums to distance themselves from *escolas de samba* and to resemble *candomblé baterias*. Once established, *blocos afro* became more flexible and opted to include non-percussive instruments that were played in

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60 *Fundos* and *surdos* are large drums providing low notes in *blocos afro*; *repiques* are smaller drums playing high-pitched timelines; and *caixas* are snare drums.
“percussive” manners.

The example of Olodum, which is representative of other blocos afro such as Ilê Aiyê, Araketu, Muzenza, and Malê Debalê, shows that various interpretations of the theme of percussiveness allowed musicians to challenge nationalistic ideals of tri-ethnic origin and to connect with ideals, symbols, and aesthetics of an international black community. They reinforce discourses of blackness.

**Theme 3: Groove as a Metaphor of Participatory Communalism**

In characterizing the Afrocentric perspective as articulated by its main proponents (Assante, Nascimento, Ujamaa), David Covin listed five points, the last of which was “some form of communalism or socialism is an important component of the way wealth is produced, owned, and distributed (1990:127-28). Although communalism here does not refer specifically to musical activity, it clearly emerges as one of the sides of the binary individualism/communalism.

The idea that African music is highly participatory in its production, performance, and reception and that this produces a strong sense of community and reflects egalitarian societies is very popular in scholarship (e.g. Chernoff 1979, Keil 1995). Based in his study of Ewe and Dagomba Ghanaian drumming, John Miller Chernoff wrote “music is essential to life in Africa because Africans use music to mediate their involvement within a community” (1979:154). He proposed analogies between the structure of Dagomba polyrhythmic drumming pieces (he thought of them as polymetric) and the structure of their society. For him music and community are formed by diverse rhythms and personalities that must remain distinct and in ritualized opposition, because “African sensibility” tends to situate conflicting and opposite forces in mediated communication (ibid).

Chernoff’s model of music and community reinforces the themes of African percussiveness and rhythmic complexity as expressed in the structure of ostinato with variations. If the layers of a polyrhythmic texture are conceived as conflicting forces in permanent tension, one is safe to assume that the listener experienced the perceptual rivalries that Pressing attributes to Black Atlantic rhythm. Chernoff argues that African music is characterized by a sensibility that mediates social conflict through rhythmic tension. In the words of Alan Merriam, Chernoff boiled
down African music to rhythm and thence to drumming (1980:560). He reduced it to communalism, too.

Charles Keil's theory of participatory discrepancies (PDs) offers a rather different explanation of the way African grooves relate to communalism. For him musical grooves are places of democratic participation because they are flexible structures that, escaping from Western standardization, allow musicians to play slightly out of tune or out of time and still be in the groove (1995:4). According to Keil, the key element that makes African grooves communal and participatory is precisely these subtle variations (PDs), and the more they appear the “groovier,” more danceable, more communal, and thus more enjoyable, the music would be. But he also claims that this is antithetical to Western music standardization (e.g. metronomicity or perfect pitch) suggesting that the grooviest grooves (i.e. African grooves) are removed from “Western” aesthetics (ibid). Said differently, African grooves are highly participatory because they oppose “Western” music standards.

One of the problems of Keil’s formulation is that it requires the existence a “non-groovy” Western music, which does not exist. Problematically, his argument implies that the participatory nature of (African) grooves opposes “Western” individualism. Individualism is a fundamental feature of Western modernity and has been defended by cultural theorists such as Theodor Adorno (1941) as a “Western” ideal to inspire music creation and appreciation. Coming from a historical context where immersion in a collectivity meant fascism, Adorno found the participatory qualities of repetition in a groove to be problematic because “continuing and continuing to join in are given as justification for the blind persistence of the system, and the net result is the abolition of the individual” (Adorno in Monson 1999:51). However, the “excessively repetitive” popular music to which Adorno reacted has come to represent Western music as much as European classical music does. Besides, one does not have to dig deep to find aspects of communalism in “Western” art music ensembles. Adorno's position on repetition and individuality in Western music is the opposite of Keil's and Chernoff's on African grooves. However, once again, a notion attributed to African music—in this case African grooves—stands in opposition to Western music ideals. Adorno, Keil, and Chernoff used the theme of communalism to reinforce negative and positive aspects of the primitivist discourse of African music.
Let's see how Keil and Chernoff's ideas about groove (specifically grooves structured as ostinato with variations) and participatory communalism apply (or not) to Bahian capoeira, candomblé and samba-reggae grooves. Keil suggests that the simplicity, brevity, and literal repetition of each of the layers of the composite ostinato plus a degree of flexibility in the performance coming from a preference for subtle deviations facilitates participation. Consider an ensemble of capoeira angola in Salvador composed of eight instruments (three berimbau or musical bows, one atabaque or low hand drum, two pandeiro or tambourines, one agogó or bell, and one reco-reco or scrapper), a vocal leader, and a choir. While berimbau, pandeiro, atabaque, and lead singing are reserved for seasoned practitioners, playing the agogó, the reco-reco, or singing in the choir are not only allowed for newcomers but strongly encouraged. Patterns played by agogó and reco-reco are short, and aligned in obvious ways with the composite texture of the groove (i.e. “on the beat”), as if designed for any outsider to pick them up on the spot. In addition, there is great flexibility of pronunciation, pitch, and rhythm of the choir response, thus enhancing beginners’ participation even at their first roda.

This capoeira groove, which Keil would probably label as democratic, nonetheless is not free of differences in power and prestige within the capoeira community. Ingrid Monson critiqued the idea of egalitarian grooves, arguing that while an African groove may create a strong sense of community, the social organization of its production and circulation is not necessarily immune to differences in power, money, and prestige (Monson 1999:52). Berimbau are reserved for capoeira masters and advanced students as from these positions they can control the flow of the performance. Beginners or visitors would only rarely be allowed to play this instrument, unless they demonstrate proficiency on the spot. Improvising and introducing subjectivity are symbolic ways to experience and express freedom in the capoeira groove (Lewis 1991), and are also reserved for a select group: mestres (Larrain 2005). In addition, PDs may add flexibility to the capoeira groove but they are not arbitrary. While playing the atabaque at a roda de capoeira angola in Salvador, I was repeatedly frowned upon by a berimbau player who finally approached me to demonstrate my part. He played with a type of swing that I could not match, even when I consciously moved away from metronomicity, and explained that my playing was simply fora do ritmo: “off rhythm” or “out of the groove.”
Capoeira grooves reflect only partially Chernoff’s and Keil’s hypothesis of music and communalism. The most popular groove in capoeira angola—toque de Angola—, for instance, composed by eight different instruments plus call-and-respond singing, does not place all layers in opposition as in Chernoff’s model of African communal grooves. Five instruments (atabaque, agogô, reco-reco, and two pandeiros) play basically the same rhythmic pattern in unison, and the basic patterns of berimbaus do not contrast sharply either among themselves or with the rest of the ensemble. It is only during berimbau variations or singing when rhythmic tension emerges as a possible enactment of social conflict. The idea of communalism in capoeira thus does not imply egalitarianism but acceptance of hierarchy and authority as it allows every member to know their place and interact harmoniously with the rest.

As in capoeira, in candomblé instruments may change hands, but in this case among a selected group of men who usually stand around the atabaques ready to take over when a drummer voluntarily, or sometimes forcibly, gives his instrument away. The repertoire of drum rhythms is larger and more elaborate than in capoeira as drummers are expected to memorize long sequences of toques (sometimes up to sixteen); to maintain their parts against a dense, and sometimes quite fast, polyrhythmic background; to play with specific swing feels; to start and stop playing several times on subtle cues; and to adjust to the flow imposed by the master drummer, dancers, lead singers, or the mãe de santo (spiritual leader). The rum (lead drum) is reserved only for initiated male master drummers or alabês, who conduct the music in close interaction with dancers and eventually with the orixás manifested in their bodies. There is also some degree of flexibility, but much smaller than in capoeira. Although some agogô players get away with shifting the orientation of timelines during ceremonies, most of the time a player who makes an obvious mistake is immediately replaced.

Candomblé is widely perceived as a space where everyone has a place and a function (Faria 2005) and where distinctions based on color, social class, and nationality are irrelevant, provided that “he or she shows to be linguistically, ritually, melodically, rhythmically and choreographically competent” (Carvalho 1993:4). Arguing for the universality of candomblé, Carvalho stated:

From the point of view of ethnic identity, therefore, candomblé and shango cults do not establish social, racial or color distinctions: everyone is a potential member, since all human beings have orishás. So, blacks or non-blacks, Brazilian or non-Brazilian, are
oppositions that do not make sense in the world of the orishás; they are just African, on the mythological level; and on the level of individual identification, they are simply universal. (1993:4)

In contrast to candomblé’s supposedly color-free inclusiveness, Ilê Aiyê interpreted the theme of communalism rather differently. Since its foundation, Ilê Aiyê has maintained an only-black membership policy reflecting a desire to identify their music and activism with the Black Aesthetic Movement ideal of opposing the white mainstream (Danielsen 2006:29). Carvalho claims that the use of the word negro (black) by Ilê Aiyê and other racially minded groups in Salvador refers to a liberated African in Brazil and contrasts with preto, a term associated in other Afro-Brazilian contexts such as umbanda with “the oppressed and unliberated Afro-Brazilian who still calls a white man his Master” (1993:14).

Keil and Chernoff provide models to frame candomblé, capoeira, and bloco afro grooves as highly participatory. The theme of musical communalism is reassessed—rather paradoxically—by some blocos Afro to symbolize black liberation and to support black empowerment. By restricting participation to blacks, Ilê Aiyê embraced Africa and the diaspora and challenged the Brazilian tri-ethnic discourse.

At a more literal level, capoeira groups, candomblé houses, and carnival associations perform communalism by running social projects in impoverished areas of Salvador. These projects range from professional educational initiatives fully funded by transnational corporations to grassroots projects where capoeira mestres teach freely to black and mestiço street kids. Throughout my visits to Brazil I witnessed increasing interest of these artistic groups in engaging with this social work. This instrumentalized use of culture is clearly strategic to reinforce the discourse of black empowerment and is, at least partly, influenced by Afrocentric ideals of communalism.

**Theme 4: African Music and Culture is (Very) Embodied**

Nor is it possible here to do more than make mention of the dance, also a fundamental element in aesthetic expression everywhere in Africa. Dancing takes multitudinous forms, and all who have had firsthand contact with the area of our special interest speak of the many varieties of dances found there. These may be ritual or recreational, religious or secular, fixed or improvised, and the dance itself has in characteristic form carried over into the New World to a greater degree than almost any other trait of African culture... since analysis must also await the utilization of motion pictures as an aid to the
study of these special aspects of motor behavior, we can here but record the fact of its prominence in the culture, and its pervasiveness in the life of the people. (Herskovits 1941:76)

According to Patrícia de Santana Pinho, “The body has occupied a central place in black cultures of the diaspora. Because it was one of the main resources of the enslaved and to a certain extent their descendants, strategic use of the body has been of great importance in the Afro-diasporic production of culture” (Pinho 2010:101). However, the black body has been constructed in particular ways. She explains that historic dominance of Eurocentric aesthetics in Salvador has stigmatized the black body by assigning the worst side of the binaries such as beauty/ugliness and cleanliness/dirtiness (ibid:102, 107). Since the 1970s and 80s blocos afro in Salvador have contributed to challenge negative perceptions of the black body by “inventing” an aesthetic where elements perceived as “African” such as dark skin and curly hair, are considered beautiful (Pinho 2010:102). Pinho also points out that such aesthetic does not imply that former racist ideas of “whitening” or “taming the black body” have completely disappeared, even among blacks (ibid:111). For good or for bad, the black body is thus a quintessential “locus of affirmation and inscription of blackness” (ibid:102).

But it is the relationship of the black body with music what interests me most. In discussing the embodiment of African grooves, Simon Frith adds another binary to the stigma mentioned by Pinho: the idea that the black body is less controlled or mediated in its response to black grooves music that its “Western” counterpart (1983:19). This unmediated response (linked to hypersexualized dance), which he contrasts with controlled “Western” dance, arises due to the fact that “the sound and beat are felt rather than interpreted via a set of conventions” (ibid).

Many times, I have heard that African musics are to be felt and enjoyed with the body, not just heard quietly. Most formal and informal depictions of African based musics like the one cited above indicate that their most important function is to facilitate dance. Authors (such as Frith and Keil), musicians, and audiences attribute to African grooves an irresistible force that provokes spontaneous bodily response. However, modern cognitive theories applied to music show that embodiment is inherent to the perception of any type of music, be it African, Western, or Chinese (Iyer 2002, Becker 2004). Emphasizing music embodiment—a universal—in one culture while downplaying it in another thus highlights cultural difference and reinforces dichotomizing views.
Furthermore this emphasis on black embodiment is linked to the theme of closeness to nature and the discourse of primitivism as the black body response to music is seen as free of cultural or “civilized” mediation.

Using theories of embodiment and situatedness, Vijay Iyer demonstrated that music cognition is structured not only by the mind and the sociocultural aspects that contribute to its development, but also by the body, its sensorimotor systems, and its physical environment (2002:391). For him musical cognition is both a social and a biological phenomenon that enforces interaction between the agent's body and its environment (ibid).

However, Iyer, as well as Downey (2002), argue that there are certain aspects of musical embodiment that are not universal, but culturally specific because “every culture 'constructs' the human body differently thereby tempering any claims to universality” (2002:388). Here it is pertinent to ask: what is specific or characteristic about the embodiment of African or Afro-diasporic musics? Iyer argues for the groove with its minuscle time deviations from metronomicity as the answer. The groove is a structure where aspects of musical time (rhythm, microtiming) override other elements (melody, timbre, harmony, tone, form). These temporal aspects are paramount to musical embodiment as the act of listening to rhythmic music involves the same mental processes that generate bodily motion (ibid:392). For Iyer, “groove gives rise to the perception of a steady pulse in a musical performance... (and is what) engages the 'walk' (locomotor) channel of the listener's sensorimotor system” (ibid:398). Microtiming deviations, on the other hand, reflect specific temporal constraints imposed by physical embodiment in the performer and constitute powerful communicative devices that musicians and listeners pick up and react to more physically than intellectually. In Iyer's words: “Short-time rhythm cognition might include physical sensation, visual entrainment, and sonic reinforcement, unmediated by a symbolic representation” (ibid:396).

Iyer's work on embodiment was centered on West African and Afro-diasporic musics because they “have a cultural aesthetic that foregrounds the body,” are based on grooves that feature microrhythmic expression in isolation from the possible interference of tempo variation, and tend to involve percussive timbres that facilitate precise microrhythmic analysis (2002:411). In other words, Iyer demonstrated what he assumed: that African music is groove-based (thus centered in
rhythm), percussive, and more embodied than others, particularly than Western art music. In fact, he suggests that these traits are found to varying degrees in all world music except in European classical music, where microtiming implies tempo variation and where embodiment is not necessarily seen as integral to music perception (ibid:388, 411).

But placing African music as more embodied than European art music reminds us of old prejudices around the body and the mind. Aware of this, Iyer wrote:

> It is worth reminding ourselves that the study of African-American culture has been plagued by racist mythologies surrounding the idea of the body. Historically, African-American cultural practice has been seen by mainstream Western culture as the realm of the physical, the sensual, and the intuitive, in diametric opposition to the intellectual, the formal, and the logical. As outlined in McClary and Walser (1994, p. 80), I must stress that “to discuss the bodily aspects of cultural texts or performances is not to reduce them,” but rather to elevate the crucial role of embodiment in all aspects of cultural and perceptual activity. An enlightened treatment of black music that draws from theories of embodiment can get beyond the old mind-body binary, particularly in its racialist manifestations. Such an approach affirms the African diasporic aesthetics that engendered this powerful body of music, while illuminating aspects of all world music. (2002:397)

I am not in a position to say if elevating the role of embodiment in African music “can get beyond the old mind-body binary in its racist and other ideologically harmful manifestations.” What it does is to turn the tables on the binary. While Iyer's analysis provides tools to understand the role of the body in playing and listening to African grooves, it makes me suspicious that the glorification of African derived music still comes at the cost of disparaging the “West.” With this in mind, let us turn to Afro-Bahian music where embodiment is also assumed to be integral.

Many authors and musicians have pointed out that the most emblematic black musics from Bahia follow an aesthetic centered in the body that manifests itself in particular forms of dance, emotional responses and even altered states of consciousness. Angelo Cardoso (2006), Nicolau Parés (1997) and Gabi Guedes (p.c. May 1, 2012), for instance, point out that the ultimate goal of candomblé music is summoning African deities who come through the body of initiated dancers.

With the help of drumming patterns and other ritual elements, dancers go through various physical, mental, and emotional stages until full possession takes place (Parés 1997). In the same
spirit, Decanio (2002) and Diniz (2011) claim that the acute state of alert that capoeira dancers experience during the roda is akin to a ritual trance. Downey (2002) demonstrates that apprenticeship of dance moves, berimbaus playing techniques, and images of bodily interactions with another dancer condition the way capoeira adepts listen to music while performing. For these authors capoeira grooves only make sense when embodied. As Pinho and Sansone explain, Bahian carnival music, one of the main expressions of the “new black Bahian culture,” is centered in the exhibition of the “black body” which manifests itself in forms of sexualized dance, ways of dressing, hairdos, and so on (Pinho 2010, Sansone 2004a). Both authors link this process to the re-Africanization of carnival in Bahia in the 1970s and—at least partially—inspired in the African American slogan of black is beautiful (ibid).

For Sansone the embodiment of Bahian carnival music adheres to a locally developed, but internationally-minded black aesthetic that stands in opposition (at least symbolically) to national or “white” aesthetics. Samba afro, the dancing style associated with samba-reggae, the signature groove of blocos Afro, resulted from a combination of orixà dances, reggae, funk, and contemporary dance moves. Here we see references to what Sansone calls the main sources of inspiration for the new black Bahian culture: the local traditional black culture represented by candomblé and globalized symbols of blackness represented by diasporic styles like reggae and funk. Interestingly enough, samba afro is also influenced by contemporary dance, a more “Westernized” dancing idiom (at least not typically associated to blackness) but not by samba itself, the style perceived as “embodying the nation” (Vianna 1999).

Musical embodiment is universal, particularly in the case of groove-based music’s, because the very concept of groove is characterized by the production of a sense of pulse to which physical entrainment happens. At a universal level candomblé, capoeira, and bloco afro grooves are powerful examples of this type of pre-cultural embodiment but at another level, the experience of these grooves is conditioned by the sociocultural situatedness of the body (per Iyer). Musical embodiment is thematized by musicians in Salvador to support discourses of empowerment but without challenging primitivist views. They comply to a generalized vision of blackness aligned to a “bodily-centered Africa” and opposed to the “intellectually-centered West,” while also reflecting a desire to affirm a sense of black identity that transcends national boundaries. This emphasis on black embodiment is linked to the theme of closeness to nature and the
discourse of primitivism as the black body response to music is seen as free of cultural or “civilized” mediation.

**Theme 5: Emphasis on Spirituality**

For underlying the life of the American Negro is a deep religious bent that is but the manifestation here of the similar drive that, everywhere in Negro societies, makes the supernatural a major focus of interest. It is because of this, indeed, that everywhere compensation in terms of the supernatural is so immediately acceptable to this underprivileged folk and causes them, in contrast to other underprivileged groups elsewhere in the world, to turn to religion rather than to political action or other outlets for their frustration. (Herskovits 1941:207)

What continues to link Brazil with West Africa and other African diasporic areas is a sacred/secular connection and widespread belief in a power/creative energy source that many Brazilians refer to as *axé*. (Henry 2008:3)

Black cultural activity is almost always imagined and portrayed as connected with the metaphysical, the supernatural, or some type of spirituality. In Chapter 2 we saw that the world of African spirituality as experienced and portrayed in Afro-diasporic religious circles functions as an aesthetic and symbolic model of black tradition. All the idealized notions of musical Africanness discussed in this work are featured very literally in diasporic religions such as *candomblé* and *santeria* because they were taken as models in the first place. The fact that the ideology of blackness as difference relies on notions linked to a supposed African mode of spirituality suggests that spirituality is seen as a strong and effective marker of cultural difference.

But what is African spirituality? Dutch philosopher Wim Van Binsbergen wrote that African spirituality has become a “globally recognized social fact” that “features prominently in the increasingly vocal expressions by intellectuals, political and ethnic leaders, and opinion-makers who identify as African or who can claim recent African descent” (1994). For him “African spirituality consists in a political scenario, and in that context the minutiae of contents of a specific cultural repertoire, and a specific biologically or socially underpinned birth-right, are largely or even totally irrelevant” (ibid). Leaving aside the discussion of authenticity, Binsbergen's views on African spirituality match what I observed in Bahia: a strong connection between *candomblé* and the politics of black identity. This view is more nuanced than that of
Herskovits, who claimed that blacks choose religion over politics. Religion is political.

An important dimension of this theme of spirituality is the assumption that in African cultures the sacred and the secular are not as “neatly separated” as in Western culture. Clarence Henry (2008) argues that the sacred and secular Afro-Brazilian musical landscapes in Salvador are unified by the Yoruba religious concept of axé. For him Brazilian axé is a reapropriation of Nigerian asé, a concept from the heritage of African religiosity linking West Africa and the diaspora. It refers to a powerful and creative energy emanating holistically from all things, influencing all aspects of social life and allowing musicians to connect with the spiritual world (ibid). He contends that religiosity, via axé, always influences black music production creating a connective flow of the sacred and secular in the black experience (ibid). Many other authors have also proposed the existence of sacredness in secular black music activity—Jackson (2000) did it with jazz and Obi (2008) with capoeira.

The discursive power of these characterizations of African or Afro-diasporic musics comes from its contrast with the idea that in Western modernity there is a clear separation of the sacred and the secular in socio-political activity. This idea of promoting a sharp separation between religion and the nation-state is rooted in the French Revolution and is one of the pillars of Western modernity. Arguing that musical, social, or political activity in African derived cultures is simultaneously influenced by both the sacred and the secular may be interpreted as denying Africans entrance to modernity, which amounts for denying black double consciousness—to be simultaneously inside and outside European modernity.

Clearly one could find many Western musicians who do not identify themselves as African descendants and yet who look for transcendence, or bring elements of their own religious practices into their musical experiences. There is a historically lengthy set of discourses in Western music about its inspiration in god, or the “spiritual” connection Western musicians feel when playing “great” works (Forman 1984). A prominent example is the link to transcendence that many musicians and composers claimed to experience during the romantic period. In other words, one could selectively invent Western music as spiritual, too. One need not deny the possibility that musicians who identify as African or black share a special connection with the supernatural when they play or listen, but claiming that this sets African musics apart from
Western music only reminds us of primitivist discourses and the ideology of difference denounced by Agawu.

The theme of African spirituality emphasizes qualities that ostensibly allow musicians, dancers, or listeners to experience heightened emotion, alterations of consciousness, or transcendence. Of course these are types of embodiment and as such may be partially explained in terms of the microrhythmic expressions of black grooves. That was covered above. Here I will focus on three new aspects. The literal and accelerated repetition of short rhythmic cells has been claimed to induce spatial and temporal disorientation in dancers and to prepare them for possession in Afro-religious ceremonies (Carneiro 1991). Specific buildups manipulating the dynamics, tempo, and layering of black grooves are also considered responsible for elevated emotional response (Attas 2011). Finally, in several traditions, people may link codified rhythms and songs to supernatural entities like African gods or spirits of ancestors (Cardoso 2006).

Repetition

Repetition is pervasive in music but holds a special place in groove-based musics, as it enables the creation of the layers that form composite ostinatos and support temporary departures for communicative and ornamental purposes. Repetition is featured in groove-based musics in very explicit ways.

For Monson the use of simultaneous but differing periodicities in the structure of ostinato with variations is not only a shared musical process among musics of the African diaspora, but also what facilitates music circulation within it (1999). Furthermore, she claims that it is possible to use aspects of repetition in black musics (e.g. particular ways to combine riffs) to understand some of the specific cultural complexities of the African diaspora including cultural hybridity, economic domination, and agency. In her work she criticizes negative views of repetition in Western modernist critical theory, where it has been associated with musical monotony, stasis, and lack of interest (Schuller 1989:253), or even with “industrial standardization, loss of individuality, military marching, and hence fascism” (Adorno 1990:61).

Most assessments—favorable or not—of African music, engage its repetitiveness. As a musical universal, repetition has been used as a parameter to analyze and classify music, sometimes for
the study of culturally informed expressions of that universality (Tenzer 2006 and Tenzer and Roeder 2011), other times adding value judgments like Kramer (1988) and Adorno (1941). Michael Tenzer proposed a model to classify musics of the world based on their periodicity with three categories including: 1) isoperiodicity, when strict repetition dominates; 2) sectional periodicity, when larger periodic structures appear; and 3) linear composition in periodic contexts, where repetition is harder to feel (2006). Tenzer classified two African derived cases as isoperiodic and sectionally periodic, and three pieces of art music from China, India, and Europe as linear (ibid). Jonathan Kramer characterized linear and circular musics as polar opposites using metaphors of movement and stasis (1988), and the much-criticized Adorno idealized a trend of Western 20th century art music—dodecaphony—as the freest, more sophisticated, and best suited for the expression of true individuality, mainly because of its avoidance of repetition (1941).

In recent studies grooves are no longer seen as merely repetitive, circular, static, or provoking mechanic and predictable responses. With the help of Christopher Hasty's processual approach to meter (1997), Robin Attas demonstrated that groove buildups, where periodic layers enter the groove consecutively, create a sense of intensification and forward motion towards a sectional boundary rendering “an intriguing combination... of linear and circular time” (2011:189). She also points out that although grooves may induce coordinated response, “individual expression is possible with additional responses such as specific and unique bodily motions and personal emotional responses tied to past experiences” (ibid:17).

**Buildups**

This connects with the second aspect of African grooves held responsible for enhancing emotional response. Buildups are common processes of musical intensification in grooves that generate sustained expectation and a sense of motion towards a goal. This is typically achieved by gradually adding periodic layers one by one to the groove, by breaking from a fixed pattern of the composite ostinato to phrases that augment the density, or by increasing tempo and dynamics.

**Codified Rhythms**

The third element associated with spirituality and particularly possession is the use of codified rhythms and songs. In *Ketu candomblé* ceremonies in Salvador drummers play specific *toques* and sing songs for each *orixá* that dancers recognize and respond to with energetic movements,
bodily gestures, and screams, eventually entering into trance (Cardoso 2006). Drawing on Rouget (1996), Cardoso argues that drummers can induce possession in dancers not because the rhythms or songs they play have any intrinsic musical element that unleashes the trance, but because they share with the dancers the codes of the message carried by drum rhythms and songs (ibid:238-239).

These musical qualities that ostensibly allow transcendence or other forms of embodied spiritual experience are present almost by definition in capoeira, candomblé and carnival music given their groove-based nature. Chapter six discusses the groove structure in the latter two including the techniques of layering repetitive and varying patterns, various forms of buildups, the symbology of codified rhythms, and the microtiming. In capoeira angola the case is not very different as the groove is formed by short repetitive cells called toques and berimbau players increase tension gradually towards a climax (e.g. when a dancer is hit) by augmenting the density of variations, by playing louder, and particularly by accelerating the tempo61 (p.c. Mestre Cobra Mansa, Salvador, Bahia, July 2009). Each toque is also associated with the spirit of the game. While toque de Angola is associated with slow, sad, introspective game, in toque jogo de dentro dancers are more playful, jumpy, and closer to each other (ibid). Ritual possession a la candomblé is not a feature of capoeira, but some dancers claim these toques can provoke a capoeira trance, an altered state of consciousness related to focused alert during the dance (De canio 2002, Diniz 2011).

Candomblé spirituality is thematized by capoeira adepts in many other ways. Many mestres are candomblé devotees and perform many candomblé related rituals for protection including the use of amulets, making offerings to their orixás, making signals at the foot of the berimbau before a game starts, singing for the orixás, and invoking axé in prayers and songs. For Larrain (2005), this emphasis on candomblé spirituality stems from a belief that both practices share African ancestry. For instance, the berimbau, like candomblé atabaques, is believed to carry the voice of African ancestors (ibid).

Other academic discourses connect capoeira to “African” spirituality, yet in a more abstract ways. Desch Obi (2008) claims that the use of physically inverted positions in capoeira (e.g.

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61 All these features are near universals in ritual performance, with or without possession.
hand stands) evidences the retention of a key West/Central African ancestral and spiritual concept called *kalunga* that links aspects of the natural and supernatural worlds. For Obi the perception of the Atlantic crossing by many African slaves was strongly influenced by the *kalunga* paradigm as they conceptualized the ocean as a bridge connecting the lands of the living and death. This bridge, which was believed to be crossed by ancestors walking with their feet up, gave hopes of return to slaves across the Americas. Obi argues that, through physical inversion, *capoeiristas* symbolically gain the ancestral and spiritual power required to return to Africa with honor (ibid). Although in a more abstract way, Obi uses the theme of spirituality to promote dignification and empowerment.

Carnival percussion ensembles strengthened their connection with *candomblé* for the same purpose as *capoeiristas*. *Afoxés*, for instance, appropriated *toque ijexá*, a groove linked to the *orixá Oxum* for street performances. Many of these groups are under the protection and spiritual guidance of specific *candomblé* houses. Such is the case of *bloco Ilê Aiyé*, which was founded by devotees of the *terreiro Ilê Axé Jitolu* and inaugurated its signature educational project inside this *candomblé* house in Salvador. Explicit references to *candomblé* in this group range from offerings to *orixás* (*despacho para exú*)

62 to song lyrics (“Que Bloco é Esse”) and public speeches (Canal Petrobras n.d.).

Although *escolas de samba* from Rio de Janeiro and their main groove, *samba duro*, emphasize racial and cultural mixture, their performances also reference African religiosity and Bahia. From the very beginnings of Rio's carnival (1930s) a section called *ala das baianas* was included. It concerns the *tias Baianas*, black Bahian ladies linked to *candomblé* who immigrated to Rio during the 19th century. *Sambistas* argue that *samba* was developed then, in an environment of official repression and in close proximity to Bahian *candomblé* (Vianna 1999). Here the theme of African religiosity is strategically performed by *carioca sambistas* in a Brazilian style representing nationhood, not to challenge the discourse of tri-ethnic heritage as *blocos afro do*, but to reassert the presence of one of the three components of the ethnic national mixture.

*Capoeira* groups and carnival associations assert their blackness and Africanness by emphasizing various types of African spirituality. This is why strengthening their connections with *candomblé*
has been central to their empowerment agendas. Nonetheless, this “sacralization” or “candomblé-ization” of secular black music often relies on dichotomous views that support primitivism. It reflects a desire to distance Afro-Brazilian music from Western secular music, which is perceived as lacking emotion and spirit.

**Theme 6: Emphasis on Tradition, Past, and Respect for the Ancestors**

The idea of tradition has a strange, mesmeric power in black political discourse. (Gilroy 1993:187)

Traditionalism and eclecticism are contrasting positions in contemporary debates about identity, culture, and politics of the black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993:100). The former view sees black music as the primary means to reproduce politically an ethno-racial essence of blackness. Afrocentrists and ethnic absolutists typically use a relationship of black music to tradition, cultural continuity, and the memory of an African past as a central argument to support their totalizing views (ibid). From this Afrocentric perspective tradition is seen as an element of black resistance to the intrusion of Western values and a dignified base to model modern black culture. Eclecticism and hybridity, on the other hand, represent pollution and impurity. Eclecticism sees black music as a cultural manifestation that is emblematic of the “processes of cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse and avoid capture by its agents” (ibid:2). Under this view, music hybridity and mixture are inescapable as they are inherent to cultural dynamics and do not necessarily prevent a musical product from “being used as a potent sign and symbol of racial authenticity” (ibid:107). Traditionalism here is seen as reductionist, simplistic, and thus insufficient to explain the role of black music in larger contexts.

In Bahia, a place populated by millions of African descendants and perceived as a diasporic center of black tradition, these contrasting positions may operate separately or together. Traditionalists, on one hand, stress the importance of preserving practices locally perceived as traditional like candomblé, capoeira, and samba de roda and advocate for modeling contemporary black culture over them. Non-traditionalists, on the other, believe that the new black culture in Bahia must also embrace modern international black cultural products like reggae, funk, soul, and hip-hop. Local musicians like Macambira claim that Bahian musicians, particularly drummers, are best in appropriating rhythms from other parts of the world (p.c. Mar.
For him blocos afro and popular music like axé music are ideal contexts to demonstrate one's creativity by making these mixtures (ibid). On the other hand, there is a strong emphasis on preservation in candomblé (Carvalho 1993:3). This was separately confirmed by Gabi and Macambira himself who agree that in candomblé the alteration of old drumming traditions threatens the efficacy of music in the ceremonies (p.c. Salvador May 2012). Drummers may act in one of those contexts or in both, as Gabi, Macambira, and many others do. Musicians in Salvador have flexible interpretations of the theme of traditionalism to reassert black empowerment interpreting the theme of traditionalism.

Traditionalism is related to the maintenance of past repertoires, instruments, performance practices, and techniques ostensibly associated with the history and culture of African descendants (p.c. Gabi Guedes, May 1, 2012). Having the oldest documented histories tracing to colonial times, candomblé, capoeira, and samba de roda are considered Afro-Bahian musics par excellence. Therefore, most of what is considered musically traditional in Afro-Bahian culture is related to them, particularly candomblé, the most idealized of them all.

This model of black tradition, which has inspired projects of musical re-Africanization in Bahia and across the diaspora, has, nonetheless, a long history of changes and internal struggles for authenticity. As Pares and Crook illustrate, a perceived superiority of the Ketu candomblé nation in Bahia and the diaspora led to important changes in candomblé traditions during the beginning of the 20th century. Many adepts of Angola and Jejê nations incorporated Ketu elements, some time seeking them in West Africa itself (Parés 2004:193). This view of the Ketu nation as the purest representatives of black tradition in Brazil has gradually changed. The Angola nation is now seen by black activists, musicians, and scholars as an equally valuable source of black tradition. Capoeira angola, for instance, was putatively re-Africanized since the 1940s, inspired by candomblé Angola (Röhrig 2005).

**Theme 7: Closeness to Nature**

In Latin America blackness is frequently associated with images of nature (Sansone 2004a). Danielsen (2006), Pinho (2010) and others have pointed out that nature usually opposes culture in Western discourse. The study of how this dichotomy is embodied, both externally (through physical appearance) and internally (through the “soul” or a supposed essence) by blacks in
Bahia has been sufficiently discussed (see Pinho 2010). Here I rather focus on the relationship of nature to spontaneity, minimal mediation or transformation, as opposed to organization, and planning. In a way, I thus focus on what Frith sees as the “unmediated” black physical response to African grooves.

Within primitivism, nature refers to the intrinsic qualities that an object or process develops on its own with minimal intervention by civilization or artificiality—in other words, what is more spontaneous and less obviously mediated by human consciousness. Typical examples are the world of the living things and the outdoors (e.g. animals, plants, forests, mountains, oceans), and the human body, emotions, and temperament. This contrasts with the planned and artificial, that which has been deliberately brought into being by human consciousness. Even though the line between these is not clear even at the extremes, the dichotomy helps to understand the effects of assuming black music as removed from the intervention of human minds and technologies.

Closeness to nature in the sense being distanced from technology should not be seen as the opposite of modernism for modernism has an ambiguous relationship with technology. On one hand, modernism affirms the power of human beings to transform their environment using practical experimentation, knowledge, or technology (Berman 1988:16) but on the other, high modernists questioned the use of technology because of its devastating effects in World War I, and a perceived collision between aesthetic introspection and technology (Danius 2002). By the same token, in discourses of black empowerment sometimes stress the theme of closeness to nature and sometimes challenge it.

But how do we interpret “nature” so that it can be used as a criterion of musical Africanness? Gabi Guedes and Macambira, two musicians from Salvador, provided a list of musical elements ostensibly related to nature: 1) an extensive use of the unamplified human voice and instruments hand-made out of “natural” materials like wood, leather, and vines; 2) flexible music structures and performance styles that allow the expression of spontaneous sentiment through improvisation; 3) reliance on human memory in learning, creating, performing, and storing musical repertoires; and 4) symbolism associating certain instruments with elements of nature (p.c. Gabi Guedes, April 2012 and Macambira, May 2012).
Not surprisingly, these ideas are neatly featured in the Bahian model black traditions: *candomblé, capoeira*, and *samba de roda*. *Capoeira angola* performances follow protocols, but the structure is flexible and allows for improvisation and spontaneity. The ritual begins with a song-type called *ladainha*, but its specific content and duration is up to the lead singer. Once physical games start, lead singers choose from a large repertoire of call-and-response songs and change them at will. The groove structure also allows rhythmic improvisation, especially for *berimbaus* players. Capoeiristas learn songs orally and are supposed to memorize them and encouraged to improvise verses in performance. There are no scores or written aids. Singing is central and there is never electronic mediation during performances. Instruments are mainly made out of local wood, vines, leather, and seeds.

*Berimbau*, the main instruments, are made out of an indigenous tree called *beriba* and are often referred to directly as *beriba or madeira* (wood). *Capoeiristas* assign many kinds of domestic uses to *beriba*, but the most noble is the construction of *berimbau*, as *capoeira* songs attest. The relationship of *berimbau* with a particular tree has special relevance for *capoeiristas* for three main reasons. First, *berimbau* are the leaders of the *bateria* and are to be played by *mestres* most of whom are *berimbau* luthiers themselves and thus understand better the mechanics of the instrument. Second, in certain circles they are believed to channel the voice of *capoeira* ancestors for which an instrument as “natural” as possible is better. And third, *berimbau* have come to symbolize the art and Afro-Bahian music as a whole, reinforcing a connection between African diasporic culture and nature.

Countless black grooves, however, elude and even seem to lean towards the inverse of my informant's characterizations. In Bob Marley's iconic reggae pieces electronic riffs and effects interact with amplified instruments built with synthetic materials. His songs were written beforehand and clearly structured in a typical song form that alternates verses with a refrain, sometimes with improvised electric guitar interludes played over fixed chord progressions. Although people recognize the indebtedness of Marley's grooves to American soul, funk, and R&B and the strong transformations he introduced to Afro-Jamaican music, few would challenge the *Africanness* of his music. But does it come from the fact that his music is perceived as “close to nature,” or from the appropriateness of its political message which elevated it to iconic status among black communities across the Atlantic? Although one could dig into Marley's music and
make arguments for references to nature in his lyrics and in the cover pictures of his albums, or more abstractly in the way music was performed (say featuring Thompson's aesthetic of the cool, 2011) that compensate for artificiality (i.e. an excessive use of technology in music production), the reality is that there is a high degree of disjuncture between Marley's grooves and my informants' associations of “nature” and African music.

The primitivist interpretation of black culture and music as removed from civilization and modernity is in fact problematized by black activists and institutions themselves in Salvador. Referring to their partnership with Orkestra Rumpilezz, Ailton Ferreira, the director of the Municipal Secretary of Reparation of Salvador (SEMUR), a governmental institution created to “promote affirmative policies and reparation for black communities” (p.c. Salvador, Bahia, May 24, 2012), stated that “We promote the mixture of modernity and ancestry. Respectfully we take advantage of the best they offer. There is no clash. We can be a terreiro de candomblé, afoxé and internet. We can also be twitter and much more” (ibid). In addition, the Cultural Fundation of the State of Bahia (FUNCEB) offers since 2012 a music program for the study of ancestral Afro-Bahian music that emphasizes the use of tools coming from contemporary technologies. These institutional efforts to integrate modern technologies into the traditional model of Afro-Bahian music challenge the view of many local musicians regarding the theme of closeness to nature, but they compensate by emphasizing their symbolic relationship with candomblé.
The introduction of music forms perceived as foreign into the Brazilian cultural scene reconfigured local, national, diasporic, and regional identities, particularly during the second half of the 20th century. Jazz, perceived by some in Bahia as a music representing the other due to its use of European harmony and brass instrumentation, and by others, as a distant relative because of its African American roots, offers an excellent example of the ambiguities of drawing clear cut lines between what is perceived as local and foreign. This chapter discusses the impact of North American jazz and its cultural baggage on the production of locality through black music in Salvador. To this end, I will first review how postcolonial theories may help to address the difficulties of defining the categories “us” and “them” in modernity and postmodernity, particularly in the realm of music representation. This is followed by a brief outline of the history and politics of jazz's adoption in Brazil and Salvador, the local and national perceptions of jazz, and the attributes emphasized or downplayed in its indigenization. Last, I study how certain combinations including North American jazz, European art music, and black music serve to legitimize what it is being hybridized.

The Difficulties of “Us” and “Them”
Identity is based on a sort of difference that is creatively constructed by individuals who negotiate between chosen and received social labels, according to their socio-political position, needs, and possibilities. The challenge with identities is that: 1) they always imply negotiations between self-imposed and enforced labels; 2) there is also negotiation, and possible conflict, between individual and collective identities; 3) several contradictory identities may coexist in the same individual; 4) individuals arbitrarily foreground certain identities according to their convenience; and 5) people change the way they see and identify themselves and each other over time. However, this does not mean that a person cannot see some aspects of his/her identity as fixed. For instance, a person born and raised in Brazil by “Brazilian” parents may see his/her Brazilianness as a more rigid, essential or even inescapable aspect of identity. Thus, states of both “authentic” and “essential” identity and more fluid postmodern relations of desire and proto-identification coexist in many individuals, producing a state of fragmentary and multiple identifications (Born et al. 2000:33).
This problematization of identity is fundamental to understanding how musical practices and ideas express and construct the categories of “us” and “them” in Salvador, a crucial node of the black Atlantic located in a former European colony. Since “African” and black Atlantic identities have been largely constructed in opposition to white “European” or “Western” identities, largely through primitivist discourses, it is useful reviewing the ways in which otherness has been negotiated between the “West” and other former European colonies. To this end I discuss: 1) how exoticized views of an often racialized other manifest themselves in two “Western” musical spaces, namely art music and World Music; and 2) how two particular others of the “West”—Brazil and the black Atlantic—negotiate and construct their own categories of otherness.

The Other in Western Art Music

In Western Music and its Others (2000), Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh examine how popular, Western and non-Western folk, and non-Western art musics have been represented in 19th and 20th century Western art music through appropriation or imaginative figuration. They explain that in their relationship to the other, modernist composers held two contrasting positions, the first taking active interest in various aesthetic properties of musics of other time and space for experimentation and innovation. This turn to other musics was motivated by a “desire to reinvigorate the present by reference to principles of earlier musics” (e.g. neo-classicisms of Stravisnky and Hindemith) or curiosity and fascination with foreign sounds, rhythms, musical forms, and ideas (e.g. Copland, Gershwin, Bartok, or Vaughn Williams).

The second position is represented by composers who were engaged in the expansion and eventual break from tonality, particularly by Schoenberg's serialism. Serialism and other atonal systems strived for an absolute and autonomous aesthetic rigour which refused the representation of other musics. Given that most popular music is tonal or modal, serialist principles prescribe an aesthetic that is antithetical to these other musics. As for how the ideas of the other evolved among modernists of the first position, Bartok's case is instructive. In the same volume, Julie Brown explains how Bartok's conceptions of gypsy and peasant musics evolved in his Hungarian nationalist cultural project. Initially he idealized an “authentic” peasantry and contrasted it with a degenerate and “impure” gypsy culture because of the presence of oriental elements (Brown 2000:120). For Brown this racist position was “allied to a progressive Western modernity and progressive nationalistic elements, which must be purged of putatively non-Western, antimodern,
inauthentic marks of Hungarian gypsy music” (Born et al. 2000:14). As Bartok recognized the existence of hybridisms in peasant music, “his classification shifted to an opposition between the 'bad hybridity' of gypsy music versus the 'good hybridity' of peasant music” (ibid). Later on with the threat of Americanization of the 1930s, Bartok came to value gypsy music as “authentic” Hungarian urban popular music (ibid:15).

Born and Hesmondhalgh also explain that postmodern thought of the late 1960s and 1970s questioned the hierarchies of musical value and authority of earlier modernism. For these authors the dominant ideas of postmodernism are: 1) old divisions between high, low, art, and popular culture, the commercial and the autonomous in culture, are now redundant and superseded; 2) there is no distinction between the economic and institutional foundations of commercial and art musics; 3) an unparalleled drive to hybridize intensifies aesthetic crossovers between popular, non-Western, and art musics; and 4) this cross-cultural empathy and its aesthetic “reconciliation” equalizes musics of formerly unequal status and power, and erases erstwhile differences of legitimacy (ibid:18-19). Nonetheless, Born and company argue that these ideas are deceptive and that cultural postmodernism as expressed by Western art composers “can be seen as an ideology of a cultural system that conceals domination and inequality” (ibid). In the same volume John Corbett points out that John Cage's experimentalism, conceived as emblematic of posmodernity, is not free of modernist representations of the other as “exoticisms and orientalisms continue to proliferate and mutate in the imaginaries and aesthetics of many contemporary art musics of West and East” (ibid:20)

The postcolonial critique, inaugurated by Edward Said's orientalism, has been fundamental to the study of Western notions of the other. Orientalism (1978), about Western depictions of the “East,” is an analysis of colonial discourses and their contemporary subtle legacies. Said argues that the otherness of the “East” was systematically reinforced in 19th century European literary texts through images of exoticism and primitivism. Musicologists inspired by Said interpreted these images of the other as strategies of 19th century Western composers to proclaim European superiority and to suggest the weakness of the “East” when faced with European might and efficiency. Locke (1991) and Taruskin (1998) contend that the “East” is constructed in 19th century orientalist operas63 as mysterious, dark-skinned, deeply emotional, brutal, tribal, blindly

63 The analysis is based on Saint-Saens's Samson et Dalila (Locke 1991) and Borodin's Prince Igor (Taruskin 1998).
obedient, savage, appealing but dangerous, erotic, exotic, hedonist, decadent, and ultimately as a
degenerate counterpart through the use of “pentatonicism and other unusual or purposefully
constrained musical procedures” (Born et al. 2000:8-9). With their rejection of simplistic binaries
of hegemony and resistance, postcolonial authors have contributed to the deconstruction of
Western art music's representations of the oriental and, by extension, of the exotic or primitive
colonized other.

The Other in (the Discourse of) World Music

In “The Discourse of World Music” (2000), Simon Frith explains that during the 1980s, sounds
yet unclassifiable in Western terms began to be repackaged and offered to “Western” audiences
as an exotic product with which they could have the more real, authentic, and unmediated
experiences that “Western” civilized (and corrupt) popular musics could not provide. Music
producers exploited images of exoticism associated by “Western” audiences with the sounds of
the other (i.e. the “non-Western”) and redefined them in positive terms of authenticity in clear
reference to “the long European romantic celebration of the native (the peasant and the African)
as more real (because more natural) than the civilized'Western' “ (Frith 2000:308). A decade
later the World Music phenomenon raised questions of musical appropriation and cultural
exploitation among scholars and art critics while globalization's increasing interconnectivity
evidenced the shortcomings of authenticity. As part of their commercial strategy, music
producers adapted their discourses asserting that World Music offered a new site where all sorts
of hybrid identity could be performed and celebrated. Not surprisingly, positions of these music
producers during the 1980s and beyond, defended fusion and contributed to positive views of the
exotic other. However, these views relied in two different discourses: primitivism and the
celebration of hybridity.

Frith continues explaining that the role of World Music in the globalized world was weighted in
academic circles with contrasting positions ranging from views of loss of referentiality and
difference in postmodernity (Erlmann 1996) to optimistic views of World Music's hybridity as
the necessary expression of the postmodern inherently hybrid condition (Slobin 1992 and Taylor
1997). This last perspective, the one I stress in this dissertation, is not without problems as I
explained with the help of Born and company, especially when it is assumed that hybridity erases
differences of power and prestige.
According to Charles Keil, this renovated emphasis on fusion has impacted musicking in new ways:

There is another stylistic phenomenon found around the world these days that... is the spread of a symphonic or bolshoi model—the “big unison sound”—being applied to local traditions in order to make them competitive as “high popular culture” or “dignified...” in western and global markets. Very subjectively, that is how I see and hear it; a primal other meets the west and becomes “us,” a big orchestra and/or chorus with a conductor. (Keil n.d.)

As will become evident towards the end of this chapter, Keil's observation partially applies to Salvador, a place where local music traditions and global musical forms have been combined to dignify the former. These combinations have also been strategically used in this city to augment the commercial appeal of hybrid musics (e.g. axé music bands like Banda Eva). While Keil's suggestion that with these fusions the primal other (Afro-Bahians) wants to become “Western” can be interpreted as an example of cultural assimilation, I prefer to see it aligned with one of the sides of black double consciousness, namely, that in modernism black Atlantic identities strive to be “European.” However, Keil's quote crucially misses the other side of double consciousness: that black Atlantic identities also (and simultaneously) strive to be “African.” The analysis of Orkestra Rumpilezz's politics of music creation and reception demonstrates that the effect of mixing “higher”, often perceived as “Western”, and local black musics is far from a Westernizing one.

The Other's Others: Samba in Brazil

Now it is time to explore how former colonial others construct their own categories of otherness. In The Mystery of Samba (1999) Hermano Vianna discusses the transition of samba, a quintessential national emblem in Brazil, from being an outcast and suppressed music mixing “African” and “European” elements to triumphing in Rio's carnival, and in radio, and to being used to promote national unity across the country in the 1930s. He argues that the glorification of samba was accompanied by changes in the way racial mixture was seen during the First Republic (1889-1930). According to Vianna, during this period racial mixture also transitioned from stigmatization to celebration, to the point of becoming policy of the Estado Novo in 1937. The prevalent evolutionist view of the turn of the century that proclaimed European (and white)
superiority over black, indigenous, and other mixed groups promoted a more Europeanized Brazilian identity. The central argument of Vianna's book is that a series of encounters between black musicians, intellectuals, classically trained composers, and other elite members of society gradually fostered more positive views of racial mixture that paved the way for samba's emergence. Gilberto Freyre, one the most important social commentators of the epoch, wrote “Our strength is in the mixture” and “race mixing is the guarantor of Brazil's special cultural identity” (1936). Celebration of mixture in this period was accompanied by primitivist discourses of Indianism and Africanism that, while celebrating these particular heritages, opposed Eurocentric discourses of nationhood. However, the type of mixture that prevailed for Brazilian national identity focused only on whites and blacks, largely excluding Indians and other immigrant groups.

Vianna showed that throughout a history of encounters Brazilian intellectuals, black musicians, classically trained composers, and other elite members of society negotiated official symbols of nationhood by reassessing the ways in which European, Afro-Brazilian, and Amerindian cultural contributions were seen. In defining what should be “truly” Brazilian it was necessary to take distance from the Portuguese “European” identity but as it happened—rather ironically—in many other Latin American nations, this European identity became simultaneously a new other and an ingredient of the new hybrid national identity. By the same token, the fact that Afro-Brazilians and Indians became integral to the tri-ethnic discourse of nationhood, did not mean that they stopped completely being seen as others.

64 Indianismo is a Brazilian literary and artistic movement that reached its peak during the 19th century and which romanticized the Brazilian Indian as the symbol of the new nation. Since Brazilians still held resentment over the Portuguese for centuries of colonization, and blacks were considered barbaric and immoral, Indianismo artists and writers preferred taking inspiration in the Brazilian indians for their nationalist works. Partly inspired in the “noble savage” myth, Indianismo is based on primitivist views of Brazilian indians as pure and living in harmony with nature. Major proponents include José de Alencar, Antônio Gonçalves Dias, Gonçalves Magalhães, Victor Meirelles, Rodolfo Amoedo, and Antônio Parreiras.

65 Hermano Vianna points out that during the 1920s Gilberto Freyre and other intellectuals were writing positively about black culture with the express interest to “valorize the Brazil that defied European models” (1999:9). Vianna analyzes “On the Valorization of Things Black,” an article written by Gilberto Freyre in 1926 where he asserts that “in Rio there is a movement to assert the value of things black” (Freyre in Vianna 1999:9). Freyre claimed that this movement revealed a willingness of Brazil’s elite to admit black influences (ibid). Vianna sees Freyre’s article returning to a 19th century “theory of two antagonistic ‘Brazils’ . . . with a stronger need to valorize the Brazil that defied European models” (ibid). In advancing positive ideas about Brazil's African heritage “Freyre declared Brazil a ‘phony and ridiculous’ Europhile version that ‘hid’ the real Brazil, personified for him by black musicians” (Vianna 1999:9).
The African Diaspora's Other

Debate about musical exchange between the “West” and the African diaspora has been particularly vigorous due to the global popularity of black musics and the hegemony of Western art music in academic and intellectual circles, as experienced against the backdrop of the legacy of colonialism and slavery (Born et al. 2000:22). In regard to the seven themes introduced in Chapter 3 I pointed out that while black interpretations of these themes helped to build more positive representations of black culture, they did not always contest primitivist discourse. This resonates with another orientalist argument: that European constructions of the other have shaped the ways in which the orient has constructed itself (Said 1978). In Born's volume, Richard Middleton calls this strategy “deformation of mastery” and argues that it may work as a “counterculture of modernity” as it infuses former primitivist themes with a sort of ethno-philosophical subversive aura.

Snead's (1984) and Gates' (1988) vindications of the concept of repetition in black culture as the base of an aesthetic theory that challenges the aesthetics and teleological thinking of “Western” rationalism are examples of this philosophy. Gilroy's double consciousness also tells us that modern black identities are inspired by these internalized primitivist notions and by internalized values of European hegemonic culture—the former masters. Analogously, one could argue that the massive appropriation of black culture by the mainstream and a gradual “erosion of European art music as the measure of all things” (Deveaux 1991:553) has provoked reassessments of “Western” Euro-American white identities that allows them to integrate aspects of the black Atlantic other. The narrative of the rise of jazz from its “folky” black beginnings to the status of art music illustrates evolving negotiations on the perception of otherness among black and white North Americans.

In his article “Constructing the Jazz Tradition” (1991) Scott Deveaux argues that the narrative of jazz continuity that connects its diverse stylistic developments throughout the 20th century into a unified tradition that managed to preserve a type of “essence” was instrumental to its legitimation as “America's classical music.” This implied downplaying other versions of its history that stressed stylistic ruptures from that supposed essence (e.g. the bebop or free jazz movements), de-emphasizing its African American roots because “to be accepted as a kind of classical music, jazz had to be understood as a music that had outgrown its origins in a particular ethnic subculture and
could now be thought of as the abstract manipulation of style and technique” (Deveaux 1991:546), but rather paradoxically “openly acknowledging its debt not to Europe, but to Africa” (ibid:526). For Deveaux the fact that some aesthetic elements identified with black American culture had to be minimized or left in the path of jazz's “evolutionary progress” (e.g. dance, spontaneity, informality, and rhythmic excitement) to conform to the European standards against which it was measured, did not mean erasing all connections with black culture, as the narrative of jazz continuity required a primitive African origin to begin with and an (at least partially) “African” essence to be carried on by the tradition.

But scholars, art critics and institutions were not the only ones responsible for the emergence of jazz to the status of art music in the U.S. Throughout the 20th century many black jazz musicians and black artists contributed to raise the status of jazz. Black artists and intellectuals of the so-called Harlem Renaissance for instance, challenged the pervading racism and stereotypes of the 1920s to promote black pride, progressive politics and integration through production of literature, art, and music. A new way of playing the piano developed during this period called the Harlem stride style, which helped traditional jazz big bands to gain prestige as piano was considered an elite instrument. With this modification, jazz became more attractive to wealthier blacks and to whites, contributing to its eventual national popularity and prestige. Connected with this cultural movement were pianists and composers Duke Ellington and James P. Johnson, who sought some degree of ethno-racial uplift and “high” culture legitimization through their concert works (Howland 2009). John Howland explains that the hybrid compositions of Ellington and Johnson blending concert music, jazz, and popular music “were intended to be read as 'serious American music' (where 'American music' is defined as African American jazz and popular music) rather than works which were direct extensions of the European classical tradition.”

In the same vein, Charlie Parker recorded Charlie Parker with Strings (1949), an album of ballads arranged for a mixed group of jazz and string orchestra. Parker's longstanding desire to perform with a string section came both from artistic striving and from his interest in engaging what later became known as the Third Stream, a new kind of music synthesizing jazz and

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66 The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural movement centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York that spanned the 1920s. Also known as the "New Negro Movement," it was characterized by an overt racial pride that came to be represented in the idea of the New Negro, who through intellect and production of literature, art, and music could challenge the pervading racism and stereotypes to promote progressive politics, and racial and social pride. The creation of art and literature would serve to "uplift" the race.
classical elements as opposed to merely incorporating a string section into performance of jazz standards. During the same period, Parker and other black jazz musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie and John Coltrane introduced radical stylistic changes to jazz performance that contributed to its legitimization. Striving for artistic virtuosity (e.g. faster tempi, asymmetrical phrasing, intricate melodies, unusual harmony progressions, instrumental virtuosity), these musicians transformed swing jazz into bebop, a more “serious” concert music that contributed to raise its status.

In its hybridity, jazz reflects and contributes to the construction of national, white, and black American identities. The rise of jazz to the status of high culture was the result of negotiations within American society that settled their dispute at an intermediate position between their aesthetic ideas of “Europe” and “Africa.” Apart from free jazz—an avant-garde development of the 1960s analogous to Cage's experimentalist movement, and characterized by intentional disregard of conventions such as popular song forms, Western intonation systems, or the explicit stating of a dance beat—jazz retained aesthetics aspects of the groove (repetition, swing, improvisation, and so on) that primitivists have attributed to black music since the 19th century. Simultaneously, jazz gained some of the autonomy that modernist serialists strived for, increased its harmonic sophistication following European post-Romantic aesthetics, and got institutionalized into the North American formal educational system next to European art music. In short, the American jazz scene was legitimized conforming to “Western” values but maintaining the aesthetics of the groove which in this context are associated with black music.

**Jazz in Brazil and Salvador**

As it did in most Latin American and Caribbean countries, the North American jazz big band tradition of the swing era penetrated Brazil between the 1920s and 1930s. It first influenced a local tradition of brass and percussion military bands introduced by Portuguese colonizers and present since at least the 17th century (Kiefer 1977). These influences first became evident in the cosmopolitan cities of the south, particularly in the capital of the time, Rio de Janeiro, and eventually spread throughout the country.

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67 Ingrid Monson points out that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, “just as [jazz] musicians were perfecting their relationship with modernism and most likely to declare the autonomy and transcendence of their art, they were simultaneously most likely to find themselves buffeted by the political forces around them, both, domestic and international” (2008:6). For Monson, black jazz musicians had to negotiate between their artistic ambitions and politics of the civil rights movement to make a living in the music industry.
In her Ph.D. dissertation “Mais ‘Coisas’ sobre Moacir Santos, ou os Caminhos de um Músico Brasileiro” (More ‘Coisas’ about Moacir Santos or the Path of a Brazilian Musician) (2010), Adriana Ernest Dias points out that brass bands known as jázis or jazz-bands were created across Brazil after the end of the First World War, a period when popular music from elite ballrooms and theatres began to be recorded and aired to broader audiences (2010:47). According to music journalist José Ramos Tinhorão, this period was characterized by a decline of “Europeization” and the beginning of an “Americanization” in Brazilian music (Tinhorão in Dias 2010:47-8). He adds that the name jazz-band was adopted by various types of musical groups in Brazil that were fascinated by the type of modernity brought by the growing American consumer industry (ibid).

Dias describes these jazz-bands as

musical groups differing from philharmonic orchestras basically in their repertoire, formation, and social function. Philharmonic orchestras played a more civic repertoire, in more solemn occasions like parades commemorating historic dates, and in many cases, without remuneration. The jázis, as they were pronounced in the northeastern Portuguese accent, played a repertoire of foxtrot, maxixe, waltzes, and baiões, in events promoted by radio including dancing parties at clubs and other social events. They [jazz-bands] emerged as professional alternatives for musicians. They were composed by a smaller number of musicians [than philharmonics] who were generally organized in sections of three saxophones, three trumpets, two trombones, trap-set, banjo, guitar, and percussion. (Dias 2010:47)

The much-celebrated Pixinguinha was one of the first musicians to integrate jazz aesthetics and instrumentation into Brazilian popular music during the 1920s. Pixinguinha’s contact with jazz big-bands while touring in Paris in the 1920s with Os Oito Batutas, an iconic Brazilian music group from Rio de Janeiro, had a great impact on the carioca musician resulting in the incorporation of jazz influences in the execution of their choros such as the use of saxophones, trumpets, and more complex harmonies (Queiroz 2010:30). Many other Brazilian composers like Severino Araújo, Radamés Gnattali, Garoto, Laurindo de Almeida followed Pixinguinha’s footsteps in arranging Brazilian frevos, choros, and sambas in the style of jazz bands making

68 Frevo is a carnival music-dance style typical of the State of Pernambuco in the Brazilian Northeast.
the first contributions to the indigenization of jazz in Brazil (ibid).

Jazz Becomes Bossa Nova

By the 1940s jazz exposure in Rio de Janeiro and other cities increased via radio broadcasts, access to commercial recordings, and visits of North American jazz musicians. Roosevelt's “Good Neighbor” Policy (1933-1945) encouraged cultural and economic exchanges between the U.S. and Latin American countries and resulted in significant mutual exposure of Brazilian and North American jazz musicians (Perrone et al. 2001:12). Reactions to these exchanges were mixed coloured by the political environment of the Vargas Era (1930-1945), which promoted exacerbated nationalism. Initially some feared that jazz influences would threat the “purity” of native Brazilian styles. This is why Pixinguinha and other early jazz enthusiasts were accused of corrupting Brazilian choro. Later on, people focused more on positive aspects of this influence as many musicians worked towards the indigenization of the style. This led to the raise of the world-acclaimed version of Brazilian jazz: bossa nova. Queiroz cites a long list of notable bossa nova precursors including Radames Gnattali, Garoto, Laurindo de Almeida, Dick Farney, Nora Ney, Tito Madi, Luiz Bonfá, Moacir Santos, Dorymal Caymmi, and Johnny Alf who appropriated jazz harmonies and techniques and used them to explore new interpretative and compositive styles. These musicians inspired the creation of a jazz/bossa circuit of performers at the affluent Rio de Janeiro's Zona Sul, a neighborhood and touristic destination in the South of the city.

The proper inauguration of bossa nova was marked by the release of the album Chega de Saudade (1959) which featured the style's foundational trio: the guitar and voice of João Gilberto, Tom Jobim's compositions, and Vinicius de Morais' lyrics. Although bossa nova gained great international attention that same year thanks to Marcel Camus' film “Orfeu Negro”, featuring Jobim's and Bonfá's compositions, the definitive establishment of bossa nova as a distinct form of Brazilian jazz occurred on U.S. soil thanks to the collaborations of Gilberto, Jobim, Bonfá, and other Brazilians with American jazzman Stan Getz during the early 1960s. Their more influential productions were two concerts at the Carnegie Hall in New York in 1962 and 1964 and the

69 Choro is Portuguese derived music form with Afro-Brazilian influences developed in Rio de Janeiro at least since the 19th century (Vianna 1999).
70 This recorded concert (Bossa Nova at Carnegie Hall) marked the international debut of key bossa nova musicians like João Gilberto and introduced bossa nova to American audiences as the new Brazilian version of jazz. It featured Stan Getz and Lalo Schifrin along with the leading Brazilian bossa nova figures of the time: Miltinho Banana, Luiz Bonfá, Ico Castro-Neves, Oscar Castro-Neves, Carmen Costa, Chico Feitosa, Joâo Gilberto, Tom Jobim, Ana Lucia, Carlos Lyra, Gary McFarland, Sérgio Mendes, Roberto Menescal, José Paulo, Roberto Ponte,
album Getz/Gilberto (1964). This sparked interest in the recording industry and in jazz artists in general, leading to the so-called bossa nova boom (1961-1965), which brought several musicians to Brazilian stages (Dizzy Gillespie, Quincy Jones, Paul Winter, Sarah Vaughan, Nat King Cole, Billy Eckstine, and Charlie Byrd), and put many American-produced jazz-bossa nova fusion albums on radio stations and music stores (e.g. Quincy Jones, Cannoball Aderley, Charlie Byrd and Stan Getz).

A Bahian Style of Jazz
As mentioned, brass jazz-bands were formed across Brazil starting in the 1920s. Salvador was no exception. Like swing bands in the U.S. (and perhaps to a greater extent) these groups were linked to social dance and in the Bahian case, competed for economic survival with other bands like gafieiras, military and police bands, as well as other groups more spontaneously formed (Queiroz 2010:55). One such group was the Red Stars Jazz, which played in popular celebrations throughout the 1950s (ibid).

This jazz scene, mainly linked to social dance, was greatly impacted in the late 1950s and early 1960s by the jazz/bossa scene of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Although the first bossa-inspired trios of piano, bass, and trap set were formed in Salvador during the 1960s, Queiroz argues that it was not until the 1970s when local musicians started to experiment with jazz in a more systematic manner (2010:64). This transitional period could be compared with the changes introduced to jazz by John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and others during the 1940s and 1950s to transform it into a more prestigious art form. Local musicians were interested in expanding their improvisatory techniques and in experimenting with modern sounds. The School of Music of the Federal University of Bahia (EM-UFBA) has been the most important center of study for those interested in erudite and vanguard music in Salvador (ibid:65). However, musicians also sought jazz training in foreign schools, particularly at Berklee College of Music (eg. Sergio Couto, Thomas Gruetzmacher, and Zeca Freitas). Under the repressive military

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71 This concert, held on Oct. 9, 1964 followed the success of the first record, Getz/Gilberto. It was recorded and released that same year under the name Getz/Gilberto #2. It featured Getz (sax), Gilberto (guitar and voice), Gary Burton (vibraphone), Gene Cherico (bass) and Joe Hunt (drums).

72 The album Getz/Gilberto epitomized the marriage of jazz and bossa nova as it featured two of the creators of the style (Jobim and Gilberto) next to Stan Getz, the American jazzman more strongly identified with bossa nova. The album won three Grammies (1965) and stayed in top radio lists for over seventy weeks, being only overshadowed by the Beatles.
dictatorship (1964-1985) art forms which did not comply with official nationalistic aesthetics (e.g. samba, choro) faced limited official support. Places like the Instituto Cultural Brasil-Alemanha (ICBA) in Salvador served as alternative venues and centers of study for musicians interested in European vanguard and free jazz.73

As in the jazz/bossa circles of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, in Salvador a repertoire of bossa novas and other Brazilian tunes began to be treated as jazz standards by instrumentalists. This made improvisation both desired and necessary for instrumentalists who made their living playing and arranging popular music (Queiroz 2010:40). A seminal jazz workshop sponsored by the ICBA in 1976 met some of the local needs for improvisatory methods. Guests Victor Assis, a jazz saxophonist from Rio de Janeiro trained at Berklee College of Music, and German jazz guitarist Volker Kriegel taught ways to solo over harmonic progressions and the usefulness of licks and patterns as improvisatory devices to a group of musicians who were already trying to decipher the sounds of Miles Davis and John Coltrane intuitively (ibid). Their teachings impressed local musicians. Roland Schaffner, the director of the ICBA, believed that such types of events would help local musicians to develop a “Bahian style of jazz” (ibid).

Queiroz credits three groups as the pioneers of jazz in this epoch: A Banda Do Companheiro Mágico (1974), Sexteto do Beco (1978), and Raposa Velha (1980). Their members were mostly trained at the EM-UFBA and, at times, abroad. They were avid devotees of Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Weather Report, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, and Hermeto Pascoal. They were interested in Brazilian rhythms but also in modernism, European vanguardism, the serialism of the post-Schoenberg era, and free jazz. Zeca Freitas, a member of Raposa Velha, declared that they embraced free jazz because it was the “craziest” thing to do in those days, musically speaking (ibid:93).

In Queiroz’s eyes these three bands opened the stage for a vibrant movement that continued experimenting and indigenizing jazz in Salvador. The movement gained popularity during the 1980s thanks to the Instrumental Music Festival of Bahia but suffered a relative decline with the advent of carnaval-associated trio eletrico and axé music in the 1990s. As Jeff Packman (2011) explained, many musicians had to compromise their desire to experiment with “sophisticated”

73 Letieres Leite described the ICBA as “a point of confluence of instrumental music from around the world” (Leite in Ramos 2012).
Brazilian music, jazz, and other modernist sounds, to make a living in commercial *pagode* and *axé music* bands. Letieres Leite, the director of Orkestra Rumpilezz, performed and arranged in the *axé music* circuit for many years before settling into his *jazz-candomblé-samba reggae* fusion project.\(^7\)

The project *Jazz MAM* (later called *JAM no MAM*) has been a focal point for local and visiting jazz musicians in Salvador since the 1990s. It has also been an alternative venue for musicians playing in commercial circles who want to experiment with jazz and also gain prestige among their colleagues. The project began in 1993 when drummer Ivan Huol organized jam sessions at the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) of Bahia from. This first phase was closed in 2001 and reinstalled in 2007 as *JAM no MAM* by Huol at the new MAM location at Av. Contorno in Salvador. On a weekly basis a house band formed by well trained jazz musicians, many of whom teach music at a university level or play at the most prestigious orchestras of the city (e.g. Symphonic Orchestra of Bahia and Orkestra Rumpilezz), perform jazz and Brazilian standards as well as arrangements by local musicians. The house band instrumentation used by the base band is similar to that of Latin jazz bands, including a brass section typically with a trumpet, a saxophone (or two), and a trombone, a rhythm section of piano, electric guitar, bass, and trap set, and percussion like congas, bongos, timbales, shakers, and occasionally *agogós* and *atabaques*.

In an interview with Gislene Ramos, Letieres Leite praises jazz’s flexibility. He believes that jazz can be adapted to most world music contexts. He asserted “There is Indian jazz, Japanese Jazz, Eurojazz, Cuban Jazz, and Latin Jazz. In Bahia, [there are] artists making jazz based on the information of our Afro-Bahian culture” (Ramos 2012). For Leite the characteristic flavor that jazz takes in Bahia is thus provided by Afro-Bahian music.

**Perceptions of Jazz in Brazil and Bahia**

The influence of jazz in Rio de Janeiro up to the 1960s was seen both as a threat and an opportunity. To a certain extent this also applied to Salvador, but today the picture gets complicated because of the increasing importance given to blackness since the 1970s. Despite the prevalent perception of jazz “as fully resistant to Western hegemony” (Monson 2000:1), the American jazz scene was legitimized through the internalization of “Western” values, such as its

\(^7\) After I interviewed Leite in his house in Salvador in April 27, 2012, his mother expressed that having a band like Rumpilezz had been Leite’s dream since he began playing music in the 1980s.
incorporation into the formal educational system. The use of music scores, complex harmonies, and brass instruments contributed to its perception in Bahia as “erudite” music and ultimately to its “foreignness.” Nonetheless, some prefer to see it as a closer other (or perhaps a “distant us”) because of its Afro diasporic roots (Sandra Lima, p.c. May 14, 2012), a familiarity with the style acquired through a long history of mixture with local popular musics (Letieres Leite, p.c. April 27, 2012), and its improvisational aspect, considered akin to the ability of local percussionists to create as they perform (Gabi Guedes, p.c. May 11, 2012).

Interest in jazz in Salvador during the 1970s was due to a group of musicians who wanted to experiment mixing local musics with the avant-garde sounds of Europe and North America. Discourses of musical Africanness were somewhat irrelevant for them as their attention was more focused in developing new techniques and approaches than in the politics surrounding music. Said differently, Bahian jazz musicians of the epoch such as Sergio Couto were not particularly interested in the rhythmic, percussive, spiritual, traditional (i.e. its old repertoire), or participatory aspects of jazz, or in its connection with nature, or the black body (i.e. dance). Nor were they necessarily interested in the politics of the African diaspora in general. Instead, they focused their studies on aspects of jazz perceived as erudite, foreign—such as its harmonic language with its formulaic chord sequences, chord extensions, scales, and modes—as they were key for the study of solo techniques. So, too, was the adoption of song forms that allowed the alternation of precomposed materials with solos. It was only later that the “Africanness” or “blackness” of jazz became relevant for Bahian musicians and audiences.

Queiroz documented opinions of local musicians in Salvador attesting to jazz’s integral place in today’s Brazilian popular instrumental music, particularly its improvisatory aspect. Saxophonist Andre Becker (a member of Rumpilezz) claims that while not indispensable, “jazz knowledge helps Brazilian instrumentalists to better improvise.” Pianist Sergio Couto says that “what is essential about jazz in Brazil is improvisation, not its repertoire.” He thinks of jazz as an approach, a way to make music where the performer has a creative role. For him improvisational techniques associated with local music styles are limited when compared to those offered by jazz. He contends that while improvisation in choro is a variation that stays close to the reference melody, in jazz you study the harmonic progression and depart from the melody until you can no longer recognize it. For saxophonist Rowney Scott (member of Rumpilezz) a show of
instrumental music in Salvador features pre-composed tunes with improvised solos in the middle and this reflects the jazz influence too. And for trumpeter Joatan Nascimento (another member of Rumpilezz), instrumental music in Brazil solidified in the 1960s with the fusion of jazz and *samba*.

In an article published at Portal A Tarde, one of the most prominent newspapers in Salvador, various local jazz musicians were interviewed for the celebration of the “Day of Jazz” on April 30th, 2012. Most lamented the low popularity of jazz in Salvador. Joatan Nascimento for instance declared:

> For Brazilian musicians, particularly from Bahia, it is difficult to assimilate the cultural values of North American jazz because they come from a different culture. We live in a very strong and dominating mass culture in Salvador. We, the musicians who like to play jazz, have become warriors defending a practice that would completely disappear if we do not do it. (Ramos 2012)

Letieres Leite believes that there is a *jazzfobia* or phobia for jazz among many musicians in Salvador because they “consider it too difficult” (ibid). Vandex, a Bahian jazz saxophonist elaborates this point: “jazz is sometimes very distant of popular language because its has a very sophisticated musical dimension that makes it hard to listen to and understand” (ibid).

Another complaint by Nascimento and Leite has to do with the way “erudite” musicians perceive jazz. Leite declared: “the paradox of swing in music is that jazz musicians are seen by composers of erudite music as if the music is not elaborated and organized. As they are unable to explain swing in jazz, they say that jazz is played differently every day… No! There is rigor and structure” (ibid).

Leite and company are apprehensive about perceptions of jazz by all non-jazz musicians. From popular musicians because being too timid to explore the “complexity” of jazz, they prefer to play “easy” commercial music, and from Western art (erudite) composers, because they disregard the structure and rigurocity of jazz. In other words, jazz’s problem is that some considered it to be too complex (and thus close to erudite music) and others, to be too simple (and thus close to
popular music). In a way, jazz is trapped in prevalent modernist distinctions in Bahia between high/low and erudite/popular art.

**Combinations with a Purpose**

With the possible exception of modernist serialists and other purists who strove for absolute difference, combinations of music sounds, techniques, and performance practices have been throughout history a natural response to musicians’ curiosity and fascination with the other. Despite persistent debates about authenticity versus hybridity and postcolonialist preoccupation with cultural representation and the politics of appropriation, we saw that fusion takes new impetus in postmodernity as it is believed to create new possibilities for the celebration of hybrid identities, to promote cross-cultural empathy, and to equalize former asymmetric relationships of power (Born et al. 2000:19). But as Born and company argue, this does not mean that the categories of high and low or erudite and popular culture are erased. In certain contexts in Salvador and other places of Brazil, for instance, European art music and North American jazz are regarded as “higher” (i.e. more civilized, serious, sophisticated, formal, or erudite) than others. It is precisely the history and implications of the encounters of these so-called higher musics with black musics in Salvador that I will consider here.

I concentrate on a selected group of 20th and 21st century composers, arrangers, and conductors whose legacies, in my view, reveal that: 1) music hybridity contributes to the development of national or regional flavors of musics regarded as “higher” and more “universal”; and 2) music hybridity may become a vehicle to ennoble or dignify historically subjugated music cultures like that of the African diaspora. In both cases, hybridity leads to legitimation. However, the ways in which each music culture is portrayed (symbolically, structurally, or technically) reveal that, although composers had respect for the musics they were combining or quoting from, music hybridity does not always contribute to equalize musics of former unequal status, to erase differences of legitimacy, or to a democratic celebration of hybrid identities as postmodern discourses stresses. Often one music culture is celebrated at the expense of the other.

Consider Heitor Villa-Lobos, the most celebrated composer of European art music in Latin America, who advanced the modernist nationalist project in Brazil during the first half of the 20th century through the combination of Brazilian folk and European classical music. Like Alberto
Ginastera in Argentina, Carlos Chávez in Mexico, and Amadeo Roldán in Cuba, Villa-Lobos began referring directly to folk or popular materials with tonal means. Throughout his career he integrated sublimated musical codes of folk forms and forged an original style—largely atonal—that he claimed represented a Brazilian spirit. He drew from a wide array of local genres but was particularly interested in Portuguese-derived *choros* from his home town Rio de Janeiro and in indigenous melodies, especially from the Amazon region. His interest in indigenous music connects his nationalism to a pan-continental Americanism that sees the ancient pre-Columbian world as a primitive stage of the Americas, and as a place with a shared essence worthy of recreation in contemporary music (Schwartz-Kates 2007). This primitivist view was also apparent in his scattered portrayals of Afro-Brazilian culture. Between 1914 and 1915 Villa-Lobos wrote one of the few works referring explicitly to Afro-Brazilian culture, “Danças Características Africanas” (African Characteristic Dances). The three-part piece, originally composed for piano solo and later arranged for chamber ensemble (1915-1916) and for full orchestra (1916), was inspired by the Caripunas Indians of Mato Grosso, whose roots can be partially traced to Africa. Here is Robert Cummings' description of the three movements:

The titles of the three pieces are as exotic-sounding as their music: Farrapós, Kankukús, and Kankikís. The first opens with a fanfare-like motif that sounds more primitive than exotic. A lively rhythmic theme is then presented whose ethnic traits are as much Latin as Brazilian-Indian. The ensuing Kankukús is relatively moderately paced in its jaunty mix of cultures, again with Villa-Lobos blending Latin elements with the rhythmic, rawer sounds of the Indians. While Kankikís has a measure of exoticism, it could almost pass for folk-inspired music from Eastern Europe. It eventually divulges more Latin and exotic elements and provides a colorful finale to this charming set of short piano pieces. (Cummings n.d.)

Villa-Lobos' choice of inspiration for a piece with such a name is striking, especially in a country full of people claiming direct African ancestry. He chose a mixed indigenous/African music culture from Mato Grosso instead of an Afro-Bahian music style (e.g. *candomblé* or *samba de roda*) whose Africanness was already well established nationally. From Cummings' description, it is apparent that Villa-Lobos treated African music like he treated indigenous music: as primitive and rhythmic. That may account for Villa-Lobos' decision. The Latin element in the last two movements that Cummings refers to is the accentuation of the semiquavers corresponding to the *tresillo* (x..x..x.). However, current scholarship considers the *tresillo* a rhythm underlying much world music.
Abigail Moura and his Orquestra Afro-Brasileira represent one of the first relevant examples of the combination of “high” and black music that could be interpreted as dignifying the latter. Moura founded the Orquestra Afro-Brasileira in 1942 and conducted it until its dissolution in 1970. He arranged pieces inspired by Afro-Brazilian styles candomblé, umbanda, maracatu, frevo, and jongo for a brass big band, Afro-Brazilian percussion, and vocals. Dias points out that in addition to studying the scores and recordings of “erudite composers,” self-taught Abigail Moura made a conscious effort to “construct an anthropologic base for his work by reading Africanist authors such as Arthur Ramos, Edison Carneiro and Roger Bastide while, at the same time, maintaining a close relationship with umbanda and candomblé terreiros [in Rio de Janeiro]” (Dias 2010:92). Moura added to his performances an aura of mysticism: “concerts were preceded by ceremonies similar to those of candomblé rituals, with 'purification' of the instruments before each show and the use of clothing typical of Afro-Brazilian religious traditions” (ibid). Shows were dedicated to the memory of “great black figures of the past” such as Bahian Teodoro Sampaio or to commemorate important dates in the history of slavery in Brazil (ibid).

The orchestra performed hundreds of times at the Associação Brasileira de Imprensa (Brazilian Press Association) in Rio de Janeiro for enthusiasts and supporters of black culture. Dias explains that the orchestra's audiences included the União dos Homens de Côr dos Estados Unidos do Brasil (Association of Coloured Men of The United States of Brazil), members of black consciousness movements like Abdias do Nascimento (the founder of Quilombismo) and José Pompílio da Hora, ethnographers of Afro-Brazilian culture like Câmara Cascudo and Alceu Maynard, as well as “erudite musicians” such as Eleazar de Carvalho, Paulo Silva, Camargo Guarnieri, and Moacir Santos (ibid:93).

Abigail Moura located his “black orchestra” between the “resistance of African traditions in the socio-cultural environment of Rio de Janeiro” and his ideas of modernity and contemporaneity (ibid:94). The following excerpt reflects Moura's conceptualization:

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75 During its almost three decades of existence the orchestra only recorded two albums: Obaluayé (Todo América, 1957) and Orquestra Afro-Brasileira (CBS, 1968)
76 The qualifier “black” was added by Dias (2010:94).
The Orquestra Afro-Brasileira is a group that disseminates the art and musical culture of blacks in Brazil. Its rhythmic structure rests on barbaric instruments (percussion), and [its] harmonic [structure] on civilized instruments -piano, saxophones, trumpets, and trombones. My music, I believe, is not influenced by 'jazz.' It follows two schools: primitive and contemporary.

Sung by a choir and calling gods and orixás of African mythology, [this music] features the ritual (Macumba) of Africans and Afro-Brazilians, without the interference of civilized instruments. . . In this primitive and ritualistic school, the presence of black religious sentiment is clear.

With regards to the contemporary school (created by me), it demonstrates the musical evolution of Afro-Brazilian people. [Here] is when my music develops harmonically supported by the piano, saxophones, trumpets and trombones . . . These melodies, also characteristically black, are themes developed by me in symphonic poems, laments, apotheoses, preludes, fantasies, etc. I use these forms to express the most profound messages of black art. In them I describe the dramas and tragedies endured by my race; I also express myself as an individual by screaming, moaning, and sobbing desperately.

(Abigail Moura in Dias 2010:95)

Moura’s rhetoric is perhaps, the clearest example of the coexistence of discourses of primitivism and empowerment of black culture in Brazil. Black culture was for him primitive, barbaric, and uncivilized, but worthy of respect and admiration. This position reflected the common thought of many defenders of Afro-Brazilian culture during his time.

Alberti and Araújo Pereira (2006:144) point out that the Orquestra Afro-Brasileira as well as related initiatives geared to raise the visibility of black culture were encouraged and supported in the political context of the Estado Novo (1930-1945). As discussed above, the use of indigenous music forms to promote nationalism was strategic during the Vargas Era, but at that point black musics were still considered too exotic by Brazilian society at large and thus needed to be dressed up if they wanted to represent it. This is what brass instruments, harmonies, and Western art music compositional techniques did for Moura's orchestra. Although this transformation brought attention to black music in Brazil, it did not erase the perception of exoticism with which audiences received Moura's music.
Moacir Santos is another Brazilian musician and composer who experimented with jazz, Western art music, and Afro-Brazilian music. In his Ph.D. dissertation “Moacir Santos, Seus Ritmos e Modos: 'Coisas' do Ouro Negro” (Moacir Santos, His Rhythms and Modes: 'Coisas' of Ouro Negro) (2012), Alexandre Luís Vicente asserts that Santos' music aesthetic of the 1950s and 60's strived to reconcile the “modern” with “African rhythm” (Vicente 2012:25). Santos' discovery of modernism included his participation in Northeastern jazz bands as a young saxophone player and further study of jazz harmony in Rio de Janeiro (Dias 2010:51). In order to include modernist sounds in his music, Santos also studied Schoenberg's dodecaphonism and Hindemith's Acoustic Harmony with two of his mentors, composers César Guerra-Peixe and Hans-Joachim Koellreuter (ibid:68-9). As for the “African” side of his music, Vicente wrote:

Moacir worked hard, in researching, studying, and composing black music. Dividing his work between erudite and popular music, he thought of black music as a great [unifying] path for both in our country [Brazil]. He [Santos] expressed - 'the ideal is that we find a path that makes the European instruments and harmonies and the spirit of African rhythm flow together.' (Vicente 2012:25)

Despite his Afro-Brazilian ancestry and his fondness for black music, Santos did not position himself as a defender of Africanist (or nationalist) ideas as Abigail Moura and other composers like César Guerra-Peixe, Villa-Lobos, and Ary Barroso did (ibid:25-26). However, this did not necessarily hurt the reception of his music in Brazil. His music was valued because it brought an African and Brazilian sonority to jazz and to concert music (ibid:26).

As for his status as “black” musician Vicente writes that Santos saw himself as a subject of the Black Atlantic who moved between Brazil and the U.S. “representing the transnational links, interests, and identifications shared by the musics, composers and audiences of these two countries” (ibid). Africa was for Santos “the womb of blacks” and only one aspect of his music and world vision. When asked about the blackness of his music he responded “some things are black, others are not” (Santos in Vicente 2012:27). The main hypothesis of Vicente's dissertation is that the African “things” of Santos' music are polyrhythms and modality. Both Vicente and Dias documented the “African-based” rhythmic patterns that Santos developed in his career, both
for his own compositions and for teaching purposes. These include timelines and catalogs of rhythmic cells. These patterns will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The album Coisas (Forma, 1965), exemplifies Santos' integration of Afro-religious music and symbolism into jazz. The music on the album is based on candomblé toques and on other Afro-Brazilian rhythms. For Dias the piece “Coisa n° 5 – Nanã,” inspired by Nanã Buruku, the Yoruba orixá of mud, is representative of Santos' works of the 1960s.

[the] melody [is] predominantly modal, supported by mixed harmonies and established by . . . dissonances in chords following the rules of acoustic harmony, modal and tonal cadences. The rhythm is structured as polyrhythm, superimposing binary and ternary groupings in order to create an idea of instability, which is one of the characteristics of the West African sonic world (Dias 2010:212-3).

This piece, Santos’ most popular in Brazil, was conceived as a blues a la Brasileira (Santos in Dias 2010:212). The significance of this statement is that blues was considered by Santos a building block of jazz (ibid). Santos uses Afro-religious music in “Coisa n° 5 – Nanã” to integrate jazz and Brazilian music. The album Coisas including “Coisa n° 5 – Nanã” is part of the soundtrack of Carlos Diegues’ film “Ganga Zumba” (Copacabana, 1963) which thematizes the history of black resistance during colonial Brazil and of its leaders, particularly Ganga Zumba, one of the founders of the iconic Quilombo dos Palmares. The soundtrack also included Filhos de Gandhi, one of the most traditional carnival groups from Bahia linked to black consciousness. Despite his disinterest in linking his music with black politics, Santos’ Coisas ended up linked to black consciousness and resistance, much in the same way as James Brown's funk served Black Power activists in the U.S. An important difference between the two musicians is that while Brown’s reluctance to position himself as a defender of black culture was driven by integrationist ideas and commercial interest, Santos’ was based in a more universal view of the self that crossed racial and ethnic boundaries.

In 2008, classically-trained Bahian Ubiratan Marques founded the Orquestra Afroinfônica in Camaçari, a town near Salvador, following a tradition of scattered attempts to perform Afro Brazilian musics in the context of a symphonic orchestra. His idea was to develop a “Bahian
sound” based on the fusion of European symphonic music, North American jazz, and Afro Brazilian compositional methods, concepts, and instruments. To this end he created, with governmental support, the Núcleo Moderno de Música (Center of Modern Music) in 2007 in Camaçari (Bahia), where he trains musicians in his method of combining erudite and popular musics using his own compositions and arrangements as examples. As Moura did 50 years before, Marques raises the visibility of Afro Brazilian music by dressing it up and by presenting it in “high” culture venues. But his main interest is not dignifying black “barbaric” musics by pairing them with “civilized” ones, but rather bringing that “higher” music form closer to people through a symphonic orchestra that reflects the local reality of Bahia—an orchestra with Bahian flavor. In this sense, Marques aligns with Villa-Lobos’ project to legitimize European art music, but this time at regional level, not at the national one. His strategic choices were arranging songs from candomblé and umbanda (particularly those in Yoruba or Angola dialects), including Afro Brazilian percussion instruments, and elaborating on Afro Brazilian rhythms and melodies to create symphonic grooves. Although Marques chooses elements ostensibly characteristic of each music culture for his fusion project, he is relatively unconcerned about “African” or “European” authenticity. He rather embraces hybridity as a necessary feature to produce a sense of locality in postmodernity.

On March 23, 2012, I attended an event marking the beginning of Olodum's school year at Teatro Teixeira in Pelourinho, Salvador. After introductions and speeches, a music performance took place. Gerson Silva, a talented Bahian guitar player, arranged six famous carnival Olodum pieces for big band and a reduced version of a bloco afro. The show was presented by Silva as an opportunity for young bloco afro percussionists to interact with professional musicians, and as a testimony to “the beautiful and sophisticated things that could be achieved with our carnival songs and percussion” (public communication, Salvador, Bahia, March 23, 2012). All this was meant to encourage newcomers to take their music studies seriously. Over steady samba reggae grooves featuring the typical bloco afro paradinhas (full breaks), Silva transferred the song melodies to the different brass sections quite literally in his arrangements and voiced them with implied harmonies very close to those of Olodum's original recordings. Here Silva dignifies carnival bloco afro music by pairing it with a “higher” music form—a jazz big band. Curiously,

77 The brass section included 3 trombones, 3 trumpets, 3 alto saxes, 3 tenor saxes, and 1 tuba and the bloco afro 2 fundos (low-pitched drums), 4 surdos (low-pitched drums), 1 caixa (snare drum), and 1 repique (high-pitched drum).
he did not exploit the elements of jazz cherished by local musicians—the harmonic language and improvisation techniques—but relied on the timbral and symbolic properties of the brass section. The “higher” status of jazz was represented by the brass and the use of an exclusive indoor venue, but not by its more technically defining characteristics. As we saw in Chapter 2, blocos afro used this very strategy since the 1980s to augment the appeal of their carnival grooves.

These are only but a few examples of such encounters in Bahia and Brazil where black music, jazz, and Western art music are enthusiastically mixed, partly to promote national, Bahian, or black identities, and partly for artistic striving. Like many European modernists composers, Villa-Lobos portrayed the black other as primitive in his nationalistic music. So did Ubiratan Marques, but at the regional level in Bahia. Using big bands, Abigail Moura and Gerson Silva boosted Afro-Brazilian music but without necessarily challenging black primitivist views. Although with their own nuances, their portrayals of blackness as primitive and exotic were similar to those of modernist Western composers and World music producers.

One more instructive example where two “higher” traditions interact is worth mentioning. The Jazz Sinfônica Orchestra, founded in 1989 by the Secretary of Culture from the state of São Paulo with the purpose of arranging and performing popular music of Brazilian composers, “blends a (symphonic) orchestra of erudite stock to a jazz big band.” Here the qualifier erudite evidences a hierarchy of prestige between jazz and Western art music. This implied distinction is relevant because of the associations of jazz with African American culture. This project resembles the concert works of Ellington and Johnson that, according to Howland, contributed to the legitimazation of jazz in the U.S. In the contemporary context of Brazil, the story is different because both musics have already “high” status and are strategically used to dignify Brazilian popular music. One could thus read this project as ennobling Brazilian popular music through a “European” and a Europeanized Afro-diasporic “higher” music. The rest of the dissertation will be devoted to Orkestra Rumpilezz from Bahia, a particular case of music hybridity that, mixing jazz with candomblé and Bahian carnival music, touches upon most of the issues raised in this and previous chapters.

78 http://www.jazzsinfonica.org.br/
Concluding Remarks

The indigenization of jazz in Brazil decreased its “foreignness” over time. The first contacts of Brazilian popular musics with jazz in the early 20th century brought the typical issues of authenticity of the epoch to the fore. At a national level, jazz was a suitable other against which an ideology of difference necessary for the establishment of a national identity could be imposed. By the mid-20th century elements of jazz were assimilated by Brazilian musicians and, partly due to these mixtures, a decade later a style representing the nation internationally emerged: bossa nova. Paradoxically the legitimatization of this style as “Brazilian jazz” was largely accomplished on North American turf. By the 1970s jazz in Bahia was enriching local popular music by providing elaborated harmonies and solo techniques, and fueling a local music avant garde movement. Up to this point jazz was still perceived as a “higher” other, neither nemesis nor ally of black music. When jazz became available for the production of locality in Salvador, its blackness—and whiteness—gained weight. At that point it became evident to composers that jazz may be regarded both as our music and that of the other. They envisioned and exploited the possibilities of jazz’s liminal position for advancing discourses of black empowerment. With time they jazzed up Bahian black music.
Chapter 5: Reinventing Afro-Bahian Music Through Public Rhetoric and Performance Practice

Orkestra Rumpilezz is one of those encounters between black music and jazz discussed in the last chapter. It is a Bahian group mixing a big band with Afro Brazilian percussion that claims to play music “very close to its African roots.” In fact, the orchestra proclaims itself to be a dignifier of Afro-Bahian music and thus embrace black empowerment. They use a wide array of means to articulate this message from verbalizing in interviews to integrating it into performance practice and music structure. Using the model of discourse formation of blackness proposed in Chapter 3, this chapter deconstructs public and private interviews as well as aspects of performance practice of the orchestra.

For the interpretation of the symbolism in Rumpilezz’s music, I tie Foucault’s method of discourse analysis (1972) with Roberto DaMatta’s idea of displacement as the basis for symbolization (1991). The referent or domains from which Rumpilezz draws elements (i.e. candomblé, carnival, and jazz) are crucial to the interpretation of their music. DaMatta helps to determine how the relative distance of these domains affects the intensity of symbolism. He explains “if an element—object or social role—circulates between very distant and contradictory domains in a given social system, it will be the focus of fairly strong references” and the more distant those domains are, “the stronger its evocative power and the greater will be the effort to return it to its sphere of origin” (1991:69-70). To explain his model, DaMatta uses the example of a skull which “will be nothing more than a remain in a grave, where it belongs; but it comes to represent a lot in a drawing room or in a kitchen drawer” (ibid). One can understand the urgency of a person who finds the skull in the kitchen to “return” it to the grave. For DaMatta this urgency is proportional to the distance between the domains of origin (the grave) and destination (kitchen). Domains for him are spheres of social life with distinct logics arranging their constitutive elements (objects, social roles, ideologies, values, actions, attitudes) (ibid). I see candomblé ceremonies, carnival parades, and Rumpilezz's performances as differentiated domains with the latter being more distant to the first of these than to the second. After all, candomblé ceremonies are strictly religious and the other two, while possibly imbued with the sacred-secular energy of axé, are more related to the spheres of popular and even art music. This mere fact explains Rumpilezz's focus on candomblé elements, but it does not explain why there is
not a strong tendency by audiences to “return” them to their original context, as it happens in other appropriations of candomblé for popular music.\textsuperscript{79} I suggest that this tendency is neutralized by 1) the presence of the alabê or candomblé master drummer, who lends legitimacy to the orchestra; 2) various transformations of the borrowed elements; 3) the high density of the music which draws focus on the overall texture and not on particular elements; and more generally 4) Rumpilezz's public rhetoric that embraces black empowerment. In its structuralist approach DaMatta’s model is thus limited on its own. However, it complements well my Foucauldian analysis by shedding light into the referent and the associated field.

**Orkestra Rumpilezz**

Founded in 2006, Orkestra Rumpilezz synthesizes Letieres Leite's experience as a sax and flute player in jazz and Brazilian popular music bands, arranger of jazz and axé music styles, and researcher of Afro Bahian rhythms. It is the tangible result of a dream conceived in the 1980s while he began to study, notate, organize, and systematize the various toques and claves\textsuperscript{80} of what he terms the “Bahian percussive universe” (TV Brasil 2012). His idea was composing a new type of music using these materials as a creative resource. Nonetheless, his strategy was different than that used by other groups, one that developed “a method to combine the aesthetics of ancestral Afro-Bahian percussive traditions and jazz on equal terms” (p.c. April, 27, 2012). Here Leite implies, jazz and Afro-Bahian percussion (ABP) are perceived as having different status. Influences of jazz, carnival music, and candomble are patent in the orchestra’s music structure, and instrumentation. Rumpilezz’s pieces “Balendoah,” “Taboão,” and “Floresta Azul” reference those influences. “Balendoah” is an arrangement of an eponymus piece by Ed Motta, a jazz musician from Rio de Janeiro; “Taboão” is inspired by the samba-reggae “Reggae Odoyd” by Bahian Bira and Silvio Cunha and recorded by Olodum; and “Floresta Azul” contains the melody of “Okê Odê,” a candomblé song heard in many Ketu terreiros from Bahia. The rest of the orchestra’s repertoire is original from Leite.

Before Rumpilezz, Leite made several attempts to fuse Afro Bahian rhythms with jazz, both in Brazil and while living in Europe (1985-1994). In 2005 he began hosting jam sessions at various venues in Salvador with fellow brass players and candomblé master drummers Luizinho do Jejê

\textsuperscript{79} As it will be discussed on Chapter 8, candomblé devotees in Salvador are very critical of candomblé appropriations for popular music, especially when they are too literal (i.e. copy-paste).
\textsuperscript{80} Leitieres Leite uses clave as a generic term for timelines. This includes, but is not limited to, what is known as clave in salsa and other Afro-Caribbean styles (x...x...x...x...).
and Gabi Guedes. For these sessions he arranged jazz and Brazilian standards and eventually wrote his first compositions. By 2006 the orchestra was rehearsing regularly and making its first public appearances. In 2009 they released their first album for which they received three national awards. This national recognition, beyond raising their profile, led to sponsorships from government institutions and the private sector. The orchestra performs regularly in Salvador both at prestigious theaters, such as Teatro Castro Alves, and open venues like Terreiro de Jesus where people can enjoy the music without payment. Largely funded by sponsors like Petrobras (a large Brazilian multinational energy corporation), they also tour around the country as ambassadors of contemporary Afro-Bahian music and in few occasions they have participated in music festivals in Europe.

Rumpilezz routinely invites renowned collaborators (e.g. Ed Motta, Cacau do Pandeiro, Carlinhos Brown, Gilberto Gil, Móveis Coloniais de Acajú, Joshua Redman, and Salim Washington) to sing or to play solos in their compositions. Leite also arranges popular or classical pieces as well as compositions by their guest artists in estilo da Rumpilezz (Rumpilezz style), such as Joshua Redman's “Jazz Crimes” and “Mantra #5,” Opanije's “Deus que Dança,” the Beatles' “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds,” Miltão's “Depois que o Ilê Passar,” and Ravel's “Bolero.” Like his own compositions, these arrangements are based on candomblé toques, each associated with an orixá. For instance, “Deus que Dança” is based in toque ilú for Iansá, “Jazz Crimes” in toque ijexá for Oxum, and “Bolero” in toque adere for Ogum.

81 In 2010 the album Leitieres Leite and Orkestra Rumpilezz received the following distinctions: Globo de Ouro as Best Album of the Year, Medalha de Ouro à Qualidade do Brasil, and Prêmio Bravo! for the best CD of Popular music of the year.
82 Rumpilezz has performed at the Brazil Festival in Amsterdam in 2011 and is scheduled to perform in June 2014.
83 During 2012 the orchestra collaborated extensively with American jazz saxophonist Joshua Redman. This included Leite's arrangements of Redman's “Jazz Thieves” (Elastic, Warner 2002) and “Mantra #5” (Back East, Nonesuch 2007), and multiple performances in Bahia, Belo Horizonte, and São Paulo where the guest artist soloed with Leite's compositions and arrangements. Their work can be visited at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHioa6ut4gs, and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFp3n_WnDfo
84 Leite wrote an orchestral accompaniment for Opanije's rap song “Deus que Dança.” They performed together at the Festival Bahia de Som Salvador, at Ibirapuera theatre in São Paulo, on Sep. 21, 2012. The show can be seen at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=org1La3YM3s.
85 Leite arranged the Beatles's “Lucy in the sky with diamonds” (Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Parlophone 1967) for a joint performance of Rumpilezz with the Brazilian group Móveis Coloniais de Acaju, and singer Mariana Aydar at the Festival Rock in Rio 2011. The show is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rm8jQ4rolK
86 The orchestra performed Leite's arrangement of Miltão's “Depois que o Ilê Passar” with Bahian singer Lazzo Matumbi at the Festival Bahia de Som Salvador, at Ibirapuera theatre in São Paulo. on Sep. 21, 2012. The show can be seen at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E44an032wj4.
87 On Feb. 10 2012, The Symphonic Orchestra of Bahia featured Rumpilezz at Teatro Castro Alves in Salvador. After playing separately, the two orchestras played jointly Leite's arrangements of his own “Floresta Azul” and Ravel's “Bolero.”
Like most big bands, Rumpilezz has a robust brass section, uses jazz harmonies, and creates grooves, but the instrumentation and compositional techniques used to establish groove differ from those of typical big bands. Throughout this chapter, and particularly in Chapter 7, I demonstrate that the result is a dense orchestral texture that evokes the polyrhythms the orixás dance to inside the terreiros, or that people dance to in carnival parades.

**Self-Representation: Public Interviews**

“*Our Music has Strong African Roots*”

The word Rumpilezz combines the names of the three sacred *atabaques* (drums) of *Ketu candomblé*—rum, rumpi, and lê plus the last two letters of the word jazz. This evokes the music’s main constituent musical languages. Additionally, the orchestra draws inspiration from Bahian carnival grooves, particularly those of *blocos afro* and *afoxés*, which Leite sees as the other main constituent of ABP. Leite uses the metaphor of a tree to locate Rumpilezz in the universe of ABP:

Imagine a tree with thick and thinner branches. The trunk is Afro-Bahian sacred music, the [thick] branches are the big street carnival associations . . . [such as] Olodum, Ilê Aiyé, and all those, and the smaller branches are the consequences of that. I based my work on the trunk of the tree, which is what makes us a consequence [a smaller branch]. (Leite 2011, translated from Portuguese by the author)\(^8\)

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\(^8\)All quotations of Letieres Leite, including speeches and interviews, are the author’s translations from Portuguese unless stated otherwise.
With this statement Leite justifies his claim that Rumpilezz is “very close to its African roots.” This verifies Sansone's claim that Afro-diasporic religions play the role of representatives of black tradition and that contemporary black culture in Bahia is inspired by traditional and modern black symbols—the trunk and the branches of Leite's tree. The ensuing analysis will demonstrate that Leite’s public rhetoric is supported through music structure and performance practice. To this end themes of Africanness are strategically interpreted.

“We Dignify Afro-Bahian Music” 89

I dedicate this work with all my love and gratitude to our doctor musicians: percussionists from Bahia who develop, preserve, and disseminate this rich and diverse BAHIAN PERCUSSIVE UNIVERSE.

(Liner notes of Letieres Leite and Orkestra Rumpilezz, 2009, translated from Portuguese by the author)

In this statement Leite encapsulates the main mission of the orchestra: dignifying ABP. However, it is remarkable that in a city full of purely percussive ensembles linked to black consciousness, a big band takes up such an endeavor. This begs the question of why Leite thinks that ABP needs to be further glorified, knowing that carnival associations like Ilê Aiyê, Olodum and Filhos de Gandhi have successfully undertaken this task since the 1970s? Consider these statements offered in two separate interviews:

The idea [with Rumpilezz] is to showcase the structure and richness of ABP . . . [to demonstrate] that ABP is elaborated, as opposed to what I always heard, that it is a disorganized thing, lacking rigor. That today a person [a percussionist] plays something in one way and tomorrow in another. All that is based in prejudice.

(p.c. Letieres Leite, April 27, 2012)

Interviewer: [Rumpilezz has] a rare configuration: fifteen musicians play brass instruments in the back of the stage and the other six play traditional Bahian percussion. It is not a mere coincidence that percussionists stay in the front line.

Jaime Nascimento (*): Our intention is precisely to break with the prejudiced notion that percussion is arbitrarily free. Here everyone has to be aligned [tight], play percussion

89 After the release of their first album in 2009, Rumpilezz received increased media attention both locally and nationally. Members of the orchestra, particularly its director, have been featured in TV, radio, newspapers, and paper and online magazines. Numerous formal and informal interviews leading up to or following their shows are also posted on websites like Youtube. These materials plus a personal interview conceded to me by Leitieres Leite on April 27, 2012 at his house in Salvador, constitute the basis for this section.
with dignity.

**Letieres Leite (LL):** Percussion is in the front line. Percussion comes out of the kitchen and goes into the living room. (Radarcultura, 2010)

(*) One of Rumpilezz's percussionists

Here two Rumpilezz members lament and react to pejorative perceptions towards ABP. Their main plaint is to the perception of ABP as too spontaneous and disorganized, revealing the endurance of modernist distinctions of high and popular art in Salvador. These distinctions are based on, among other things, the positive value given in modernism to order, organization, and planning. Leite and Nascimento's response is that Rumpilezz's music demonstrates that ABP is as organized as written musics. Playing percussion with *dignity* for Nascimento means playing aligned with brass instruments within an organized and prearranged structure.

Leite also asserts that ABP has been historically placed in the kitchen, the colonial social and symbolic space of disenfranchised *blacks* and *slaves* (Freire 1933). For him, moving percussionists from their traditional place in the back of the stage to the front line has the metaphorical meaning of moving ABP from the kitchen to the living room, the social and symbolic space of the *master*. 
Leite told me that “my intention with this project is creating a compositional music in which the resources of Afro-Bahian music are mixed. . . Where one could understand the complexity and organization of these rhythmic systems” (p.c. April 27, 2012). The key terms of this statement are “compositional,” which in this context refers to scored music, and “complexity” and “organization,” both positive modernist values. In Chapter 4 we saw that among musicians in Salvador, the status of “high” music is often related to the use of scores and to a perceived complexity, organization, and rigour, attributes ascribed to Western art music and sometimes to jazz. We also saw that jazz has a liminal position in Salvador: on one hand, it is perceived as a “higher” music by popular musicians, and on the other, as popular or “lower” by erudite composers. This last position was hinted by the Jazz Sinfônica Orchestra’s online description and articulated by Leite in an interview where he defended the “high” status of jazz with the same arguments that he uses to defend ABP: by stressing their complexity and organization (Ramos 2012). However, the overall position of jazz among those who engage in discourses of black empowerment in Salvador is “high.” Therefore, the subtext of Leite’s utterance is that the inherent organization of ABP systems is better evidenced when measured against another
“organized” (written) music system like jazz. Under this perspective, Rumpilezz becomes a more effective dignifier of ABP than blocos afro and other purely percussive ensembles from Bahia.

In sum, Leite puts ABP in a dialog with jazz, a music he perceives as “the classical music of America” (p.c. April 27, 2012) such that ABP profits from jazz's organization and brass instruments symbolically revere percussion. Though candomblé and carnival music have their own organizational systems and are “complex” from any musical point of view, the critical point is that Leite decided to highlight that structural complexity by claiming that it is as organized as jazz.

“This Is How We Do It”: Describing A Compositional Method

Now let us see how Leite and other members of the orchestra talk about the way the sounds of these musical worlds are combined. Leite's compositional method has three characteristics that set Rumpilezz apart from most big bands: First, he re-assigns the harmonic background typically provided by big band rhythm sections (piano, bass and guitar) to brass instruments:

Salim Washington: Another thing that interests me about Rumpilezz and in general about the Bahian music that I've heard, especially in the samba bands, is the presence of a heavy bass sound without there being a bass. With the bass drums. And I have noticed there is no piano, no guitar, and there is no bass in Rumpilezz and I don't miss it! And I am wondering about that. How did you come to that decision, not to use those instruments.

LL: First, I love brass instruments. And second I believe I can make a piano sound with brass instruments. I had a similar experience with another orchestra 10 years ago in my school. I wrote for friends with the same idea. I had this idea to make (the sound of) the bass with tuba, bari and bass trombone and I used that idea for Rumpilezz. I wanted that type of sound.

(Jackson 2008, interview in English)

Second, Leite emphasizes the role of timelines. In a joint interview with Joshua Redman, a North American saxophonist who collaborated with Rumpilezz in 2012, Leite explains why, before their first rehearsal, he took Redman to a terreiro and taught him how to maintain agogô patterns against dense drum polyrhythms.

Joshua Redman: For 2 hours I was in the middle of a sea of incredible rhythm. I was trying to keep rhythm in the...what you call the bell?

LL: Agogô . . . I demonstrated to him that all my brass lines are originated in each of the toques that I choose... I was showing to him the process of transmission from drums to
brass. That was a hard encounter, but very fruitful.

**Interviewer:** And he played the *agogô*...

**LL:** Yes, because it is precisely in the clave where rhythm begins... and in my arrangements I follow the same principle of Cubans and North Americans, which is adhering to the kick drum. In Bahia it works the same way, but we follow claves. I am not reinventing the wheel. Perhaps we are the first musical group in Bahia that observes with such rigor the rhythmic organization of the Afro-Bahian music system. (TV Cultura 2012)

Making Redman play the *agogô* while Rumpilezz's drummers played the *atabaques* is consistent with Leite's idea that “in order to be prepared to play this kind of music, musicians must learn it also orally.”

The third element of Leite's method is transferring drum parts from *candomblé* and carnival grooves to the brass.

**André Gonzales:** How do you write your compositions?

**LL:** I choose an *orixá* rhythm, speaking with a knowledgeable master. I begin to learn about the rhythm and the variations of each drum from the bottom up . . . I weave the pieces together as if I had a loom. But the fabric is bound to a principle: I give the variations of the lowest sounding drum to the lowest brass (tuba, bari and bass trombone) and that creates synergy, an immediate sync. The variations of middle range drums go to the trombone, and so on. Everything that I write for the brass is based in drum variations. (Compacto Petrobras 2010)

The explanation of this compositional method is central to Leite's public discourse. This level of detail in explaining how music is made is atypical in public declarations of musicians in Brazil. With Rumpilezz's performances and his nearly scholarly descriptions, Leite has earned a national reputation of understanding the essence of Afro-Bahian music among well established Brazilian popular musicians, American jazz musicians, national media, *candomblé* communities, carnival percussionists, classically trained musicians, and more. Consider the following public statement of Joatan Nascimento, one of the orchestra's trumpet players:

**Interviewer:** The relationship of Rumpilezz with *candomblé* implied a deep research. Does each song have a *toque*?

**Joatan Nascimento:** I think that is the biggest success of Letieres' work. His work of
organizing *toques* and discovering that each contains a clave. Compositions and arrangements are made within that clave. Everyone knows sacred candomblé music, but no one in history has done such a deep work in that direction. The idea of Letieres to identify that intrinsic relationship between *toque* and clave makes that from now on, no one will use those *toques* without taking into account its clave. Everything is linked and that is for me, the biggest contribution of his work.

**Interviewer:** [we have to take into account that] these are the words of a member of the Bahian Symphonic Orchestra who understands music profoundly. (TV Brasil 2012, translated from Portuguese by the author)

The orchestra profits from Nascimento's position of authority. In a joined performance of Rumpilezz and the Bahian Symphonic Orchestra (OSBA) at Teatro Castro Alves, Nascimento performed first with the OSBA and then with Rumpilezz. The switch was spotlighted and interpreted by the MC as a demonstration of the “high quality” of Rumpilezz's music (Public communication at Rumpilezz and OSBA show at Teatro Castro Alves, Salvador, Bahia, February 10, 2012).

“The Alabê Plays As In The Terreiro”: Centrality of Candomblé

Lastly, I refer to the ways in which Leite and Guedes talk publicly about the role of the *alabê* and his drum (*rum*) in the orchestra. I asked Leite about a piece called “Feira de Sete Portas,” which is inspired by the *toque ijexá*, but with a different meter (7/4).

**Juan Diego Diaz (JDD):** How was it for musicians like Gabi Guedes and those from the *Jejê* nation who are used to playing *ijexá* in 4/4 in the street and in the *terreiro*?

**LL:** Gabi is a special case. When I conceived this work I knew I needed an *alabê* to play the variations of each *toque*. The *alabê* is not supposed to play exactly as I wrote the arrangements. What he plays in *rum* is already within the composition because I was already thinking in that rhythmic design when I wrote the piece. That means that I only compose over *toques* that I know better. Obviously Gabi knows millions of variations more than me... That enriches the piece... Thus, for Gabi it is a [re]encounter [with *candomblé toques*] and he can play more relaxed. If he plays *rum* 'as in the *terreiro*,' he will be completely connected with the music because the design (of the piece) is based on those variations.

**JDD:** But in the case of the piece I mentioned, he cannot play 'as in the *terreiro*’ because...

**LL:** Yes! he plays *rum* exactly 'as in the *terreiro*.' The main goal is that, having the *rum* of the *terreiro*, I do not compose [parts for] *rum*. No one has that capacity. It is so much so, that it is only Gabi who plays *rum* (in the orchestra). I always say to those who want to play *rum*: you have to start when you are three years old. After that age your chance is gone.
Leite refers to *rum* and its player in the orchestra with the respect and reverence devotees do in *terreiros*. He leaves writing parts for the *atabaques* to the *alabê*, assuming that anything created by Guedes, even if spontaneous, would fit. This is the only case, besides melodic solos over chord progressions, where Leite shares his role as composer. Granting such authority to the *alabê* demonstrates respect for basic precepts of *candomblé*, the most consummated symbol of black tradition in Brazil.

Allowing Guedes to play variations of the *ijexá* rhythm in “Feira de Sete Portas” is, however, remarkable because if Guedes played *rum* “as in the *terreiro*” the result would be a rhythmic clash between 7/4 and 4/4. Figure 5.3 contradicts Leite's claim, if taken literally. Guedes designs a new pattern in 7/4 drawing from the *ijexá* rhythm. While this pattern may evoke the *ijexá toque*, it would be hardly heard as such at an actual *candomblé* ceremony, since the *rum* player must guide dancers into possession with codified patterns that match the steps of choreographies. On the other hand, there are pieces like “Floresta Azul” or “A Grande Mãe” where Guedes plays *toques* and variations more literally “as in the *terreiro*.” We do not need to take Leite's comments at face value, for they are utterances supporting his strategic choices in the context of discourse formation. What interests me here is that Leite's claim uses the theme of African spirituality to reinforce a discourse of black empowerment. One should then take Leite's intention to be “the *alabê* has full freedom to use *candomblé* *toques* and variations literally or to draw inspiration from them for the design of new rhythms that fit odd meters.”

![Figure 5.3](image.png)

Figure 5.3 *Rum* patterns in *ijexá* and in “Feira e Sete Portas”

In fact, Guedes makes a clear distinction between playing *atabaques* inside and outside the *terreiro*. 
**Gabi Guedes (GG):** When you play for the orixá, you have to know, and be sure of what you play because the orixá does not know about [strange] improvised [rhythmic] figures. Candomblé has its own improvisations and they are connected with the reality of the dance. There is no reason to go “tu-tu-ta-tu-pa-tu-pa!”... You do not want the orixá to dance that super-fast movement. You have to know what is happening with the orixá.

**JDD:** Why don't you talk about your own musical project, Pradarum?

**GG:** I always saw the possibility to bring candomblé music to the world music scene in a more original way . . . I took some elements of the candomblé atabaque and adapted them for the trap set so that it could speak the same language of atabaques... Afterward I brought in the guitar, the bass, the piano, and a little brass instrument to accompany the song. That is my idea. It is taking that candomblé musicality and showing it to the world. But, It is me who is going to be shown to the world, not candomblé. I am not showing candomblé. I am showing my music, my culture . . . Some people say candomblé music and the orixás should not be talked about in the street. If you want the answer, ask a ialorixá or a babalorixá: “My mother, this is my idea. Please illuminate my path. What can I say [out there] about the orixá? What can I not? Because I do not want to mess with anyone or to be disrespectful to the orixá.” I am not being disrespectful to the orixás . . . I only want to express my feelings musically through candomblé and the orixás.

(p.c. May 1, 2012)

Guedes' declarations reveal that, generally speaking, the displacement of certain candomblé instruments, rhythms, songs, and practices to the domain of popular music creates a reaction within the candomblé community of wanting to “return” those elements to their original context. For instance, Makota Valdina, a candomblé spiritual leader from Salvador, reacted very strongly to listening to candomblé sacred songs in the repertoire of Carlinhos Brown, a successful popular artist from Bahia. When she heard the song in the domain of popular music, she felt that it should have never left the religious context, which I interpret as an urgency to “return” it to the terreiro. However, Gabi also suggests that showing aspects of his music and culture to the world in a positive and dignifying way is a legitimate reason for using candomblé elements outside of the terreiro. This, he continues, should be done in consultancy with the spiritual leader as there are certain elements belonging to the sacred sphere of the orixás that should not be displaced. No one is more apt and authorized than the alabê to undertake this task, as he is the musical authority in the terreiro and is usually close to the spiritual leader. Having Guedes and other candomblé drummers in the orchestra is instrumental for Leite, not only because they can play the “right” rhythms that evoke African religiosity, but also because they neutralize reactions to the displacement of candomblé elements by serving as mediators between the orchestra and candomblé communities.
Inside the *terreiro* the *alabê* has the responsibility of directing the *candomblé* ensemble, conducting dancers into trance, and making the *orixás* dance. He does so by pulling out *rum* variations from a stock of rhythmic phrases and by playing them at the right moment, pace, and intensity in dialogue with officiants, dancers, singers, and entities. Perhaps this is what Leite means when he says that in the orchestra the *alabê* plays *rum* exactly “as in the *terreiro*”: that Guedes chooses from his repertoire of rhythmic phrases whatever he considers appropriate to play in each moment of the piece. As the example of “Feira de Sete Portas” indicates, this includes adding portions of existing variations to match meters foreign to *candomblé*. The difference being that there is no dance, possession, or *orixás*, at least in the sense they exist in *candomblé* ceremonies, and above all that the *alabê* does not conduct the orchestra, not even the percussion section. That is Leite's role.

**Self-Representation: On the Stage**

This section discusses how dignifying ABP is accomplished through performance practice. To this end, the orchestra draws on elements and symbols of *candomblé*, carnival, and jazz. Once displaced from these three domains and embedded in Rumpilezz's performance, these elements and symbols gain a particular evocative power.\(^90\) The aspects of Rumpilezz's performance practice considered here are choice of instruments, layout of the musicians on the stage, style and color of clothing, approaches to musical notation, and body movement while playing. Here I also include the speech between pieces where Leite, and sometimes other members, introduce and explain some of the compositions. Although dignifying ABP (Afro-Brazilian *percussion*) obviously implies stressing the theme of percussiveness in each of these aspects of the performance, we will see that it requires flexible interpretations of other idealized notions of Africanness.

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\(^90\) One could also argue that by displacing elements from their original domains, they lose evocative power. For instance, the evocative power of a rhythmic cue for an initiated dancer in *candomblé* is dependent upon many other aspects of the ritual setting like clothing, the presence of spiritual leaders, and offerings, etc. The surrounding elements (associated field) as a whole can hardly be transferred to other domain. However, as DaMatta argues, by being displaced, those elements become the focus of attention, because they are seen as “not belonging” to the setting and new symbolism emerges. In other words, when played by Rumpilezz, the *candomblé* rhythmic cue may not have the same evocative power that it has for dancers in the *terreiro*, but, it may mean much more than a mere drum pattern.
Choice of Instruments

As in most big bands, Rumpilezz has a robust brass section. His is formed of five saxes (two altos, two tenors, one baritone), four trumpets, four trombones, and one tuba; Soprano saxes, flutes, piccolos, or flugelhorns may also be added. As discussed above, Leite spares the typical big band rhythm section of piano, guitar, and bass and reassigns their conventional roles to the brass. On the other hand, the typical big band trap set is replaced by five percussionists who play a set of instruments typically found both at Bahian carnival ensembles (*surdos*, *repiques*, *caixas*, *timbais*, and *caxixis*) and candomblé quartetos (*rum*, *rumpi*, *lê* and agogô). One of the things that struck me most when I first saw Rumpilezz was the strong presence of this percussive section. Typically the drummer in jazz big bands sits in the back of the stage and is featured only during drum solos. During Rumpilezz shows, drums are carefully wrapped in white cloth, as in some candomblé ceremonies, and placed in the center of the stage, raising their visual status.

*Atabaques* (the generic name of drums in *candomblé* Ketu houses) are not only focal objects of candomblé ceremonies but also strong symbols surpassing that religious domain. Jose Jorge Carvalho argues that candomblé drum ensembles are one of the most powerful symbols shared or at least known by most Afro-Brazilians (1993:3). This view is shared by Bahian dancer Sandra Lima who claims that *rum*, *rumpi*, and *lê* are the instruments that represent more genuinely traditional Afro Bahian music (p.c. May 14, 2012). Thus, beyond adding timbral novelty to the big band, these drums symbolize the presence of what is considered more traditional and representative of Afro-diasporic culture. Even though some may agree with Henry in that the sacred-secular energy of *axé* is present in all forms of black music, there are acute differences between the sacredness of the terreiro and the secularism of a public venue ranging from expected behavior to function of the music. These differences contribute to magnify the symbolism of the *atabaques* in the orchestra.

Carnival percussion from *blocos afro* also reinforces the presence of Afro-Bahian percussion in the orchestra, but their evocative power is lower because of the lesser difference between the domains of carnival street parades and big band performances. Although the displacement of carnival percussion to a jazz big band focuses the attention on carnival drums, the effect is less striking than in the case of *atabaques* because audiences are more familiar with combinations of brass with carnival percussion than with *atabaques*. In Chapter 4 we saw that there is a long tradition in Bahia of mixing *surdos*, *caixas*, and *repiques* with horns stemming from former
colonial marching bands. Audiences are also used to listening to Bahian blocos afro playing alongside with piano, electric guitar, bass, saxophones, trombones, and trumpets in large stages set up during and before carnival. Some popular musicians vindicating black identities like Bahian Carlinhos Brown, who have used both carnival percussion and atabaques in their shows, have been subject of criticism by some candomblé devotees but not by carnival musicians. This selective criticism confirms that the presence of carnival percussion in popular music is less symbolically charged in popular music than that of atabaques.

The symbolism associated with carnival drums is also of different nature than that of atabaques, as they are perceived as an expression of modern—as opposed to traditional—Bahian black culture. As Sansone explains, the new black culture in Bahia asserts its identity partly by adapting elements from the traditional black culture (e.g. candomblé and capoeira) but especially from the more modern black popular culture (samba-reggae, axé music, reggae, funk). With this traditional/modern Afro-Brazilian percussion section, Rumpilezz reinforces notions of “African” percussiveness and encompasses a broader black community. The power of Rumpilezz’s five drummers balances the sound of the fifteen brass players as though neutralizing perceived differences of status between them.

In the orchestra, brass players outnumber percussionists in a proportion of three to one. However, Leite's idea of interlocking the different horn sections as atabaques do inside terreiros suggests that he strives, like other Afro-diasporic jazz fusions from the 1920s on, for a percussive aesthetic when writing for horns. This is accomplished by shortening note duration (e.g. playing “shots” or in staccato) and writing lines where each horn plays a repeating short rhythmic-melodic motif that interlocks with contrasting patterns over a period (refer to Figure 5.4). However, at certain points horns also play melodies in legato and harmonized pads that clearly exploit the brassiness of the horns and downplay percussiveness.
Drum polyrhythms are objects with specific aesthetics and symbolism within *candomblé* and carnival. Following DaMatta's logic, when displaced and adapted to brass instruments, they should become a focus of attention, at least in theory. However, the evocation of these patterns is not as explicit as is, for instance, the presence of a drum that people can visually recognize and associate with a specific domain. Here drum patterns may or may not be recognized when executed by horns given radical timbral differences between these two types of instruments. Horns play melodies and form harmonies more clearly than drums (if one chooses to hear Rumpilezz’s drums as pitched); or horns can maintain a sounding note for much longer than drums can. In other words, even if horn textures are the focus of attention, they do not necessarily evoke *candomblé* or carnival polyrhythms, or even their symbolism in obvious ways. As I will argue in Chapter 7, the evocation may occur at subtler levels of the groove.

Leite's flexible interpretation of the theme of percussiveness in the choice of instruments and the
ways they are played allows him to build an aesthetic that symbolizes both “Africa” and “Europe” (or the U.S.), much like in the argument of double consciousness.

**Positioning of the Musicians on the Stage**

![Figure 5.5 Spatial configuration of Orkestra Rumpilezz on the stage (source: Letieres Leite & Orkestra Rumpilezz's Facebook page).](image)

The typical layout of big bands places brass players in three rows at stage center and the rhythm section (piano, bass, guitar) next to them with the drummer in the back corner. This may have many pragmatic explanations related to the size of the instruments, dynamic levels, bodily postures and positions while playing, and desired sonic result. Having the drummer at the back of the stage also reveals the accompanying role typically assigned to percussion. Rumpilezz arranges musicians differently. Figure 5.5 shows two semicircles on the stage: an inner one formed by five percussionists and an outer one with fourteen horn players. Leite stands in the middle with a tenor sax. This layout reflects the way Leite conceptualizes Rumpilezz: “it is not a big band with percussion, but a percussion group with a big band. I mean, the big band accompanies the percussion” (Jackson 2008). With this formation Leite draws attention to
percussionists at the expense of brass players:

**LL:** With musicians [brass players] placed in [the external] horseshoe, I see an inversion of value. In music, brass instruments are always more valued than percussion. That is why I put the percussion in the living room [i.e. the center of the stage]. They dress formally with tuxedos and brass players dress more informally with the purpose of creating that contrast. To make the inversion. (TV Brasil 2012)

But such configuration not only symbolizes this inversion, it also produces a particular sonic result:

**Salim Washington:** I have a technical question about the band. Maybe this has to do with the centrality of the percussion. I noticed that the sax section, in addition to the bari not being (acting as) a sax player, is split. We have the altos on one side of the band and the tenors on the other side. Is that for a reason or is it just for the visual centrality of the percussion?

**LL:** First, I listen to the sound of Rumpilezz like that. If you are in the audience, you listen first to the saxophones (draws a semi circle in the air with his hands) and then... you understand? That is the [first] plane. There are layers. Then, if I put all saxes in one side it does not sound how I write, then I put the saxes on the other side. I made experiments with the orchestra trying different situations [configurations] and I went for this. It is like a “U” with the percussion in the middle. All musicians need to listen to the percussion very closely because they play the same rhythms. That is why the percussion is in the middle, so that the rest of the musicians can listen to them. The tuba, bari and bass trombone are a little bit higher so that we all can see them and they can come stronger. (Jackson 2008)

Percussionists are in the middle because Leite wants every brass player (including himself) to listen to them closely. The rationale is that by being in close proximity to percussionists, horn players can more easily adjust their playing to the various swing feels created by them. For Leite this swing feel is the main element of ABP that Western standard notation cannot capture. Leite also listens to them from the front. Then he explains how he listens to the horns in layers: first, the two pairs of saxes, which are in the extremes of the external semicircle; then trumpets and trombones and lastly the low brass section, sitting in the back of the stage. This is how he wants his music to be heard by the audience.

**Color and Style of Clothing**

The visual centrality of percussionists is also highlighted by the style of dress. While drummers wear elegant tuxedos and leather shoes, horn players dress informally with shorts, T-shirts, and
sandals. The contrast is acute. The uniformity observed in most large music groups in Salvador is purposefully broken.

In Figure 5.5 one also sees that white is the dominant color both for musician's clothing and stage decoration. Most devotees of African derived cults in Salvador—and in other places of Brazil and the diaspora—tend to wear white as an identity marker. In a TV interview, Jaime Nascimento, one of Rumpilezz's percussionists, declared that “white is the color of peace and it is related to the religion represented with our music” (TV Brasil 2012). Every Friday one sees hundreds of candomblé devotees on the streets of Salvador dressed in white to pay respect to Oxalá, father of all orixás and creator of the world. Friday is the day of Oxalá and white is his color. The importance of this Yoruba deity is such that white has come to represent, in the public sphere, the three major nations (Ketu, Jejê, and Angola) and their syncretic relatives candomblé-de-caboclo and umbanda. In all candomblé celebrations I attended in Salvador people dressed predominantly in white, irrespective of the orixá to which it was dedicated.91 Initiates also observe a white dress code during the whole period of initiation which may last from weeks to one year.

**Approaches to Musical Notation**

The use of Western standard notation is common practice among jazz big bands, and Rumpilezz is no exception. However, scores in this orchestra are reserved for brass players. If we take into account that the perception of jazz and brass instruments as “higher” in Salvador is largely related to the use of music notation, and the informality of ABP to orality, Leite's decision to maintain this separation in Rumpilezz seems to contradict his dignifying project. This is reinforced by the fact that oral music is seen by many as closer to nature than written music in the sense of being spontaneous, thus reinforcing images of primitivism in ABP. Leite, however, sees the relationship between ABP’s orality and jazz's notation in different terms:

> There are systems [within ABP], but they are practiced within orality, that is the sole difference [between jazz and ABP systems]. As we know, it is not possible writing African derived music, specially if it is very close to its roots—as it is the case of Rumpilezz—, using the European notation system because it was not designed for that type of music. Then, you have a dilemma. You do not have a way to notate those rhythms with precision, so what do you do? We learn to play the music using the two means.

91 Each candomblé celebration is dedicated to one or various specific deities, each of which have their own attributes, elements of nature, paraphernalia, colors, and day of the week associated to them. For instance, Oxossi is the orixá of hunting and is symbolized with a bow and arrow and with green (in umbanda) or blue (in Ketu candomblé).
Perhaps that is the most important lesson of Rumpilezz: in order to be prepared to play this kind of music, musicians [brass players] must learn it also orally. Otherwise they will not be able to interpret correctly what is written in the score. Because if written music is interpreted exactly as in the paper, it will not sound as we want. [Notation only gives you] written rhythms and accents. So, we walk backwards: I deconstruct the rhythm, memorize it, and then notate it in the traditional way only as a reference. That [developing this system], is my higher goal. (p.c. April 27, 2012)

By claiming that the rhythmic nuances of African diasporic music (e.g. swing feel) cannot be fully captured by European standard notation, and that brass players must first learn music orally before reading it during rehearsal or on the stage, Leite places orality over notation, or at least equalizes them.

Leite composes and scores all brass parts but writes only sketches for the percussion (p.c. April 27, 2012). Although I have not seen these sketches, one could imagine them as akin to those given to jazz drummers with continuous dashes for groove passages interspersed by written *obbligatos*. Leites' sketches are transformed during rehearsal as he encourages percussionists to create their own parts. Most grooves are thus created collaboratively by Leite and percussionists. This process involves a great deal of variation of internalized patterns. For instance, in “Floresta Azul,” a piece inspired by the *candomblé toque aguere* (a Ketu groove dedicated to *orixá Oxossi*)92, Guedes plays the *aguere* pattern and variations he knows from the *terreiros* and combines them at will. But Leite also contributes patterns for other percussion instruments like the *caxixi* that are foreign to the *aguere toque* in Ketu ceremonies. For Leite this improvisatory aspect of Rumpilezz grooves follows with rigor a logic rooted in the oral organizational system of ABP and should not be regarded as spontaneous or disorganized.

Guedes also challenges the notion that non-scored music is informal and spontaneous:

> Yesterday a woman told me “my daughter is very impressed [by the fact] that you cannot read music but still can play so well.” That is because she [the little girl] plays the violin at the Neojiba orchestra93 and I have played with that orchestra. They also played with Rumpilezz. She was impressed because she saw me playing popular music with her aunt and then playing [erudite music] with the [Neojiba] orchestra and then with Rumpilezz. Afterward, she saw me teaching, lecturing, and playing percussion, *atabaque, pandeiro,*

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92 *Oxossi* is a *Ketu orixá* associated with the forest and hunting.
93 Neojiba stands for *Nucleos Estaduais de Orquestras Juvenis e Infantis da Bahia* (State Nuclei of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Bahia). Founded in 2007, this initiative of the government of Bahia offers opportunities of Western art music education and performance to children and youth.
and trap set . . . You do not need to learn how to read music to play an instrument [proficiently] and to express what you feel deep inside about the creation of another person. (p.c. May 1, 2012)

Like Leite, here Guedes takes pride in the fact that ABP can be successfully mixed with “higher” written music forms. Leite defines a composition as a “mixture of (musical) elements which would not come together on their own, spontaneously” (p.c. April 27, 2012). With his written compositions, Leite challenges the idealized notion that Afro Bahian music is close to nature in the sense of being spontaneous.

**Bodily Movement While Playing**

Despite Rumpilezz's appealing grooves, very few people dance during their shows. Audiences tend to sit quietly and behave as they do in art music shows. There are various reasons for this. First, the orchestra often performs at closed venues without appropriate space for dancing or where this activity is simply not allowed. However, I also attended concerts at open places where dancing is appropriate, but still most of the audience chose only to listen. Both at closed and open venues I noticed how some “felt the groove” and responded by rocking their bodies, bobbing their heads and tapping their feet in time to the beat, but mostly the energy was devoted to listening. Second, many of Rumpilezz pieces use odd meters (e.g. “Alafia” is in 5/4, “Anunciação” in 9/8, and “Feira de Sete Portas” in 7/4) that would “throw off” dancers used to duple or quadruple meter in popular music or in terreiros. Nonetheless, Rumpilezz has pieces with recognizable samba-reggae and candomblé metric structures that people could dance to, but still few do. And third—and most important—the orchestra does not advertise its music as dancing music and during shows they do not particularly encourage people to dance.

This disconnection between grooves and dancing is remarkable in Salvador, a place where the pleasure of popular music is largely enjoyed through coordinated dance. It is even more striking for the case of Afro-Bahian music. The orchestra's apparent disdain for dancing may be interpreted as a strategy to raise their status to the category of art music, just as bebop musicians did in the 1940s and 50s in the U.S.

Despite this, in their shows I noticed that musicians execute evocative movements while playing. Each show is commenced with one musician on the stage: Gabi Guedes. He solos on rum as Leite
joins in with a soprano sax. A minute later the rest of the percussionists walk on into the stage and join in by playing the other two atabaques (rumpi and lê) and the agogó. The percussion locks into a candomblé toque called aderé for orixá Ogum in 12/8. By this moment Leite has turned his free improvisations into the theme of “A Grande Mãe,” the piece that opens their shows. After three or four repetitions of this theme one begins to hear the rest of the brass instruments joining in but one cannot see them yet. As the volume increases they appear at the back of the audience parading towards the stage in two lines. Once the two lines meet at the stage center each pair bows in salutation to Leite and to each other before taking their seats. After three or four repetitions of this theme one begins to hear the rest of the brass instruments joining in but one cannot see them yet. As the volume increases they appear at the back of the audience parading towards the stage in two lines. Once the two lines meet at the stage center each pair bows in salutation to Leite and to each other before taking their seats. Shows are closed with the same piece while musicians leave parading out in the same way, leaving Guedes alone on the stage.

Sandra Lima once referred to Rumpilezz performances as contemporary xirês (p.c. May 2012). Xiré is the first section of candomblé public ceremonies where initiated dancers get possessed. Xirês begin with a toque that calls dancers. They enter the dancing space forming a line and saluting musicians, officers, and drummers as the walk by them. For Sandra, Rumpilezz’s opening routine is a stylized enactment of the xirê. Other statements that reinforce Sandra’s interpretation are inherent to Rumpilezz’s repertoire. Each piece is inspired (with a couple of exceptions) by a candomblé toque and related to different orixás, like the sequence of toques performed by drummers during the xirê.

In “Floresta Azul” Guedes and the other two atabaque players, coordinate their steps as filhas-de-santo (initiated dancers who get possessed in candomblé ceremonies) do when they dance for the orixá Oxossi in the terreiro (see Table 5.1).  

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94 I observed this sequence at their show in the Vilha Velha Theatre (February 2, 2012) in Salvador, Bahia. It can also be observed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Tv4ZCkVWw (1:08-4:40), accessed on May 4, 2014. 
95 I observed Rumpilezz’s drummers performing these steps at shows in the Vilha Velha Theatre (February 2, 2012) and the Castro Alves Theatre (February 10, 2012), both in Salvador, Bahia. Online clips where the same choreography is performed by Rumpilezz’s drummers can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_axAbDeXqkg (1:38-2:37), accessed on June 15, 2013.
Angelo Cardoso points out that these steps are part of a choreography that “represents that divinity [Oxossi] riding a horse and looking for prey. The arms, in constant movement, symbolize the arms of the rider handling the reins” (1996:289). Although drummers' hands are busy playing the drums, adepts like Sandra are able to recognize this choreography and imagery.

Speech Between Pieces

**LL:** I am not authorized to introduce the following piece. There is an issue that prevents me... (long pause)... but there is someone (here) who can: Gabi Guedes.

Applause.

**GG:** Good evening. The next piece, also composed by our great master Letieres Leite, is called “Alafia.” *Alafia* in the language of the orixás, interpreted by babalorixás and ialorixás [candomblé priests and priestesses] through the jogo de búzios, known as ifá [divination system], means open paths, union, respect, progress in life, peace.

Applause.

(Rumpilezz's show at Villa Velha theater, Salvador, Bahia, February 2, 2012)

During the four live Rumpilezz shows I attended in Salvador in 2012, “Alafia” was always introduced with an exchange similar to the one transcribed above. Leite, the master of ceremonies in all shows, steps back in “Alafia” and gives the limelight to *rum* player Guedes. The significance of this gesture is magnified by the aura of mystery created by Leite's unexplained claim that he is “not authorized” to talk about this piece, even though it is composed by him! The
mystery is solved when Guedes explains the meaning of the word *Alafia* and the magical context surrounding it. This linkage of *candomblé* to mystery and magic relies on popular notions of *candomblé* and black culture's closeness to nature.

In his book *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé* (2002), Paul Johnson explains that, throughout its history, secrecy has been essential for *candomblé* practitioners, at the beginning to remain hidden from authorities, later to resist prosecution and to protect precious knowledge, and finally to charge *candomblé* with an exotic hidden power that served to gain protection and legitimacy among elites and patrons. Johnson, who stresses the performative nature of secrecy in *candomblé* (2002:79), argues that as *candomblé* became a public religion and a vital part of Brazilian culture in the first half of the 20th century, the debate about secrecy moved away from the secrets themselves towards their holders. “It is speech about secrets, and not about the content of the secrets, that is now most important in building status, legitimacy, and power in *candomblé*” (ibid).

In the introductory speech of “Alafia” Leite and Guedes perform a form of secrecy that exoticizes *candomblé*. The emphasis is not on what is revealed, but on the fact that there is a secret and that the holder of the secret is present and has a privileged position in the orchestra.

The same night Rumpilezz performed “O Samba Nasceu na Bahia” (Samba was born in Bahia), preceded by a type of lecture-demonstration:

**LL:** Now we are going to demonstrate something. (These) are various types of samba that we have in Bahia as part of our culture. (By putting them) together, I created a composition, whose name I will say in the end. Now, for you, a little bit of *samba duro*

Percussionists play *samba duro* for 15 seconds and stop at Leite's cue “*pe-di.*”

*Applause.*

**LL:** [Now] a little bit of Ilê Aiyê's *samba afro*

Percussionists play *samba afro* for 45 seconds and stop at Leite's cue “*pe-di.*”

*Applause.*

**LL:** Now I am going to present the great-grandmother of samba in my opinion... (it was) created by people from the *Angola* nation. (Today) it is not exclusively property of *Angola* nation *terreiros*, but also of various ethnicities (*candomblé* nations) of the
We are going to demonstrate *kabila*, which I believe is the origin of samba with master Gabi Guedes, master Luizinho do Jejê... and countermaster Kainan.

Percussionists play *kabila* for 20 seconds and stop at Guedes’ drum cue
Applause.

**LL:** You noticed that in order to stop that rhythm [*kabila*] I did not use the cue ‘*pe-di pa-ra pa-rar pa-rou*’... (pause) because I must not... it is a mystery... With you “O Samba Nasceu Na Bahia.”
(Rumpilezz's show at Villa Velha theater, Salvador, Bahia, February 2, 2012)

“*pe-di pa-ra pa-rar, pa-rou*” literally means “(when) I asked you to stop, (you) stopped.” Beyond its semantic meaning, the phrase has a specific rhythmic meaning for Rumpilezz:

![Vocal cue and percussive response](image)

Figure 5.6 Closing cue used in *samba duro* and *samba afro* (Rumpilezz’s show at Villa Velha theater, Salvador, Bahia, February 2, 2012).

When demonstrating carnival styles *samba duro* and *samba afro*, Leite cued percussionists by saying “*pe-di*” to which they responded rhythmically with the phrase “*pa-ra pa-rar, pa-ru*.” This closing cue is widely used by *bloco afro* leaders in Salvador, not necessarily with the voice, but with a whistle or a high-pitched *repique*. Conversely, for the ending of *kabila*, Leite stepped back and let Guedes cue the ensemble himself, reflecting how this rhythm is actually performed in *candomblé terreiros* and in *samba de roda*.

Once again, Leite creates intrigue about why he “must not” use the carnival cue to stop *kabila*, a rhythm presented as the African ancestor of carnival samba that was developed and preserved inside *candomblé Angola terreiros*. The mystery fostered around *candomblé* in the introduction of “Alafia” is underpinned. But more importantly, claiming that samba—in all its contemporary forms—comes from *kabila* draws attention to the latter as samba is considered “the foremost

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96 Recôncavo da Bahia or Recôncavo Bahiano is the name of the area surrounding the Bahia de todos os Santos (Bay of All Saints), a former stronghold of Portuguese colonizers currently inhabited by millions of descendants of former enslaved Africans.
symbol of Brazil's culture and nationhood” (Vianna 1995). Leite relies on the idealized notion of “African” traditionalism and emphasis on the past to raise the status of kabila, and to legitimize the other two styles of samba he quotes in “O Samba Nasceu Na Bahia.” The title of the piece locates the origin of samba in Bahia, challenging the narrative of samba's beginnings in Rio de Janeiro. This reinforces the hypothesis of samba's origins in Bahian candomblé Angola terreiros.

Discussion

Candomblé, carnival music, and jazz are key referents for Leite. Candomblé provides the necessary images and sounds of black tradition, carnival connects them with the aesthetics and discourses of black empowerment of well known modern carnival associations, and jazz serves as a yard stick against which the organization of ABP can be measured.

To combine these three musical worlds, Leite devised a compositional method, a public rhetoric, and specific performance practices. This chapter showed that the content of these forms of communication links to idealized notions of “African” music that rest on images of primitivism, black tradition, and particularly candomblé. There are instances where discourses of primitivism and empowerment are simultaneously stressed. For instance, Leite's compositional method based in timelines and transferring drums rhythms to the brass emphasizes the theme of rhythmic predominance and complexity. In public interviews, however, he downplays the theme of closeness to nature in the sense of spontaneity by claiming that ABP is as organized as jazz. With this strategic choice, Leite articulates empowerment but neutralizes the discourse of primitivism.

Percussiveness and spirituality are emphasized in all possible ways during Rumpilezz performances. For instance, percussiveness is stressed in the choice of instruments, the way horns are played, and in the centrality given to drummers which is manifested in their position in the stage, style of dressing, and the attention given to the alabê in the speech presenting the piece “Alafia.” Spirituality is underpinned with the color of dressing, the steps of atabaque players in “Floresta Azul,” the presence of sacred drums, and the alabê who, according to Leite, plays “as in the terreiro” and holds secrets. Leite reinforces traditionalism in the speech preceding “O Samba Nasceu na Bahia” and by respecting some of the traditional freedoms and authority alabês have in candomblé. The theme of closeness to nature also manifests itself in one aspect of performance practice, a restricted use of musical notation. With regards to the notion of embodiment, the orchestra interprets it in two different ways. On one hand they de-emphasize it
by intending their music mostly to be heard, which links it to jazz and Western art music. In this way Leite puts ABP in the big leagues of “higher” musics. Simultaneously, while playing, percussionists do recognizable candomblé steps, a reference to “African” embodiment and spirituality.
Chapter 6: From Candomblé and Carnival Grooves to Big-band Grooves: A Method of Analysis

This chapter provides a method of groove analysis for Rumpilezz and its influences. It focuses on four categories relevant to the study of groove-based musics: timelines, layering, improvisation, and microtiming. Structural or systematic aspects of each of these categories are prioritized over performative ones. I begin explaining my method, then move to its application with regard to the structures and symbols of candomblé toques and melodies, samba-reggae grooves, and jazz big band grooves, the three domains which feed into Rumpilezz’s music. The objective is to understand how structural elements in these three domains are meaningful in their own spheres of practice before interpreting their possible meanings in Rumpilezz. Candomblé grooves receive special attention due to their centrality in Rumpilezz discourse and music.

A Method for the Analysis of Afro-Diasporic Grooves

Groove generally refers to the experience of certain types of music, particularly physical responses and sensations, and the rhythmic structures that produce and shape that experience. In constructing an analytical framework for Afro-Cuban jazz grooves, Bøhler distinguishes between groove as a noun and groove as a verb: “Analyzing one groove as a noun implies a description of the rhythmic structures that constitute the groove. Analyzing to groove as a verb implies a more aesthetic and normative description of the groove experience and how the music grooves” (2013b:68). Since my interest here is on how ABP is constructed by Orkestra Rumpilezz through musical structure, my focus is on groove as a noun. Chapter eight on music reception deals with groove as a verb.

This section proposes a method for the analysis of the structure of so-called “African” grooves in Bahia. As outlined in Chapter 3, the analysis of black grooves is highly politicized. The adaptation of methods of Western music theory for this purpose has been supported by many (Agawu 2003) and criticized by others (Arom 1991). Like many of my predecessors, here I adapt concepts typically used in Western music theory such as period and meter, as I believe they provide useful vocabulary to describe temporal aspects of grooves at a macro-rhythmic level. However, my focus is on structural elements to which musicians and listeners in Bahia have more concrete associations such as timelines and swing feels. As the method is meant for the analysis
of Rumpilezz's grooves, Leite's own descriptions of his compositional method served to
determine what aspects are more relevant and useful in the analysis. In my method I group these
elements in four categories and explain what binds them together. For this, I use Christopher
Wahsburne's guidelines of *playing in clave* (1997). The aim is to choose categories that are both
useful for structural analysis and meaningful for musicians, thus linking structure and meaning in
Rumpilezz's grooves.

But before laying out our categories of analysis, I will explain what I mean by structure and how
musicians might relate to it. In *Presence and Pleasure* Anne Danielsen conceives of rhythm as
“an interaction of something sounding and something not sounding (the... reference structure).
The latter is always at work in the music, and to me it is impossible to understand rhythm without
taking it into consideration” (2006:46-47). Drawing on Deleuze's notion of virtuality, Danielsen
conceives musical reference structures as “virtual aspects of the real music” and sounding events
as “actual manifestations of the same reality” (ibid:47). Rhythm for her thus “happens in the
midst of actual sound and not-sounding virtual structures of reference. . . . and the sounding event
may play both with and against the virtual structure” (ibid). An obvious example of this interplay
of sounding and not sounding aspects of music is the “relationship between meter and rhythm”
(ibid) where the gestalt of music events is contingent upon a silent matrix of hierarchical beat
streams and accent patterns. The categories of analysis discussed in this chapter try to
characterize the structures of reference of candomblé, samba-reggae, and big band grooves. My
transcriptions are aimed at representing musical sounds within the confines of the virtual
structures musicians may have in mind. While at the macro-rhythmic level these representations
may be satisfactory, at the micro level some events may not be satisfactorily accounted for, an
issue I will discuss later (ibid:48).

Timelines are among the most recognizable strands and reference structures of grooves in Bahia.
When they manifest as surface rhythms they often serve as groove identifiers, thus carrying
potential meaning by evoking particular contexts, images, moods, behaviors, and ways of
dancing. As reference structures, they determine the temporal aspects of grooves and give
coherence to the way various repetitive and varying layers (including melodies) fit together and
contribute to create the groove. This attribute of timelines has been fundamental in the analysis of
many black grooves in Africa (e.g. Jones 1959, Nketia 1974, Chernoff 1979, Locke 1982, Anku
1997, and Agawu 2006), in the diaspora (e.g. Washburne 1997, Mauleón 1993, Peñalosa 2009,
Chor 2010, Moore 2012), in Brazil (e.g. Kubik 1979, Lühning 1990, Sandroni 2001, Oliveira Pinto 1999, Cardoso 2006, Fonseca 2006, Lopes Carvalho 2011) and also central for Leite's compositional method and public rhetoric. This is why the method is centered in timelines.

The other three topics of discussion in this section include the properties and relationship of the layers and their connection to instrumentation, techniques of improvisation and variation, and microtiming. Leite refers directly or indirectly to these categories when speaking publicly about the way he writes for the brass in the orchestra, the freedoms of the alabê while playing, and the limitations he sees in Western notation for the representation of African grooves. In order to provide a wider context, I also explore how these structural elements of grooves fit into the larger form of the pieces and into the settings of the performance. Being the main source of Africanisms in Brazil and of inspiration for Rumpilezz, candomblé structure and context receive particular attention.

Timelines

Scholars and musicians agree that much of black Atlantic music is based on so-called timelines. However, some black grooves like those of funk and jazz are not necessarily underlain by these patterns, at least not in any obvious way. This section is exclusively concerned with the first types of grooves.

Timelines are short patterns that may be materialized by an instrument as a recurrent surface rhythm of a groove (or not). Authors studying black grooves across the black Atlantic have found that, in both cases, they are always ideally present in each musician's consciousness informing and constraining instrument patterns, melodic phrases, improvised rhythms, and even microtiming. Timelines are thus silent reference structures (per Danielsen) implying principles of phrasing and rhythmic combination. In polyrhythmic structures musicians create groove by listening to the actual layers they produce as a group and by making this texture fit with the reference structure dictated by an explicit or tacit timeline.

This understanding of timeline is widely acknowledged in Brazil, both by musicians and scholars

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97 Timeline is a concept first developed by ethnomusicologists who studied West African music traditions mainly during the second half of the 20th century. Although Arthur M. Jones recognized the existence and importance of timelines among Ewe drumming ensembles since early the 1950s, it was Kwabena Nketia who formalized the use of the term in Western scholarship in *The Music of Africa* (1974).
dealing with Afro-Brazilian music styles. Gerard Kubik, as early as 1979, was one of the first ones to describe “the so-called timeline patterns of African origin, that are preserved with noticeable creative force . . . in Brazil” (Oliveira Pinto 2001). Kubik points out that in Afro-Brazilian music, timelines “function as orientation for other parts of the music in their temporal dimension” and confirm “the bantu origins of samba or the Yoruba and/or Fon origins of gege/nagô candomblé” (Kubik in Oliveira Pinto 2001). Scholars in Brazil have translated timeline as padrão ritmico (Sandroni 1996), linha guia (Sandroni 2001, Fonseca 2006), ritmo guia (e.g. Oliveira Pinto 1999, Lopes Carvalho 2006) with some preferring to maintain the English word timeline (e.g. Lühning 1990, Cardoso 2006, Nobre 2008). Among musicians there is even more variety. Leite, for instance uses the Afro-Cuban word clave generically for timelines. Guedes and other candomblé musicians often use the name of the idiophone that materializes the pattern (e.g. padrões do agogô [agogô patterns]) and carnival percussionists like Macambira sometimes use the word toque. Some scholars have even tried to clarify the terminology by reserving timeline for Africa, clave for Afro-Cuban music, and ritmo guia (or linha guia) for the Afro-Brazilian case (Lopes Carvalho 2011:91). Despite my interlocutors’ use of other terms, I maintain the term timeline when applying it to Brazil or to any other context in the black Atlantic. Unless indicated, hereafter clave refers to a specific Afro-Cuban timeline: (x...x...). 

Back to the question of timelines as reference structures: as a surface rhythm a timeline is a short recurrent pattern of fixed length and pattern of durations that helps musicians and dancers extract a roughly isochronic pulse to which they entrain. The pattern may be grouped in two halves or more typically, in two uneven subgroups. An example of the first type, the symmetric one, is the batá timeline of Ketu candomblé, which is divided in two subgroups of 6 subdivisions each (xx....xx....). The second type, the asymmetric one, is exemplified by the Afro-Cuban clave timeline, with a grouping structure of 10 + 6 (x...x...x...). Because every stroke of
asymmetric timelines offers a unique point of reference within the period, they define the properties of the period (e.g. its beginning, duration, and subpulse) more unambiguously than symmetric patterns. The position of the strokes that fall off the implied beat suggest a subdivision of the pulse that in Afro-Bahian grooves is always triple or quadruple.\footnote{At micro-rhythmic level the pulse is not always evenly subdivided. In some cases, such as \textit{samba duro}, the positions may suggest subdivisions in six. These cases will be discussed in the section on microtiming.} Another important property of asymmetric timelines like \textit{clave} is that when divided in two halves (as dancers and musicians do), one of the halves typically has more syncopated feel than the other. This creates a sense of rhythmic tension and resolution that propels the music.

![Diagram of reference structure implied by an Afro-Cuban clave timeline.](image)

Figure 6.1 Reference structure implied by an Afro-Cuban \textit{clave} timeline.

Figure 6.1 reflects a structure of four pulses with quadruple subdivision implied by the \textit{clave}, perhaps the most theorized timeline in the diaspora. Afro-Cuban and salsa musicians and scholars typically divide \textit{clave} in two halves or sides as shown in Figure 6.1. The name of each side comes from the number of strokes contained within its duration (3-side and 2-side). \textit{Clave} is also heard to begin on beat 3 of the above figure thus yielding two versions of the timeline: \textit{clave} 3-2 (beginning on beat 1 of Figure 6.1) and \textit{clave} 2-3 (beginning on beat 3 of Figure 6.1). These unique reference structures are by no means interchangeable. Indeed Rebeca Mauleón asserts that for Cuban musicians reversing the orientation of \textit{clave} is seen as a major error (Mauleón 1993:48).\footnote{There are cases where musicians choose to “cross the timeline” in their compositions to create special effects as Jairo Varela, the late director of Grupo Niche, did in his early salsa hits “Cali Pachanguero” (No hay Quinto Malo, 1984) and “Buenaventura y Caney” (Querer es Poder, 1981) (Waxer 2002:172). In Cuban timba some contemporary arrangers and performers have consciously chosen to use \textit{clave} but not follow it in conventional ways and. Many of them like arranger Alain Perez sees this as “freeing” themselves from the \textit{clave} by paradigm Penalosa (2009:218). Kevin Moore (2010:41) points out that this has created reactions among the salsa and timba community.} Musicians call this “\textit{tocar con ritmo cruzado}” (playing crossed with the rhythm) (ibid).
But how do musical phrases “fit” or “clash” with the reference structure implied by a timeline? In his article “The Clave of Jazz” (1997), Christopher Washburne proposed a set of guidelines to determine the extent to which a musician plays his or her part with or against the implied rhythmic framework of a particular timeline, the Afro-Cuban clave. In analyzing the presence of clave in jazz, a type of groove-based music not typically associated with timelines, Washburne proposed the following criteria to determine if a phrase is in clave:

1. Accented notes correspond with one or all of the clave strokes.
2. No strong accents are played on a non-clave stroke beat if they are not balanced by equally strong accents on clave stroke beats.
3. The measures of the music alternate between an “on the beat” and a “syncopated beat” phrase or vice versa, similar to the clave pattern.
4. A phrase may still be considered in clave if the rhythm starts out clashing but eventually resolves strongly on a clave beat, creating rhythmic tension and resolution. (1997:67)

In short, playing a musical phrase in clave implies matching certain key notes with clave strokes to create a sense of rhythmic agreement, and alternating a more syncopated feel in the 3-side of clave (first measure of Figure 6.1) with a more “on the beat” feel in the 2-side (second measure of Figure 6.1). Washburne uses the expression “crossed with the clave” for instances where the rhythm of a phrase does not adjust to the criteria presented above, particularly when the syncopated and “on the beat” sides of the phrase are swapped with those of clave (ibid:66).

Washburne transferred this clave discourse from salsa and Afro-Cuban music to jazz arguing that jazz developed in New Orleans in an environment strongly influenced by Spanish, French, Haitian, and especially clave-based Cuban music traditions such as habanera and rumba (Washburne 1997:63, 65). He claims that such influences have been partly integrated into jazz aesthetics since the end of the 19th century in the form of timelines such as clave, tresillo (x..x..x.) and cinquillo (x.xx.xx.) and unconsciously carried on by musicians at least up to the times of bebop.

The same Afro-Cuban clave timeline appears in Afro-Brazilian music with different names, for instance as a signature tamborim pattern in samba batucada, as a repique pattern in samba-reggae, and as the agogô pattern of toque ramunha\textsuperscript{104} in Ketu candomblé ceremonies and of

\textsuperscript{104} Ramunha or avaninha is a toque used to open and close Ketu candomblé public ceremonies.
toque congo de ouro in Angola candomblé ceremonies. We know that this timeline came from West and West Central Africa to Cuba and Brazil probably long time before significant cultural interactions between these two diasporic centers began to happen. Therefore, the cultural and analytical validity of Washburne’s discussion of clave needs to be verified.

Although some Bahian musicians are familiar with the role of clave in Afro-Cuban music, terms such as “clave in 2-3”, “2-side,” or “3-side,” are foreign and, to my knowledge, not used by Brazilian authors. However, the idea of reversing the orientation of a timeline is also troubling for Bahian musicians. In capoeira angola, when singers switch the orientation of their phrasing with regards to the timeline (x..xx.x.), they are immediately corrected by mestres. The same happens with berimbau variations. I was scolded by Mestre Cobrinha for extending the syncopated feel of my variations for too long (over four timeline cycles) or for not resolving them idiomatically by matching the agogô pattern (the timeline). In that occasion he shook his head and moved his hands against each other, suggesting that I was playing atravessado (crossed).

During candomblé drumming lessons, Guedes, Macambira, and Ricardo Costa always emphasized the importance of listening and aligning my parts with the agogô pattern. With them I learned grooves that included a dozen different timelines. I noticed that drum variations and songs align with such timelines in forms analogous to those proposed by Washburne. However, when timelines are too short (such as aguere, which lasts two beats: xx..xxx.) the applicability of Wahsburne’s clave analysis is limited as there is not enough space to create rhythmic tension and resolution within the confines of the timeline. Songs and drum patterns tend to align with implied longer timelines (e.g. 4-beat long), as will be demonstrated later.

Washburne’s discussion of clave is thus largely relevant for the Afro-Bahian musical context, particularly for timelines spanning four beats. For clarity, I adjust the terminology. When a phrase is aligned with a timeline I use “in sync with the timeline” as opposed to “in clave.” I ignore the 2-side and 3-side nomenclature and refer to each side of the pattern descriptively. Furthermore, the concept of timeline “side” is inapplicable for some pieces of Rumpilezz with odd meters (such as “Feira de Sete Portas” with a timeline spanning 7 pulsations). I use the expression “crossed with the timeline” for instances of non-alignment.
Layering

A groove can be seen as a tight fabric made of threads of different colors, materials, lengths, and thicknesses. Olly Wilson argues that African American musics strive for a “heterogeneous sound ideal” in which “a kaleidoscopic range of dramatically contrasting qualities of sound is sought after in both vocal and instrumental music. The desirable musical sound texture is one that contains a combination of diverse timbres” (Wilson 1992:329). Although Wilson was referring to timbre, the concept applies to other parameters. For instance, many black grooves are typically formed by layers interweaving contrasting rhythms that may begin and finish at different points of the time cycle, use nested periodicities with different lengths (related by simple ratios), and be played in contrasting registers. As Danielsen puts it, “striving for differentiation among parts becomes increasingly significant as the number of layers and figures increases” (2006:52). The idea is that every thread (sonic layer) of the fabric (the groove) can be distinctly seen (heard) even when the fabric is very tight (dense).

In The Music of Africa (1974), Kwabena Nketia claims that the various layers forming this fabric always relate to “a fixed time span, which can be broken up into equal number of segments or pulses of different densities” (126). In other words, each layer relates to a shared reference structure, a meter. But we also know that the time span or period is determined by the timeline. Therefore, the rules governing how contrasting layers are put together are dictated by the timeline. Each of the interlocking rhythms must be in sync with the timeline, and their periodicity is either equal to that of the timeline or related by a simple ratios. The result is that each layer not only fits, but also reinforces the reference structure. But these layers not only reinforce this reference structure in the ways described by Washburne. They also do it by materializing the pulse and its subdivisions, especially in the more stable layers that vary little or not at all in each repetition. In these cases an instrument may articulate the pulse in positions where the timeline omits it (fundos in samba-reggae) or fill in the space between its salient notes with rapid notes that evidence the subdivision of the beat (rumpi in candomblé quartets).105

Improvisation and Variation

Grooves are composed of ostinato layers that remain relatively stable and others in which instruments improvise and embellish. However, many of the stable layers also vary—even if only

105Musicians who articulate the beat are referred to as time keepers and those who articulate all subdivisions as swing keepers.
a little—giving the impression that the groove is permanently changing. This idea of “repetition with a difference” has been linked by some authors to a supposed ethos of African derived cultures (Gates 1988). But more importantly, it has inspired some ethnomusicologists to describe Afro-Brazilian groove-based musics as based in improvisation (Béhague 1984, Garcia 1995).

Ethnomusicologists recognize that “to some extent every improvisation rests on a series of conventions or implicit rules” (Nettl 2001:94). Here I am particularly concerned with these aspects of improvisation, those related to style. The amount of change that is appropriate in a specific groove varies and is controlled by these conventions which are specific for each tradition. Improvisation and variation are both used to refer to these changes. In his Ph.D. dissertation “A Linguagem dos Tambores” (The Language of Drums) (2006), Angelo Cardoso distinguishes between these two terms. While improvisation is related to “spontaneous creation,” variation is a change always in relationship to something that has been previously repeated (112-13). In simpler terms, in groove-based music improvisation tends to imply a more radical deviation from a pattern than variation. More radical deviation may imply many things, for instance that changes introduced to a pattern render it unrecognizable. A characterization of variation as a slight change where the original pattern is still recognizable, applies to the more stable layers of the groove and, in some instances, to those more overtly authorized to change. However, the idea of freedom and spontaneity can only be applied partially as improvised phrases must fit the reference structure implied by the timeline and comply to conventions shared by musicians, dancers, and singers in the performance.

A change in one of the layers of a multilinear groove may be for embellishment or for cuing musicians, dancers, and singers. The more radical the change, the more clear the cue emerges from the groove. This is one of the reasons for the heterogeneous sound ideal, and also why many groove-based music traditions have a set of predesigned phrases that, contrasting sharply with the pattern from which they depart, communicate crucial messages such as the approach of a sectional boundary (e.g. ending of the performance, the beginning of a song). This category of pattern is neither variation, as the original pattern is no longer recognizable, nor improvisation, because the phrase was not created *spontaneously*. The case will be discussed in more detail in the section of *candomblé* drumming.
Microtiming

Many authors acknowledge that music's ability to make the body move, is largely dependent upon subtle deviations from a metric grid at a micro-level\(^\text{106}\) (Keil 1995, Iyer 2002, Davies et al. 2013). There are, however, aspects of this microtiming variation that are systematic or part of the style, and others that are non-systematic or performative. Since this chapter is specifically concerned with reference structures, I focus on the former.

Everyone knows that most groove styles subdivide the pulse unevenly in their own ways. For instance, a heavily swung eight note in jazz may sound as part of a triplet even if notated in binary meter. The qualifier *heavily*, which may appear in jazz charts or be agreed upon verbally, indicates that the amount of deviation required of performers is subjective. In her edited volume *Musical Rhythm in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (2010a), Anne Danielsen borrows the concept of “rhythmic tolerance” from Johansson (2010) to refer to this flexibility of grooves (7). For her, the reference structures used to represent microtiming (e.g. pulse, patterns of subdivision or meter) also “require a certain flexibility in their application” (ibid). It follows that even if one chooses to represent a music phrase in a metric grid (an option not ruled out by Danielsen), one must be cognizant that it “does not need to be realized as an exact temporal position but instead might work as a framework within which a cluster of acceptable realizations may occur” (ibid). This flexibility not only happens at the level of pulse subdivision, but also at the level of pulse as Danielsen demonstrated in the same volume (2010b). In her analysis of D'angelo's “Left and Right” she found instances where three micro-rhythmically different interpretations of the beat compete. Her conclusion is that pulse must be approached “as a dynamic feature of music,” as the location of pulse may shift according to changes in expectations and to discrepancies between local and global tempo (ibid:34).

Microtiming allows musicians to create the particular swing feel that characterizes the style and that makes the *groove* expressive. With swing feel I simply mean pattern of uneven subdivision, which includes, but is not limited to, transitions from binary to ternary subdivision or vice versa. Swing is also part of the virtual reference structure and, as Danielsen points out, may be realized

\(^{106}\) Some authors challenge the assumption that microtiming deviation always leads to grooviness. For instance, Anne Danielsen argues that certain machine-produced grooves do not “require microtemporal deviations from a metric grid in order to succeed” (2010a:2). In their study of microtiming in rock drumming, Frühau, Kopiez, and Platz found that “some styles of modern groove-oriented music are characterized by an aesthetics of 'exactitude' and a groove effect independent of microtiming deviations” (2013:246).
in various ways by each of the musicians. In a polyrhythmic groove structure all layers, including the timeline (if present as a surface rhythm), are articulated with microrhythmic characteristics (Gerischer 2006:114). Although timelines may be important in determining the relative degree of micro-asynchrony with which notes should or could be played in each metric position (Chor 2010:47-48), swing feels are more firmly articulated by the instruments that play the subdivision of the beat, for instance by the drummer in jazz big bands, by *rumpi* in candomblé quartetos, or by the *caixa* in blocos afro. This swing is negotiated in performance by musicians, who vary microtiming to communicate elements of the reference structure to each other. However, while trying to match each other in an established swing feel and with the reference structure in mind, they hardly play simultaneously (Cardoso 2006). These almost inevitable subtle discrepancies—or “clash of (microrhythmic) accents,” as Christiane Gerischer (2006) calls them, or PDs in Keil's terms—are accommodated by a flexible structure, but one with limits. Musicians and dancers can *tell* when and if the “right” amount of microtiming is being employed as this often manifests in music's *grooviness*. The “right” amount here refers more to ranges and tendencies than to exact intervals in milliseconds.

I also consider two aspects of microtiming variation that are not necessarily systematic but rather performative. The first one is intentional. Musicians may choose microtimings that contrast with the groove's swing feel to add expressive richness. This is particularly true for soloists, singers, or master drummers. With this device they can give more salience to the phrases they use to communicate codified messages, like when the *repique* player cues a break in *samba-reggae*. A typical technique is subdividing binary grooves in three or ternary grooves in two or four. For instance, the substitution of *tresillos* for triplets in Afro-Cuban binary grooves (Bøhler 2013a:105):

![Figure 6.2 Typical swinging of *tresillos* in Afro diasporic music.](image)

The second aspect is unintentional and has to do with sound production. As Rudolf Rasch points out, “a perfect synchronization is not possible in a live performance” because of “the relative ease of tone production within or between instruments, and the time lag between the production of a
player's own tones and the perception of the tones produced by others” (1988:71). In negotiating the swing feel within a polyrhythmic structure certain instruments produce notes that are more focused than others. An obvious example is the difference between the precise temporal perception of a bell tone versus a blurred shaker note which peak of sound spreads temporally, making it hard to know when the actual attack happened. Even when both musicians intentionally play with the same reference structure in mind, these unintentional deviations occur.

Candomblé Grooves and Melodies
As explained above, candomblé houses in Bahia usually organize themselves into three main nations: Ketu, Jejê and Angola, each providing specific canons for candomblé tradition. I focus on Ketu grooves and melodies as this is the denomination to which Guedes (Rumpilezz's alabê) belongs and from which Leite draws the most inspiration. As Röhrig (2005), Parés (2004), Crook (2005) and others point out, the Ketu tradition has held more prestige and influence over other nations throughout the 20th century. Additionally, more than half of today's candomblé terreiros in Salvador belong to this nation (Teles 2008:22). Toques, songs, and symbols, and even deities, however, circulate fluidly among candomblé houses of the three nations and among drummers it is common to master the repertoire of their own nations, plus that of others, as they are necessary to honor visitors from other houses (p.c. Gabi Guedes, May 1, 2012).

Grooves and songs are integral to sacred candomblé ceremonies as they are believed to summon orixás in the barracão, a room inside the terreiro where devotees witness dancers' possession during public ceremonies. Since virtually all elements of these ceremonies are interrelated and charged with meaning for musicians, dancers and devotees, an understanding of the symbolism and flow of the ceremony is necessary to contextualize its grooves and melodies.

The Ceremony
Although ceremonies have the general purpose of celebrating community and summoning the orixás, each event also honors particular orixás or marks rites of passage. Each candomblé house organizes its own cycle of ceremonies or festas (celebrations) according to an annual calendar. This calendar includes ceremonies to revere a specific orixá, a group of orixás, or for the

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107 This account is based in my own observations at various candomblé Ketu houses in Salvador in 2012: Casa Branca, Casa do Gantois, and Ilê Axé Tony Solayo.
108 For instance, Festa de Oxossi is celebrated in the last week of May and the first week of June at Casa Branca in
There are, however, ceremonies outside of this calendar, like those commemorating the death of highly ranked members of the house. These specific dedications imply variations from ceremony to ceremony in the way the house is decorated and in the emphasis given to deities. However, the overall layout of the ceremony is maintained.

Public *candomblé festas* have two main parts: the *xirê* and *dar rum pro orixá* (Cardoso, 2006:204-205). The *xirê* consists of a cycle of *toques* played in a specific order to accompany songs and dance. Initiates enter forming a straight line to the *barracão* at the call of *toque ramunha* and then dance for each *orixá*, following the cycle of *toques*, while walking in circle. Towards the end of the *xirê*, one by one dancers are possessed by their respective *orixás* and taken subsequently by *ekedes* to a specific room where they prepare for the second part of the ceremony. The *xirê* is thus a standardized part of the ceremony where: 1) all *orixás* are revered with a fixed sequence of *toques*, songs, and dances, and 2) specific *orixás* are invited to manifest themselves through the dancers. Once all initiates are taken inside to be dressed, music stops for some time while people socialize and eat.

*Dar rum pro orixá* begins with the entrance of *orixás* into the *barracão* to the *toque batá*. Dressed up with their characteristic paraphernalia, *orixás* enter the *barracão* and proceed to dance in a circle, but this time some *orixás* are put to rest by the *ekedes*, depending on the *toque*. Here *toques* and songs are dedicated specifically to each of the summoned *orixás*. *Orixás* dance enthusiastically performing choreographies coordinated with *rum's* phrases, saluting the congregation, and sometimes yelling and making bodily gestures. People make obeisance to each *orixá* from their place by standing, bowing or showing the palms of their hands. This is the climax of the ceremony at which the main goal has been accomplished: bringing the *orixás* down to earth so that people can experience them. It is a highly emotional moment. After every *orixá* has danced, *ekedes* take it out again and undress it. When all *orixás* have left the *barracão*, the drummers play *toque ramunha* again and the ceremony finishes.

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109 For instance, *Festa das Iabas*, for feminine *orixás* is celebrated in September and December at Casa Branca in Salvador.
110 For instance, the *Saída das Iaos* is celebrated in September at Casa Branca.
111 *Ekedes* or *Ekedis* are female initiates in *candomblé Ketu* houses who, rather than dancing or entering in trance, serve the manifested *orixás* in various ways (e.g. by dressing them or placing them in appropriate places).
In the barracão everyone has a particular place. The spiritual leader (mãe or pai de santo) sits in an honorific chair from where she/he controls the highly charged atmosphere, her primary responsibility. She gives cues to the drummers, ekedes, ogans,112 dancers, and sometimes comes to the dancing floor to entice orixás or to appease their impetus. Drummers sit in a central position against a wall so that everyone can see and hear them. They are often surrounded by a group of men, youth, and sometimes children who take turns playing. The audience is divided by gender and there is a spot for special guests (e.g. leaders of other candomblé houses). Ogans greet people at the door, assist them in finding a seat, and help drummers if required. Ekedes stand by the doors leading to the interior of the house and from there assist dancers before and after they have been possessed.

During the ceremony, the atmosphere may feel very solemn and serious but also joyful. Codes of behavior for the audience include: 1) dressing properly with clean and formal clothes in colors that allude to one's orixá or in light tones, especially white; 2) greeting everyone with codified gestures (e.g. by checking and kissing each others' hands) at one's arrival and departure; 3) sitting on the correct side of the room according to one's sex or prestige; 4) standing up or sitting down in accordance to what is happening in the dancing floor; 5) offering one's sit to the elderly; 6) singing in response to the soloist; 7) making reverence to the orixás when they pass in front of one's sit; and 8) contributing to the emotional energy of the ceremony by being quiet or cheerful when appropriate.

Instrumentation and Normative Roles
According to their use and symbolism, instruments in candomblé are divided in two groups: instrumentos de fundamento and quarteto instrumental (Cardoso 2006:46-47). The first group appears rarely in ceremonies, and is used to enhance the possession of specific orixás as each is associated with a deity. The focus here is on the quarteto, which is featured from beginning to end of all ceremonies accompanying dance, songs, and possession.

The quarteto instrumental is composed of a bell called agogô (or gã) and three barrel drums called atabaques which receive different names according to their size and tone: rum (the largest and lowest sounding one), rumpi (the middle sized), and lê (the smallest and highest-pitched).

112 Ogan is a title given to male initiates in candomblé Ketu houses to those who do not enter in trance.
The agogô a is a single or double-mouthed bell struck with a metal stick that provides a timeline over which drummers superimpose their patterns and give identity to the intended toque. Once this is established, dancers and singers add a repertoire of songs and dance steps evoking behaviors, moods, mythology, and history that associate the toque with a specific deity. These domains of knowledge can be almost entirely called upon with the agogô pattern.

Atabaques are wooden drums with a single leather head featuring diverse construction and tension techniques that may be traced back to the Bantu, Yoruba, Ewe, or Fon (Cardoso 2006:54-56). In Bahian Ketu ceremonies they are played vertically by standing or sitting male drummers who use techniques combining the bare hand and thin wood sticks called aguidavis with which they hit the head, rim, and shell of the drum. Atabaques provide the backdrop for the entire public ceremony and produce codified rhythms that help the alabê to control the flow of the dance, salute orixás, lead dancers into trance, and produce aesthetic pleasure. Equally important, atabaques carry symbolic meaning for practitioners as they are given the status of divinities (ibid). Cardoso explains that once atabaques are sacralized, they receive offerings, are dressed properly, and can only be handled by authorized personnel (ibid).

The rum player leads the quarteto and oversees the rest of the drummers, guides dancing, enhances possession, and many times leads the songs. He introduces the first cycle of the agogô pattern in his drum to establish the desired tempo. Once the agogô picks up the pattern, he is promptly joined by rumpi and lê, who have fixed patterns associated with each agogô pattern. However, it is the variations of rum that unambiguously identify the toque, as some toques share the same bell pattern (e.g. toques agueré and torin euê, respectively for Oxossi and Ossain\textsuperscript{113} share the accompanying patterns and timeline, xx..xxx.). These variations, consisting of a group of pre-composed phrases associated and organized more or less freely by the drummer, dictate and respond to dance choreographies. The alabê manipulates intensity through dynamic and timbral changes and above all by playing sequences of codified patterns. Possession happens during these moments of intensity, which are also energized by singing, cheering, and sometimes by the intervention of the mãe de santo. Each toque is performed for three to seven minutes by the quartet and finished in a full stop with a rum cue.

\textsuperscript{113} Ossain is a Ketu orixá associated with medicinal plants
Rumpi and lé have supporting roles and play fixed patterns in each toque. Along with the agogó, they provide an unchanging base for rum variations. Except for toques ramunha and ijexá in Ketu ceremonies, these two atabaques always play in unison (Cardoso 2006:260).

**Forming Candomblé Grooves**

Toques are composed by three or sometimes four distinct layers, (in the case of ramunha and ijexá), two (or three) of which form an ostinato.

![Figure 6.3 Toque ijexá (source: Gabi Guedes, Salvador, February 14, 2012).](image)

**Timelines**

The top three systems of Figure 6.3 show the composite texture of the ostinato of ijexá, one of the most popular candomblé toques both inside and outside terreiros. The agogó pattern sticks out because of its metallic timbre and functions as the strongest identifier of the toque. The rhythmic framework defined by its series of strokes (12212 2222) determines a period of four beats with quadruple subdivision, the reference structure.

While in Salvador I heard at least a dozen different timeline patterns both at candomblé ceremonies and drumming lessons. While some of them are exclusively used for a single toque, others like the vassi accompany various toques. Table 6.1 shows some of the most common candomblé timelines. All define cycles of two or four pulses with duple or triple subdivision. As theorized for other African and African diasporic styles (e.g. Locke 1982), and as demonstrated to me by Guedes, drummers may understand a cycle of 12 subdivisions to have 3 or 4 main pulses, depending on the variation they want to introduce.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Associated toques</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Subdivision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Timeline 1" /></td>
<td>aderé (Ogum)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ternary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alujá (Xangô)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ternary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>igbi (Oxalá)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ternary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ramunha (beginning and ending of xirê)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Timeline 2" /></td>
<td>agueré (Oxossi)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>torin euê (Ossain)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Timeline 3" /></td>
<td>opanijé (Omolu)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Timeline 4" /></td>
<td>batá (entrance of orixás to the barracão)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ternary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 Common timelines in Bahian Ketu candomblé (source: Gabi Guedes, Salvador 2012).

In addition to *ijexá*, the last three timelines listed above feature symmetric grouping. As we will see in the discussion of melodies, singers use other implied asymmetric timelines to frame the rhythm of their melodies.

**Layering**

In Figure 6.3 *agogô*, *lê*, and *rumpi* fit and reinforce the rhythmic framework with interlocking rhythms of different periodicities (two and four). In *candomblé toques*, the length of the *agogô* period is always equal to or twice as long as that of *rumpi* and *lê*. In *ijexá* these two *atabaques* reinforce the rhythmic framework suggested by the *agogô* (e.g. pulse 2 is empty in the timeline, but materialized by these drums) and add salience to the offbeats on pulses two and four, a defining feature of this *toque*.  

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Improvisation and Variation

Cardoso argues that common associations of improvisation to spontaneous creation during performance and variation to elaboration over a pattern inadequately account for the activity of the *alabê* (2006:115). Instead, he holds that “improvisation in the instrumental music of *candomblé* must be understood mainly as the liberty that the musician (the *alabê*) has of choosing the order in which musical phrases are performed” (ibid) because at a given terreiro, each toque has a definite number of codified phrases, called variações (variations), that are associated with specific choreographies (ibid:116). As this repertoire is shared by drummers, dancers, and orixás, drummers are encouraged to maintain it as stable as possible. This stress on preservation is connected to the fact that *candomblé* drumming and dancing patterns have a privileged status as symbolizers of Afro-Brazilianness (Carvalho 1993:3).

Figure 6.5 shows a series of variations for toque ijexá played by Guedes during a percussion lesson I took with him in 2012 in his house. There are phrases that could be conceptualized as variations of a central theme A (B, C, G, H) and others where the theme is not recognizable (D and E). The theme (three open strokes placed in beat positions 3, 3&, and 4 and a muffled one in 4&) matches the second half of the timeline and also has a periodicity of four beats, reinforcing the agogó. In other words, it is in sync with the timeline.
Figure 6.4 Series of *rum* phrases in *toque ijexá* (source: Gabi Guedes, February 14, 2012).

Table 6.2 Key for drum notation in Figure 6.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🎼</td>
<td>Open stroke on the <em>agogô</em> with a metal stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎼</td>
<td>Slap on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎼</td>
<td>Open stroke on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎼</td>
<td>Ghost note on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In ceremonies these types of phrases, played at moderate tempo (around 90 bpm), accompany the dancing for Oxum, the feminine orixá of beauty and fresh waters. According to Cardoso, orixá dancing in Ketu terreiros is connected with longer narratives where orixás have particular personalities, powers, realms of dominance, and relationships (2006:352). The dance for Oxum, for instance, symbolizes that deity taking a bath and being gently moved by the waters of a river, her domain (ibid). While some elements of the narrative can be re-arranged in the dance, certain sequences must be maintained, such as when the orixá moves forward and returns, as this symbolizes Oxum being taken down by the current and returning to the initial point to continue bathing. As each of these movements is accompanied by a rum variation, the alabê's freedom of choice to order musical phrases is limited.

Despite being free of such obligations, in Figure 6.4 Guedes follows certain criteria. For instance, phrases E and F, which articulate every beat with an open stroke, are always preceded by phrase D, which only marks beats 2 and 4 with those types of strokes. This sequence generates an increase in intensity as open strokes are rum's most salient sounds. Gradually increasing the density of open strokes is characteristic of rum phrasing.

But as Cardoso points out, the relationship between the dancing orixás and the alabê is bi-directional. Once incorporated, orixás not only respond to rum variations, but also dictate what must be played. At such times the alabê has the obligation to match the orixá choreographies with a corresponding variation.

**Microtiming in Candomblé**

The systematic study of microtiming in candomblé toques has received scant attention. Cardoso, who studied drummers of the Casa Branca in Salvador, found that musicians associate toques with particular swing feels. He discovered that when playing the vassi ostinato (see Table 6.1), which may accompany toques alujá and aderé, drummers consistently delay notes in the former and anticipate them in the latter with respect to their metronomic positions (2006:66-68). With the help of these subtle deviations drummers create distinct swing feels to associate vassi with toque alujá or aderé, even if they are conceived as metrically identical. However, he also found that even when drummers try to match each other in trying to create these feels, they play with varying degrees of anticipation or delay.
In her analysis of a *samba do caboclo* groove by Gabi Guedes, Christiane Gerischer found that *rum* and *rumpi* tended to anticipate, *lê* to delay, and the *agogô* to combine those two, and concluded that in some *candomblé* grooves “every pattern seems to have its own microrhythmic timing” (2006:111-112). She added that “this independence is no surprise considering that the solo drummer on the *rum* consciously articulates accents with the purpose of ‘turning’ (*virar*) the energies of initiates into *orixás* by inducing spirit possession” (ibid). For her this clash of accents augments music tension and facilitates possession. In her study of ceremonial spirit possession in the black Atlantic, Sheyla Walker offers a more detailed description of this technique that Peter Fryer (2000:19) finds relevant for *candomblé*:

> The dancers dance with great violence, energy, and concentration. Getting really involved in the rhythm and movement...The drummers... can play certain signals in the rhythmic pattern to cause the dancing to take a violent turn ... One method is for one drum to syncopate the rhythm slightly (another one maintaining it) such that a strong beat falls just before the main beat... This gives a impression of increased speed when this is not really the case, and creates tension and feeling of imbalance in the listener or dancer. (Walker 1972:18-21)

Gerischer's findings disagree with Cardoso's in that in some toques *lê*, *rumpi*, and *agogô* (the instruments of the ostinato) do not necessarily follow common patterns of anticipation or delay. Furthermore, she claims that the “clash of microrhythmic accents” is not (only) the result of technical limitations, but of conscious decisions of *rum* player.

*Other Layers: Songs and Melodies*

Like toques, songs in ceremonies address specific *orixás*. Most *Ketu* songs use ancient *Yoruba* words that are no longer spoken in day-to-day life. Although some devotees and specialists may know the translation of some songs, most do not. Even Guedes, after a lifetime relationship with *terreiro de Gantois* in Salvador, admitted that he only knew a vague meaning of the songs he taught me during our lessons. Certain *Yoruba* words are used as salutations for *orixás*, as when “Oké Aro!” is used for *Oxossi*. These words usually provide only general meanings. Thus, more than semantic meaning, text of *candomblé* songs and their melodies is symbolic and evocative.

Melodies in *Ketu* songs vary as they come from various sources and as singing styles are influenced by folk and popular music. I found the following overall melodic characteristics in the songs I learned from Guedes and heard at Bahian ceremonies: 1) a predominance of
antihemitonic pentatonic scales approximating degrees 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of a major diatonic scale; 2) a maximum range of an octave; 3) movement by intervals of a $2^{nd}$, $3^{rd}$, and $4^{th}$; 4) predominantly descending melodic contours; 5) responsorial forms; 6) the tendency to sing in unison or octaves when responding to the soloist; 7) rhythms aligned with the *agogô*; and 8) subtle deviations from metronomicity and Western tempered scales. Consider the song “Okê Odé” for *Oxossi* provided in Figure 6.5.

![Figure 6.5 Song “Okê Odé” for *Oxossi* and *agogô* pattern (Luiz da Muriçoca 1968)](image)

* The implied timeline was not heard in the recording

Here the rhythmic coincidences between the song and the *agogô* are marked with a “+”. The song has a period of eight pulses but a rhythmic pattern of four that at a glance matches the *ijexá* *agogô* pattern closely (see “o” above notes). When I learned this song from Guedes, he used different pitches for the soloist part (C-E-A-G-E), but the rhythm was identical to the one shown. He sang while playing the *aguere agogô* pattern and made no reference to *ijexá*. Other songs for *Oxossi* like “Aderê” and “Odé Comorodé” also align with the *ijexá* pattern like “Okê Odé” does. Thus, there are two possible timelines for these songs. Cardoso addresses this structural ambiguity by explaining that although many devotees insist that each *toque* is devoted exclusively to one *orixá*, in practice “when toques are used to accompany songs, that specificity is significantly diluted” (Cardoso 2006:247). He points out that “*ijexá*, Oxum’s *toque* accompanies songs for almost *all other orixás*” (ibid, emphasis added).114 This explains why *Oxossi* songs are underlain by the timeline of *Oxum’s toque*. The fact that “Okê Odé” aligns more

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114 While attending ceremonies in Salvador in 2012, I heard the above mentioned songs for *Oxossi* accompanied by *toque* *ijexá*.  

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explicitly with *ijexá* than with *aguere*, may be related to an aesthetic preference for timelines with a length of four pulsations that alternate a syncopated with an “on the beat” half and by the ubiquity of this particular rhythm in Bahian popular music. *Toque ijexá* has been secularized throughout the 20th century in Bahia by *afóxê* carnival associations and also by popular musicians. Its influence in Bahian music can be heard in *capoeira*, *samba de roda*, *pagode*, and *axé music* songs (Henry 2008).

I also found relationship between the *rum* variations Guedes taught me for *toque aguerê* and the *ijexá* pattern, although beginning at a different point, as shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6 Two *rum* variations for *toque aguerê* with implied *ijexá* timeline (source: Gabi Guedes, Mar 20, 2012).

This relationship is even more intriguing than that of songs as these two *rum* patterns are never played against *ijexá*.

**Bahian Carnival Grooves: Blocos Afro and Samba-Reggae**

Carnival is perhaps the most emblematic and colorful celebration of Brazil, and for many it represents the soul of national popular culture. Public rehearsals of music and dancing groups across the country and heavy media attention anticipate this pre-Lent celebration for months creating a long crescendo that climaxes during five days each February. During these days millions celebrate in public or private areas dancing to un-plugged or heavily amplified grooves. This national celebration, epitomized by the parades of Rio de Janeiro’s *escolas de samba*, has

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115 *Escolas de samba* are carnival associations typical from Rio de Janeiro. They are usually associated to particular areas of the city, have thousands of participants including dancers, drummers, and choreographers. Each years they parade at the *Sambódromo*—a purpose-built parade area in downtown Rio de Janiero where *escolas de samba* parade competitively each year during carnival.
regional flavors where the celebration of Brazilianness is combined with the vindication of regional identities. Bahian **blocos afro** are among the richest examples where local, national, and even international identities are negotiated through grooves.

**Blocos afro** emerged in Salvador during the 1970s as black-only percussion ensembles of poor neighborhoods, in a socio-political environment of racial discrimination and military dictatorship. By the early 1980s these ensembles dominated Bahian carnival music and became associated with a renewal of black consciousness taking place in Salvador and the rest of the country (McGowan and Pessanha 2009:136, Sigilião 2009). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the construction of an Afrocentric aesthetic in **blocos afro** was politically and aesthetically furthered by black activism in the diaspora and in Africa itself. These long-distance connections galvanized Bahian musicians' interest in experimenting with other diasporic styles such as *merengue, son cubano, salsa,* and particularly *reggae* and *funk* (Dos Santos 1996:213, 215). In their urge to create new “black” grooves to express their political views and aesthetic taste, local musicians transformed existing carnival samba grooves, adding these international rhythms and, of course, *candomblé.* The result was *samba-reggae,* a style that became a signature of Bahian carnival since the 1980s.

**Bloco afro** grooves are performed during carnival by hundreds of musicians parading in the streets. The visual effect of their colorful clothes and drums is enhanced by percussionists' coordinated steps, which resemble a dance more than a march. The volume is such that musicians themselves wear earplugs and audiences either enjoy them from a distance or cover their ears with their hands. Their grooves produce an intense sensation of pleasure almost involuntarily expressed through dance.

Every major **bloco** in Salvador chooses an annual theme for carnival that is best represented by a newly composed song. The song is usually arranged for **bloco afro** ensemble, keyboards, electric guitar, bass guitar, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and voice, and is rehearsed, recorded, and aired through radio and TV before carnival. These themes are linked to politics. For instance, **bloco Ilê Aiyê** tends to choose themes celebrating Afro-Brazilian heritage and idealizing ancient African civilizations (Filho 2004:49). The **bloco** commences its carnival parade *A Saída do Ilê*\(^{116}\) in the Curuzu neighborhood, where the message of their annual theme is reinforced through

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\(^{116}\) *Saída do Ilê* is an emblematic event marking the beginning of **bloco afro** Ilê Aiyê's parade in Bahian carnival.
grooves, slogans, speeches, and clothing. Grooves are thus not only associated with the pleasure of dance, but also with political statements.

**Instrumentation**

*Blocos afro* are led by the *director do bloco* or *mestre de bateria*, who stands in front of the group marking the tempo, replacing broken drum sticks, leading the advance of the parade, and cuing the breaks with hand gestures, a whistle, or a *repique*. The ensemble is typically composed of six or seven types of drums, but the number of drummers varies according to the significance of the occasion. In the annual carnival, the size of the ensemble may swell up to hundreds of drummers, with dozens playing each of the parts. But in smaller celebrations such as *festa da benção*, held every Tuesday night at Pelourinho, there may be ten to fifteen members in total.

Drums have different sizes and are either cylindrical (*surdos, fundos, repiques*, and *caixas*) or conical (*timbaus*). They are made of light synthetic materials with a system of nuts and bolts that facilitates transportation and tuning during parades, and are usually attached to the drummer's body. The plastic head is played with padded, flexible sticks or bare hands. The ensemble is divided in three families: high-pitched (*repiques* and *caixas*), middle-pitched (*timbaus*), and low-pitched (two *fundos* and two *surdos*). Every family functions as a timbral unit providing high, middle, and low range interlocking layers. In their urge to create a style that represented their aesthetico-political project, members of *blocos afro* gave paramount importance to the lowest section as they perceived it as the counterpart of *rum* in *candomblé* grooves. They invented a “singing” low layer (see “*surdo 2*” in Figure 6.6) to evoke *candomblé* where low sounds are prominent. The high section is formed by the *caixa* and *repiques*, the smallest drums of the ensemble, which balance out the low section with piercing rolls and timelines. The middle section, formed by *timbaus*, is the least prominent. In fact, many *blocos* do not include *timbaus*. When included, they play improvised embellishment that project weakly, unless they are particularly featured.

**The Groove: Samba Reggae**

In *samba-reggae* each pulsation is articulated by the two *fundos* and the accentuation of the offbeats is the job of the *caixa* (similar to reggae guitar accents). A swing feel prevails ostensibly combining those of reggae and carnival *samba*. There are many versions of *samba-reggae*, each with specific combinations of the patterns of *surdo 1, surdo 2*, and *repique*. These three parts,
particularly the last two, confer identity to the groove.

Figure 6.7 *Samba-reggae* groove (source: Renato Kalile, Salvador, August 2009).

*Timelines*

*Samba-reggae* timelines are usually materialized by the *repique*, sometimes are implicit, and on a few occasions played by *surdo 2*. Figure 6.7 shows one of the most typical *repique* timelines. It defines a cycle of four pulsations with quadruple subdivision. However, when experiencing these grooves, the pulse and its subdivision are not so much “extracted” from a syncopated timeline as they are “given” by the *fundos* and the *caixa*. One could then say that the rhythmic framework of this *samba-reggae* groove is jointly established by the *repique*, *caixa*, *fundos*, and *surdo 2*.

During my time in Salvador I heard *repiques* patterns defining cycles of 2, 4, 8, and 16 beats, and *surdo 2* cycles of 4, 8, and 16 beats.

*Layering*

Figure 6.7 shows a typical alignment of layers with different periodicities (1, 2, 4, and 8). *Fundos* mark the beat alternating between one and two, *surdo 1* emphasizes offbeat positions every other pulsation, *surdo 2* plays the signature pattern of the groove with rolls that gravitate towards a downbeat every four beats, *caixa* articulates the minimal subdivisions with consistent accents in
the third position of a pulse subdivided in four, repique plays an asymmetric syncopated timeline, and the timbau embellishes the groove with improvised phrases.

**Improvisation and Variation**

In blocos afro the role of timbaus is to embellish, but the rest of the drummers maintain their patterns without or with very little variation. As fundos, surdo 1, and caixas have a fundamental role in providing the pulse, the subdivision, and a swing feel, they have little latitude to vary. Surdo 2 and the repique, on the other hand, have some freedom to vary their themes but not too much as their patterns give identity to the groove. As in the case of timbaus, their variations embellish but do not have structural functionality, except when the leader uses the repique to cue a paradinha (break). This stability of the groove makes the contrast of the breaks more noticeable and effective.

**Microtiming: O Suingue Bahiano**

Samba is the Brazilian genre that has attracted most scholars interested in the systematic study of microtiming (Gouyon 2007, Naveda 2011, and Naveda et al. 2009 and 2011). Samba-reggae and other Bahian genres, however, have been less studied. Samba-reggae swing feels are mainly materialized by the caixa with its four uneven subdivisions of the beat. For Gerischer, this way of playing is part of a rhythmic dialect called suingue bahiano that generates the groove effect necessary to tease dancers (2006:100, 102). Unlike Rio de Janeiro's escolas de samba, where the effect of the four notes played by the caixa may be approximated by superimposing two against three (Murphy 2006:10-12), Gerischer found that in blocos afro each of the four notes has an average duration of 95, 87, 103, and 115 percent of the quantized duration (2006:107). In qualitative terms, the bloco afro swing pattern shows a tendency to anticipate each of the three offbeat metronomic positions, specially the second one. Her analysis, which spans over a cycle of four beats, also demonstrates that beats 2 and 4 tend to be slightly anticipated as well, in agreement with Danielsen's postulation of groove dynamic pulses (2010b:34). In her study of Olodum's samba-reggae grooves, Gerischer found that this swing pattern of the caixa is consistently followed by the repique, surdo 2, and the timbau, but with different amounts of delay and acceleration (2006:112).
Form

The performance of blocos afro begins with an introductory call-and-response phrase called convenção, continues with a series of alternations between ostinatos and rehearsed breaks (paradinhas), and finishes with a typical call-and-response closing cue. Each bloco typically has a repertoire of paradinhas for each piece that are cued by the conductor with hand gestures, a repique, or a whistle. It is not uncommon that the convenção is also used as a paradinha. Less common is for a paradinha to change the groove, in which case the performance may feature various versions of samba-reggae or even other types of grooves like funk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convenção</th>
<th>Groove</th>
<th>Paradinha 1</th>
<th>Groove (or groove 2)</th>
<th>Paradinha 2</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>Groove</th>
<th>Ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 6.8 Form of bloco afro performances.

The convenção is an introductory call-and-response phrase usually between a repique (played by the director do bloco) and the rest of the ensemble. This exchange builds tension by repeating a short a motif and varying it right before launching into the toque. Once the toque is established there is a sensation of release in the expectation of a dancing groove fulfilled. The length, instrumentation, and form of convenções varies according to the tempo and version of the samba-reggae groove that follows. Figure 6.9 shows a common convenção leading to various slow tempo samba-reggae grooves.

Paradinhas break the flow of the groove with contrasting unison, call and response, or sometimes interlocking phrases. Like convenções, paradinhas have various lengths (during my fieldwork I heard paradinhas from 4 to 92 pulsations), instrumentations, and forms. They are usually followed by the same toque that precedes them, but sometimes introduce new ones. The
momentum that propels the dance in the groove is suspended during these breaks, generating tense expectation. The power of this device is evidenced when the groove re-emerges releasing that tension and rewarding dancers. Figure 6.10 shows a paradinha where the leading repique and surdo 2 repeat a call and response motif three times and then prepare the return to the groove with a different type of call-and-response exchange. All other instruments remain silent.

Figure 6.10 Samba-reggae paradinha at fast tempo (source: Olodum street performance, July 11, 2009).

Bloco afro performances close with a typical repique cue to which the ensemble responds in unison. This phrase is usually taught with the Portuguese words: “pe-di pa-ra pa-rar, pa-rou” (I asked you to stop, you stopped):

Figure 6.11 Samba-reggae closing cue (source: Olodum street performance, August 1, 2009)

**Grooves in Jazz Big-Bands**

The ideas of grooving that Leite and Bahian musicians and audiences typically associate with “jazz big bands” inform how Rumpilezz's music is created and received. Leite’s references to Bahian carnival music and candomblé are concrete. He gives names of carnival groups, candomblé nations, orixás, and toques that render those references traceable to specific music settings in Bahia and identifiable in the orquestra. Jazz, on the other hand, is referred to in more general terms. Leite acknowledges inspiration from “North American jazz from the 1940s” (TV Brasil 2012) and has mentioned John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Weather Report, Hermeto Pascoal, Egberto Gismonti, Moacir Santos, and Abigail Moura as influences too (Jackson 2008). What
unifies these musicians is their experimentalism in jazz. In addition to the specific traditions mentioned by Leite (swing and bebop), his inspirations evoke cool, Latin, Brazilian, and free jazz.

Leite evinces awareness of relationships with other jazz groups that use Afro-diasporic music when he acknowledges Abigail Moura’s Orchestra Afro-Brasileira and Moacir Santos as predecessors of his work and when claiming that

   In my arrangements I follow the same principles of Cubans and North American [musicians]. When they play jazz they respect the surdo [kick drum] and the clave [timeline] in order to maintain the suingue [swing]. It’s the same in Bahia. I’m not inventing anything new. (Leite in TV Cultura 2012).

As discussed, when talking to organizational principles, Leite means arranging the music rhythmically according to timelines, as Afro-Cuban jazz musicians have been doing since the 1940s. However, not all the jazz that Leite and Rumpilezz audiences reference is guided by timelines. In this section I examine brief examples from Abigail Moura, Moacir Santos, Chano Pozo and Dizzy Gillespie, and Stan Getz where timelines explicitly guide the texture. I contrast these cases with Washburne (1997) who claims that some jazz grooves of the swing and bebop era are underlain by timelines, and with Monson (2000) who found that the presence of timelines as surface rhythms in some of Art Blakey’s works of the late 1950s does not imply that the whole ensemble is temporally guided by them.

Moura’s Orquestra Afro-Brasileira left only two albums: Obaluayê! (1957) and Orquestra Afro-Brasileira (1968). The instrumentation consisted of a brass big band (saxes, trumpets, trombones, and clarinets) and Afro-Brazilian percussion such as rum, rumpi, lê, agogô, adjá (a sacred bell used in candomblé), angona-puita (cuica), urucungo (berimbau), afoxé (a goard covered with beads). Most pieces also include call-and-response songs with lyrics making references to candomblé, umbanda, and the struggle of Afro-Brazilians during slavery (e.g. “Amor de Escravo” [Obaluayê! 1957] or “Palmares” [Orquestra Afro-Brasileira 1968]). Moura designed percussive grooves that supported songs and brass vamps. These grooves were based on timelines. That shown in Figure 6.12, for instance, underlie many of his pieces. Brass layers and songs align or reinforce the rythmic framework suggested by these timelines in explicit ways.
Consider, for instance the voice and brass vamp in “Saudação ao Rei Nagô” (Obaluayê!):

Moacir Santos’ fusions of Afro-Brazilian music and jazz offer a more elaborate example of the use of timelines. Santos’ music has been scrutinized by Brazilian scholars, particularly in relation to rhythmic structure and “African” traces (Dias 2010, Vicente 2012, Boneti 2013). These authors documented the “African-based” rhythmic patterns Santos developed for his compositions and for teaching purposes. Santos had a catalog of rhythmic cells that he and his students called ritmos MS, which could be combined for “rhythmic solutions in the creation of motifs or melodic themes” (Dias 2010:76-77). This rhythms include (x.xx / xx.x / xxx. / x..x / xx..) (ibid). Although Santos did not have a specific rhetoric about Afro-Brazilian timelines, in interviews he mentioned mojo, a pattern created by him which underlays many of his pieces.

Dias proposes that mojo was also a generative pattern for Santos. She documented nine variations used by the composer:
Referencing Dias, Vicente transcribed some excerpts of Santos’ compositions to show how *mojo* works as a timeline: “In ‘Kathy’ [*Moacir Santos: Ouro Negro*, 2004], we have a *mojo* within an odd meter of 5/4 which is played by the double bass, piano, and guitar (Vicente 2012:84). From these examples it emerges that Santos had the tendency to combine layers of the rhythm section contrapuntally to form a *mojo* timeline. Melodies align with *mojo* per Washburne (see Figure 6.14). Timelines are also articulated by the *agogô* in many of his compositions, for instance in his album *Coisas* (Forma, 1965).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kermis / Quermesse</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Variations of Kermis / Quermesse" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Variations of Kathy" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s my name / Oduduá</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Variations of What’s my name / Oduduá" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemurianos</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Variations of Lemurianos" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April Child / Maracatu, nação do amor</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Variations of April Child / Maracatu, nação do amor" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Iracema / Mãe Iracema</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Variations of Mother Iracema / Mãe Iracema" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suk-Cha (mão direita)</td>
<td>![Variations of Suk-Cha (mão direita)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coisa nº 8 / Navegação</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Variations of Coisa nº 8 / Navegação" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outra coisa / What if</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Variations of Outra coisa / What if" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 Variations of mojo in Santos’ compositions (source: Dias 2010:176)
Vicente claims that “the odd mojo in “Kathy” can be understood as a version of the alujá [timeline] where Moacir Santos eliminates the last eight-note, creating again a non-typical Afro-Brazilian 5/4” (ibid). His interpretation requires 1) rotating the alujá timeline (x.x.xx.x.x.x) and making it begin in the last subdivision; 2) erasing the last two subdivisions of the rotated pattern; and 3) changing the subdivision structure from ternary to binary (ibid:85). Applying similar procedures, Vicente claims that several Afro-Brazilian linhas-guia or timelines underlie Santos’ mojos and compositions including the ibim timeline (x.xxx.xx.xx.x.x) for orixá Oxalá underlies his piece “Oduduá” (Ouro Negro, Adventure, 2004); samba (x.x.xx.x.x.x.x.) underlies “Kamba” (Ouro Negro, 2004); and ijexá (xx.x.xx.x.x.x.x.) underlies “Coisa n°1” (Coisas 1965) (ibid: 77-92). Coisas is in fact, Santos’s that integrates Afro-religious music into jazz more assertively. In addition to alujá and ijexá, Vicente found relationships with candomblé toques bravun and barravento (ibid).

Santos drew from Afro-Brazilian religious music but did not use its instruments like Moura or Leite. His jazz formations included large brass sections (saxes, trumpets, trombones, woodwinds), a rhythm section of piano, bass, electric guitar, and trap set, as well as Afro-
Brazilian percussion instruments such as *agogó*, snare drums, and shakers. After he moved to California in 1967 he maintained this formation and sometimes added organ (e.g. *Opus 3 nº1* 1968), French horn (*Carnival of Spirits* 1975) and other instruments.

Co-written by Dizzy Gillespie, Chano Pozo, and Gil Fuller in 1947, “Manteca” is one of the most known and recorded Afro-Cuban jazz pieces in the U.S. Grooves and melodies align with a 2-3 *clave* timeline and a common mambo bell pattern:

In a rare interview posted on Youtube, Gillespie says that the bass line of “Manteca” was an invention of Pozo and claims “that is the first time in jazz that the bass player wasn’s playing [sings a “walking” bass line]” (path0610 2010). He explains that both the horn layers of the groove (Figure 6.16) as well as the main theme (Figure 6.15) were also invented by Pozo.
Gillespie described Pozo’s grooves as highly rich and rhythmic but “lacking harmony” and thus decided to write a harmonic bridge (B section) that gave the tune AABA form, a standard form in the jazz of the epoch (ibid).

Many other Afro-Cuban jazz pieces of Gillespie follow “Manteca’s” structure. “A Night in Tunisia” and “Tin Tin Deo,” were arranged for big band and smaller jazz combos in 4/4 and 12/8, for which he used clave and a 12/8 santeria pattern (x.x.xx.x.x.x) as timelines. Throughout his career Gillespie collaborated with other Cuban jazz musicians such as saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera and trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, both former members of Irakere. During the 1980s Gillespie led the United Nations Orchestra, a group of first-class American and Latin American musicians including the above mentioned and Brazilians Airto Moreira and Flora Purim. The repertorie included many of Gillespie’s compositions arranged in Afro-Cuban style and other Latin American pieces such as “Seresta Samba for Carmen,” a Brazilian samba guided by the timeline (x.x..x.x.x.xx.x.). The influence of Gillespie in Brazilian perceptions of jazz was further increased by his tours in this country as early as 1962 (Henry 2008:167).

Timelines in jazz

In Stan Getz album Big Band Bossa Nova (1962) the drummer plays the so-called bossa nova timeline (x..x.x...x..x...) throughout. With this timeline jazz drummers evoked Brazilian bossa nova and samba in the 1960s. But unless a Brazilian, Cuban, Caribbean, or a West African flavor is desired, timelines are rarely present as surface rhythms in North American big band jazz and are not typically present in swing, bebop, cool, and free jazz.

Washburne (1997), nonetheless, argues that asymmetric timelines such as clave, tresillo, and cinquillo implicitly underlie many melodies, solos, and comping patterns of swing jazz, even when Afro-Latin evocations are not necessarily intended (e.g. “Skrontch” in Ellington’s An Explosion of Genius, 1938-1940). He discusses cases where solos by Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Gillespie, and others align with an implied clave, suggesting that they work as non-sounding reference structures. For Washburne the implicit presence of these patterns demonstrates Afro-Caribbean contributions to jazz dating back to its early developments in New Orleans (1997:78). In the case of Gillespie, we know he learned this patterns from his interactions with Cuban musicians throughout his career.
On the other hand, Ingrid Monson demonstrates that “it is quite possible to borrow rhythmic patterns that are 'in clave' without fully internalizing clave as a structural principle of phrasing and rhythmic combination” (2000:339-340). In her analysis of Art Blakey's “Ritual” (Ritual, 1957), “Toffi” (Orgy of Rhythm, 1957), and “Dinga” (Holiday for Skins, 1958), she found fragments in which African and Afro-Cuban timelines are articulated by some instruments, but crossed and disregarded by others (ibid:334-336). She concludes that “Blakey’s purpose, however, was not to keep clave but to invoke the notion of Africa and ritual” (ibid:334).

In sum, explicit timelines in North American jazz are heard as Afro-Latin in origin but are only conceived as structure references in some cases. Whether Washburne's historic claim is well founded or his examples are sufficiently representative of the style is a different question.

Improvisation

Improvisation and spontaneous negotiations on the stage are central features of jazz in any of its manifestations. For instance, the standard big band rhythm section of by piano, guitar, bass, and trap set, creates groove by overlaying improvised parts according to standard performance practice: the drummer establishes the tempo, the subdivision of the beat, and a swing feel; the bassist delineates the harmonic progression by “walking” a quarter-note line or by playing rhythmic patterns according to style (see Figure 6.16); and the pianist and the guitarist “comp” with short fills or syncopated chords. These roles are fulfilled with flexibility. For instance, the bass player may choose tones implying different inversions of the harmonies and change the rhythm. The piano and the guitar players may choose any inversion, register, and duration of the chords they are expected to play, or may add fills. While providing the pulse and swing feel, drummers may play rolls or syncopated rhythms, especially when anticipating sectional boundaries.

Jazz with Afro-Latin influences usually features percussion instruments such as congas, bongos, cowbells, timbales, shakers, surdos, pandeiros, etc. These instruments often play patterns that are idiomatic to their traditional settings (such as rumba or samba), or adaptations of those patterns to

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117 Monson uses the term clave generically for timelines. Thus, “in clave” must be understood as “in sync with the timeline,” whatever the timeline is in that piece.

118 Washburne's claim that the presence of clave in some recordings of the swing and bebop era testify early musical exchanges between New Orleans and Cuba is questioned. Ives, for instance, finds Washburne's analysis “anecdotal in its selection of examples” (2010:40).
new meters (e.g. Moacir Santos’ “Kathy”). Like the rest of the rhythm section, Afro-Latin percussion (with the exception of bells playing timelines), has latitude to deviate from patterns as they “feel it,” as long observing the reference structure implied by the timeline is observed.

Jazz typically features melodic solos, most commonly over chord progressions. Those solos are conventionally governed by scales, modes and harmonies. As Queiroz (2010) pointed out, Bahian musicians praise these improvisation techniques as they allow them to construct lines where the main theme or head is no longer recognizable. Other aspects highly valued in melodic solos by Bahian musicians are speed, variety of timbres, ability to play in extreme ranges, ability to build a narrative by developing and returning to motifs, the ability to change the mood with specific phrasings and pitch choices, and the ability to blend well with the groove (ibid). In big bands the arranger or director specify when the soloist is to improvise.

None of the two albums left by Moura’s Orquestra Afro-Brasileira feature melodic solos. The brass focuses on playing riffs, vamps, and melodies mostly backing up singers. Santos’ music, on the other hand, features melodic solos over chord progressions as in most jazz bands. Influenced by North American modal jazz of the 1960s and by music the Northeast of Brazil, where he grew up, Santos preferred modality to tonality in his compositions (Vicente 2012:16, 135). Supported by McCann (2004) Vicente claims that in the 1960s modalism emerged in Brazil as a “compositional strategy that contributed to the process of construction and renovation of ‘Brazilianness’, ‘Africanness’, and ‘Northeastern identity’” (2012:128). He subsequently interprets the melodic and harmonic features of Santos’ Coisas (e.g. modal melody and harmony, tonal cadences in modal melodies) as “opositions to tonality” and affirmations of an African aesthetic (ibid:152-3). In terms of improvisation, Vicente points out that modality opened spaces for improvisation in Santos’ compositions at the level of structure, giving musicians the freedom to create “modal vamps” (ibid:182). The author explains in modal jazz the sense of cadential resolution of functional harmony is minimized “when there is only one chord or when a chord progression is not determined by tonality” (ibid:149). In this sense, improvisation is not meant to delineate chord progressions, but to “explore different colors . . . using modes” (ibid). Vicente suggests that brass players gain new freedoms in modal contexts as written vamps can be altered in each repetition, more or less as bass players may change the rhythmic and melodic content of their lines (ibid). Independent of their modal or tonal character, Vicente and Dias demonstrate that melodic solos in Santos’ compositions align with their corresponding timelines.
Microtiming: Jazz Swing

Jazz swings in many different ways. Differences are largely based on the rhythmic section and the intended style. For instance, in Afro-Cuban jazz the groove is mainly produced by the interactions of congas, bongos, cowbells, timbales, trapset, piano, and bass. Afro-Cuban percussion tends to impose swing feel idiomatic to traditional styles like rumba or son. By the same token Moacir Santos’ music of the 1960s, also swings in ways idiomatic to the Afro-Brazilian percussion instruments that accompany it.

Being one of the most distinctive markers of style in jazz, swing has been extensively discussed in North American scholarship. Charles Keil was one of the first ones to propose a relationship between the ability of the music to groove and microtiming deviations: “it is the little discrepancies within a jazz drummer's beat, between bass and drums, between rhythm section and soloists, that create 'swing' and invite us to participate” (1987:277). Matthew Butterfield asserts that ever since this model was introduced in 1966,

Most studies of microrhythmic processes in jazz to date have focused primarily on two dimensions: (1) the “swing ratio,” which expresses the durational relationship between the long downbeat eighth note and the short upbeat; and (2) asynchronous timing between bassists and drummers in the articulation of an ongoing beat. The expressive quality of a soloist’s particular style of swing is believed to stem largely from the former; but swing as an emergent quality of groove—the feeling that gets feet tapping and heads bobbing—is thought to result specifically from the “tension” generated between bass and drums as they negotiate the beat. Typically, one plays ever so slightly ahead of the other—that is the “discrepancy”—and the push and pull between them purportedly produces the effect of swing. (2010:157-158)

In North American jazz big band music (that has no intentional Afro-Latin references) notated in 4/4, the beat theoretically subdivides into two equally spaced intervals represented by a pair of eighth notes. However, in practice musicians tend to prolong the first of each pair and shorten the second. Butterfield asserts that “Empirical research has shown that the 'swing ratio' (the ratio of long to short eight notes) varies widely with tempo, but appears on average to be about 1.7:1” and that “at faster tempos, this ratio approaches an even 1:1” (2006, paragraph 18). Even though standard notation offers a distorted representation of these reference structures, musicians read scores with these internalized structures in mind and adjust their microtiming to the rhythm section's swing, particularly to the drummer's. Consider the following fragment of Gillespie's
rendition of “Autumn Leaves” (*Birks’ Works* 1957) in bebop style, provided in Figure 6.17. The waveform shows that the distance between the eighth notes in beat positions 2& and 3 of the second bar is approximately half of that between notes in beat positions 4 and 4&.

![Waveform of “Autumn Leaves”](image)

Although swing is flexible and subjective and musicians hardly match each other at the micro level, swing feels may achieve high degrees of synchrony as when musicians say that their groove is “in the pocket.” In sum, swing in jazz is typically achieved by different degrees of delay in the attack of the second note in a pulse theoretically divided in two. This provides flexibility in the performance that musicians interpret as freedom to express how they feel the music.

There is one more thing to say about big band microtiming, but this time in its non-systematic manifestation. Inspired by Wilson's idea of heterogenous sound ideal, Vijay Iyer points out that microtiming variation can allow an instrument of a timbrally homogeneous large ensemble like a jazz big band to claim its individual personality (2002:402). This is achieved by improvising at the microrhythmic level (i.e. by consciously deviating from the established swing pattern while soloing).

**Orchestral Black Grooves**

We saw how the four analytical categories operate in *candomblé*, carnival, and various big band traditions, particularly Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian jazz. Structural elements may appear across styles, but they acquire different functional and symbolic significance in each. Consider
the ubiquitous timeline (x..x...x.x...), present as a surface rhythm or implicitly as a rhythmic framework in each of these styles. This pattern is one of the four layers of *toque ramunha*, used in *Ketu terreiros* (Behague 1984:238, 243, Cardoso 2006:261). *Toque ramunha* is exclusively used to invite dancers into the *barracão* at the beginning of ceremonies and to send away the *orixás* at the end of the event. It thus functions as a marker of these crucial points of the celebration. Cardoso points out that in Casa Branca and other *Ketu terreiros* in Salvador, *ramunha* accompanies a choreography for *Omolu*, the *orixá* of illness and healing (2006:263, 264). The five strokes of the *agogô* in *ramunha* not only represent the beginning of the event and the promise that devotees will see their *orixás*, but also specifically the deity that may help them to cure their diseases. Cardoso also found that *ramunha* may be played with microrhythmic differences in *Ketu terreiros*:

![Figure 6.18 Two versions of ramunha in Ketu candomblé (source: Cardoso 2006:262).](image)

The pattern is also the timeline of *toque congo de ouro* in *Angola candomblés* and various *umbanda terreiros* in Salvador. In these contexts the pattern accompanies dances and songs for various deities, but does not necessarily open and close ceremonies.

In *blocos afro*, this timeline provides the reference structure for *samba-reggae*, specially for more upbeat versions of it (120 bpm or more). I observed that *samba-reggae* tends to be played at slower tempos (between 90 and 100 bpm). At this pace, timelines are typically similar to the one shown in Figure 6.7, but when they accelerate, the *repique* often switches to (x..x..x.) or (x..x..x...x..x...). Leite delcared “Samba in Rio de Janeiro is played a little faster. That is the most important difference between Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. We play samba like before: slower” (Jackson, 2008). Therefore, beyond its structural function, the five-stroke timeline symbolizes versions of *samba-reggae* that are more removed from some local musicians' ideal type of Bahian samba.

Last, *clave* was one of the foundational timelines of Afro-Cuban jazz. It is integral to many of the
compositions of Machito and Bauzá (e.g. “Tanga”), Gillespie and Pozo (e.g. “Manteca”), Irakere (e.g. “Aguanile”), and many others. The discussed timeline does not appear as such in Abigail Moura or Moacir Santos’s Afro-Brazilian jazz, but it underlies many of the timelines used by them. For instance, the pattern is contained by Santos’ *mojo* (x.X.xx.x.Xx.X.) and by a timeline used by Moura in most of his compositions (x.X.x.Xx.Xx.X.). In both cases the pattern begins half way and the coincidences are marked by a capital X. In other jazz styles outside of Afro-Latin, like swing, bebop, and cool, the pattern is rarely materialized. In the specific cases discussed by Washburne, the pattern does not necessarily symbolize specific moods and styles for musicians and audiences as in *candomblé*, *blocos afro*, or Afro-Cuban jazz. In other instances it is explicitly articulated but it does not necessarily guides the ensemble rhythmically like in Art Blakey’s *Ritual*. In this case the pattern is a mere allusion to Afro-diasporic or African music in a general sense, much as North American jazz musicians refer to Brazilian music when they use the so-called *bossa nova clave*\(^1\) (x..x..x..x..x..x..) in pieces like “One Note Samba.”

But what happens when a big band in Salvador overtly uses this timeline? The pattern gains strong symbolic power, as it is not associated with jazz big band music *per se*. Bahian audiences may link it with *samba-reggae, samba duro, toque ramunha, toque congo de ouro* or even with Afro-Cuban jazz, Caribbean music or salsa. Associations are contingent upon the particular discourses and associated fields at play. The next chapter examines the different timelines chosen by Leite for Rumpilezz’s repertoire and explains how they also function as devices of symbolic representation in their performances. With the help of these structural and symbolic meanings, Leite tailors Rumpilezz’s orchestral grooves to forge an aesthetic that connects jazz with Afro-Bahian music.

\(^1\) *Bossa nova clave* is often used among jazz musicians outside of Brazil. In Brazil this label is rarely used in Bahia. My percussion teachers in Salvador associate this pattern with carnival samba and call it “padrao do repique,” or “samba.”
Chapter 7: Reinventing Afro-Bahian Music Through Musical Structure

In what follows I continue the work of Chapter 5 in interpreting grooves and melodies as communicative means used by the orchestra to set forth their agenda of dignifying ABP. In reinforcing this agenda, the orchestra primarily reinforces the notion of “African” rhythmic centrality and complexity, and secondarily, uses various interpretations of the theme of “African” closeness to nature in the sense of spontaneous creation. Groove elements brought in from other music domains have varying degrees of evocative power when placed in the context of the orchestra, being greater when they come from candomblé. As we will see, the evocative power depends on the treatment (degree of transformation) given to these imported elements, and also the symbolic power they are charged with in their original contexts.

The chapter uses the four categories of analysis proposed in Chapter 6 to scratch the surface of Rumpilezz's grooves and melodies and to detect the symbolism resulting from displacing groove elements belonging to candomblé, carnival, and jazz. For the analysis I study the timelines used by Leite in Rumpilezz's only album Letieres Leite and Orchestra Rumpilezz (2009), plus two new pieces of their repertoire that were not released by the time I concluded this dissertation: “Feira de Sete Portas” and “Das Arabias.” For layering, improvisation and microtiming I focus on “Floresta Azul”, a piece overtly inspired by candomblé elements and symbolism.

Timelines

In Chapter 5 we saw that Leite's compositional method is based on timelines because he believes these patterns synthesize the main organizational principles of Afro-Bahian rhythm and thus provide the most rigorous base to create a new sound that, despite exploring contemporary sounds and timbres, remains profoundly connected with ABP aesthetics. In other words, as Afro-Cuban jazz musicians he recognizes the role of timelines as providers of rhythmic frameworks.

Each piece of Rumpilezz's repertoire is based on one or various timelines borrowed literally or inspired by candomblé or samba-reggae grooves. Table 7.1 shows the timelines of eleven pieces, nine recorded on their first album and two that, as of December 2013, have not been released yet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Associated toque</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “A Grande Mãe, entrada”  
“Balendoah”  
“A Grande Mãe said” | *Vassi for Ogum (aderê)* | ![12/8 note pattern] |
| “Anunciação” | Variation of *vassi* (first 3 beats of *vassi*) | ![9/8 note pattern] |
| “Alafia:” | Variation of *sato* | * |
| “Floresta Azul” | *Aguere (Oxossi)* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| “Taboão” | *Samba-reggae* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| “Adupe Fafá” | Variation of *vassi* (last 3 beats of *vassi*) | ![9/8 note pattern] |
| “O Samba Nasceu na Bahia” | *Samba duro* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| | *Samba-reggae* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| | *Kabila* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| “Temporal” | *Ilù (Iansa)* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| | *Ijexá (Oxum)* | ![8/8 note pattern] |
| “Feira de Sete Portas” | Variation of *ijexá* | ![4/4 note pattern] |

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120 Tracks 1 and 10 of the Rumpilezz’s album are live versions of the same piece, the first one at Teatro Castro Alves and the second one at the church Nossa Senhora do Rosario dos Pretos, both in Salvador.

121 *Sató* is a *toque* of the Jejé nation often performed in *candomblé Ketu terreiros* where it is dedicated to orixá *Omolu* (Cardoso 2006:357, 359)
Table 7.1 *Toques* and timelines associated with each piece of the Rumpilezz's repertoire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Associated toque</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Das Arabias”</td>
<td>Variation of vassi (shifting the position of the downbeat)</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Timeline" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* I have not been able to establish the timeline underlying Alafia.

Rumpilezz employs more timelines inspired by *candomblé* than carnival samba. Out of the eleven pieces, only two use *samba-reggae* timelines and one uses a variation of *ijexá*, a *toque* present both in carnival and *terreiros*. This emphasis on sacred timelines is consistent with Leite's discourse that the richness and originality of ABP has been mostly preserved inside *terreiros*. It also reinforces the extramusical messages of *candomblé* spirituality, especially the choice of instrumentation and color of clothing.

Most timelines in Table 7.1 are transferred literally from *candomblé* and carnival grooves and materialized by the *agogô* or the *repique*, the same instruments that play them in *terreiros* and street parades (e.g. “A Grande Mãe,” “Floresta Azul,” “Taboão,” “Balendoah,” “O Samba Nasceu na Bahia,” and “Temporal”). This rhythmic and timbral equivalence links each timeline with their source aesthetics and symbolism yet at general levels. For instance, in Bahia the *vassi* pattern played by the *agogô* can be heard in contexts including popular music and experimental carnival music grooves. However, it more strongly evokes Afro-religious grooves, since other diasporic styles like *capoeira*, *samba de roda*, and carnival *samba* are typically binary or quaternary. But within *Ketu* ceremonies, *vassi* may underlie *toques aluja* for Xango, *igbi* for Oxalá, or *adere* for Ogum. In other words, the *vassi* pattern in “A Grande Mãe” or in “Balendoah” *in itself* evokes Afro-religious music because of its ternary subdivision, but not necessarily the aesthetic qualities and symbolic meanings of a specific *toque*. One who has the insider knowledge needs to hear the rest of the *atabaque* parts in order to make the disambiguation.

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122 In 2006 percussionist Macambira formed the carnival percussion group *Na Cor*, for which he arranged some *candomblé* grooves based in the *vassi* pattern. See an example at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vz7z0Jeqio](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vz7z0Jeqio).
The association of Rumpilezz’s timelines with candomblé or carnival grooves is more difficult to establish in pieces like “Anunciação” or “Feira de Sete Portas” where Leite alters the structure of known timelines to create new metric configurations. He uses two techniques to make these alterations: first, shortening the length of an existing pattern; and second, maintaining the original pattern but shifting the pattern’s alignment with the meter (i.e. changing where “one” is felt to be). For instance, the timelines of “Anunciação” and “Adupe Fafá” are both based on fragments of the vassi pattern, the former in the first three beats, and the latter in the last three beats, but shifting the first stroke to the position of the downbeat as shown below:

![Diagram of timelines](image)

Figure 7.1 Relationship of timelines of “Anunciação” and “Adupe Fafá” to the vassi pattern.

The two new timelines shown in Figure 7.1 create cycles of three beats with triple subdivision. As candomblé drumming lacks this type of meter, the structural connection demonstrated above is difficult to establish just by hearing these patterns, particularly in the case of “Adupe Fafá” where the beginning is shifted over and rhythmically altered. Although Leite does not claim here any specific connection to a particular toque, he knows that triple subdivision evokes Afro-religious music, especially when the timeline is played by the agogô. He used this device also in “Das Arabias” as will be discussed below.

The same technique of cutting a well-known timeline is employed in “Feira de Sete Portas,” a piece that Leite refers to as “ijexá in seven.” Differently than in the two previous examples, this timeline can be more easily associated with ijexá, as the only difference between the two is the absence of the last stroke, resulting in a period of seven pulsations (see Figure 7.2). Besides its presence in candomblé, ijexá is also the signature toque of afoxés, another type of carnival ensemble with Afro-religious symbolism and aesthetics. The importance of the ijexá groove in Bahia is best represented by the song “E d'Oxum” by Gal Costa which includes the lyric “Nessa Cidade Todo Mundo é d'Oxum” (in this city everyone is a devotee of Oxum). Despite its
secularization, *ijexá* retained its connection with *Oxum*, the goddess of fresh water, an image of great significance in a port city surrounded by bodies of water.

Figure 7.2 Timelines of *ijexá* and “Feira de Sete Portas.”

* *Ijexá* is usually notated in 4/4. I used 8/4 to illustrate how the pattern was transformed to 7/8.

The second way used by Leite to alter *candomblé agogô* patterns is featured in “Das Arabias.” In this piece he maintains the length and set of durations of the *vassi* pattern, but shifted the position of the downbeat, a technique analyzed by Anku (1993) in relation to the so-called 12/8 standard pattern in various drumming traditions of West Africa.

Figure 7.3 Relationship between timeline of “Das Arabias” and the *vassi* pattern

Conceiving rotations of the *vassi* pattern for analytical purposes is also possible in Bahian *terreiros*, as I heard several times and as documented by Cardoso (2006:343). For Cardoso, *vassi* and a slightly different pattern used sometimes for the same purpose (he calls it *vassi*’s inversion) are exchangeable and hold the same meaning in *toque igbi* for *Oxalá* at Casa Branca (ibid:345). Although one can theoretically conceive of *vassi*’s inversion as a rotation of the original pattern, this does not necessarily reflects the drummers’ perspective. Some drummers like Guedes see *vassi*’s inversion (he does not call it that) as wrong as it displaces the short note from an offbeat position in the second beat to the beginning of the third beat, which is empty in *vassi*. In other words, he seems to judge difference based on number of points of non-coincidence, not on
rotation. Leite's rotation thus implies a more radical departure from vassi because of the higher number of non-coincidences with vassi. When aligning the beginning of these three patterns, vassi's inversion has only one point of non-coincidence and “Das Arabias” has four (see Table 7.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vassi</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vassi's inversion</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Das Arabias”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 Alignment of vassi, vassi's inversion, and timeline of “Das Arabias.”

Even though the timeline of “Das Arabias” has a high degree of foreignness in candomblé that prevents associations with specific toques or orixás, its triple subdivision and the fact that it is played by the agogô permits that, in the broader context of a theater or an open public venue, the pattern evokes Afro-religious music in a more generalized way. More importantly, the surrounding statements symbolizing Afro-religious music (the associated field) such as the presence of atabaques and Leite’s speech between pieces, support the association of the timeline of “Das Arabias” with candomblé.

Leite’s modification of candomblé timelines has parallels with Moacir Santos’ use of mojo as discussed by Vicente (2012). Both composers cut known timelines and/or shift the reference point (e.g. the position of “one”) to produce non-typical Afro-Brazilian timelines. For instance, both have pieces in 5/4 (“Alafia” and “Kathy”).

“Floresta Azul” is my choice to discuss Leite's composition technique in more depth. This piece was specifically designed to evoke Oxossi, the orixá of hunting and the forest, as the name of the piece indicates (floresta means forest in Portuguese and Azul means blue, a color symbolizing this deity). Its aguere timeline is shorter than most others used in candomblé and lacks asymmetric grouping structure. In Chapter 6 I explained that songs for Oxossi (usually accompanied in ceremonies by toque aguere) are sometimes also accompanied by ijexá and that this may explain why some of those songs align better with ijexá than aguere. I call attention to this relationship because “Floresta Azul” features the melody of “Okê Odê”, which does
precisely this. But, somewhat surprisingly, “Floresta Azul” has instances where the pattern (x..x...x.x...) (hereafter *ramunha*\textsuperscript{123}) is present as a recurrent surface rhythm. A closer look at the structure of this piece demonstrates that thinking of an implicit *ramunha* timeline enriches the interpreting framework. Figure 7.4 shows that *ramunha* is contained in the *ijexá* pattern and has the advantage over *aguere* of being asymmetric and longer. As mentioned, this asymmetry spanning four pulsations allows phrases to build rhythmic tension and resolution with the alternation of syncopated and non-syncopated feels. For its brevity, *aguere* reduces the effect of this resolution.

![Figure 7.4 Relationships between aguere, ijexá and ramunha timelines.](image)

**Layering in “Floresta Azul”**

The percussive groove of “Floresta Azul” features the *atabaques* and *agogó* playing *aguere* “as in the terreiro.” The groove, which is supplemented by the *caxixi* and sometimes by *surdos*, has two versions: first, a more energetic one used in louder passages where the *caxixi* plays the *horse rhythm* (x.xx), typically used in Afro-diasporic grooves to drive the energy forward; and second, a “softer” one used in improvised passages where the *caxixi* plays the *ramunha* pattern or selected strokes of it, and the *agogó* player switches to play *surdos* with a pattern that reinforces a cycle of four pulsations and matches most open strokes of *rum*. Figure 7.5 shows these two percussive grooves:

\textsuperscript{123} In the context of “Floresta Azul” I never heard Leite referring to the pattern (x..x...x.x...) with a specific name. As mentioned, he uses the word *clave* generically for timeline. In order to avoid confusion, I refer to this timeline as *ramunha* in “Floresta Azul.” *Ramunha* is the name of a *Ketu* candomblé toque where the *agogó* part matches the mentioned pattern. This choice is preferable to *clave* because it avoids confusion with Leite’s terminology and also because it is closer to the main domain of reference of this piece (*Ketu* candomblé).
Figure 7.5 Two percussive grooves in “Floresta Azul”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Open stroke on the agogó with a metal stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Open stroke on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Bass stroke with the palm on the centre of the drum head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Ghost note on the head of the drum with bare hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Open stroke on the centre of the drum with aguidavi (drum stick)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Pressed open stroke with hand and slap with aguidavi simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎤</td>
<td>Rumpi and lé strokes with aguidavi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3 Key for drum notation in Figures 7.5 and 7.12

Seen in isolation, these versions of the aguere groove suggest quadruple subdivision of the beat and periods of two and four pulses respectively. However, analysis will show that when heard with melodic layers, ramunha functions as the actual timeline.

“Floresta Azul” has three main melodies, each accompanied by different kinds of riffs and padded backgrounds and separated by bridges. I have labeled these three melodies “A,” “B,” and “C” and the bridges “T1,” “T2,” and “T3” (T is for transition). The three melodies with their accompanying grooves and two of the three bridges align with ramunha. I will focus first on the three melodies with their main accompanying brass grooves and their relationship to implied or explicit timelines.
Figure 7.6 Melody A of “Floresta Azul” with accompaniment (0:57-1:09).
* Saxes, trumpets and trombones play harmonized pads
** The flute melody is repeated exactly over the next four bars over the chords: F7(b9) / F#7(#5) / D7 / A7, forming an eight-bar harmonic progression. Low brass and saxes maintain the same rhythm.

As discussed in Chapter 6, melody A is the same of “Okê Odê,” a song for Oxossi. The accompaniment consists of chordal pads articulating two of the four beats of the time cycle and thus can be seen as reinforcing the reference structure suggested by the timeline.

Figure 7.7 Melody B of “Floresta Azul” with accompaniment (2:20-2:41).
* the main melody is played as a voiced tutti shout, except for the low brass (tuba, bari sax, and bass trombone) and one of the tenor trombones which doubles the bass trombone.
As the figure above shows, melody B is in sync with *ramunha*, although in a less obvious way, as it clashes with the first half of the timeline and resolves in the second one. At the same time this melody aligns with the more salient strokes of the *aguere* timeline (i.e. those accentuated in the first system of Figure 7.5a), suggesting the coexistence of two timelines. The bass line, on the other hand, not only aligns with more *ramunha* strokes than the melody, but also alternates measures between “on the beat” and syncopated phrasing, following more literally Wahsburne's criteria of being in sync with the timeline.

Figure 7.8 Melody C of “Floresta Azul” with accompaniment (2:41-3:05).
Melody C with its accompanying groove features a more complex case of polyrhythm and timeline alignments. In this passage the percussion section plays groove 2, which explicitly articulates *ramunha*. The tuba bassline reinforces this timeline, except for the last four bars. The repetitive accompanying shots of the saxes and trombones, however, mostly clash with the *ramunha* timeline, having only one out of four positions aligned with the pattern. This layer adds tension to the groove, as its single coincidence with the timeline—in the second *ramunha* stroke—provides a weak sense of rhythmic resolution *a la* Washburne. The main melody posits the more intriguing case, as it clearly clashes with the *caxixi ramunha* pattern (which I am assuming is the guiding timeline in this excerpt) but at the same time aligns with the same pattern if we swap its two sides. As explained, this is known in salsa, Afro-Cuban, and also Afro-Bahian music as to play “crossed” and is considered wrong as it disregards the role of the timeline as an organizational principle. Listening to “Floresta Azul” as rhythmically organized by the *ramunha* timeline poses challenges in this passage. In fact, there seem not to be plausible timeline that would satisfy the chosen criteria of timeline alignment in C. It is possible that Leite’s arrangement aimed to cross the timeline purposefully to create tension, or simply that Leite’s understanding of how timelines provide reference structures for the texture surpass the chosen criteria. In any case, it is significant that the few melody notes that align with the *caxixi ramunha* pattern are all chord identifiers, as the rest of the notes are mostly chordal extensions or passing notes. This way of listening to this melody reinforces *ramunha* as a timeline and, as it will become clear, this choice is reinforced by most of the piece.

*Maintaining the Heterogeneous Sound Ideal*

The heterogeneous sound ideal attributed to black grooves by Wilson (1992) is evident in “Floresta Azul.” In Figures 7.8 and 7.5b the layers accompanying melody C have constrasting rhythms, different starting points (see measure 1 in Figure 7.8), different rhythmic periodicities (2, 4, and 16), and different dynamics, all reinforced by the different timbres involved. Leite’s orchestration takes this one step further by departing from the typical big band practice in which trumpets, saxes, and trombones are mostly treated as separate timbral units. Leite formed a new section with the lowest horns (baritone sax, bass trombone and tuba) playing in unison or octaves as per Figure 7.7. Figure 7.8 shows the mixture of trumpets with flutes and trombones with saxes. Throughout the piece he keeps broadening the pallette of horn combinations, adding more and more colors and textures to the groove.
Playing drums with the horns

Leite claims that all horn rhythms in Rumpilezz are related to a corresponding Afro-Bahian groove. For instance, he declared that in the orchestra “horn players must listen to the percussion because they play the same rhythms” (p.c. April 27, 2012). Of course this is not literal, even though there might be moments of concidence between the two. As we have seen, what he means is that both fit and reinforce a rhythmic framework provided by a specific timeline. Leite claims to achieve this by assigning the patterns and variations of *rum* to the lowest horns, the patterns of *rumpi* to the trombones, and, as he says, “etcetera” (Compacto Petrobras 2010). The “etcetera” means that the rhythms of *lé* and the *agogó* correspond to the higher horns, for instance to trumpets, saxes, and flutes.

Most *candomblé* grooves feature three homorhythmic and stable layers that correspond, in Leite's method, to the orchestra's high-pitched horns (4 saxes, 4 trumpets, and 4 trombones). Since each of these three *candomblé* layers have only one pattern per *toque* associated to them (many times a shared pattern), the choice of rhythms for twelve horns is quite limited. In the case of “Floresta Azul” they can hardly correlate to the rhythmic richness of Leite's lines for higher horns, at least not in all cases. As we saw in Chapter 6, the more active and rhythmically rich layer is the lowest one, *rum*, which, according to Leite, corresponds to the three low-pitched horns. I first discuss the lower layer of this piece, allegedly inspired by *rum* phrases of *toque aguere*.

Figure 7.9 shows the five different basslines featured in “Floresta Azul.” The rhythmic variety of these basslines is comparable to other jazz styles such as Afro-Cuban, Latin, and funk jazz and contrasts with normative jazz “walk” basslines. In Rumpilezz, the low horn section plays melodic lines that provide harmonic support for the high-register melodies and interact with them on equal terms. For instance in melody B (see Figure 7.7) the bassline and the higher melody are equally *singable*, and share the same periodicity and rhythmic complexity. The richness and centrality of bass lines emerges as a logical consequence of their association to *rum*'s variations in Leite's method.

In my *candomblé* drumming and singing lessons with Guedes, I learned seven *rum* variations for *toque aguere*, most of which I was able to recognize him playing in the album version of “Floresta Azul.” As explained, the link to *orixá* choreographies and the interaction between musicians, dancers and devotees of *Ketu terreiros* in Salvador makes this repertoire relatively
stable. I corroborated this while visiting various terreiros in Salvador, taking lessons with other teachers, and reviewing the literature. Therefore, one can safely assume that Leite modeled the bass lines of “Floresta Azul” on these same rum variations. Surprisingly, all bass lines— with the exception of A where the bass provides the root note of chordal pads— seem to be inspired by a single rum phrase, the one that Guedes uses the most in the recording.

Figure 7.9 Horn basslines in “Floresta Azul” aligned with a rum variation.
(*) A later rendition of this bassline (4:05-4:17) used these half notes in the last three bars resembling a “walking” bass.
(**) These are not necessarily the actual notes played by rum in these passages. The diagram only demonstrates the structural relationship of tuba phrases with a common aguere rum phrase.
Figure 7.9 shows the alignment of four horn bass lines with a *rum* phrase almost identical to two phrases employed by Guedes in the recording of “Floresta Azul” (see Figure 7.12, phrases b and c). The pattern aligns with *ramunha* as in Figure 7.12, and Leite's basslines suggest two different orientations: 2-3 in B and 3-2 in A (canon), T2, and C. The call-and-response exchange between the low horns and the trumpets and saxes in T2 shows that the higher horns also align with *rum* phrasing (see Figure 7.9). Now let us examine the upper horn layers.

The three higher layers of the *aguere* groove play a pattern almost in unison that fills all the subdivisions but the onset of beat 2 (see Figure 7.10). If we divide the pattern in two halves, what differentiates the two sides is that the first one stresses offbeat positions and the second one, the beat. In this way it is similar to *clave*:

![Figure 7.10 Aguere pattern for agogô, lê and rumpi with more salient strokes.](image)

Since *aguere*’s span is too short to allow the development of enough rhythmic tension in the first half and resolution in the second, the first two guidelines of Washburne (those concerned with note matching) are the only ones available to determine whether the three main melodies of “Floresta Azul” align with *aguere*. However, given the high density of this timeline, covering almost all subdivision of the span, virtually any phrase in 4/4 aligns with *aguere*. Based in the rhythms of the melodies, I observed that positions 1&, 2& and 4 are particularly common, sometimes in each measure (B), sometimes every other measure (A and C).
Figure 7.11 Melodies of “Floresta Azul” signaling positions 1&, 2& and 4.

One does not need to claim that positions 1&, 2&, and 4 are the most salient ones of *aguere* to see that melody B is aligned with this timeline, and that A and C also align, but at every other measure. As shown in Figure 7.4, *aguere* aligns with the first half of *ramunha* (the one containing three strokes) but clashes with the second half (the one containing two strokes) because the fourth stroke of *ramunha* falls in the only empty position of *aguere*—beat 2. This explains why A and C, clearly in sync with *ramunha*, only align with *aguere* every other measure. Likewise, it explains why B, also in sync with *ramunha* but fully aligned with *aguere*, clashes with the second half of *ramunha* and resolves in the first half of it. In short, any phrase in sync with *aguere* is also in sync with *ramunha* as the rhythmic tension on one of the sides is resolved in other half. Conversely, a phrase in sync with *ramunha* is not necessarily fully aligned with *aguere*.

_A Word About Melodies_

Leite declared that he begins his compositions with melodies that have built-in rhythms.
I compose using melodies that come to my mind . . . When I create my melodies, the rhythm is already there [built into the melody] because I internalized it through long time of study . . . After, I make the arrangement for percussion. (p.c. April 27, 2012)

The rhythm of “Okê Odé” (melody A in “Floresta Azul”) is certainly already there as it is a traditional candomblé song for Oxossi that devotees recognize and which aligns with ramunha, ijexá, and aguere timelines, and with a rum variation of toque aguere. As for the remaining two melodies of our piece, we saw that B is closer to aguere than A and C are, which better match the ramunha timeline. Leite implies that he discovered the specific aspects (timelines) that connect his melodies to Oxossi, a posteriori. While these connections can be seen on paper and may be instinctively “felt” by listeners, melodies B and C have less evocative power than A as they are not recognizable songs for the candomblé community. This issue is discussed in the next chapter from the point of view of music reception.

We have seen how Leite constructed grooves that evoke the Ketu orixá Oxossi. Toque aguere played by the candomblé quarteto, and melody A, based on the song “Okê Odé,” more evidently connect these grooves with the symbolism and aesthetics of this deity. Leite argues that he connects each horn layer with one part of the candomblé quarteto according to its relative range. We saw that this is evident in the three low horns, but no so much in higher brass sections which align better with rum lines. In any case, evocations of Oxossi through the big band are weaker than with atabaques because of timbral differences. Atabaques, for instance do not produce definite pitches or can hold them as horns do. In other words, the displacement of candomblé rhythms to the orchestra involved greater transformations than in the case of say melody A. The method resulted in a greater weight given to bass lines in the arrangements which resemble the centrality of rum in terreiros.

**Improvisation and Variation**

“Floresta Azul” combines three distinct genres of improvisation: candomblé rum drumming variation, jazz big band soloing over chords, and free jazz.
*Rum Solos*

In the past chapter I explained that in *terreiros* improvisation is left to the *alabê*, who pulls out variations from a stock of phrases for each *toque* and orders them in specific sequences to coordinate with dance and manipulate the intensity of the groove so that dancers enter into trance. The album version of “Floresta Azul” uses eight *rum* phrases, seven of which are identical to or slight variations of the typical *aguere* phrases used at *terreiro de Gantois* that I learned with Guedes.

![Diagram of rum variations in “Floresta Azul”](image)

Figure 7.12 Catalog of *rum* variations in “Floresta Azul” with implied *ramunha* timeline.

(*) In “Floresta Azul”, Guedes only used the first four bars of this six-bar variation he taught me.

(***) See key for drum notation in Table 7.3

By playing these phrases more or less “as in the *terreiro*,” Guedes punctuates sectional borders and molds the intensity of Rumpilezz's grooves. However, the context of a Rumpilezz show
(lacking dancers, incarnated orixás, and ritual protocols) gives him the freedom to explore these materials in new ways. For instance, he is aware of the structural relationships between his rum variations and the horn parts, particularly the tuba. Although he feels a strong relationship with the tuba (not surprisingly, given Leite's method), he molds his playing according to changes in texture in the whole band:

At Rumpilezz shows I play rum variations according to the tuba: sometimes I match it, others I match the trumpet, the bass trombone, or the sax. (After) I learn the piece, I create my variations so that they combine with each thing (section). “Floresta Azul” (is a good example). Sometimes the rhythm of rum is the same of the tuba's, but most of the time it is not. So I adapt variations for each moment. When the tuba is playing its part, I take it easy. When the trumpet comes in, I become more engaged and when other horns enter, then you grow, you switch the variation.

(p.c. Gabi Guedes, May 1, 2012)

Guedes does not create new rum phrases in the sense of inventing new rhythmic structures during or in preparation for the performance. By “creating a variation” he means either: 1) combining the phrases he knows for aguere in specific sequences so that they match the level of intensity he seeks, and as we will see below; 2) shifting the orientation of phrases to match or echo tuba lines. This second technique, coming from the aesthetic pleasure of playing with his brass counterpart, represents a type of improvisation foreign to candomblé and more aligned with the interactions among musicians of the big band's rhythm section. Consider two passages where Guedes matches and echoes the tuba:
With this technique Guedes molds the level of rhythmic tension as echoing the tuba line implies that one of the two is aligned with *ramunha* and the other is crossed. Like any other drummer of jazz or popular music, Guedes also anticipates certain moments like the beginnings of solos or tutti shouts. For this, he creates a “point zero” energy level by recurrently playing phrase a, the most characteristic phrase of *aguere*, and the basis of variations b, c, d, and e. Key moments are articulated by introducing different phrases and arranging them in sequences leading to these target points. Table 7.4 shows Guedes' choices in “Floresta Azul.”
Table 7.4 Form of “Floresta Azul” and corresponding rum phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Duration (4-beat cycles)</th>
<th>Rum variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00 − 0:08</td>
<td>Caxixi intro</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:08 − 0:33</td>
<td>A first presentation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:33 − 0:45</td>
<td>A bassline</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:45 − 0:57</td>
<td>A in canon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a b a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:57 − 1:09</td>
<td>A with harmonic pads</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>d b a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:09 - 1:21</td>
<td>Percussive bridge</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>f g a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:21 - 1:26</td>
<td>T1: Airy sextuplets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:26 - 1:32</td>
<td>Percussive bridge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>d a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:32 - 1:38</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:38 - 1:44</td>
<td>Percussive bridge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>c a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:44 - 1:50</td>
<td>A’ voiced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:50 - 2:01</td>
<td>A with harmonic pads</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:01 - 2:08</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:08 - 2:20</td>
<td>B: bassline</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a d a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20 - 2:41</td>
<td>B shout</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>a d a a a b a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:41 - 3:05</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>a a a a a b a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05 - 3:17</td>
<td>tpt solo (a) - changes of C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a b a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:17 - 3:29</td>
<td>tpt solo (b)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a d d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:29 - 3:41</td>
<td>tpt solo (c)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:41 - 3:53</td>
<td>tpt solo (d)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:53 - 4:05</td>
<td>tpt solo (e)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a d a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:05 - 4:29</td>
<td>tpt solo (f) - changes of A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>a a a d a a a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:29 - 4:37</td>
<td>B shout</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:37 - 4:50</td>
<td>sax solo (a) - changes of C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:50 - 5:02</td>
<td>sax solo (b)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:02 - 5:14</td>
<td>sax solo (c)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a d a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:14 - 5:26</td>
<td>sax solo (d)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:26 - 5:38</td>
<td>sax solo (e)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a d b a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:38 - 6:01</td>
<td>sax solo (f) - changes of A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>a d a a a a d b a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:01 - 6:10</td>
<td>B shout</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>a d a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10 - 6:28</td>
<td>Percussive bridge</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>b c f g g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:28 - 7:22</td>
<td>Flute solo (free jazz)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>a a a a a a a a a a a a a d a a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:22 - 7:46</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>a a d a b a a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:46 - 7:57</td>
<td>A with harmonic pads</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>b a a e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:57 - 8:03</td>
<td>Percussive bridge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:03 - 8:15</td>
<td>A with other harmonic pads</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>h a d a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15 - 8:31</td>
<td>A as in first presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guedes reserves the more elaborated phrases for the two longer percussive bridges where there is minimal interaction with the horns. Leite designed these interludes to showcase rum just as jazz big bands typically do with drummers and other musicians. Guedes' choices in these passages (phrases f, g, and h) are highly syncopated, cross with the timeline, and contrast with a. He also uses a denser phrase d for embellishment and to anticipate certain key points such as the beginning of the trumpet solo, “B shout,” and “A with harmonic pads.”
Melodic Solos.

In Rumpilezz harmonic changes are delineated by a tuba bass line and reinforced by chordal horn pads and riffs instead of an upright bass or piano. In the album version of “Floresta Azul,” Bahians Joatan Nascimento and Rowney Scott solo with the trumpet and soprano sax respectively over a sequence of five repetitions of the chord progression of C and a closing section going twice through the harmonies of A. Here I focus on the former.

Figure 7.14 Trumpet solo in “Floresta Azul” (3:05-4:29).
As in standard jazz improvisation, Nascimento's solo is built on scales and modes implied by the chord progression. Although Leite designed the accompaniment for this solo section with the harmonic progressions of C and A, the original melodies (see Figures 7.6 and 7.8) are no longer recognizable in Nascimento's solo. As discussed in Chapter 4, during the indigenization of jazz by musicians in Bahia, one of the things that interested them most was the possibility of departing from the melody more than in local styles of improvisation. This is exactly what we see in Nascimento's solo.

Nascimento's solo is accompanied by aguere groove 2 (see Figure 7.5b) where the caxixi articulates the ramunha rhythm (see “x” in the first system of the above figure). The orientation of the timeline shown above is reinforced by the tuba bassline and rum (Figure 7.9) but clashes (Figure 7.8) when the horns enter between measures 25 and 40 (Figure 7.14). Nascimento also reinforces and clashes with the caxixi clave pattern in different parts of his solo. In a second repetition of the same chord progression Scott's sax solo demonstrates characteristics similar to Nascimento's but matching the timeline more consistently.

Free Jazz Solo

After the two melodic solos, the horns go silent, the percussion settles into aguere groove 1 very softly, and Leite plays a flute solo for almost a minute (6:28-7:22). Leite's solo is a striking contrast in various ways. First, his phrases are in free rhythm and use extremely fast notes decoupled from the minimal durations of the groove. Second, there is no explicit or implied harmonic progression framing Leite's pitches. Third, Leite's use of whole tone scales blurs the tonality. Although whole-tone scales have been used in modern harmonic contexts by figures like John Coltrane (e.g. “One Down, One Up”, 124) an idol of Leite, in “Floresta Azul” they might also bring associations of non-directional movement and exoticism much like they do in Debussy's La Mer. And fourth, Leite explores unconventional playing techniques in the flute with timbres not heard elsewhere in the piece.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Effect / Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6:28-6:40</td>
<td>Whole-tone scale on B played stepwise and in fast legato. It begins moving within a range of almost two octaves and then stabilizes in a shorter range (B3 to F4). Decrescendo until it fades out.</td>
<td>The whole-tone scale played without harmonic accompaniment blurs tonality breaking the forwardness of cadential resolution. This creates a sensation of non-directional movement. The high speed at which legato notes are played makes them hard to discern one from the other, giving an effect of lightness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6:40-6:46</td>
<td>Similar to phrase 1 but shorter. Closes with E.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6:46-6:51</td>
<td>Similar to phrase 1 but shorter. Closes with D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6:51-6:56</td>
<td>Fast staccato notes in diatonic scale (C major).</td>
<td>The return to tonality and the fast staccato notes give a sensation of movement towards a goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5:56-7:00</td>
<td>Similar to phrase 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7:00-7:03</td>
<td>Similar to phrase 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7:03-7:05</td>
<td>Similar to phrase 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7:05-7:08</td>
<td>Similar to 4 with upward leaps in thirds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>7:08-7:18</td>
<td>Upward glissando to D5. This note is maintained for 5 seconds before playing a whole-tone scale on B in fast legato. Decrescendo until it fades out.</td>
<td>The airy glissando and sustained note sharply contrast with the previous fast notes creating an effect of suspension of movement or time. The whole-tone scale closing this phrase has a similar effect of phrases 1, 2, and 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7:18-7:22</td>
<td>Phrase divided in two segments, each with oscillations between 1) D4 and G3; and 2) G3 and D3. High notes stand out as they are played louder and maintained while lower ones sound intermittently.</td>
<td>The movement from D4 to G3 (the two more salient notes) creates a sense of tonal resolution and closure to the solo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.5 Flute solo in “Floresta Azul” (6:28-7:22)

Most structural elements of “Floresta Azul” are intended to symbolize Oxossì, the orixá of hunting and the forest. I believe Leite's solo is, too. By moving in and out of tonality and by using different timbral effects, Leite evokes different sensations of movement and stasis that could be interpreted as part of a narrative. For instance, the change from whole-tone passages played in legato to diatonic ones played in staccato suggests a change from non-directional to goal-oriented movement. It is plausible that, in the context of this piece, Leite and audiences acquainted with Ketu mythology, interpret this passage as Oxossì wandering (perhaps in the forest, his domain) and then running after his prey. Oxossì is always depicted in candomblé carrying a bow and arrow. Therefore, the airy glissando and sustained note of phrase 9 could also be interpreted as...
the sound of the hunter's arrow cutting the wind before reaching his pray.\textsuperscript{125}

This interpretation, more than unveiling a particular narrative, suggests that Leite uses elements of avant-garde music and free jazz to make references to Oxossi. This a remarkable choice, as avant-garde music and free jazz are more associated by Bahian musicians with European vanguardism than blackness or primitivism (Queiroz 2010). By displacing elements from this domain to the orchestra Leite ironically reinforces the images of primitivism that he combats in his project of dignification. The theme of closeness to nature serves Leite to reinforce primitivism and empowerment.

**Microtiming**

As discussed in Chapter 5, tacitly Leite expressed a preoccupation for microtiming because, according to him, Afro-Bahian drummers and the big band speak two different music dialects. His solutions were: 1) making horn players learn their parts orally and clap timelines while keeping the pulse with footsteps before reading out of the scores; and 2) placing musicians in two concentric semicircles with percussionists in the inner one so that horn players can hear and see them from behind. The idea is creating a tight percussive groove in the center of the stage to which horn players adapt their rhythms at macro and micro levels. Percussionists, then, oversee tempo and swing feel in Rumpilezz.

I first will deal with subtle tempo variation, an aspect of microtiming related both to style and performance. In “Floresta Azul” atabaques have a tendency to accelerate tempo, as some authors claim it happens in candomblé ceremonies when the ritual intensifies (Cardoso 2006:239). This is particularly apparent in purely percussive passages or during Leite’s improvisation, which is exclusively accompanied by the aguere groove 1. Although the overall tempo of the piece is around 80 bpm, during these passages, tempo locally increased, averaging 81, 82, and even 83 bpm. As Table 7.5 shows, these accelerations are somehow counterbalanced when the horns come in.

\textsuperscript{125} This interpretation of Leite's free jazz solo is mine and is not based in a specific ethnographic account. However, in conversations with Sandra Lima, Gabi Guedes and other candomblé adepts, I noticed that sometimes listeners and musicians superimpose orixá histories to Rumpilezz repertoire. This prompted me to propose this generalized interpretation that integrates the strongest symbols of Oxossi: the forest and hunting.
Table 7.6 Subtle oscillations of tempo in “Floresta Azul.”

But independent of this tendency to accelerate, *aguere* grooves also have idiomatic swing patterns. Discovering the individual contributions of each instrument to the overall swing feel of the percussion section posed several challenges, as I do not have access to recordings with separate tracks to examine the behavior of each layer. In my analysis, I rely on the recording released by Rumpilezz in 2009, which offers a balanced mixture of the whole orchestra making the tracking of individual layers more difficult. It was most practical to focus on purely percussive passages.\(^{126}\)

---

\(^{126}\) I used the Digital Audio Editor Audacity 2.0.0 to alter the sound wave and facilitate the location of points of attack. I boosted the low frequencies of the drums to distinguish their notes from other less focused such as those of the *caxixi*. This program also allowed me to slow down the music and zoom in to detect the level of asynchrony of some instruments attacking the same point and to mark points of attack with a precision of one hundredth of a second.
The first selected passage is the percussion interlude between (1:08–1:14) marked in purple in Table 7.6. This passage extends over 16 pulses, features *aguere groove 1* (Figure 7.5a) and *rum* phrases f, g, and a (Figure 7.12). Audacity’s zoom tool revealed that the pulse and its subdivisions exhibit subtle changes. In order to calculate the degree of asynchrony in each internal position of the pulse, I subdivided each pulse duration in four even intervals, corresponding to the theoretical positions of metronomic subdivision and compared the onset of actual attacks with these theoretical ones. The following figure shows the differences between the metronomic positions and the actual drum attacks. Positive values indicate delays and negative anticipations, in hundredths of second, with zero meaning a match between the two.\(^{127}\)

\[\text{Table 7.7 Difference between metronomic and actual onsets of subdivisions in percussive passage of “Floresta Azul” (1:08-1:14).}\]

I highlighted in yellow the positions of the *rum* open strokes, the ones that are more discernible both in the recording and during live shows. In this passage Guedes mostly anticipates metronomic subdivisions and a few times matches them, especially in the second subdivision, but never delays. The rest of the drums and the *agogô* (non-highlighted values) also tend to anticipate, but after pulse 12 began to delay more consistently. One could interpret these figures in many ways. For instance, anticipations could be associated with gradual shortening of the

\(^{127}\) Since tempo has constant subtle oscillations, I use each pulse onset as a point of reference to calculate the three metronomic internal positions following of the pulse. This is why there is no theoretical asynchrony for the first position.
subdivisions to accelerate tempo, and delays with lengthening those subdivisions to slow down. While this could be the case, the column in the far right shows that systematic anticipations between pulses 1 and 10 did not have the overall effect of increasing tempo, as tempi kept fluctuating around an average of 81.91 bpm. Analogously, delays in the last five beats did not lead to slowing down the tempo either.

While these variations could also be human error or natural variability, which might also be found in music not necessarily associated with swing, there is significant evidence suggesting the existence of patterns of anticipation in toque aguere. This aligns with Walker's claim that drummers “syncopate the rhythm slightly... such that a strong beat falls just before the main beat...” (1972:18-21). To corroborate this, I examined the percussive passage preceding Leite's flute solo, also highlighted in purple in Table 7.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subd 2</th>
<th>Subd 3</th>
<th>Subd 4</th>
<th>pulse dur.</th>
<th>tempo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(sec)</td>
<td>(bpm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>81.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Table 7.8 Difference between metronomic and actual onsets of subdivisions in percussive passage of “Floresta Azul” (6:10-6:29).
The above passage confirms the tendency to anticipate metronomic subdivisions without necessarily having the overall effect of accelerating tempo. As in the previous example, this tendency is more marked in *rum* than in the rest of instruments.

*How Does Swing Impact the Horns?*

For this I selected one passage where the tuba plays an unaccompanied single line (0:33-0:45), and another where all horns play homophonically (1:32-1:38). The first case is an exchange between the tuba and *rum* over *aguere groove 1* where Guedes echoes the tuba with phrase a (see Figure 7.13). The second is a call-and-response exchange where trombones join the low brass section for the call and the rest of the horns respond. Table 7.9 shows anticipations and delays with respect to metronomic subdivisions calculated as above.

![Table 7.9](image)

The results above complicate the picture. In the first case the tuba consistently delays the second metronomic subdivision, either delays or matches the third one, and consistently anticipates the fourth. The second case shows a tendency to match the second metronomic position, and to anticipate the following two. As in the case of the percussion, these patterns are independent of...
overall tempo changes and of the consistent anticipations of *rum*.

In this study I have not considered unintentional aspects of microtiming related to sound production. However, it is important to notice that the precision of my measurements is significantly lower for horns, particularly in the case of instruments producing notes of lower frequencies such as the tuba because there is a bigger difference between the moment when a note is blown and the moment when it is distinctively perceived. This is reflected in blurred sound waves at a micro level. The next graphic compares the waves of *rum* and tuba notes when low frequencies are boosted with Audacity.

Figure 7.15 Sound waves of tuba and *rum* notes in “Floresta Azul” using the bass boost tool of Audacity (0:36-0:37).

The same kind of effect occurs in T2. Each note is attacked by a group of horns, (six for the call or eight for the response) all of which come in with subtle differences. In both cases I chose locating the onset of the note in the place of maximum wave amplitude as I assume this is when the sound is more clearly perceived by listeners. This short delay may account for extra differences at the micro level. If my assumptions are correct, a more detailed and accurate study of this phenomenon could render the anticipations of Table 7.9 even greater and perhaps demonstrate that some of the delays are in reality notes that were blown in anticipation but perceived after the metronomic position.

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128 The perception of notes also depends on the acoustics of the space, a factor I am not considering here.
129 This assumption is based on my perception of greater loudness at positions of maximum wave amplitude when slowing down the recording. However, it is perfectly possible that a musician begins to perceive the note before this point—somewhere between the beginning of the wave and its point of maximum amplitude. With the help of Audacity I observed that this interval is around 35 ms (see Figure 7.15). Research has determined that “onset time differences of 20 ms or less are unlikely to be perceived when they occur in musical or ‘pseudo-musical’ settings” (Butterfield 2010:158). The question remains when exactly the wave is loud enough to be properly perceived.
Another aspect of microtiming unexplored in this work is the asynchronies between the low horn section (tuba, baritone sax, bass trombone) and rum. Keil asserts that microtiming differences between the bass drum and string bass are partly responsible for jazz's grooviness. Rumpilezz does not have trap-set or string bass but rum and a section of three low horns covering the bass lines. As Keil might put it, the subtle differences among these four instruments when attacking the same metric positions affect Rumpilezz's groove. Leite’s choice to write horn bass lines based in candomblé rum phrases and as of asking Guedes to play “as in the terreiro” (i.e. playing slightly behind the beat) augments the possibilities of these coincidences. As discussed, Guedes sees the tuba as his melodic counterpart in the orchestra and finds aesthetic pleasure in matching or echoing tuba lines. However, I have not enough data or ethnographic evidence to know what reference structure Guedes has in mind. That is, what exactly does he mean by “matching”: is he trying to anticipate, to delay, or to match exactly the tuba notes? I noticed that rum has the tendency to anticipate metronomic subdivisions, that there is an aesthetic inclination for flams in candomblé drumming. Tuba notes may be perceived with longer delays than rum strokes and these may partly account for PDs and increases in grooviness. But these are only hypotheses that need to be validated.

In this performance the percussion plays toque aguere with a swing feel that tends to anticipate each metronomic subdivision, particularly the fourth one, and to accelerate tempo when they are not interacting with horns. As Fryer (2000) points out, alabês use these subtle but systematic patterns of anticipation in terreiros to increase rhythmic tension and enhance possession (see also Walker 1972, and Rouget 1996). These microtiming deviations constitute powerful communicative devices that musicians and listeners pick up and react to more physically than intellectually (Iyer 2002:396). Through systematic microtiming manipulation, Guedes, the rest of the percussionists, and perhaps horn players too (but to a lesser extent), evoke a central aspect of candomblé aesthetics, namely the ability of music to enhance possession, but only for those who are sufficiently familiar with the tradition and can feel it. The next chapter explores how these and other aspects of the embodiment might contribute to the positive reception of Rumpilezz's grooves.

Concluding Remarks
Several elements of candomblé, big band, free jazz, and even European art music emerge as or reinforce symbols of Africanness in “Floresta Azul.” While some candomblé elements—the main
symbolic source of Africanness of the orchestra—manifest themselves more literally like *toque aguere* played by the *atabaques*, others are “dressed up” as Leite likes to say, and thus are less obvious, but this does not mean that their symbolic power is lower. For instance, the melody of “Okê Odê” is first played in unison by the flutes, then in parallel thirds, then in canon, and finally accompanied by harmonized pads. When introduced in an unaccompanied way, the melody is easily recognized by everyone, but then it is gradually transformed using techniques associated with jazz and with European art music. The fact that the identity of this *candomblé* melody was already established and that these techniques are symbolically very distant to *candomblé* puts these passages in focus and charges them with strong symbolic power. My reading is that elements of jazz and European art music are at the service of *candomblé*. This is analogous to Leite's motto: “in Rumpilezz the horns revere the percussion.”

The deconstruction of Rumpilezz's grooves and Leite's compositional method indicate that, in many ways, Leite subordinates melody, harmony, and timbre to rhythm, reinforcing the notion of “African” rhythmicity. However, most of these rhythms are built into the melodies and jazzy harmonies of a big band. While one could interpret this as ironic, this is actually one of the reasons for Rumpilezz's success. The fact that *candomblé* rhythms (and microtiming at a subtler level) are given such centrality in a big band environment where jazz, free jazz, and European art music techniques prevail raises our awareness of the rhythmic dimension.
Chapter 8: Embodied Politics in the Reception of Black Music

Popular music reception studies are usually based on broad surveys of fans, radio audiences, record or internet-based sells, media coverage, or awards. In this chapter I opt instead to explore how Rumpilezz’s appropriations of *candomblé* music and symbolism are received by *candomblé* devotees. I will try to argue that the perspectives of a *candomblé* initiated dancer may enrich our understandings of the aesthetic and political reception of black music in Bahia.

This chapter foregrounds my conversations with a single individual, Sandra Lima, a *candomblé* dancer (initiated in May 2013), former *capoeira angola* practitioner, *dança afro* dancer, and Rumpilezz fan from Bahia. Sandra's voice has particular meaning because of her position as local subject. Appadurai defines local subjects as those who organize and recognize themselves in a community and thus “properly” belong to it (1996:179). Sandra was born and raised in Alagoinhas, a small town in eastern Bahia, and has spent most of her adult life in Salvador. She self-identifies as a Bahian who “descends from African kings and queens” (Sandra Lima, p.c. April, 2012).

In May 2013 Sandra began the formal process of initiation as a *filha-de-santo*, which included segregation and other forms of body marking and restriction. Devotees in initiation are easily recognized in the streets of Salvador by the white clothing they wear from head to toe for an entire year, and after that period is over, every Friday. This confers to Sandra strong status of local subject. Her knowledge and status within the *candomblé* community is fundamental to the interpretation of the symbols and references built into Rumpilezz's music. This gives to her voice a compelling resonance that amplifies many of the issues developed thus far. Sandra is one of many Afro-Bahians who feels empowered by Rumpilezz's music, but she expresses her convictions with unusual force and clarity. Her responses to Rumpilezz are, however, exemplary rather than typical or statistical. Her subject position is one in which the issues presented in the dissertation can be viewed in their most concentrated form of embodiment and belief.

In one of our numerous conversations Sandra asserted that she likes Rumpilezz's music because it “touches her soul.” This bold phrase opened a lengthy discussion that revealed how much importance she gives to embodiment in the experience of music and how Rumpilezz connects her
with that aesthetic experience. As a Bahian with strong consciousness of her own blackness, she is engaged in the politics of black and Afro-Bahian music and thus, has much to say about how Rumpilezz properly portrays—or not—Afro-Bahian culture. In this chapter I focus on these two aspects of how Rumpilezz is received: the experiential and the political. Analysis demonstrates that in both cases, audiences and media refer to idealized notions of “Africanness,” linking them to discourses of black empowerment and primitivism.

Since Rumpilezz openly aims to honor and draw upon candomblé music, and because candomblé is considered the most traditional Afro-Brazilian practice, reception of candomblé is also key. It is clear that Rumpilezz does not play straight candomblé and that the reception of Afro-religious music is contingent upon the degree of familiarity a listener has with this religion and upon his or her own biases. There is a continuum between a candomblé devotee who may celebrate the presence of atabaques in Rumpilezz and members of other faiths who might find them detrimental. This is not to say that candomblé devotees will automatically celebrate seeing their music in secular contexts or that non-devotees will always dislike it. The point is that familiarity with forms of Afro-Brazilian spirituality offers unique ways of listening to Rumpilezz. These forms of listening and their impact on the reception of music outside of the religious context have been addressed before. Henry argues that “In the black experience in Brazil and other African diasporic areas, the sacred often informs the secular and vice versa” through the Afro-religious concept of axé (2008:189). His contribution, clearly aligned with discourses of black empowerment, however, does not explicate how the nuances of axé embodiment outside of the terreiro may relate to the various facets of discourses of blackness and their themes. In this chapter I address this issue with the help of a filha-de-santo’s own interpretations of Rumpilezz music, a phenomenological approach to aesthetics, and a model for analysis of discourses of blackness.

After an initial discussion of body-centered aesthetics based on Shusterman's concept of somasthetics (1999) and on phenomenological studies of Afro-religious and other forms of Afro-Brazilian music, I explain how audiences assess Rumpilezz’s music using these aesthetics.

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130 In his study of the physical condition of terreiros in Salvador, Bahian Anthropologist Jocelio Teles reported that 8.6% of the terreiros of the city suffered some form of religious intolerance from members of evangelical churches (2008:20). These forms of intolerance ranged from insults to threats, physical aggression, and even invasion (ibid). One of his informants complained “One day when the terreiro was beating (playing drums for the ceremony), an evangelic neighbor yelled Jesus burns Satan” (ibid).
Subsequently, I discuss how informants connect this aesthetic experience to black empowerment and to issues of representation.

**Listening with the Body**

The act of listening to music is conditioned not only by the mind and the sociocultural aspects that contribute to its development, but also by the body, its sensorimotor systems and its physical environment or sociocultural situatedness (Iyer 2002:391). In his article on the phenomenology of listening to *capoeira* music, Greg Downey argues that:

> Practitioners perceive music, I argue, not merely through a layer of cognitive categories and symbolic associations, but with a trained and responsive body, through habits copied from others and socially reinforced, and by means of their own skills, arduously acquired and actively engaged in listening. (2002:490)

Adepts train their bodies to hear *berimbau* rhythms in culturally situated ways. Contexts, codes, symbols, techniques, and histories associated with the music in question condition how we listen and experience it.

Downey's reflections resonate with the way dancers and devotees listen to Afro-Brazilian religious musics,\(^{131}\) Some authors have established parallels between ritual *candomblé* possession and the sharp state of readiness that *capoeiristas* develop while dancing in the circle (Diniz 2011, Decanio 2002). They argue that in both cases dancers may perform beyond their “normal” capacity while listening to the music, and that music is assessed in terms of its ability to induce these states. Adijair Damasceno, a *capoeira angola* teacher in Salvador, once compared the singing styles of *mestres* Valmir and Cobra Mansa and said that while the former has a much more powerful voice (with more projection, something desirable in *capoeira* circles), *mestre* Cobra Mansa compensated with *sentimento* (feeling or emotion) (p.c. Salvador, Bahia, April, 2012). For Sandra Lima, Mestre Cobra Mansa's musical *sentimento* also manifests itself into his dancing. She asserts that part of the reason why he is considered a top *capoeira* player is because he seems to enter in trance while dancing (p.c. Valença, Bahia, February 2012). In other words, there is an aesthetic centered in bodily sensations and emotions.

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\(^{131}\) An important difference between the two is that while the *capoeira* tradition demands that practitioners learn both, instrumental music and dance, *candomblé* keeps these two activities separate.
**Somasthetics**

In Western philosophy aesthetics is commonly understood as a science dealing with the creation and appreciation of beauty. However, there is a long tradition of authors arguing for an aesthetics centered in embodied pleasure instead (e.g. Herder 1800, Baumgarten 1750). Within this line of thought, Richard Shusterman developed somasthetics, a field devoted to “the study of the experience and use of one's body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation and creative self-fashioning” (1999:302). He wrote:

> As an object grasped by our external senses, the body (of another or even one’s own) can provide beautiful sensory perceptions... or representations. But there is also the beautiful experience of our own body from within – the endorphine-enhanced glow of high level cardiovascular functioning, the slow savouring awareness improved, deeper breathing, the tingling thrill of feeling into new parts of one's spine. (ibid:299)

The aesthetic potential here resides in the pleasurable bodily sensations and the beautiful perceptions of one's body that may be triggered by external stimuli. But when the stimuli involves sound, these bodily sensations and perceptions are importantly affected by imagery because “the tendency of the mind to activate visual and kinetic imagery through auditory stimuli seems deeply embedded, possibly universally hard-wired” (McGraw 2008:39). Because they are integral to music embodiment, these images are also fundamental in somasthetics. Shusterman's theory also places embodied sensations next to self-fashioning—the process of constructing one's identity and public persona according to socially acceptable standards. As analysis will show, these two kinds of embodiment are present in Sandra's aesthetic and political assessment of the music.

Ritual possession is fundamental to an understanding of *candomblé* devotees' embodied experience and aesthetic values. The goal of a *candomblé* ceremony is summoning African deities. According to emic views, these divinities visit the human realm through the bodies of possessed initiates. In his study of *Tambor de Mina*[^132], Nicolau Parés observed that all the stages a dancer goes through during ritual possession are marked by specific physical symptoms and behavioral signs. For instance, when a dancer begins to feel the proximity of the spiritual entity, she may yawn, tremble, and change facial expressions (1997:104). Once possession takes place,

[^132]: *Tambor de Mina* is an Afro-Brazilian religion from the state of Maranhão in Northeast Brazil with similar origins and characteristics as Bahian *candomblé*.
dance usually becomes more vigorous and adjusts to the personality of the incarnated entity (ibid). Possessed dancers are expected to incarnate or perform these personalities. This implies learning prescribed behavior to materialize in dance moves and emotional states that function as signifiers for the community. For instance, the moves of orixá Xangó (a noble warrior of strong temperament that governs lightning and fire in Yoruba mythology) represent him throwing lightning with his arms and then celebrating with turns and open arms (Cardoso 2006:313).

Stories of Yoruba mythology are at times enacted by possessed dancers. At a terreiro in Mussurunga, Salvador I once saw a possessed dancer carrying another one on her back and walking around the room while the audience celebrated and revered them. Sandra explained this scene with a Yoruba story in which Xango carries his old father Oxalá on his back to free him from an unjust imprisonment (p.c. May 14, 2012). In the scene each dancer embodied the character of her orixá: a just, strong, and proud warrior and an old tired good-hearted father.

Somasthetics is appropriate for understanding how highly codified dancing genres are experienced, how images and stories impact such experience, and how they may contribute to creative processes of self-fashioning. In their own ways Downey, Diniz, Decanio, and Parés explain how somasthetics materializes in capoeira angola and Afro-religious music. They suggest that these musics are heard by adepts expecting a physical and emotional response that leads to altered states of consciousness. These altered states make the experience more enjoyable as dancers can perform beyond their physical limits and audiences have contact with the divine.

It is clear that Rumpilezz's grooves are not intended to induce possession, and that audiences do not expect that from them either. However, Sandra's declarations suggest that a great part of the pleasure she derives from Rumpilezz's music is due to evocation of the intense embodiment that would lead to possession in candomblé. Although she never reached possession as such while listening or dancing to Rumpilezz, she felt and enjoyed aspects of its initial stages. Enjoying this without having the risk of falling into possession with Rumpilezz adds certain value to the music:

_Sandra Lima (SL):_ I never received my saint [got possessed] with Rumpilezz. I think it is because of the mixture. The toques are there, but there are breaks. Even if a person is being induced into trance, there are breaks preventing that. Another reason could be the presence of jazz... There is _aguere tatatatata_... playing the _toque_ but there are breaks. There is no way [to fall into trance]. Even if you are entering into trance you could not stay there. You fall out of trance. That is even better. Imagine if you are in a show with
JDD: So, the energy grows but it is not like in candomblé where it continues growing and growing. Instead it goes up and quickly down...

SL: And then it stops. It does not give the opportunity to enter into trance. At least I, who fall into trance very easily, never did. I enjoyed a lot, danced a lot, rejoiced in a lot with that vibration but I did not feel that I was going to enter in trance listening to that music.

(Sandra Lima, p.c. over skype, Jun 15, 2013, translated from Portuguese by the author)

The ensuing analysis shows how Sandra uses her embodied knowledge of candomblé to enjoy Rumpilezz's music. A somasthetics specific to candomblé and centered in aspects of possession provides a framework to understanding the experiential aspects of Sandra's reception of Rumpilezz music.

**A Somaesthetics Centered in Candomblé**

Figure 8.1 Letieres Leite and “aura” Rumpilezz (source: http://rumpilezz.com/).

There is a mystic and sacred aura in Rumpilezz's music: African roots are very evident in

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133 All quotations of Sandra Lima are translations from Portuguese by the author.
their songs, which feature *candomblé* rhythms. The layout of the musicians in the stage also reminds of a religious shrine, with master Letieres Leite at the centre surrounded by musicians dressed in white (almost as incarnated *orixás*) who reinforce with their music a sacred moment of musical communion. (Cruz, n.d.)

Audiences and media often highlight the “mystical and sacred aura” surrounding Rumpilezz performances and connect it to the pleasures of their musical experience. Sandra Lima compared Rumpilezz performances with a fragment of a *candomblé* ceremony called *xirê*. When I asked why, she compared the way brass players enter the stage at the beginning of Rumpilezz’s shows with the entrance of *filhas de santo* to the *barracão* at the beginning of the *xirê* (see Chapter 5). She also said that both *xirês* and Rumpilezz shows feature a sequence of *toques* for the *orixás*. She asserted that she “likes these toques very much,” because they “take me to the *candomblé* atmosphere” and “are part of my Afro-Brazilian ancestry” (p.c. Apr. 15, 2012). Afterward, she cited other elements of Rumpilezz performances that contributed to her enjoyment: the presence of *atabaques*, *candomblé* drummers, white clothing, and above all, a particular *vibração* (vibration, energy) that she felt in their music. She describes *vibração* in the same terms Clarence Henry use for *axé*: the vital energy that connects the physical and metaphysical in music and dance (2008). Beyond contributing to her sensual enjoyment of the music, *vibração* contains the potential (if properly administrated through controlled musical activity in the *terreiro*) of making her fall into trance. Sandra claims that Rumpilezz was able to capture it and recreate it:

Their [Rumpilezz's] music pushed me to the stage. It touched me profoundly because of *candomblé toques*. As I am not yet initiated, I am not allowed to dance inside the *terreiros*, but at a Rumpilezz's show I can, even if they modify the *toques*. My body [still] responds to that [modified] rhythm . . . Here [in Salvador] we also have *blocos afro* with which I can easily dance for the *orixás*, but I have a better dancing trip with that mixture proposed by Rumpilezz. When I hear them my creativity emerges and flows better. (p.c. May 14, 2012)

The modified rhythms Sandra refers to are mostly present in pieces like “Anunciação” and “Feira de Sete Portas” where Leite cuts *candomblé* timelines producing odd meters. She had no problem adjusting her dance moves to grooves in 9/8 or 7/4 and suggested that her background in contemporary dance and knowledge of *candomblé* were crucial to this.

*Vibração* is not only related to the sounds, but to the setting:
There is another thing that I perceived. I bought their CD and the vibração is not the same . . . Perhaps because it is not live, eh? After we spoke yesterday, I saw their show [the piece “Floresta Azul”] online and was able to feel a little more of that vibração. Maybe the visual element counts a lot because by just listening to their CD I do not feel the connection. I tried to use their CD for the dança afro and orixá dance lessons that I give here, but now I do not use it as much. The show moved me a lot more. I think that part of the vibração comes from seeing the musicians dressed in white, and the atabaques. In fact, seeing the atabaque drummers dressed more formally. That for me counts a lot. It gives a lot of value to being black, to the African culture and I feel very good with that. (Sandra Lima, p.c. over skype, Jun 15, 2013)

Besides spirituality, percussiveness, rhythmicity, and traditionalism, images of nature are also central to Sandra's aesthetics. She commented on the effect of orixá toques both in the terreiro and in Rumpilezz's shows:

**JDD:** Does Rumpilezz music have a similar effect on you as music played at terreiros?

**SL:** It is not the same effect... but both touch me profoundly. In the case of candomblé it is because of the religion and the invocation of the orixás. In the case of Rumpilezz shows, things happen more organically. It is clear that orixá rhythms are elements of nature, and their [Rumpilezz's] toques sort of represent [to a lesser extent] those elements. We all have the energy of those elements of nature inside. We have the energy of water, fire, earth, (and of) all which vibrates. So, when I listen to their [Rumpilezz] music, all that resonates inside me. There is a linkage between toques and those elements inside me... In candomblé this [connection] is very strong because of its spiritual nature, but with their [Rumpilezz's] music I am able to extract that connection.

(Sandra Lima, p.c. May 14, 2012)

But Rumpilezz is not only orixá toques and atabaques. They are also a jazz big band. When asked about the presence of jazz in Rumpilezz, Sandra continued referring to elements of nature, to embodiment, and to vibração:

Each instrument vibrates, touches the mind of a person in different forms, and unleashes different feelings and emotions. The percussion, the drums, the atabaques touch specific parts of my mind and body. Other instruments touch other points of me in different ways (ibid.)

She claims that atabaques resonate with the earth and wind instruments with the air and water and thus are “more fluid”, a positive element that enhances her dance. This account of an experience of hers in South Korea illustrates this point:
I remember when I was in Korea working with a local group that used to teach Afro-Brazilian percussion. When they where learning how to play drums and atabaques, the rhythm was very stiff. Very, very, very stiff. As they progressed in their learning process they began to play closer to what we have here [in Salvador]. But at the moment of dancing there was still something missing. I was not able to flow. It was very bum bum bum [square]. But one day, at a show, a guy who played a wind instrument—I do not know exactly what it was—showed up and he matched so good that I could dance and flow. I flowed better with his help than with the force and energy of the percussion of those Koreans. It was because of the fluidity of wind instruments. (ibid)

It is very likely that one of the aspects that was missing for Sandra was the particular swing feel (suingue baiano) of Afro-Bahian percussion, as microtiming deviations are majorly responsible for music's grooviness (Keil 1995, Iyer 2012). However, it is unlikely that the Korean wind player who inspired her to dance in that occasion was aware of, or played with such swing feel. It is thus safe to assume that what moved her was the timbre and imagery evoked by wind instruments. For her, Rumpilezz provides a complete sonic combination that allows her to “have a better dancing trip” as they connect her with natural elements inside her that ground her (the earth) and allow her to move fluidly (air and water). Her statement also suggests that Rumpilezz's choice of instruments is aesthetically ideal as it combines the strength of percussive rhythm with the softness of wind melodies. Here she specifically associates strength with the earth and softness with water and air.

To see how this set of aesthetic values is played out more concretely, I now turn to Sandra's own assessment of her experience of “Floresta Azul.”

**Listening to “Floresta Azul”**

Sandra has gained exposure to “Floresta Azul” by attending Rumpilezz shows since 2010, watching their videos on Youtube, listening to their studio album, and even by using their recorded music to teach dance. During a skype conversation where Sandra and I listened to “Floresta Azul” she interpreted the piece as an encounter in the forest between orixás *Oxossi* and *Oxum* (p.c. over skype, Oct 19, 2013). In her account *Oxossi*, the hunter, enters the forest looking for prey and in his path encounters the sensual dancing of *Oxum* who begins seducing him but ends up being seduced and “hunted” by *Oxossi*'s aguere rhythm. 134 Numerous images of nature were invoked in Sandra's account, including the forest and fresh water, the respective domains of

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134 *Oxum* is one of *Oxossi*'s wives in Yoruba mythology (Prandi 2005).
Oxossi and Oxum. She connected certain musical elements with these images. For instance, she said that Oxum entered the scene in T1 (1:21-1:26) where the flutes play a series of sextuplets:

![Image of musical notation]

Figure 8.2 Fragment T1 of “Floresta Azul” (1:21-1:26).

As T1 is preceded and followed by purely percussive grooves, the contrast of the ostinato flute line of Figure 8.2 captured Sandra's attention. She found this passage particularly “fluid” (like running water); this is what evoked Oxum in her mind. Later on, in a section where the drums play the aguere groove without melodic accompaniment (6:10-6:30), she said that Oxossi conquered Oxum. She associates the softness of Oxum with the melodies of high-pitched wind instruments and the strength of Oxossi with the aguere groove played by the atabaques.

“Floresta Azul” is among Sandra's favorite pieces because, in addition to all the extramusical candomblé symbols mentioned in Chapter 5, she recognizes symbols evoking Oxossi such as the percussionists' dance steps (see Table 5.1), the aguere atabaque patterns (see Figure 7.5), and the melody of the song “Okê Odé” in the flutes (see Figures 6.5 and 7.6). As mentioned in Chapter 5, in “Floresta Azul” the three atabaque players often coordinate their steps as filhas-de-santo do when they dance for Oxossi in the terreiro (see Table 5.1). As an initiated dancer, Sandra often performs this choreography in the terreiro strengthening the evocative power of Rumpilezz drummers' gesture.

With the exception of the caxixi, which is generally not featured in Ketu ceremonies, the percussive groove shown in Figure 7.5 is identical to the aguere toque for Oxossi that I heard in
Bahian terreiros in Salvador and that I learned with Guedes in private lessons in 2012. Likewise, most variations of rum featured in “Floresta Azul” also match those I heard in terreiros and learned from Guedes (see Figure 7.12). This renders the aguere toque recognizable for Sandra.

With the exception of a few notes, the melody of “Okê Odé”, a popular song in Bahian Ketu terreiros, is reproduced note by note in octaves by the flutes in “Floresta Azul.” This renders the melody recognizable for Sandra, despite the multiple transformations of the arrangement. She responded to increases in texture and dynamics. She stated “my body is getting hotter and hotter” at 1:50-2:01, where melody A is accompanied by harmonic pads. This comment came after a build up from 1:38 to 2:01 where a purely percussive aguere groove is gradually thickened by horn layers (see Figure 8.3). Here melody A, is harmonized differently than it has been up to this point of the piece. Her response is one where aesthetic values are in line with somasthetics as bodily sensations acquire paramount value. Melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral elements all shape Sandra's bodily response to the piece.
In May 2013 Sandra was initiated in a Ketu terreiro in Salvador with Oxum as her guide orixá. 135 Being Oxum one of Oxossi's wives in Yoruba mythology, she finds a special connection with this piece. In fact, she admitted that the aguere groove is particularly seductive for her. This was

135 In candomblé, each devotee has a head orixá who guides him/her. Within the Ketu tradition filhas-de-santo only get possessed by their head orixá.
evident in our listening session when the *aguere* groove entered for the first time in the piece (0:33) as she exclaimed “how beautiful” (ibid).

![Figure 8.4 Images of Oxum in Sandra Lima's Facebook public profile (published with permission of Sandra Lima)](image1)

![Figure 8.5 Picture of Sandra Lima in her Facebook public profile (published with permission of Sandra Lima)](image2)

Figures 8.4 and 8.5 show that Sandra identifies publicly with *Oxum*, not only at a symbolic level, but also experientially. The caption of her picture in the river in Facebook reads “Na casa da
Mãe” (at my mother's house). Candomblé devotees often refer to their guide orixás as their parents. Oxum is Sandra's mother. Her mother's house thus refers to rivers and fresh water, Oxum's domain, where Sandra feels secure and protected. By evoking images of this orixá, “Floresta Azul” contributes to Sandra's embodied self-fashioning and thus to make her feel empowered.

**The Politics of Black Grooves**

So far I have addressed reception in relation to aesthetic preference and embodied experience. However, aesthetics are also intertwined with politics. This was clearly articulated in the quote “Seeing the atabaque drummers dressed more formally... for me counts a lot. It gives a lot of value to being black, to the African culture and I feel very good with that” (Sandra Lima, p.c. over skype, Jun. 15, 2013). Like carnival musicians and dancers in Salvador, here Sandra associates politics with the production of value for black culture, particularly with black pride.

Sandra and many other self-proclaimed Afro-Bahians I interviewed in Salvador in 2012 felt that Rumpilezz represented Afro-Bahian music very well. This made them feel very proud:

> I feel very grateful and happy to see the atmosphere of the xirê... in the streets. At a theatre or at a square. In that way, that energy [vibração] is not restricted to the terreiro. But it is important that this is done in a respectful manner, not simply by copying candomblé elements verbatim and placing them in the streets. I think that is disrespectful. But when you dress them differently you can share what is inside the terreiro with people outside the religious context. That is very significant for me. That raises my self-esteem and I believe also that of all Afro-descendants because you can see your culture aggrandized. I like that very much. That means dignifying the Afro culture. The culture of my ancestors. (ibid)

Sandra is proud and satisfied by how Rumpilezz presents and recreates elements of her “ancestors' culture” in prestigious venues outside of the terreiro. She is very emphatic, however, in that these kinds of transfers must be done respectfully. Respecting for Sandra means “taking a base and transforming it by dressing it differently but without losing the essence that makes people enjoy and see themselves reflected, respected, and valued in the music” (ibid). When asked what constitutes that base she responded, “atabaques and orixá toques” (ibid).
José Jorge Carvalho argues that:

The main matrix of Afro-Brazilian identity is still the traditional cults of African origin, such as the candomblé of Bahia, the shango of Recife, the tambor de mina of São Luís and the batuque of Porto Alegre. They concentrate some of the most powerful symbols shared or at least known by most Brazilians: the orishas or santos . . . and the drum ensembles, among which the better known are the atabaques of Bahia.” (Carvalho 1993:3)

This, joined to the fact that “the rescue of black identity is one of the dominant themes in Brazilian popular music” (Carvalho 1994:4) are important reasons why elements of candomblé have been eagerly secularized in Bahia throughout the 20th century. Blocos afro, afoxés, capoeira groups, and popular artists like Carlinhos Brown, Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, and Ivete Sangalo have appropriated candomblé instruments, rhythms, songs, melodies, and techniques. While some of these appropriations are celebrated, others—especially those intended for commercial use—receive harsh criticism from other artists and the candomblé community. For instance, Ed Motta (a renowned jazz pianist from Rio de Janeiro) appreciates Rumpilezz's non-commercial nature: “Many instrumental CDs are released with a commercial logic. This can be seen both in the predetermined way of playing and in the repertoire which focuses in re-recording popular songs as opposed to creating new materials. This is not the case of Bahian Letieres Leite and his orchestra” (Motta n.d., translated from Portuguese by the author). While Rumpilezz's presence in Bahian and Brazilian media has increased since 2006, their popularity cannot be compared with that of any local successful popular musician of the axé music or pagode circles. Motta would doubtless approve, and is likely aware, that Rumpilezz has established partnerships with cultural associations, municipalities, and corporations like Petrobras that alleviate part of the costs of performing, rehearsing, recording, and touring, allowing them to perform often free of charge.

Makota Valdinha, an outspoken candomblé leader, author, and black activist in Salvador, denounced Afro-Bahian popular musicians Carlinhos Brown and Margareth Menezes for “turning candomblé songs into popular commercial hits” and using them verbatim without acknowledging their sources (p.c. Salvador, Bahia, Apr. 15, 2012). She said that candomblé songs are not in the public domain as these artists argue, but belong to the candomblé world and should stay there (ibid). Makota thinks Rumpilezz is a different case because “they are taking a toque and creating something new over it. They are only using it as an inspiration, not literally. I
really like and respect their work” (ibid).

Makota’s and Sandra’s claim that candomblé musical elements must be transformed when taken outside of the terreiro, however, clashes with Leite’s rhetoric that in Rumpilezz “the alabê plays as in the terreiro.” In “Floresta Azul” the atabaques play a repertoire of phrases almost identical to those used in ceremonies. Sandra recognized these phases because percussionists play them using the same types of drums and techniques as in the terreiro. Why does she emphasize Rumpilezz’s transformation of aguere when the drummers and Leite’s rhetoric try to persuade her otherwise? At a surface level there are several obvious contextual aspects that differentiate drummers and drumming between ceremonies and Rumpilezz shows, including the relationship with the audience, the presence of brass and a conductor, style of dressing, and the relationship between drumming and dancing. Sandra asserts that drumming in Rumpilezz has “breaks” that prevent her from falling into trance. In candomblé ceremonies the alabê creates groove-build-ups organizing rum phrases in specific ways in order to facilitate dancers’ possession. Being free from dance obligations in Rumpilezz’s shows, Guedes uses the same repertoire of phrases in different ways (e.g. by engaging with the tuba player or by punctuating sectional boundaries). This reorganization results in a new experience for Sandra as it takes away the “risk” of falling into trance. This is what she calls the “breaks.” I conclude that Sandra prioritizes her embodied experience over surface level comparison (e.g. rhythmic or timbral coincidence) when assessing Rumpilezz’s transformation of aguere. She also prioritizes it over Leite’s rhetoric. Her political position is heavily conditioned by aesthetics—a somasthetics centered in candomblé.

Like Makota and Sandra, Gabi Guedes thinks that the performance of candomblé music outside of its religious context offers new possibilities but has restrictions as some degree of secrecy must be respected. While promoting his own project Pradarum, which combines candomblé and popular music, he declared: “The idea is showing the possibility of playing candomblé things outside of the terreiro. All that without hurting the religious side, without revealing many things” (Bahia Noticias, n.d.). For Gabi, the aspects of candomblé music that are meant to be shared should be used to improve its public image, raise awareness of candomblé rhythms among percussionists, bring people together, and to celebrate life. In his opinion Rumpilezz achieves these goals. This article about him illustrates this point:

We need to preserve these rhythms before they disappear... I believe that in this city
Salvador] eighty percent of the musicians in the category of percussion and trap set do not know the musicality of candomblé, of the terreiro”, he suggested. For Gabi, this lack of knowledge is produced by prejudice. “Candomblé music does not have to remain imprisoned in the terreiro just for belonging to candomblé. It is people's music. Church is always grateful and we, who are nature, have a lot to be grateful for. Candomblé songs and all spirituality is for thanking the air that we breathe, the ocean, the trees, the rivers. (ibid, translated from Portuguese by the author)

Discussion

Rumpilezz's performances allow some candomblé adepts to have embodied experiences of similar quality to those leading to ritual possession, but without necessarily experiencing full trance. In the case of Sandra, my main informant, this embodied experience, intertwined with more overtly political stances, resulted in positive assessments of Rumpilezz.

Rumpilezz's dignifying message effectively reached Sandra Lima, Makota Valdina, Ed Motta, Gabi Guedes, and others. From a political stance these subjects, all self-identified as Afro-Brazilians, subscribe to the discourse of black empowerment articulated by Letieres Leite and Orkestra Rumpilezz and are satisfied with the way it is accomplished. They celebrate the use of instruments, grooves, techniques, and symbolism of Afro-Brazilian spirituality, but only because they see them transformed and elaborated. In “Floresta Azul”, however, the agogô and the three atabaque players play the same patterns (toque aguere) and variations as in the terreiro and use the same techniques. Why are these literal borrowings non-problematic for Sandra? Her explanation is not political but rather aesthetic. She asserts that the presence of jazz and brass instruments neutralizes the risk of falling into possession, while at the same time enhancing her dance experience by making it more “fluid,” and allowing her to combine her knowledge of modern dance and orixá dance.

When referring to discourses of black empowerment, Sandra and other informants emphasize the themes of percussiveness (e.g. celebration of the presence of more percussionists than usual), rhythmicity (e.g. celebration of the use of orixá grooves), and spirituality (e.g. celebration of candomblé in general), but interpret the theme of traditionalism in flexible ways. While expressing concern for protecting and preserving ancient candomblé repertoires, Gabi, Sandra, and Makota also celebrate Rumpilezz's eclectic approach. Gabi's call to “free” music from the terreiro and Sandra's claim that “sharing what is in the terreiro with people outside the religious
context... raises my self-esteem and I believe also that of all Afro-descendants” (p.c. over skype, Jun. 15 2013) refer to communalism, a more explicitly political notion of Africanness, articulated by Afrocentric writers and activists (Covin 1990:127). Implicit is the idea that “what is in the terreiro” has the potential of bringing people together.

From the point of view of aesthetics, Sandra's descriptions of her experience refer to types of embodiment that lead to ritual possession in candomblé. By emphasizing six idealized notions of Africanness: spirituality (vibração), percussiveness (atabaques), rhythmicity (toques), embodiment (dance and early stages of possession), traditionalism (ancestors's culture), and closeness to nature (elements of nature inside her) she articulates discourses of primitivism that implicitly portray African diasporic culture as opposed to the “West.” However, she also suggests that a balance between horns and percussion is central for her experience and that the presence of jazz harmonies and rhythmic breaks counterbalances the inherent power that atabaque toques have to induce possession in inappropriate venues outside of the terreiro. This neutralizes the notion that black music is centered in percussion alone.

In sum, while flexible interpretations of traditionalism and percussiveness respectively aid black empowerment and primitivism, idealized notions of spirituality and rhythmicity reinforce both discourses of blackness.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

This dissertation has inquired into the ways black identities are constructed in today's Salvador. This closing discussion answers my research questions, puts Rumpilezz in broader contexts, and offers lines of future research.

Themes of Africanness

The first question addressed by this dissertation is: What are the most influential preconceived ideas about “African” music and culture in Bahia and how do they impact musical activity? My main assumptions were: 1) if there is something that we can identify as “black music,” it must be linked to two discourses of blackness: primitivism and empowerment; and 2) these discourses have seven associated themes: rhythmicity, percussiveness, spirituality, communalism, traditionalism, embodiment, and closeness to nature. My study of Rumpilezz verifies the centrality of these discourses and most of these themes in Salvador’s musical scene.

Rumpilezz explicitly subscribes to local discourses of black empowerment with their motto “we dignify Afro-Bahian music.” They articulate this message through various forms of materiality: public rhetoric, performance, and music structure. Rumpilezz’s strategies do not simply consist of accepting given notions of Africanness and charging them with positive value. The orchestra challenges local views of black music as spontaneous, informal, unstructured, and necessarily linked to dance, thus challenging black primitivism to a great extent. In this way, Rumpilezz is unique as most Bahian groups linked to black empowerment (such as blocos afro) embrace old stereotypes of black music and culture, thus challenging dichotomous, primitivist discourses. Yet, in some ways Rumpilezz may be seen as using the same strategy of blocos afro, for instance when the orchestra portrays Afro-Bahian music as mainly percussive.

In keeping with their motto, Rumpilezz reinterprets themes of Africanness, sometimes emphasizing them, at others downplaying them. Leite emphasizes the theme of rhythmic centrality and complexity in public interviews when he explains his compositional method. In Chapter 7 I argued that the most salient features of that rhythmic complexity include the vertical alignment of the layers in a dense polyrhythmic structure, the transformation of known timelines to obtain odd meters, the way various forms of improvisation (from jazz and candomblé
drumming) fit into the groove, and the subtle patterns of microtiming imposed by percussionists. References to *candomblé* pervade the orchestra: *atabaques, toques*, songs, white clothing, the *alabê*, name of the pieces, explanations of religious terms and protocols during shows, routines while entering and leaving the stage during shows, steps of drummers while playing *orixá toques*, etc. With these references Rumpilezz strategically connects with the most idealized model of black tradition in Brazil and promotes an image of “full of soul” orchestra, which thematizes spirituality.

On the other hand, the orchestra downplays the notions of “African” closeness to nature and embodiment. Leite and other members of the orchestra have declared that percussion is not played randomly but are as organized and rigorous as those of Western art music and jazz. Leite also stated that “The most erudite reference for me are *candomblé* houses. They are [like] universities that maintain Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Bahian music and culture” (TV Brasil 2012). With this rhetoric and by having percussionists dressed in elegant tuxedos Leite challenges ideas of spontaneity and informality linked to *candomblé* and Afro-Bahian music in general. Rumpilezz also challenges the idea that Afro-Bahian music is necessarily linked to dance (particularly to hypersexualized dance). These particular ways of downplaying the themes of closeness to nature and heightened embodiment are strategic for Rumpilezz’s project as they make their version of Afro-Bahian music fit local standards of artistic respectability.

The themes of traditionalism and communalism are less prominent in Rumpilezz’s discourse. Leite appeals to tradition and emphasis on the past when introducing the piece “O Samba Nasceu Na Bahia” (Samba came from Bahia). The thrust of his argument is that, after coming from Angola, *kabila*, the “great-grandmother” of samba, was preserved in Bahian *terreiros* of the Angola nation for centuries. Rumpilezz makes no explicit references to communalism but, like *blocos afro, afoxés, capoeira* groups, *candomblé*, and other Afro-Bahian groups, they provide musical training for youth and women for free or at low cost through their social projects Rumpilezzinho and Rumpilezz de Saia. During the 1970s and 80s many traditional Afro-Bahian music groups became focus points of the MNU, developing ideas of black consciousness by embraced Afrocentric ideas of communalism (Covin 1990:131). Ever since, many traditional and popular music groups linked to black consciousness in Bahia have increasingly engaged in such social projects. Carlinhos Brown, for instance, an internationally known Afro-Bahian musician, also founded a music school for children and youth in his Salvador neighborhood.
Percussiveness is perhaps the most prominent theme in Rumpilezz’s discourse. Percussion and percussionists are placed at the stage center; many pieces are inspired by known Bahian percussionists (“Anunciação” and “Adupe Fafa”); and the horns play percussively, emulating drums. That only five out of twenty musicians in the orchestra are percussionists is strategic for Leite, for he asserted that “the big band accompanies percussion and not the other way around.” The larger the number of musicians “accompanying” in relation to those “accompanied,” the stronger this message emerges. Leite also asserted that “in Rumpilezz the brass revere percussion.” These statements can be better understood when examined under the rules of a discourse of empowerment.

Figure 9.1 Discourse analysis applied to Leite’s statement about brass polyrhythms

The above figure shows how Rumpilezz’s brass polyrhythms, inspired in *candomblé* drumming polyrhythms, gain the discursive meaning “Brass reveres Afro-Bahian percussion.” Two themes
are emphasized by Leite: rhythmicity and percussiveness. Within the preconditions that allow the emergence of this particular meaning, it is clear that the Leite uses *candomblé* drumming layering techniques as referent and that the coexistence of this statement with others where *candomblé* and the centrality of percussionists is invoked, is necessary.

The presence of percussion and horns also influences how Rumpilezz’s music is received. In When talking about her experience of listening to “Floresta Azul,” Sandra Lima gives equal importance to percussion and the brass because she associates each set of instruments with particular elements of nature that resonate inside her body. She claims that this resonance is crucial for her embodied experience of the music.

![Primitivism Empowerment Dignification](image)

“Brass complement percussion and help me to connect
With elements of nature inside me“

- **Referent**
  - Candomblé mythology, dance and possession

- **Associated field**
  - presence of atabaques and candomble toques
  - Spotlighting percussionists
  - melody of “Oke Ode”.

- **Materiality**
  - Brass polyrhythms
  - Atabaque toques

- **Subject**
  - Sandra Lima

- **Preconditions**

- **Percussiveness**

- **Spirituality**

- **Closeness to nature**

- **Embodiment**

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Figure 9.2 Discourse analysis applied to Sandra’s statement about brass polyrhythms

In Sandra’s case the referent is not *candomblé* layering techniques but *candomblé* mythology, dance and possession, her domain of expertise. The associated field includes everything that evokes *candomblé* for her: *atabaques, toques*, colors, songs, etc. Percussiveness, spirituality, closeness to nature, and embodiment are all thematized in her statement. By emphasizing
closeness to nature, heightened embodiment, and spirituality Sandra’s statement may also be seen as emphasizing primitivism. Although she strongly emphasizes percussiveness in other statements (e.g. “Rumpilezz represents Bahian music well because of the atabaques”), here she neutralizes it by giving it the same importance than to the brass.

Leite and Sandra’s statements show how notions of Africanness are strategically emphasized or downplayed. Percussiveness is emphasized by Leite, but neutralized by Sandra. With different referents and associated fields, the same phenomenon (brass polyrhythm) produces two different statements supporting the same discourse.

Black Identities Beyond Binaries: Is it Possible?
Throughout the 20th century the notions used to create images of black primitivism have reinforced ideologies of difference between “Africa” and “the West” and between black and white identities. The problem is that even when the value of such notions is inverted for black empowerment they still reduce black identities to one of the sides of a binary in which one side is seen as the norm and the other as a deviation.

Rumpilezz shows that black empowerment can be reaffirmed by turning the tables on the old black/white binaries and defying the dichotomy. But this defiance has limits. Rumpilezz could not have been successful in dignifying Afro-Bahian music had they not resorted to using the techniques they used (i.e. spotlighting percussionists, making horns play in “percussive” ways, and using candomblé references). But to what extent can musicians downplay or disregard idealized notions without losing their grip on black identity? What is the minimal dose of these notions required by audiences to feel that the music represents blackness?

Answering these questions requires the examination of various dimensions of locality, for instance, the perceived authority of composers, performers, and audiences in Bahia. In general terms the more authority one has, the more one can deviate from norms. But how is authority defined in circles of Afro-Bahian music and culture? We know that capoeira, samba de roda, and particularly candomblé practitioners are perceived as bearers of Bahian black tradition and that this gives them special authority. But there is also a question of seniority. As Nicolás Larrain explains, in capoeira angola senior practitioners have more authority to improvise and break the rules of protocol as it is assumed they can do it without de-characterizing the art, a great
preoccupation of capoeiristas (2005:105-106). And as demonstrated, discourses of race and ethnicity are also important. Skin shades matter but are not definitive in defining authority. From what I observed, capoeira angola mestres and candomblé spiritual leaders tend to be darker, but some, despite being lighter, hold positions of authority beyond their groups like Pai Raimundo, an umbanda priest who was a representative of the Municipal Council of Black Brotherhoods in Salvador in 2012. Makota Valdinha's criticism of Carlinhos Brown and Margaret Menezes, two black Bahian popular singers, shows that being black and famous does not necessarily equate with authority.

Jeff Packman points out that in Salvador's popular music circuit, prestige and authority are related to music style and commercial appeal:

Musicians’ efforts to live from music in the context of local understandings of good/bad music and good/bad musicians are complicated by the fact that in Salvador the most lucrative musical work opportunities often involve performing genres that are commonly criticized for being impoverished, inferior, or simply bad, while the practices most widely esteemed for their musical quality—and those that are most strongly associated with (and often definitive of) good musicians—typically pay significantly less. (Packman 2011:427)

He found that national genres such as samba, choro, bossa nova, and MPB (Brazilian popular music) and international ones like blues, rock, jazz and salsa receive more positive evaluations than regional ones like axé music and pagode, despite the immense popularity of the latter (ibid:428). We also know that among these international styles jazz is particularly prestigious.

Local subjects perceived as carrying situated knowledge and properly representing local values have more authority. For some, ethnic mixture best represents Bahia:

**JDD:** Do you think Rumpilezz's music represents well Bahian musicality?

**SL:** I think so because here in Bahia the Afro culture is very strong and rich, but Bahia is also a mixture of many European and indigenous influences. There is everything. Therefore, I think Rumpilezz represents what being a Bahian means, which is mixture. (Sandra Lima, p.c. May 14 2012)

But authority also varies from place to place. In the national context, Bahia evokes Afro-Brazilian culture and many Bahian musicians in fact perform this culture. For instance, famous
Bahian axé music artists such as Ivette Sangalo and Claudia Leite routinely emphasize samba-reggae and other Afro-Bahian influences when touring around the country.

Letieres Leite's authority is affected by the fact that he was born and raised in Salvador, that he represents Bahian mixture due to his mestiço ancestry, and that he carries key local musical knowledge. In several public declarations he reminds us of growing up hearing Afro-Bahian grooves, taking lessons with candomblé master drummer Moa do Katende, and playing in Emilia Biancardi's orchestra Afro-Brasileira. Like many other musicians in Bahia, he survived by playing and arranging for commercially successful bands whose music is perceived by many musicians as being in bad taste (e.g. axé music), and gained prestige by playing musics perceived as sophisticated, both in Brazil and in Europe. Since the 1980s Leite has also been active in the local jazz circuit. In 2006 he left Sangalo’s band, for which he played and arranged for over a decade, and formed Orkestra Rumpilezz. As Ed Motta suggests, part of his current prestige is due to the fact that now he is exclusively associated with non-commercial music. The presence of alabê Gabi Guedes and runtó¹³⁶ Luizinho do Jejê in Rumpilezz compensates for Leite's lack of authority within traditional Bahian candomblé. This authority allowed Rumpilezz to challenge aspects of the black/white binary, and still be perceived as boosting Bahian and Afro-Bahian identities.

Leite and Orkestra Rumpilezz are not alone in challenging stereotyped notions of Africanness. In their quest for challenging “the status quo in American racial politics following World War II” (Garcia 2007), and to place jazz as a truly modern style, black musicians such as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie developed the technical and compositional complexity of the music and also dissociated it from dance. This was perceived as modernizing the style but not necessarily as losing its connections with black culture. On the contrary, Gillespie, Parker, and other bebop musicians sought to strengthen their connections with African-diasporic music by collaborating with Afro-Cuban musicians.

¹³⁶ Runtó is the designation of initiated master drummers in the Jejê nation in Bahia (Ewe-Fon ancestry).
The Role of Jazz

The second question explored in this dissertation has to do with the role of jazz in the construction of Afro-Bahian music, particularly in the case of Rumpilezz. Modernist distinctions between high/low, popular/erudite, and commercial/autonomous art prevail in Bahia. As discussed in Chapter 4, jazz is somewhat trapped in these distinctions.

Perceptions of jazz’s erudition in Bahia problematically rely upon less favorable perceptions of popular and traditional Afro-Bahian music. Rumpilezz challenges and benefits from this. Leite insists that Afro-Bahian music is as sophisticated and rigorous in its structure as any other “high” music and that Bahian *candomblé* houses are like universities that maintain Afro-Brazilian culture and thus have the status of “erudite.” With messages such as “the brass reveres percussion,” “the big band accompanies percussion,” and “the percussion comes from the kitchen to the leaving room,” Leite performs an “inversion” of value between jazz and Afro-Bahian percussion, where the former serves to measure the “erudition” of the latter. Therefore, Rumpilezz may be seen as a postmodern project that strives to “equalize musics of formerly unequal status and power, and erase erstwhile differences of legitimacy” (Born et al. 2000:19).

As mentioned, Rumpilezz has many predecessors. Let’s see how the main messages of the orchestra resonate with other groups where jazz is mixed with Afro-diasporic music and how locality may explain similarities and differences.

“*We Dignify Afro-Diasporic Music*”

Following a strategy similar to Leite’s, Abigail Moura celebrated Afro-Brazilian music in Rio de Janeiro between the 1940s and 70s by attempting to reconcile unequal perceptions of percussion and brass instruments. Moura’s rhetoric and musical arrangements suggest that he also tried to put the brass at the service of percussion. This was accomplished by reducing the role of the brass merely to accompanying singers and percussion, while maintaining Afro-Brazilian grooves similarly to their traditional contexts. In Moura’s arrangements, there is no melodic improvisation as in most jazz. Horns are limited to playing short vamps and melodies alternating with singers, and some pieces only feature voice and percussion. This results in textures where percussion is forefronted. Leite’s strategy is different: instead of lowering the profile of the horns he raises the profile of the percussion. Collaboratively with drummers, Leite creates rhythmically rich
grooves, bridges, and interludes for the percussion that render a more balanced sound where no one is relegated to an accompanying role.

“Our Music has Strong African Roots”

Many African-American jazz musicians between the 1940s and 70s had to negotiate their artistic interests with the political ideas promoted by black movements, particularly with Black Power. These movements increasingly emphasized the connections of American black expressive culture (including jazz) to Africa, and demanded the involvement of many artists in the politics of Africa and the diaspora (Monson 2000).

Rumpilezz is immersed in a context where the connection between blackness and African heritage is alive and constantly revitalized and reinvented. Given the musical elements that constitute Rumpilezz’s music, claiming “African” roots is thus not surprising. Failing to acknowledge such connections, however, would be problematic. Makota Valdinha, for instance strongly criticized two popular black musicians who appropriated candomblé songs without giving credit to the source. In a highly politicized black culture, many artistic projects involving certain styles of Afro-Bahian music (such as candomblé, capoeira, samba-reggae) are seen as opportunities to make political statements aligned with black consciousness such as denouncing racism, promoting black pride, or affirming African heritage. One could then say, that the conditions of locality in Bahia impose comparable (but perhaps less intense) restrictions on Rumpilezz artistic creation and political stances to those black jazz musicians had to face in the U.S. during the 1950s-1970s. Both are in their own ways influenced by the politics of black aesthetic movement which tries to subordinate music to politics.

The Clave Discourse: “This is How We Do It”

Santos’ treatment of timelines was very similar to Leite’s in that both transformed known Afro-Brazilian timelines using similar procedures to obtain odd meters. But Leite’s rethoric about it is only paralleled only by that surrounding Afro-Cuban jazz. The birth of Afro-Cuban jazz is attributed to Mario Bauzá’s “Tanga” (1943), the first jazz piece that was consciously composed following the principle of clave (Salazar 1997). Ever since, Afro-Cuban jazz\(^\text{137}\) has been dominated by a broader “clave discourse” which establishes that all Afro-Cuban music and its

\(^{137}\) Since Latin jazz is strongly influenced by Afro-Cuban jazz, Latin jazz has also been influenced by the clave discourse.
derivatives are rhythmically organized around clave, or other Afro-Cuban timelines. Perhaps in reference to this discourse, Leite uses the word clave to refer to the various timelines present in Afro-Bahian music. Like Bauzá, Machito, and Pozo, Leite proposes that Afro-Bahian jazz is based in timelines.

“The Music is Played as in the Terreiro”: Representing Afro-religious Music
Like Leite, Moura staged sacred Afro-Brazilian music. Shows of Orquestra Afro-Brasiliera were “surrounded by an aura of mysticism” and “preceded by ceremonies similar to candomblé celebratory rituals with purification of instruments and use of clothes typical of candomblé” (Dias 2010:92). Although we have no information about the orchestra’s drummers (i.e. whether they were initiated in candomblé), from his recordings and declarations it is apparent that Moura tried to transfer candomblé toques as literally as possible to the orchestra. Moura’s candomblé-inspired pieces feature the three sacred atabaques (rum, rumpi, and, Lê), the agogó, and the adjá, a rare bell used exclusively by officiants to induce possession in dancers at crucial points of ceremonies (Cardoso 2006:47). Cardoso classifies the adjá as an instrumento de fundamento (fundamental instrument), which symbolizes axé, the sacred energy of orixás (ibid). I have never seen adjás outside of terreiros and my drumming teachers never mentioned them because they are secret. Unless adjá’s connotations were different then, its presence in Orquestra Afro-Brasileira is thus symbolically charged and represents a strong attempt to emulate not only the sound but also the mystic aura of candomblé ceremonies. The orchestra also featured songs “in Bantu, Nagô, Nheengatu and in Portuguese (respecting, in some cases its linguistic corruptions)” (Moura in Dias 2010:93), clearly trying to add “authenticity” to the shows.

Important differences between Leite’s and Moura’s orchestras in their attempts to reproduce the mystic aura of terreiros are: 1) Leite’s discourse about the presence of an alabê in the orchestra; 2) the metric transformations introduced by Leite; 3) the absence of vocal music in Rumpilezz; and 4) the absence of instrumentos de fundamento in Rumpilezz. The presence of Guedes (the alabê) is central for Rumpilezz’s discourse of Afro-Bahian authenticity and for neutralizing potential criticism from the candomblé community. We know that Moura “maintained a close relationship with umbanda and candomblé terreiros” in Rio de Janeiro (Dias 2010:92). But there is no information about the types of restrictions he faced on the use of sacred music and symbols and how he dealt with them. The fact that the orchestra existed for almost three decades suggests that Moura’s work enjoyed approval from the community. In the contemporary context of
Salvador it is highly unlikely that Rumpilezz or any other music group outside of terreiros would dare using an instrumento de fundamento. The presence of Guedes in Rumpilezz guarantees that no secrets are revealed.

Areas of Future Research

This dissertation problematized discourses of blackness and their associated themes in the context of white/black or “Africa”/”West” binaries. Nonetheless, there are other forms of Afro-Bahian identity that are more inclusive and surpass the binary, such as those linked to the Afro-Brazilian cults of umbanda and candomblé-de-caboclo (Carvalho 1993). Caboclos as well as other Amerindian, African, and Christian entities are all revered in these syncretic cults. Here symbolism and practices perceived as Amerindian are integrated to those of the old white/black binary. Like Afro-Brazilian culture, Amerindian culture has been constructed as exotic and primitive by the “West” and by segments of Brazilian society. This has shaped the ways in which Amerindians and Afro-Brazilians constructed themselves. A study of the interactions between these two “others” as expressed in Afro-religious music and in the context of Brazilian and Bahianness, would offer more complete accounts of how Afro-Bahian identities are musically constructed.

Likewise, Leite claims that there are other “others” that need to be integrated into the Afro-Bahian musical complex. He asserted:

[Here in Bahia] there was no re-Africanization... This culture never stopped being African. Now, an Africanization re-elaborated within the multifaceted mixture of culture, which is already Brazilian culture, [could have happened]. However, this [process] was not exclusive of African ethnic groups, but also of others that came along [with the Africans]. I always say that there are several Arab cultures in Bahia that people do not mention assertively. There are many [influences] from the Portuguese Moors who came here. This is evident mainly in the melodic realm and, to a lesser extent, in the rhythms of the Brazilian Northeast. This needs to be explored.
(p.c. April 27, 2012)

Leite composed a piece called “Das Arabias” (From the Arab world) for Rumpilezz to honor and acknowledge Arab influences in Afro-Bahian music (ibid). He is correct in pointing out that Arab influences in Bahia are overlooked both popularly and academically. Part of the reason is that the colonial Arab contribution to Bahian culture is minimal when compared to that of Africans, Europeans, and Amerindians. There is no historic documentation to my knowledge of Portuguese
Moor groups asserting separate identities in Bahia and less so, of preserving such identities and their cultural baggage beyond the colonial period. Regardless, Leite's discourse indicates that Afro-Bahian music and culture may also be reinvented with influences not typically acknowledged in local, national and diasporic discourses. Using Leite's words “this needs to be explored.”

I concentrated on the music and discourses of Africanness in Bahia, a place that takes pride in its African roots and is nationally perceived as the epicenter of Afro-Brazilian culture. There are, however, other centers of black tradition in Brazil like Rio de Janeiro, where discourses of hybridism are more favored. The former imperial capital of Brazil was also a point of reception of enslaved Africans, particularly from the Congo-Angola area. But as a result of internal migration, Africans of Yoruba, Ewe, Fon, and other origins and mestiços from all over the country enriched the ethnic make up of the city. In Rio de Janeiro the configuration of neo-African nations, the discourses about the origins of capoeira, samba, and candomblé, the music and politics linked to carnival ensembles, notions of musical authority, prestige and hierarchy, the relationship with international black musics and politics, and the significance of the national discourse of triethnic ancestry, despite having overlapping aspects, often contrast with those in Bahia. Therefore, as other authors have demonstrated (Sigilião 2009 and Sansone 2004a and 2004b), a parallel study of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro would render more nuanced understandings of the role of music in the formation of Afro-Brazilian identities.

Sansone demonstrated that in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro discourses of blackness are importantly affected by class (2004a). In my study I noticed this as well:

**JDD:** What is your opinion on the re-Africanization of Bahian carnival?

**LL:** For me that Africanization always existed. The difference is that it was concentrated in the ghetto but [in the 1970s and 80s] the middle upper class began to consume it. Media and the entertainment industry did too. What we had was a shift in the pattern of consumption of the industry. There was no Africanization.

(Leitieres Leite, p.c. April 27, 2012)

For Leite, Africa survives in Salvador's ghetto. The vast majority of African descendants in Salvador, including blacks and mestiços, live in poorly served areas, earn low incomes, and still struggle against discrimination (Garcia 2010). In contrast, most light skinned soteropolitanos,
comprising some twenty percent of the city's population, live in better material conditions (ibid). Although this dissertation did not discuss the role of class in discourses of blackness as such, it is implicitly considered in discourses of primitivism, particularly in the theme that contrasts closeness to nature with modernity and urbanism. In the context of Salvador, the latter is associated with access to commodities, technologies and material wealth, all key to secure positions in higher classes in the city. The connection between blackness and lower class is also reflected in the value that some black musicians give to non-commercial music projects. In a broad survey of Brazilian popular songs, Carvalho also suggests that references to blackness in song texts often portray a stereotypical “old, poor, humble, black man, who still carries the marks of slavery” (1994:17). Further study could demonstrate that the relationship between poverty or dispossession and Africanness is another theme used for discourses of blackness. The necessary question would be: how is this played out musically?

“African” diasporic music resistance to Western hegemony is another theme reported by scholars (Monson 2000), which is by definition, linked to discourses of black empowerment. *Capoeira*, with its master narratives of origin as a disguised martial art developed by enslaved Africans in Brazil to fight for freedom, its history of resistance against police prosecution and repression, and its current discourse of holding out against modern forms of oppression, epitomizes this theme best. Quilombo dos Palmares, Ganga Zumba, and Zumbi, are the most powerful symbols of black resistance in Brazil. They have been thematized in *capoeira*, *blocos afro*, *afosé*, and popular songs, TV series, and films like “Ganga Zumba” (Diegues 1963) and “Quilombo” (Diegues 1984). Since the 1970s black consciousness groups in Brazil have been celebrating May 20th, the day of Zumbi’s assassination. The day was institutionalized as a school holiday in 2003 under Da Silva’s government. On this day activists and institutions organize events to reflect on racial inequality and the historic struggle for freedom.

Although Rumpilezz has no explicit rhetoric about resistance, their project is a contemporary expression of that cultural resistance. Because black empowerment often reifies dichotomous views, an examination of the theme of resistance may broaden the scope of the analysis of discourses of blackness.
“Africa” Producing Locality

“Africa” continues to be the most important reference for the construction of blackness and of locality in Bahia. Rumpilezz invokes “Africa” to celebrate Bahianness, to negotiate the efforts of the nation-state to impose nationalistic ideologies, to participate in an international black community, and to propose a flexible sense of identity that allows black people to challenge and accommodate old ideas and stereotypes formerly used to oppress them. This also asserts Bahia's place as center of black tradition in Brazil and in the black Atlantic. *Candomblé* is central to Rumpilezz’s venture. In “O Samba Nasceu na Bahia” Leite places the roots of one of the most consummated symbols of Brazilianess inside Bahian *terreiros*. With this gesture, the privileged position of Afro-Bahian religious culture in Brazil is reaffirmed.

The myth of “Mama Africa” as discussed by Pinho (2010) is alive in Bahia. In the discourse of Leite and many other Bahians, what distinguishes Bahia from its “mother” is a particular mix:

> The Bahian percussive universe was born here through the mixture of various African ethnic groups... After their arrival something particular was created: A music with a rhythmic structure that was not [originally] from here... I had the experience of seeing some Africans struggling to understanding how these rhythms were transformed here. They have to relearn them because they [the rhythms] have become something else, like in any other place of the diaspora.
> (Leitieres Leite, p.c. April 27, 2012)

The interview where Sandra asserted “being a Bahian means... mixture” continued:

**JDD:** Had you the chance of producing a show featuring Bahian culture, what musical elements would you place in the foreground?

**SL:** It must have percussion, mainly because they represent the force of Afro culture... it must have *rum, rumpi*, and *lê*...
> (p.c. May 14, 2012)

In the mixture that represents Bahian culture, Afro-Bahian elements have a stronger presence for Sandra. Musically she distilled Bahianness to *rum, rumpi*, and *lê*—the instruments Rumpilezz uses to invoke “Africa.”
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