



Listening for Africa

Freedom,
Modernity,
and the Logic
of Black Music's
African Origins

David F. García

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COVER ART: A group of Katherine Dunham Dancers shown in mid rehearsal in New York, 1946. Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.

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FOR NELSON MY BROTHER

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I began the research for this book soon after moving to North Carolina in 2003. Originally, I planned to write a book on the history of the mambo and its social and cultural significance in various parts of the Americas. Starting my research with materials published and produced in the United States, I was struck by the prevalence of the notions “primitive,” “savage,” and “Africa” in describing mambo and related styles of music, including Afro-Cuban music. I had encountered similar terms in some of the Cuban materials I used for my research on Arsenio Rodríguez. I soon shifted my focus to researching the epistemological nature of these terms, primarily in anthropological thought of the 1940s in the United States, which led me to the work of Melville J. Herskovits and his archival collections at Northwestern University and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. From that point forward, I followed many of the direct connections Herskovits had made during his acculturation and New World Negro research, and the project shifted focus accordingly from the mambo to an epistemological study on these and related notions as understood and used not only by academics but also by musicians, dancers, and others as well.

The need I felt to understand the prevalence of the notions “primitive,” “savage,” and “Africa” in public discourse of the 1930s through the 1950s was indeed great. I wanted to write a book that explained why these notions were so prevalent in public discourse including but not limited to academia. My interests in this problem, however, extended beyond my research to include specific experiences I had throughout much of my own academic life. During a personal trip to visit my extended family in Quito, Ecuador, in 1996, I decided to wander into the Centro Cultural Afroecuatoriano. I had completed my first year of graduate school in the ethnomusicology program at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and I was planning to conduct doctoral research on an Andean topic. Upon recounting my visit to my cousins, one asked, “Why

did you go there? Are you visiting your ancestors?" The racist implication of the joke was clear to me, and it was a stark reminder that Darwinist evolution had so deeply engrained itself across societies throughout different parts of the world, or at least the Americas.

One other experience occurred much more recently, the effects of which convinced me of the importance that the work of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Gilles Deleuze had on attempting to theorize the implications of place and history in understanding and explaining the workings of political and ideological power. While on a short family trip in the mountains of western North Carolina, my wife and I began a friendly conversation with a gentleman and local resident, who eventually came around to asking us where we were from, to which we replied, Los Angeles. Not satisfied, he asked, "No, where are you really from?" My wife, whose father and mother are from Peru and Guatemala, respectively, and I had been asked this type of question many times before, and I suspect that my two children will be asked the same question—if they haven't already. Our obvious Latin@ ethnic features, it was clear, marked us as *not possibly being from here* (western North Carolina) or even our place of birth, Los Angeles! My daughter, who was in fact born in Durham, will particularly have a lot of explaining to do going back three generations.

I can't help but think about and feel the ideological violence that such questions whip up, especially during the course of a friendly chat among strangers. I also understand that such experiences do not compare with those of others who are in a much more vulnerable position, as, for instance, undocumented immigrants, transgendered people, and so on. In many ways, then, this book is about how the notion of someone's origins, regardless of racial, ethnic, sexual, or political status, is indeed a double-edged sword; my wife and I are very proud of our familial origins in South and Central America, and the histories of our parents' immigration to Los Angeles, and we want our children to also be proud and claim these origins and histories at every opportunity, without, however, ever ceding their rightful place where they call home, wherever they happen to be.

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Between the thirties and the end of World War II, there was perhaps as radical a change in the psychological perspective of the Negro American toward America as there was between the Emancipation and 1930. —AMIRI BARAKA (LeRoi Jones), *Blues People*, 1963

Like race, time is a social construct. And as a social construct it seems natural, never making itself appear indispensable while structuring much of what we do and think, when we do and think, and most importantly how we do and think. When time is coupled with space, also a social construct, together they determine how we understand where we come from, where we are now, and where we might be going next and thereafter. Such operations fulfill a limitless number of purposes, not least of which is in the ways we think of our own place in history and in the world. What relationship does music have in the service of these temporal and spatial operations? In the epigraph above, Amiri Baraka, still writing as LeRoi Jones, reflected back in time to the interwar period and claimed an ontological shift had occurred among African Americans in regard to their relationship to the nation. He made his claim inspired no doubt by the political transformations in American society of the early 1960s during which he wrote *Blues People*. Such transformations from slave to citizenship, he argued, are most graphic in black music.¹

We also encounter music having a formative place in James Weldon Johnson's statement from 1925, "As the years go by and I understand more about this music and its origin, the miracle of its production strikes me with increasing wonder."² We know Johnson was writing about the Negro spiritual during the height of the Harlem Renaissance. We may also take his statement as evidence supporting Baraka's claim that black music has had the capacity like no other form of expressive culture to record how African Americans have forged their place in history and the nation.

But is there more to be said about black music in this regard, especially given the immensity of the literature on black music history? In historical terms, what Baraka claimed to have occurred among African Americans in the 1930s was plausible, but thinking of Johnson's and Baraka's claims in historicist terms raises a different set of questions altogether concerning the deeply precarious implications of situating oneself within music bounded by modernity's social and historical frameworks of race and history.³ Although the spiritual's origin was an empowering topic of debate for African Americans and others at the time (and would continue to be in the 1930s), what often goes unexplained is how and why Johnson, Baraka, and others took black music as a medium to understand the historical past and place of origin in the first place. What was it about the historical period that Johnson anticipated and Baraka reflected back upon that ushered in much reflection and work on the social and political status of black Americans, Africans, and Caribbeans via their shared origins in music?

By way of an answer, consider the headline on the front page of New York City's *Sun* on April 19, 1940, which reads, "Jungle Drums Sound as Africans Wed atop Skyscraper."⁴ The musical items captured in this image are the three "jungle drums" that are being made to sound by three individuals who, along with the rest of the group, are identified as Africans. According to the caption, this wedding party, which includes newlyweds who are "natives of Nigeria" in addition to a "witch doctor" and a "witch woman," is atop the Chanin Building, located on East Forty-Second Street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, and in the distance is the Empire State Building, located on Thirty-Fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, southwest of the Chanin Building. The primitivist symbolism of the image and caption surely appear to us today as obvious enough and might have even appeared as such to some readers of the *Sun* in 1940, for the caption also clarifies that the newlyweds are "appearing with other native Africans" in *Zunguru*, an African dance drama produced by the choreographer Asadata Dafora from Sierra Leone.

Putting aside questions of representation and the group's promotional intentions, the image itself reproduces conceptual dichotomies integral to modernity's formations of history and geography in music and dance. It is a logic that enabled the "jungle drums" to not simply sound as such but to bring sound from the historical past to the modern present. The group of musicians and dancers also occupied the modern present, but like their drums they simultaneously embodied the ancestral origins whose music and, dance James Weldon Johnson, Melville J. Herskovits, Katherine Dunham, Fernando Ortiz, Asadata Dafora, and so many others sought to understand, explain, and perform at the time. Moreover, those pictured on the *Sun*'s front page, their drums, and the

sounds of the drums all materialized in temporal and spatial opposition to the Chanin Building upon which they sat and stood, the Empire State Building whose top floors and antenna peer from behind, and the metropolis of Manhattan in which they lived. The caption reads, "In the distance is the Empire State Building." It is *distance* temporally and spatially conceived that distinguishes the group of African musicians and dancers from modernity's monuments of its own progress. The image, in other words, constitutes an assemblage of practices of mapping people and their music within Cartesian space (the jungle and the modern metropolis) and time (the primitive and the modern). It is in fact a visual materialization of the logic of black music's and dance's African origins, prompting as it has vast temporal and spatial distances for many generations of writers, listeners, and observers, including James Weldon Johnson as well as Amiri Baraka when he stated, "There are definite *stages* in the Negro's transmutation from African to American. . . . I insist that these changes are most graphic in his music."⁵

Listening for Africa: Freedom, Modernity, and the Logic of Black Music's African Origins critically analyzes how and why the African origins of black music and dance mattered during the historical period that Johnson, Baraka, and many others marked as significant in the history of African Americans. The 1930s through the early 1950s was a politically turbulent time indeed, bridging the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, the civil rights movement, and African decolonization, when modernity's promises of freedom and progress were at their most vulnerable or near collapse. During this time ethnomusicology, dance studies, and African diasporic studies in the United States emerged in conjunction with interrelated developments not readily recognized as such, including Nazism in Europe, anticolonialism in Africa, and black nationalism in the Caribbean and United States. Not only Americans but Africans, Caribbeans, and others as well promulgated a revaluation of the African origins of black music and dance in order to sway entrenched attitudes toward race and Africa or the so-called Dark Continent in the face of a troubled modern world.

This book focuses on some of these key figures—Melville J. Herskovits, Katherine Dunham, Richard Waterman, Zoila Gálvez, Fernando Ortiz, Harold Courlander, Modupe Paris, Luciano "Chano" Pozo, Asadata Dafora, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, Harry Smith, and Dámaso Pérez Prado. Whether they were anthropologists, comparative musicologists, dancers, musicians, artists, or political activists, they all looked toward black music's and dance's trajectories from their origins in Africa to the New World to address or, in some cases, help solve modernity's shortcomings. For some the goal was to resolve

racism in Europe and the United States by scientifically discovering black American music's origins in ancient African civilization and its survivals in the Caribbean; for others it was to raise political support among Americans for Africa's decolonization and modernization by performing in music and dance their shared histories of oppression and liberation; while for others it was to assuage anxieties about modernity's threat of nuclear annihilation by rediscovering humanity's redeeming qualities in black music itself.

Their research, performances, and activism did indeed mark significant shifts in attitudes toward Africa and racial Others. But when considered in historicist terms, these shifts in the end did not entail a definitive break from modernity's trappings, which would have truly been transformative if not for their continued dependence on modernity's notions of the modern city and Africa as epistemological axes (Cartesian coordinates) of human history and progress. Instead, their work prolonged and remade modernity's paradoxes, differences, and disagreements with the cultures of black internationalism established during the interwar period as put forth by Brent Hayes Edwards.⁶ More than documenting and performing the fact of black music and dance, their work entailed modernity's practices of listening to and embodying a historical past that made racialized living compelling and empowering, yet precarious all the same.

In taking a historicist approach in analyzing the logic of black music's and dance's African origins, this book challenges the persistence of national and ethnic boundaries that circumscribe the scope of most studies on black American music and dance history. It does this by uncovering a rich historical archive of Africans, Americans, Cubans, and others who, in the two decades leading up to the civil rights movement, African independence from colonial rule, and the Cuban Revolution, addressed questions of racism and colonialism in conversation with each other and with a strategic eye toward music's and dance's potential to inspire social and political change. It follows the ideological and political forces that shaped their activities and receptions in varying locales throughout North and South America as well as the Caribbean and West Africa. The decision to pursue a transnational and interdisciplinary perspective is guided by the most recent scholarship on the black power movement by Peniel E. Joseph, Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, and Robin D. G. Kelley, among others, and scholarship on the African diaspora by Frank Andre Guridy, Kevin Yelvington, J. Lorand Matory, Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes, and Brent Hayes Edwards, all of whom bypass nationalist and ethnocentric perspectives on black culture and history in order to get at its transnational flows of racial difference that Paul Gilroy theorized in *The Black Atlantic*. Indeed, *Listening for Africa* sheds light on one of Gilroy's more recent challenges in the critical examination of race by taking that step from

analyzing the “ways that particular ‘races’ have been historically invented and socially imagined” to explaining how “modernity catalyzed the distinctive regimes of truth” (or that which Gilroy calls “raciology”) such that a logic of origins and of race itself was made epistemologically viable in music and dance.⁷

Thus this book addresses the following main questions: When black music and dance sounded and embodied its African origins—whether from recordings and films made in Suriname, Martinique, New York, and Mexico City, or public performances in Havana, Chicago, and Lima—exactly how, why, and for whom were those soundings and embodiments materializing? What did it mean when listeners and audiences perceived those performing black music and dance as modern man’s ancestors or primitives? And how did such practices of racial and historical listening and embodying serve as empirical and aesthetic sustenance for modernity itself? Addressing this final question in particular necessitates interrogating whiteness as well, not as the supposed beneficiary of modernity’s racial regimes, as Gilroy questions, but as modernity’s way of preempting un-raced and un-sexist living for men and women.⁸ For, as this book will explore, whether Negro spirituals, jazz, cubop and bebop, Yorubá *toques* (rhythms) and *cantos* (chants), black modern and African folkloric dance, or mambo, these fields of music and dance compelled from people a wide range of human emotions, actions, and interactions, from the most intense feelings of degradation and disavowal to the most uplifting, empowering, and liberating sense of self and community.

When such music and dance compelled academics, activists, and performers, as well as their audiences, to move discursively back and forth from savagery to civilization, from the bush to the city, and from Africa to the New World and back, these distances were not matters of human history and geography but rather forged by the weight of modernity’s axes of time, space, and race.⁹ The radical change Amiri Baraka pointed to in the psychological perspective of African Americans toward the United States was even more profound in that, through the early 1950s, Africans and Caribbeans, as well as Americans, put forth music and dance to reconfigure Africa as origin with the expressed intention of staking their claim on modernity’s promises of freedom and equality, usually in very subtle yet unmistakably real ways as only can be achieved in music and dance. Real ways, that is, that inhabited the interstices between real and fantasy, past and present, observation and participation, primitive and modern, and black and white. Interstices that they oriented toward freedom and that were often racially inclusive, which provoked modernity’s machines—among them psychoanalysis, the Catholic Church, nationalism, and especially capitalism—to react rather hysterically but swiftly nonetheless.¹⁰

Although the book's chapters move from the late 1920s through the early 1950s, the presentation of these temporal and spatial reconfigurations in black music and dance is not intended to imply a teleology leading ultimately to the emergences of the use of "diaspora" in the 1950s or the black power movements of the 1960s.¹¹ For in this book's broader proposal to reconfigure how and why we think of history in music and dance, each of the case studies analyzed in the following chapters is revealed to constitute the ferment of agitation and activity that has been a constant part of the human condition under modernity regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or nationality.¹² What this book will argue is that for these academics, performers, and activists, listening to, analyzing, sounding, embodying, and even resisting black music's and dance's African origins enabled their holding modernity's promises of freedom and equality to the fire usually as their acts of faith in modernity but also as acts of stepping inside and outside of its regimes of truth.

The following introductory remarks will explain the theoretical imperatives in unpacking the notions of black music, dance, and African origins as well as modernity's need for this logic, which will necessitate moving above, around, and through boundaries of many sorts. It is with such movements between music, dance, and film; black and white; urban and rural; and science, art, and magic that this book proposes a critique of the state of modernity at the mid-twentieth century, when its own excesses—through colonialism, capitalism, and science at a global scale—seemed to threaten its own collapse if not for the ideological hold its discourses of race and history had on those living in the modern world at the time. What is important to keep in mind throughout the many turns taken in this book is the premise that this logic of black music's and dance's African origins was fundamentally contingent on modernity's most deeply confounding paradoxes, freedom from which regardless of one's race was most improbable.

Modernity and Africa as Origin

This book's basic methodological premise is that music and dance embody a historically complex and contingent field of people's actions and interactions. I approach the music and dance studied here thus as constituting people's ways of having existed in the world during this particular historical period. By framing black music and dance in this way, I do not purport this book to be a study of Bush-Negro music of Suriname, African dance dramas, cubop, mambo, or any other black music or dance genre of the 1930s and 1940s. Attempting to do so would not only be an entirely different kind of project, it would trap us in modernity's orderings of historical time, space, and race. These are the very

discourses that had disavowed Melville J. Herskovits's "Bush Negroes," Asadata Dafora, John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, and Chano Pozo from occupying the same historical place in the modern world.¹³ Rather, I conceive of the music and dance studied here as having been significant occasions of musicking whose effects had assembled among its musicians, dancers, and observers, on the one hand, a consistent pattern of discourses about race and history, and, on the other, the socially sanctioned roles to operate within these discourses accordingly. Christopher Small defines musicking as "a way of knowing our world—not that pre-given physical world, divorced from human experience, that modern science claims to know but the experiential world of relationships in all its complexity—and in knowing it, we learn how to live well in it."¹⁴ In spite of its suggestive utopianism, what musicking ensures is an analysis of music and dance not as genre but as human actions and interactions that encapsulated no doubt people's planning and desires, and that were entangled in modernity's ways of knowing, yet were also immanently about people's experiences in the world.

Said another way, there could be little or nothing shared in the sound or aesthetics of, for instance, Dámaso Pérez Prado's "Mambo del ruletero" and Asadata Dafora's *Kykunkor*, or among such musicians and dancers *without* modernity's discourses of race, Africa, and history. Like what Karl Hagstrom Miller does with southern music in *Segregating Sound*, this book is similarly about how a variety of people compartmentalized music and dance of many kinds not only according to race but most urgently along modernity's mappings of history and geography, wherein the logic of black music's and dance's shared African origins was for most a matter of common sense.¹⁵ What compelled people to compartmentalize black music and dance in these prescribed ways is a much more complex question altogether. To address these problems, this book insists on eschewing any transhistorical constructs of black music and dance, as Jonathan Sterne does with sound in his study of the history of sound reproduction, in order to get at the dispositions, practices, and techniques by which people formulated their responses to black music and dance in terms of African origins.¹⁶ To conceive of music as a field of people's actions and interactions, or moving, sounding, and observing, which I will occasionally flag throughout the book as "dance-music," puts us in a position to situate their articulations of musicking to black music's and dance's African origins alongside the social and political imperatives shaping their historical and social contexts.¹⁷

Such articulations of black music and dance to their African origins had much to do with how people experienced and understood their own place in a world troubled by racism, fascism, war, and inequality. Becoming, as described

by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, is a useful theoretical insight in this regard.¹⁸ According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming attempts to capture that “prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.”¹⁹ What I am after in using this notion of becoming is to historicize people’s affective experiences in performing and observing black music and dance in their responses to Jim Crowism, Nazism, colonialism, and the dawn of the atomic age and the Cold War without taking for granted their capacity to articulate their experiences as anthropologist, comparative musicologist, African, American Negro, Afro-Cuban, artist, scientist, musician, dancer, activist, and so on. I approach these identifications as conditioned by the dispositions, practices, and techniques sanctioned to them by modernity. Recent scholarship in sound studies and aurality have shown that seemingly mundane actions such as listening are steeped in modernity’s regimes of history, ideology, and physical practice or comportment. Jonathan Sterne draws from Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* to theorize styles of listening and beliefs in the efficacy of their techniques as learned, matters of education, or shared repeated practices, all of which are made actionable in a prescribed set of contexts.²⁰ Similarly, Ana María Ochoa Gautier suggests that particular styles of listening generate or constitute ideas about the world. Sound, in other words, is a medium for constructing knowledge about the world.²¹

Hence, by beginning the book’s chapter titles with the terms “analyzing,” “listening,” “embodying,” “disalienating,” and “desiring,” I intend to focus analytical attention on these actions as socially sanctioned, historically determined, and sometimes ideologically destabilizing. They involved prescribed techniques, compelling them (as a matter of *habitus*) to invoke the notions “bush,” “origins,” “native,” “African,” “Negro,” “modern,” “soul,” and so on in their capacities to be anthropologist, comparative musicologist, African, modern listener, or simply in the modern world. Certain kinds of musicking constituted unique occasions in which people put into practice these notions and their associated techniques of action (analyzing, listening, embodying, and so on). What will become clear, then, is that their resolve to embark on engaging black music’s and dance’s African origins had little to do with the empirical question of their origins and more to do with their investments in the modern world and their precarious conditions in it.

In drawing from de Certeau’s well-known axiom “space is a practiced place,” we might best understand the modern world as materializing in people’s practicing becoming scientists when listening in the anthropological field and laboratory, historians when lecturing in the hall, Africans when performing on

stage, natives when acting on film, and modern when observing the primitive.²² Such practices, with their associated techniques and fields of action, ensured the continuity and a degree of cohesion of people's place in the modern world and thus modern living itself. Perhaps most important to this book's theoretical imperatives is the proposition that the historical time line and geographic mapping invoked by the notion of African origins were revealed through such decipherings of the modern world.²³ Put simply, according to this logic, the geographic places where black music and dance were believed to have originated (Africa) and still survived (Caribbean and South America) were separate in every possible way—socially, economically, and temporally included—from the modern city or metropolis. Because of their privileged status in the workings of this logic, then, anthropologists, departments of tourism, historians, record company producers, and Africans as well were enabled to navigate the temporalized distantiation separating urban or modern from rural or premodern space. They held the capacity to listen and even travel back in time to the “jungle” or “bush,” a fantastical feat that was in fact not fantastical at all but a matter of the spatial practices and becomings endowed to them by Hegelian, Comtean, Darwinian, and capitalist spatialized decipherings of the world and its history.

What is also essential to this proposition of the modern world is the notion of haptic perception in which all of the senses (optical, aural, tactile, etc.) were in operation independently as well as cross-referentially all the time.²⁴ When a sense organ was isolated for specialized perception or consumption, as with the comparative musicologist's listening to and analysis of the field recording's capturing of the African past, modernity's temporal and spatial mappings were operating especially formatively. It was the act of and belief in listening to and analyzing the African past that reinscribed one's belonging in the modern world. But my analysis also considers dancing within the framework of musicking because the tactile senses, including touch and interbodily movement, along with the aural and optical, served to reinscribe those participants and their observers that much more rigorously in the modern world. The costs of such investments in the modern world, however, were great in that modernity's temporal and spatial mappings, as made actionable through these fields of interaction and their associated practices and dispositions, entailed its discourses of race and history. Such mappings were indeed violent in that they were intended to striate people's places in the world in terms of difference and distance with the realization of freedom always at stake.

As modernity's striating technique par excellence, “Africa” conjured in people an authoritative list of interrelated techniques that included the “bush,”

“jungle,” and “savage”; the “primitive” and “premodern”; and “origin” and “ancestral” with which people routinely reinscribed modernity’s orderings of the world. Their discursive valences were far-reaching in that they helped unleash forces that, in W. E. B. Du Bois’s words, tore asunder the racialized body into two irreconcilable existences.²⁵ There is no doubt that the work of Du Bois and many others, dating from the first half of the twentieth century, took to task modernity’s violence on ontological as well as political grounds. Three works in particular, Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* (1918), and Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), will emerge, especially Fanon’s temporal critique of modernity’s racial logic, throughout various chapters of the book as important signposts of just how precarious and at the same time forceful modernity’s formations appeared to people, especially those racialized as black, at this time.

For now, it is worth noting briefly some of the ways in which Spengler, Du Bois, and Fanon critiqued modernity’s formations of time and race. Spengler, for instance, characterized time and race as modernity’s petty and absurd systems of truth and signs. “Time,” he stated, “is a word to indicate something inconceivable, a sound symbol, and to use it as a concept, scientifically, is utterly to misconceive its nature.”²⁶ After asserting that a “phantom time” satisfies the need of modernity’s philosophers to measure and explain all things, he ends with the following: the “invention of a time that is knowable and spatially representable within causality is really wizard’s gear.” Spengler’s suggestion that time, or that which is “bound up with the living and irreversible,” is more clearly felt in music—and, I will add, dance—together with his critique of time’s purported scientific uses as “wizard’s gear,” is significant. Not only does it lend historical grounding to this book’s methodological use of musicking, it also puts forth the theoretical imperatives of time and space when conducting a historicist analysis of the ways analyzing, listening, and embodying (as social practices), and not music and dance itself, determine what history and place mean. In terms of race, Spengler states that “Race, like Time and Destiny, is a decisive element in every question of life, something which everyone knows clearly and definitely so long as he does not try to set himself to comprehend it by way of rational—i.e. soulless—dissection and ordering.”

Spengler’s remarks affirm the skepticism that writers before and after him expressed concerning time and race as arbitrary notions manipulated by social Darwinists among other purveyors of like-minded philosophical and scientific traditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, W. E. B. Du Bois had already proclaimed “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.” As for the oppressive deployment of Western civi-

lization's discourses of time and space, Du Bois's famous explication of double consciousness as that sense of having to *measure* "one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" poignantly describes the yoke of modernity's formations of time and space on the everyday life of racialized Others.²⁷ Yet, with all their critically and rhetorically compelling exegeses of the shortcomings of modern society, science, and history, both Du Bois and Spengler make ample use of modernity's temporalizing figure, the primitive. To the extent that evolutionism and Darwinism scientifically consummated history and primitive man, Spengler's theorization of "high Cultures" and "primitive Culture" becomes that much more confounding given his repeated rejections of Darwinism.²⁸ In fact, he made it the "task of the twentieth century . . . to get rid of this system of superficial causality [i.e., placing primitives or savages as the point of departure of modern humans] . . . and to put in its place a pure physiognomic," a deceptively promising proposal indeed since Spengler's formulation still spatialized groups of people and culture in terms of modernity's time.²⁹

In reality, condemnation of Darwinism—not to mention Hegelianism and Comteanism and the unabated currency of their notions of the primitive in popular as well as scientific discourse in the United States, Mexico, and throughout Latin America as well as Africa—continued into the 1950s, which raises the question of that which Du Bois and Spengler named as the problem of the twentieth century.³⁰ Was it the color line as Du Bois posited, Darwinism as Spengler posited, or might we bracket these two problems within a deeper ontological problem of Western civilization's time line? Frantz Fanon was among the few twentieth-century theorists up until the 1950s who tackled precisely this problem of the time line, drawing primarily from the psychoanalytical and existential phenomenological works of Sigmund Freud, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Günther Stern Anders. Fanon acknowledges the "savage" and "African jungle" in the world as occupying modernity's primitive past, though he makes it clear that the need felt by the "modern Negro" to traverse the distance separating the African from himself (i.e., the Antilles Negro) and ultimately the European (becoming whiter, he claimed, in the process, or achieving embodiment of the Hegelian Spirit) is symptomatic of an inferiority complex or a psychopathological symptom "rooted in the temporal," that is, in colonialism's temporalizing logic of evolutionism.³¹ He declares, "There is of course the moment of 'being for others,' of which Hegel speaks, but all ontology is returned unrealizable in a colonized and civilized society." It is Fanon's use of the Other, that is, as pertaining exclusively to the racialized and colonized being-for-the-other distinct from "the other" of the Hegelian dialectical tradition, that

is implemented most often in this book to signal not only this peculiar race-producing otherness but especially its effects among varying racialized groups. In fact, Fanon speaks of a “third-person consciousness” derived from ontological conflicts existing among black Americans and those of the Antilles (or black Others) to which he adds the ontologies of the individual and that forced upon him by the “white man’s eyes.”³²

Du Bois, on the other hand, reflected on this unreconciled striving, a double consciousness, or “two warring ideals in one dark body,” without hesitating to posit this struggle’s eventual reconciliation within the grand dialectical tradition contrived by Hegel: “The history of the American Negro is the history of the strife . . . to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging *he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost*. He would not Africanize America [nor will he] bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism.”³³ Fernando Ortiz’s transculturation is constructed, though in inverse form, on this same dialectical formulation of race and time. But for Fanon, this dialectical resolution would never be forthcoming in the modern world, whether in situations of colonialism or not. The answer to this problem, in Fanon’s opinion, was refusing to be temporalized in the first place by modernity’s spatial decipherings of the world, a resolution that was attainable but not sustainable by Katherine Dunham, Duke Ellington, Harry Smith, or the other case studies analyzed in this book given their preoccupations with redeeming their sense of Self within modernity’s racialist, sexist, nationalist, capitalist, and historicist formations.³⁴

Indeed, ontological freedom from modernity’s formations was for most a disorienting or else an absurd proposition even as a broad range of contemporaneous thinkers from Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Kurt Koffka, and Martin Heidegger to C. L. R. James, Lydia Cabrera, and Gabriel García Márquez—in addition to Du Bois, Spengler, and Fanon—interrogated the ideologically and politically contingent nature of subjectivity in the modern world. As this book argues, it was this preoccupation with, or fear of losing (as Du Bois in fact noted), one’s subjective anchorings in modernity’s sanctioned and contingent identity formations that accounted for the profundity in analyzing, listening, embodying, disalienating, and desiring one’s way in modernity. The fact that music and dance entailed prediscursive sounding, moving, and feeling bodies, capable at any time to confuse or, worse, unhinge modernity’s hold—racialized, sexist, capitalist—on people, made rehearsing the logic of black music’s and dance’s African origins all the more urgent.

Du Bois’s, Spengler’s, and Fanon’s insights, if anything else, provide the historically contemporaneous theoretical thrust to critically analyze the logic of black music’s and dance’s African origins as one of modernity’s most natural

and all-encompassing technologies in the orderings of people, place, and time. For this reason alone their theorizing of time and space is woven into this book's story and put into conversation with the work of a broad range of thinkers in their own right. This book is not simply a historical study of black music and dance, and though much of the material presented here locates the musicking in the United States, it is also not a historical study of African American music and dance in and of itself. In resolving to analyze this logic in the interstices of subject and object, modern and primitive, what can we learn about and from its racialized subjects? Specifically, what did they have to gain and lose artistically, ontologically, economically, ideologically, and politically with respect to their spatialized and temporalized places in the world at this time? And how did these exchanges impart a sense of their place in the world, in terms of their arbitrarily defined status, racially or otherwise? These are some of the questions this book seeks to answer.

The Pathways through the Work

In his *Representing African Music* (2003) Kofi Agawu perhaps best critiqued the problem of twentieth-century Africanist ethnomusicology beginning with comparative musicology as the problem of difference. In formulating this problem, he traverses the many ways in which non-African musicologists, from Erich von Hornbostel, Mieczslaw Kolinski, and Richard Waterman to Rose Brandel, John Chernoff, and David Locke, posited the differences separating African music and Western music (both of which are always conceived as homogeneous). These include differences in perception, as in Hornbostel's statement "We proceed from hearing, they from motion."³⁵ Agawu attempts to provide a resolution to this "somewhat paradoxical situation" in the following way:

To say with the structuralists that meaning is difference is, in a sense, to do no more than identify a condition of language use. To say with [Johannes] Fabian that the production of ethnomusicological knowledge depends crucially on a denial of coevalness—a posture designed to keep the Other in a different time frame—is also to identify a condition of knowledge construction. The challenge, therefore, is not whether but *how* to construct difference. It is here that we need to attend to factors of an ethical, political, and ideological nature.³⁶

Throughout the chapters of this book, I purposefully use the terms "sound," "movement," "musicking," "dance-music," "racialized as black," and temporalized and spatialized as "of African origins" as methodological gestures toward, but

not solutions for, this problem of difference construction. I follow many occasions in which people were compelled to broach black music's and dance's African origins in order to analyze the systems of power—racism, sexism, colonialism, and classism—that were at the crux of these occasions' makings. Chapters 1 and 2 provide hitherto unknown insight into how Melville J. Herskovits, Mieczslaw Kolinski, and Richard Waterman (in addition to other analysts Agawu does not consider, namely, Katherine Dunham, Fernando Ortiz, and Harold Courlander) made some of their decisions to attend to ethical, political, and ideological factors not only affecting their subjects in the anthropological field and racialized modern Others in the city but themselves and each other as well.

Chapter 1 concerns the comparative analysis of music and dance of the New World Negro as this field of research emerged in the late 1920s from the work of Melville J. Herskovits, his colleagues Fernando Ortiz and Erich von Hornbostel, and eventually his collaborator Mieczslaw Kolinski and student Katherine Dunham. It is perhaps appropriate that this first chapter focuses on Herskovits's research activities and beliefs since his anthropological project was vexingly steeped in modernity's discursive paradoxes of race, sexism, and historical time. His belief in science's potential to objectively reason away the scourge of racist thinking did in fact steer many people's work, Kolinski's and Dunham's included, toward the same goals of racial understanding. Yet they predicated much of their work on traveling to, or listening in on, the historical past as it was retained, they believed, among premoderns living in the "bush." As other chapters will show, this technique of being transported back to Africa or the bush upon observing African dance-music and its survivals was shared among many kinds of moderns, anthropologists and comparative musicologists included. But science's precariousness also emerged in more material ways. As Kolinski's life was put increasingly at risk by the spread of Nazi control in Western Europe, Herskovits transgressed his own delineation between politics and scientific objectivity in his attempts to save him and thus their collaborative work on analyzing the African origins of New World Negro music. Whereas for Dunham, in dancing and musicking in the anthropological field, she actively blurred modernity's temporal and spatial formations of the modern and the premodern as well as its delineations of science and art, theory and practice. Dunham would continue to pursue her career in the interstices of science, art, theory, and practice, and in so doing anticipate the kind of feminist praxis that bell hooks and others would advocate for later generations of feminists of color.³⁷

The historiographical thrust of chapter 2 provides further explanation of the circumstances surrounding listening practices in modern spaces as well.

Whether in lecture and concert halls and street celebrations in Havana, the Laboratory of Comparative Musicology at Northwestern University, or homes in cities throughout the United States, the practices of listening for the distance and direction from which musical sound traveled, and then measuring such perceived phenomena according to discourses of national history, psychology, and authenticity, factored deeply in how people oriented themselves in the modern world. We can readily detect these practices underlying the experiments in sound perception by German Gestalt psychologists, and though Herskovits chose to collaborate with Hornbostel and Kolinski on the basis of their training in Gestalt psychology, what chapter 2 argues is that these practices conditioned listening across varying social, cultural, and political arenas. Public debate surrounding Havana's carnival celebrations of 1937 was a fulcrum for the Cuban public, including Fernando Ortiz and other Cuban intellectuals as well as modernist composer Gilberto Valdés, to listen for both the African past of, and its presence in, Cuban music. Similar debates in the United States over the African origins of American Negro music continued into the 1940s. In transcribing and analyzing Herskovits's Trinidadian field recordings at Northwestern's laboratory, Waterman developed his theories of "hot" rhythm and metronome sense by listening his way into the mind of the black body to locate the site of black music's African aesthetic retentions.

Whereas Henry Edward Krehbiel had looked to the Negro mind as the location where memories of the African musical past persisted, Herskovits complained that Krehbiel "as with all later writers . . . made no detailed study of African musical style, but relied mainly on what he could glean from travelers' accounts and other nonmusical works."³⁸ In fact, Waterman devised his theories in the laboratory in consultation with Abdul Disu and Julius Okala, two Northwestern students and research assistants from Nigeria who also worked to raise awareness among Americans of the oppressive conditions under colonialism in Africa. Disu and Okala, along with other African immigrants, worked to convince Americans of the myths of the savage and the jungle, whose circulation only intensified with the proliferation of new record disc formats and print media outlets. In helping to usher in the commercial consumption of field recordings, Harold Courlander serves as a particularly important figure in establishing the practices of listening for Negro authenticity via its African origins across not only the scientific and popular divide but also the black and white racial divide as well.

What ontological possibilities did Africans Modupe Paris and Asadata Dafora forge for themselves and African Americans by performing and lecturing about black music's and dance's African origins? How did Zoila Gálvez and

Chano Pozo in their performances of the American Negro mother and the African native foster political solidarity, professional opportunities, and artistic collaborations among Afro-Cubans and African Americans? And how did the engagements of Paul Robeson, Katherine Dunham, Duke Ellington, and Harry Smith with Africa, the Caribbean, and the nature of the modern world itself both shore up and destabilize modernity's promises of freedom? These are the questions that chapters 3 and 4 address, all of which have to do with raced and un-raced bodies as fundamental technologies of modernity's regimes of freedom and time.

Chapter 3's first case study is musician, dancer, and activist Modupe Paris. In his memoir *I Was a Savage* (1957), Paris chronicles his early life in French Guinea, including his first encounters with Western civilization's notions of the savage, historical time, and Christianity.³⁹ Upon arriving in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to attend missionary school, he was not only looked upon by urban Africans as a savage, stating, "I must have looked the savage that I was," he also quipped about the "hardships which seemed to go with being a Christian," saying, "being a savage was certainly more comfortable."⁴⁰ His discussions of space and time are equally insightful, describing his experience moving from his village in Dubréka to Freetown and then to New York City as feeling that he had traversed centuries of time; that time stretched spatially from the thatched-roof village of Dubréka to the skyscraper-studded seaboard of New York City.⁴¹ Paris's observations provide an important framework with which to analyze how he, Dafora, and other African immigrants in the United States strategically maneuvered in, around, and back through differing temporal and spatial formations, including linear, cyclic, ancestral, colonial, and materialist time, in order to expose modernity's shortcomings and contradictions with respect to their own freedom as well as the freedom of other black Others. As racial and temporal Others under colonialism, Paris and Dafora became competent in, and thus acted on, the conceptual equipment of modernity's "native" and "savage" African, modifying them according to the occasion at hand, which often involved performing, researching, and lecturing on the modern American Negro's African ancestors and the African origins of black music and dance of not only the United States but also of the Caribbean and South America as well.⁴²

Too often uses of time outside of capitalist and even Hegelian historical dialectical time are attributed exclusively to so-called primitive or non-Western cultures, but E. P. Thompson reminds us in his classic work "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" of people's movements from one tempo-

ral regime into another, such as “employer’s time” to the “worker’s own time.”⁴³ Here, I follow the movements of Zoila Gálvez, Paul Robeson, and Chano Pozo to and from their performances of varying temporalized figures of the black body in the United States, Europe, and Cuba, all of which effected a manifold of ethical, political, and ideological consequences. In Gálvez’s case, these included her forging among black Cuban and American women what bell hooks identified as the true meaning and value of Sisterhood.⁴⁴ With Robeson and Pozo, however, similar solidarities along anticolonial and anticapitalist values were complicated at best, if not deferred by their occasional realizations of the desires and imaginations of the British film industry and Russian modernist dancers.

According to Manthia Diawara, modernity for Africans was a matter of occupying its space, access to which was determined by its regimes of time, not only historical time but capitalist, socialist, and Christian time as well.⁴⁵ But the logics of these temporal formations were given to dialecticism’s ruthless paths toward progress, which V. Y. Mudimbe critiqued as not actually speaking of Africa nor Africans but rather as justifying the “process of inventing and conquering a continent and naming its ‘primitiveness’ or ‘disorder,’ as well as the subsequent means of its exploitation and methods for its ‘regeneration.’”⁴⁶ Thus, for Africans and others racialized as black, gaining ontological freedom under modernity’s temporal formations came at an impossible cost, as Frantz Fanon had determined in *Black Skin, White Masks*. But while Fanon formulated his project of disalienation without much regard to music, its realization actually had been premised on the notion of “being in music” as theorized by Günther Stern Anders, from whose work Fanon drew to formulate his theory of disalienation in the first place.

Chapter 4 argues that, while the kinds of disalienation Fanon theorized did materialize in acts of “being in music” or musicking, such realizations were in fact contingent on modernity’s indeterminacies and not merely a matter of rejecting its temporal formations. Through the 1940s, Katherine Dunham, Duke Ellington, and Harry Smith, in their own inimitable ways, affected fleeting moments of disalienation in their day-to-day work from one artistic creation to the next, from one performance to the next. Such moments of disalienation, in other words, were not necessarily limited to acts of musicking. Rather, we might also expect moments of disalienation to have materialized in the interstices of capitalism’s, sexism’s, and racism’s striations through the thicket of everyday living, through their daily actions and the actions of those around them.⁴⁷ Dunham continued to operate in and around modernity’s dissections

of art from science, anthropology from entertainment, black from white, and woman from man, creating for herself along the way—in her work leading up to and out from her choreography *Heat Wave: From Haiti to Harlem*—fleeting moments of disalienation in the world. Ellington, similarly, operated in and around the limits imposed upon him and his musicians by segregation and civil rights activism, the jazz music industry, and directing a band, from one composition to the next. Along the way, in composing and premiering *Liberian Suite*, he alluded to Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms by claiming his hope for a fifth freedom from, as I argue, modernity's contingencies. Harry Smith pursued his aim to disrupt visual, sonic, and temporal linearity in creating abstract films and screening them accompanied by recorded music by Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo and by live jazz musicians. Smith's desire to cut off all of the modern world's representational devices might have materialized in his representation of black jazz musicians as being innately soulful if not for his prior anthropological training and, most imperatively, his privileged whiteness or un-raced self.

If during the 1930s and throughout World War II the psychological perspective of African Americans toward the nation changed radically, as Amiri Baraka proposed, then many people's psychological perspective of the modern world, and their sense of security in it, suffered an existential crisis from 1945 through the early 1950s. Chapter 5 homes in on modernity's precarious holds on those entering and moving through fields of black dance music by analyzing the mambo in its varying manifestations in Cuba, the United States, South America, and Mexico. The existential crisis here was affected not merely by the threat of nuclear annihilation but, more to the point of this book, also by the racial intensities whose practices of analyzing national histories in music, listening one's way in the modern present, and embodying the un-raced were disrupted to the point of collapse under the mambo's excesses. It is telling the number of points of convergence one encounters in mambo, from fields of thought and (threat of) action—*lo real maravilloso*, or magical realism; Sartrean existentialism; and atomic war—to a variety of twentieth-century figures: Alejo Carpentier, Dámaso Pérez Prado, Arthur Murray, Chano Urueta, Gabriel García Márquez, the cardinal Juan Gualberto Guevara, Amalia Aguilar, and Rita Montaner. It is important to understand its disparate reaches in terms not of style or influence but, I argue, of its capacity to metastasize to modernity's own regimes of truth formation. If mambo's unordered, unpatriotic, and sinful movements and soundings threatened the integrity of capitalism's essential social unit, the modern (i.e., un-raced gendered normative) family, then why was capitalism itself the cause of its generative profitability?

In spite of the arbitrary nature of modernity's systems of logic, it is important to stress that black music's and dance's African origins were not a fiction. The connections between music and dance practices in Africa and the Americas were and continue to be real, whether historically, ideationally, stylistically, or experientially conceived. This book's aim, rather, is to situate the logic supporting black music's and dance's African origins within modernity's social and political imperatives of the 1930s through the early 1950s, revealing it to have been not so much a construct as to have involved individuated affects and desires taken up into the assemblage of modern living.⁴⁸ The rhizome, as proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, is a particularly apt metaphor for explaining the paths taken in this book. Consider their definition of the rhizome as establishing "connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles."⁴⁹ The spatial distances across which the logic of black music's and dance's African origins had impressed itself in analyzing, listening, performing, resisting, and desiring is compelling enough to follow and to explore some of its otherwise limitless burrows of significance. Each realization of this logic, whether rendered by an anthropologist, dancer, musician, audience, listener, political activist, filmmaker, or critic, was as a result of deeply compelling human encounters with freedom (individual or political) ultimately at stake, a freedom that modernity promised yet deferred on the basis of people's relationships with its discourses of race, sex, and history.

Just as modernity afforded intellectuals to think, speak, and act in privileged ways, sanctioned by modernity's decipherings of legitimate knowledge production, Africa as Western civilization's Other afforded musicians, dancers, activists, and others to retrace, usually subversively, modernity's decipherings (temporal, spatial, and epistemological) of Africa and thus reconstitute its mattering maps across society along the way. In these ways, the logic of black music's and dance's African origins enabled a field of interaction for Africans, Americans, Cubans, and others to contest, arrest, or re-create flows of the Negro spiritual, jazz, calypso, mambo, and other New World Negro black dance and music. They did so not only to stake their claims in historicism's renderings of black music's and dance's African origins but also to step into each other's histories of oppression, both as the oppressed, as with the Scottsboro case of 1931, and as the oppressors, as in the Americo-Liberian history of minority rule over indigenous Liberians. What we are left with, thus, is a critical understanding of modernity's systems of power—time, space, and race—not merely as social constructs but, more importantly, how and why they operated as such during one of Western civilization's most precarious historical periods,

the 1930s through the early 1950s. This was a period of savage oppression and barbaric warfare throughout much of the modern world, culminating in its invention of its own means of destruction (atomic weapons), yet, modernity's condition of unfreedom from identity's subjective assurances proved to be its most perniciously elusive.

Analyzing the African Origins of Negro Music and Dance in a Time of Racism, Fascism, and War

The ritual drums were never touched by a woman, even the highest of the *mambos*. Many liberties were permitted me because of my unofficial position as emissary of the lost black peoples from *Nan Guinin*. —KATHERINE DUNHAM, *Dance of Haiti*, 1983

Following the end of World War II the urgency to resolve the ideology of racial superiority once and for all was palpable across various spaces of discourse, including international political bodies. Academics in particular continued to predicate their urgency to resolve this problem on their confidence in the natural and social sciences, even though their disciplines had long held opposing definitions of race, which seemed intractable. The statements on the nature of race and racial difference by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) represent examples of the legitimating role natural and social scientists played in shaping the international community's responses following the end of the war to the Nazi death camps and to racism in general. Charged with redressing the causes of World War II through education, science, and culture, UNESCO convened a panel of mostly social scientists in 1949 in Paris to "adopt a programme of disseminating scientific facts designed to remove what is generally known as racial prejudice."¹ Its first statement published in 1950 resulted from the work of anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists of different nationalities led by Brazilian anthropologist Arthur Ramos. Criticisms of this document came from human geneticists

and physical anthropologists who complained that it “tended to confuse race as a biological fact and the concept of race as a social phenomenon.”² They were particularly critical of the statement’s assertion of the lack of biological or mental differences among racial groups, proof of which they declared had not been scientifically established. (Proof of biological differences had also not been scientifically established.) To address these complaints, UNESCO convened a second group of geneticists and physical anthropologists in 1951 to revise the original document. Before publishing it, however, the new statement was circulated among other biological and social scientists, one of whom was the American anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits; they were asked to submit their comments about the new statement.

In October 1952 Herskovits wrote his response in a letter to Swiss anthropologist Alfred Métraux, who was serving as the director of UNESCO’s Social Science Department’s race program.³ His two reservations regarding the statement were based on the premises of cultural determinism. The first concerned the following passage from section one: “The concept of race is unanimously regarded by anthropologists as a classificatory device providing a zoological frame within which the various groups of mankind may be arranged and by means of which studies of evolutionary processes can be facilitated.”⁴ Herskovits objected to the phrase “by means of which studies of evolutionary processes can be facilitated” because it “suggests a possible implication that there are significant differentials in degree of evolution of different races, something I am sure there is no desire to imply.”⁵ His second reservation concerned the following passage from section five: “It has been recorded that different groups of the same race occupying similarly high levels of civilization may yield considerable differences in intelligence tests.”⁶ Herskovits lamented the wording in this paragraph, stating, “I miss the fine hand of a cultural anthropologist.”⁷ He recommended that the phrase “groups of the same race occupying similarly high levels of civilization” be substituted with “groups of the same race having similar cultures.” Métraux did not make these changes to the statement but rather recorded Herskovits’s objections, in addition to those of the other reviewers, in a separate section of the document titled “Comments and Criticisms on Different Items of the Statement.”

The statements made by UNESCO on the nature of race and racial differences reveal the entrenched vexation that discussions of race still evoked among scientists of varying nationalities, research fields, and methodological approaches. Notions such as “evolutionary processes” and “high levels of civilization,” when addressing questions of race, clearly persisted among international bodies of academics into the 1950s in spite of the genocidal practices that the Nazi re-

gime rationalized based on these and other related scientific and historical ideas. For their part, black American writers W. E. B. Du Bois, George Schuyler, and Alain Locke had long discounted definitions of race based on biological determinants.⁸ The second UNESCO statement of 1952, however, reveals that biological and evolutionary understandings of race and the authority by which these understandings were issued were as relevant as ever.⁹ What is even more revealing is the advice the editor of the 1952 UNESCO statement gave to the reader, based on a dialectical viewpoint: “If confusion seems to be rife, we must not forget that it is precisely such differences of opinion and, indeed, such bitter attacks which give birth to what we call truth.”¹⁰

Although it seems that the authors of UNESCO’s statements on race held opposing views over the scientific suitability of evolution, civilization, and cultural relativism, the truth was that they were operating within the same logic of false oppositions (e.g., biological versus cultural determinism), the same race-producing or raciological regime.¹¹ We can consider the temporal implications in the deployment of these concepts in the name of science as the dominance of one system of historical time, in this case, Western evolutionary Time, “leveled off” as the world’s time.¹² Thus, so long as Africa was posited within this temporal scheme, Africans racialized as black body by social and biological scientists alike had at least one foot in the modern’s savage or primitive past. The spatialization of Africans and New World Negroes according to the significations of nonurban places was especially compelling when explaining the origins of black music, as even Du Bois demonstrated in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) when he turned back onto the “African forests, where its counterpart can *still be heard*” to mark the distance from which American Negro religious music had evolved to its civilized modern state.¹³ Thus, regardless of the branch of science, we can attribute UNESCO’s vexed statements on race to their temporalizing and spatializing practices, which were particularly productive in analyzing black music’s African origins.¹⁴

Beginning in the late 1920s Herskovits and his Cuban colleague Fernando Ortiz, among others, aimed to deal with their respective society’s long-held beliefs in African racial and cultural inferiority. By the early 1940s they each would publish their defining work on race—Herskovits’s *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941) and Ortiz’s *El engaño de las razas* (The deception of the races, 1946)—in which they reaffirmed that objective scientific knowledge of both the African origins of the New World Negro and the nature of cultural retention and change would debunk those false theories of race (based on biological determinism and the ideology of racial superiority) to which they attributed the existence of racial prejudice, including toward black music and dance.

Herskovits and Ortiz drew from their capital as scientists to resolve racism in society, believing that their work would impart, on the one hand, a sense of indisputable fact among people holding racist views and, on the other, a sense of pride among society's black populations in their African pasts. They also believed, however, that objective scientific analysis of the African origins of New World Negro cultures must come a priori to any political activism if racist ideologies were to be debunked once and for all. In other words, the unearthing and collection of African retentions in the anthropological field was strictly a matter of scientific discovery for the benefit of all groups, wherein racism's pathologies would thereafter disappear.

This chapter begins with analyzing Herskovits's correspondence with Fernando Ortiz and Erich von Hornbostel regarding his research on the African origins of the spiritual as part of his program to debunk the mythologies surrounding American Negroes. It focuses on deconstructing the significance placed on contemporaries—that is, Herskovits toward Caribbean and West African people of the “bush”—as spatial and temporal substitutes for Africans of the past. Such projections of the historical and spatial past onto so-called primitives and their cultural practices have been critically analyzed, especially in critiques of Africanist anthropology of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁵ What has escaped accountability, however, is how histories of whiteness as racially consolidating phenomena in North America and Europe further enabled the consolidation of black Others as either primitive or modern Negroes in Africa and in the so-called New World. For the purposes of this chapter the question of racially consolidating discourses invites analysis of not so much racial discourse *per se* as the ability of anthropologists and comparative musicologists to apprehend music both a priori and a posteriori on behalf of race, an ability that was indeed constitutive of Herskovits's project in toto in spite of his desire of scientific or a priori objectivity.

What this chapter also addresses are the day-to-day actions taken in a transnational social science industry that attempted to meet the need for the valuation of racial Others and their cultures in the face of fascism's growing threats. To this end, Herskovits's collaborations with German comparative musicologists Erich von Hornbostel and Mieczyslaw Kolinski are situated within the Nazis' rise to power in Western Europe.¹⁶ The urgency Herskovits felt in saving Kolinski from the Nazis motivated him to maximize his social capital as a scientist in order to convince philanthropic and government agencies in the United States of the potential social breakthrough of Kolinski's comparative musicological work on the music that Herskovits himself recorded in Suriname, West Africa, and Haiti. It was this music, according to Herskovits, that would help not only

provide American Negroes the history and aesthetic value as was wont of music and cultures deemed as modernity's standard-bearers of Western civilization but also wrestle the domains of civilization and evolution away from fascist claims of Aryan racial superiority for the benefit also of white Others, namely, Jews.

Of similar significance to the analysis of black dance music's African origins during the 1930s is Herskovits's relationship with dancer and anthropologist Katherine Dunham, which reveals science's power dynamics based on race, gender, and the privileging of science over performance as the appropriate mode of knowledge production. As was the case with other women anthropologists and comparative musicologists, Dunham's field methods and scholarship were simply downplayed by her white male colleagues.¹⁷ In fact, Dunham's fieldwork and publications reveal instances in which her participation in dance and rituals generated haptically different spatial and temporal configurations, rendering inconsequential those "landmarks" orienting the Maroons of Accompong, Jamaica, or the "Bush Negroes" of Suriname as substitutes for historical Africans. Moreover, her correspondence with Herskovits from the anthropological field uncovers among her informants a suspicion of anthropologists along with other temporal and spatial configurations of the New World Negro from which Dunham benefited, as this chapter's epigraph demonstrates, in terms of gaining access to cultural practices, including those otherwise reserved for men. In other instances, however, she did not resist anthropology's temporalizing and spatializing practices in dealing with primitive dance's African influences, actions that she would also take in pursuing financial backing for her dance productions later in her career.

The postwar statements made by UNESCO on race state that racism is "the outcome of a fundamentally anti-rational system of thought and is in glaring conflict with the whole humanist tradition of our civilization."¹⁸ Racism, it seems, was neither of science nor humanism, of which among the most revered endeavors were music and dance. Yet, as this chapter argues, some attempts made in the 1930s to prove racism's irrational foundations looked toward the scientific analysis of black music and dance's African origins, fraught as this endeavor was with contradictory practices stemming from Western civilization's inscriptions of historical time and space, along with its racial and gendered norms. Whether they conceived of race as biologically or culturally determined, and accessible *a priori* or *a posteriori*, anthropologists and comparative musicologists did not take account of the paradox in inscribing the temporal past onto singing voices and dancing bodies when searching for evidence of their music and dance's aesthetic value and historical integrity.¹⁹ Nor were their