

Nathaniel Mackey (1992), from *Discrepant Engagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality, and Experimental Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

15

Other

From Noun to Verb

I

Cultural diversity has lately become a much-discussed topic.¹ I would like to emphasize that cultural diversity *is* cultural, that it is a consequence of actions and assumptions that are socially – rather than naturally, genetically – instituted and reinforced. The inequities the recent attention to cultural diversity is meant to redress are in part the outcome of confounding the social with the genetic, so we need to make it clear that when we speak of otherness we are not positing static, intrinsic attributes or characteristics. We need instead to highlight the dynamics of agency and attribution by way of which otherness is brought about and maintained, the fact that other is something people do, more importantly a verb than an adjective or a noun. Thus, I would like to look at some instances of and ways of thinking about othering – primarily othering within artistic media, but also othering within the medium of society, touching upon relationships between the two. Artistic othering has to do with innovation, invention, and change, upon which cultural health and diversity depend and thrive. Social othering has to do with power, exclusion, and privilege, the centralizing of a norm against which otherness is measured, meted out, marginalized. My focus is the practice of the former by people subjected to the latter.

The title “Other: From Noun to Verb” is meant to recall Amiri Baraka’s way of describing white appropriation of black music in Chapter 10 of *Blues People*. In that chapter he discusses the development of big-band jazz during the twenties and thirties by Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Jimmie Lunceford, and others and the imitation and commoditization of it by white musicians like Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Charlie Barnet, and Benny Goodman (who became known as the “King of Swing”). He calls the chapter “Swing – From Verb to Noun.” Typical of the way he uses the verb/noun distinction is this

remark: "But for most of America by the twenties, jazz (or *jass*, the noun, not the verb) meant the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (to the hip) and Paul Whiteman (to the square)."² Or this one:

Swing, the verb, meant a simple reaction to the music (and as it developed in verb usage, a way of reacting to anything in life). As it was formalized, and the term and the music taken further out of context, *swing* became a noun that meant a commercial popular music in cheap imitation of a kind of Afro-American music. (BP, 212–213)

"From verb to noun" means the erasure of black inventiveness by white appropriation. As in Lukács's notion of phantom objectivity, the "noun," white commodification, obscures or "disappears" the "verb" it rips off, black agency, black authority, black invention. Benny Goodman bought arrangements from black musicians, later hired Fletcher Henderson as his band's chief arranger and later still brought black musicians Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton, Charlie Christian, and Cootie Williams into his band, but for the most part black musicians were locked out of the enormous commercial success made of the music they had invented. The most popular and best paid bands were white and the well-paying studio jobs created by the emergence of radio as the pre-eminent medium for disseminating the music were almost completely restricted to white musicians.

"From verb to noun" means, on the aesthetic level, a less dynamic, less improvisatory, less blues-inflected music and, on the political level, a containment of black mobility, a containment of the economic and social advances that might accrue to black artistic innovation. The domain of action and the ability to act suggested by *verb* is closed off by the hypostasis, paralysis, and arrest suggested by *noun*, the confinement to a predetermined status Baraka has in mind when he writes: "There should be no cause for wonder that the trumpets of Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong were so dissimilar. The white middle-class boy from Iowa was the product of a culture which could *place* Louis Armstrong, but could never understand him" (BP, 153–154). This confinement to a predetermined status (predetermined stasis), the keeping of black people "in their place," gives rise to the countering, contestatory tendencies I'll be talking about as a movement from noun to verb.

My topic, then, is not so much otherness as othering, black linguistic and musical practices that accent variance, variability – what reggae musicians call "versioning." As Dick Hebdige notes: "'Versioning' is at the heart not only of reggae but of *all* Afro-American and Caribbean musics: jazz, blues, rap, r&b, reggae, calypso, soca, salsa, Afro-Cuban, and so on."³ When Baraka writes of John Coltrane's recording of Billy

Eckstine's "I Want to Talk About You," he emphasizes what could be called Trane's versioning of the tune, what I would call his othering of it:

... instead of the simplistic though touching note-for-note replay of the ballad's line, on this performance each note is tested, given a slight tremolo or emotional vibrato (note to chord to scale reference) which makes it seem as if each one of the notes is given the possibility of "infinite" qualification. . . . proving that the ballad as it was written was only the beginning of the story.⁴

Trane himself spoke of his desire to work out a kind of writing that would allow for "more plasticity, more viability, more room for improvisation in the statement of the melody itself."⁵ His lengthy solos caused some listeners to accuse him of practicing in public, which, in a sense that is not at all derogatory, he was – the sense in which Wilson Harris calls one of his recent novels *The Infinite Rehearsal*.

Such othering practices implicitly react against and reflect critically upon the different sort of othering to which their practitioners, denied agency in a society by which they are designated other, have been subjected. The black speaker, writer, or musician whose practice privileges variation subjects the fixed equations that underwrite that denial (including the idea of fixity itself) to an alternative. Zora Neale Hurston writes of the gossipers and storytellers in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*:

It was the time for sitting on porches beside the road. It was the time to hear things and talk. These sitters had been tongueless, earless, eyeless conveniences all day long. Mules and other brutes had occupied their skins. But now, the sun and the bossman were gone, so the skins felt powerful and human. They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed nations through their mouths.⁶

Hurston is one of the pioneer expositor-practitioners of a resistant othering found in black vernacular culture. In her essay "Characteristics of Negro Expression," published in the thirties, she writes: "What we really mean by originality is the modification of ideas. . . . So if we look at it squarely, the Negro is a very original being. While he lives and moves in the midst of a white civilization, everything he touches is re-interpreted for his own use." Baraka's valorization of the verb recalls a similar move on her part thirty years earlier, her discussion of "verbal nouns" as one of black America's contributions to American English. She emphasizes action, dynamism, and kinetics, arguing that black vernacular culture does the same: "Frequently the Negro, even with detached words in his vocabulary – not evolved in him but transplanted on his

tongue by contact – must add action to it to make it do. So we have ‘chop-axe’, ‘sitting-chair’, ‘cook-pot’ and the like because the speaker has in his mind the picture of the object in use. Action.” She goes on to list a number of “verbal nouns,” nouns and adjectives made to function as verbs, and “nouns from verbs,” verbs masquerading as nouns. *Funeralize*, *I wouldn’t friend with her*, and *uglying away* are among her examples of the former, *won’t stand a broke* and *She won’t take a listen* among those of the latter.

The privileging of the verb, the movement from noun to verb, linguistically accentuates action among a people whose ability to act is curtailed by racist constraints. I prefer to see a connection between such privileging and such curtailment than to attribute the former, as Hurston occasionally does, to black primitivity. Language is symbolic action, frequently compensatory action, addressing deprivations it helps its users overcome. The privileging of the verb, the black vernacular investment in what Hurston calls “action words,” makes this all the more evident. The sort of analysis found in the passage from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* that I quoted is brought to bear on the movement from noun to verb in a piece that Hurston published in the early forties, “High John de Conquer.”⁸ The High John the Conqueror root that plays so prominent a role in African-American hoodoo is here personified and figured as a key to black endurance and resilience, “the secret of black song and laughter.” In the title and throughout the piece Hurston elides the last syllable of *conqueror*, as is frequently done in black speech. In doing so, honoring the vernacular in more senses than one, she changes *conqueror* to *conquer*, noun to verb, practicing what she expounds upon in “Characteristics of Negro Expression.”

Hurston presents High John de Conquer as an inner divergence from outward adversity, the ability of enslaved Africans to hold themselves apart from circumstance. “An inside thing to live by,” she calls it. She relates High John de Conquer to a propensity for laughter, story, and song, to black liberties taken with music and language. He embodies mastery of sound and mastery through sound, “making a way out of no-way.” High John de Conquer moves quickly, as mercurial as he is musical: “His footsteps sounded across the world in a low but musical rhythm as if the world he walked on was a singing-drum. . . . He had come from Africa. He came walking on the waves of sound.” He embodies music, storytelling, and laughter as a kind of mobility, a fugitivity which others the slaves’ condition:

He walked on the winds and moved fast. Maybe he was in Texas when the lash fell on a slave in Alabama, but before the blood was dry on the back he was there. A faint pulsing of a drum like a goat-

skin stretched over a heart, that came nearer and closer, then somebody in the saddened quarters would feel like laughing and say, “Now, High John de Conquer, Old Massa couldn’t get the best of him. . . .”

Hurston writes of the song High John de Conquer helps the slaves find: “It had no words. It was a tune that you could bend and shape in most any way you wanted to fit the words and feelings that you had.”

The bending and shaping of sound, black liberties taken with music and language, caused Lucy McKim Garrison, one of the editors of *Slave Songs in the United States*, to write in 1862:

It is difficult to express the entire character of these negro ballads by mere musical notes and signs. The odd turns made in the throat, and the curious rhythmic effect produced by single voices chiming in at different irregular intervals, seem almost as impossible to place on the score as the singing of birds or the tones of an Aeolian Harp.

Another of its editors, William Allen, likewise wrote:

What makes it all the harder to unravel a thread of melody out of this strange network is that, like birds, they seem not infrequently to strike sounds that cannot be precisely represented by the gamut, and abound in “slides from one note to another and turns and cadences not in articulated notes.” . . . There are also apparent irregularities in the time, which it is no less difficult to express accurately.

Henry G. Spaulding wrote in 1863: “The most striking of their barbaric airs it would be impossible to write out.” The compilers of the Hampton spirituals, M.F. Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow, wrote similarly a decade later: “Tones are frequently employed which we have no musical characters to represent. . . . The tones are variable in pitch, ranging through an entire octave on different occasions, according to the inspiration of the singer.” One could go on and on with similar statements. Western musical notation’s inability to capture the tonal and rhythmic mobility and variability such quotes remark upon confirms the fugitive spirit Hurston identifies with High John de Conquer. “It is no accident that High John de Conquer has evaded the ears of white people,” she writes, punning on while poking fun at the use of accidentals by Garrison, Smith, and others to approximate the flatted or bent notes of the African American’s altered scale.

Fugitive spirit has had its impact upon African-American literary practices as well. As fact, as metaphor, and as formal disposition, the alliance of writing with fugitivity recurs throughout the tradition. One recalls

that in 1829 George Moses Horton hoped to buy his freedom with money made from sales of his book of poems, *Hope of Liberty*. One thinks of the role played by literacy in Frederick Douglass's escape, of Harriet Jacobs's denunciations of the Fugitive Slave Law, of the importance of the slave narratives to the anti-slavery movement. W.E.B. DuBois referred to the essays in *The Souls of Black Folk* as "fugitive pieces," and the impact of fugitive spirit can also be found in the work of William Melvin Kelley (the mass exodus in *A Different Drummer*, the bending and reshaping of language in *Dunfords Travels Everywhere*), Ishmael Reed (Quickskill in *Flight to Canada*), Toni Morrison (the flying African in *Song of Solomon*, the "lickety-split, lickety-split" at the end of *Tar Baby*, Sethe's escape in *Beloved*), and others. Ed Roberson, for example, in a recent poem called "Taking the Print":

See night in the sunlight's starry reflection
off the water darkening the water
by contrast.

The dark hiding in the water
also hid us in the river at night
Our crossing guided by the internal sight
on our darkness

the ancient graphis
and -from this passage of abductions and escapes-
this newer imprimatur of the river
cut deep in the plate.

see in the river the ripples'
picture on the surface of the wind the lifting of the
image
has taken at the deeper face

the starry freedom
written in the milky rivery line that pours
the brilliance of that image from a depth only black
night fleeing across this land

has to voice.¹⁰

An especially good example of the movement from noun to verb's identification or alliance with fugitive spirit is Aimé Césaire's 1955 poem "The Verb 'Marroner' / for René Depestre, Haitian Poet."¹¹ Written in response to Louis Aragon and the French Communist Party's call for a return to traditional poetic meters and forms, which Depestre supported in the journal *Présence Africaine*, the poem insists upon openness, experimentation, and formal innovation:

Comrade Depestre
It is undoubtedly a very serious problem

the relation between poetry and Revolution
the content determines the form

and what about keeping in mind as well the dialectical
backlash by which the form taking its revenge
chokes the poems like an accursed fig tree

The poem announces and enacts its poetics under the sign of a neologistic verb. Césaire invokes the history of fugitive slaves in the Caribbean, the runaway Africans known as maroons who escaped the plantations and set up societies of their own. The French noun for this phenomenon, *marronage*, is the basis for the word, the verb *marroner*, Césaire invents, an act of invention exemplifying the independence for which the poem calls. The coinage has no English equivalent. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith translate it "escape like slaves":

Is it true this season that they're polishing up sonnets
for us to do so would remind me too much of the sugary
juice drooled over there by the distilleries on the morne
when slow skinny oxen make their rounds to the whine
of mosquitoes

Bah! Depestre the poem is not a mill for
grinding sugar cane absolutely not
and if the rhymes are flies on ponds

without rhymes

for a whole season

away from ponds

under my persuasion

let's laugh drink and escape like slaves

Such invention in Césaire's work, such othering of and taking of liberties with French, has been referred to as "a politics of neologism."¹² A similar practice can be found in the work of another Caribbean poet, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, who writes of Césaire: "His fabulous long poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939) evolved the concept of *négritude*: that there is a black Caliban Maroon world with its own aesthetics (*sycorax*), contributing to world and Third World consciousness."¹³ Brathwaite's recently completed second trilogy, comprised of *Mother Poem*, *Sun Poem*, and *X/Self*, is characterized by a versioning of English he calls "calibanization," a creolization "that comes into conflict with the cultural imperial authority of Prospero."¹⁴ One of the remarkable features of the work, one of the features any reader will come away from it unable to forget, is its linguistic texture – not only what is done with words but what is done to them. Brathwaite makes greater use of West Indian

nation-language (the term he puts in place of "dialect" or "patois") than in the first trilogy, *The Arrivants*, but what he is doing goes further than that. In his use of "standard" English as well he takes his cue from the vernacular, subjecting words to bends, breaks, deformation, reformation – othering.

Brathwaite concludes the next-to-last poem in *The Arrivants* with the lines "So on this ground, / write; / . . . on this ground / on this broken ground."¹⁵ Nation-language, what some would call broken English, partakes of that ground. "Calibanization" insists that in West Indian folk speech English is not so much broken as broken into, that a struggle for turf is taking place in language. "It was in language," Brathwaite has written, "that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by his master, and it was in his (mis-)use of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled. Within the folk tradition, language was (and is) a creative act in itself."¹⁶ This tradition of black liberties taken with language informs *Mother Poem*, *Sun Poem*, and *X/Self* with the weight of a history of anti-imperial struggle, a weight felt in so small a thing as the word. As in the anagrammatic "derangement" Shakespeare had recourse to in fashioning *Caliban* from *cannibal*, the puns, malapropisms, odd spellings, neologisms, and strained meanings Brathwaite resorts to speak of disturbances outside as well as inside the language, social disruptions the word is thus made to register.

Changing *militia* to *malitia* is one small instance of this.¹⁷ As in this instance, most of Brathwaite's "calibanisms" underscore senses of malice and malaise, emphasize the hurt put on the land and on the people by slavery, the plantation system, colonialism, capitalism. The words partake of that hurt. It shows in the language both as referent and as a telling misuse inflicted on English, an abuse that brings that referent more emphatically to light. *The panes of his eyes* becomes *the pains of his eyes* (SP, 6), *the games we played* becomes *the games we paid* (SP, 19), *landscape* becomes *landscape* (SP, 55), *the future* becomes *the few- / ture* (SP, 87). *Huts* becomes *hurts* and *hillsides* turns into *hillslides*:

but those that drone their lorries all day up the sweating
hill to the factory of mister massa midas
those mindless arch

itects that cut the cane
that built their own hurts on the hillside (SP, 61)

Brathwaite avails himself of and takes part in a revolution of the word that has long been a part of Caribbean folk culture, a reinvention of English of the sort one hears in Rastafarian speech, where *oppressor* gets replaced by *downpressor*, *livicate* takes the place of *dedicate*, and so forth.

But a revolution of the word can only be a beginning. It initiates a break while remaining overshadowed by the conditions it seeks to go beyond. The shadow such conditions cast makes for a brooding humor that straddles laughter and lament, allows no easy, unequivocal foothold in either. Oppositional speech is only partly oppositional. Cramp and obstruction have to do with it as well. In Brathwaite's recent trilogy we not only get the sorts of pointed, transparent wordplay I just quoted, but something more opaque and more disconcerting, not resolved as to its tone or intent. Brathwaite revels in a sometimes dizzying mix of parody and pathos, embrace complicated by a sense of the bizarre and even bordering on embarrassment here and there. His otherings accent fugitive spirit and impediment as well, the predicaments that bring fugitive spirit into being:

but is like we still start
where we start/in out start/in out start/in

out since menelek was a bwoy & why
is dat & what is de bess weh to seh so/so it doan sounn
like

brigg
flatts nor hervokitz

nor de pisan cantos nor de souf sea
bible

nor like ink. le & de anglo saxon
chronicles

&

a fine
a cyaan get nutten

write

a cyaan get nutten really
rite

while a stannin up here in me years & like i inside a me
shadow

like de man still mekkin i walk up de slope dat e slide
in black down de whole long curve a de arch

i

pell

ago (X, 85–86)

Brathwaite helps impeded speech find its voice, the way Thelonious Monk makes hesitation eloquent or the way a scat singer makes inarticulacy speak. This places his work in the New World African tradition of troubled eloquence, othered eloquence, I'm here sketching. Here, that is, trouble acts as a threshold. It registers a need for a new world and a new language to go along with it, discontent with the world and the ways of speaking we already have. A revolution of the word can only be a new beginning, "beating," as Brathwaite puts it, "its genesis genesis genesis / out of the stammering world" (SP, 97).

My reference to Monk, as Hurston would say, is no accident. Indeed, had Hurston written "Characteristics of Negro Expression" later, she might have included "Rhythm-a-ning" and "Jackie-ing," two Monk titles, in her list of "verbal nouns." In her section on asymmetry ("Asymmetry," she begins it by saying, "is a definite feature of Negro art") she might have quoted Chico O'Farrell's comments on the advent of bebop in the forties:

... it was such a new thing, because here we were confronted for the first time with phrases that wouldn't be symmetrical in the sense that string-music phrasing was symmetrical. Here we were confronted with phrases that were asymmetrical. They would come in into any part of the phrase they felt like, and, at first, also the changes threw us off completely because it was a complete new harmonic – not new, but we'll say unusual harmonic concept that was so alien to what we had been doing. To us it was such a drastic change that I think anything that came afterwards wasn't as drastic as that particular first step from swing to bop. I think in a sense bop probably marks the real cut-off point of the old concept of swinging. I don't mean in the sense of swinging – we were still swinging – but the concept of the square structure of the music as to this new particular way of playing and writing.¹⁸

The bebop revolution of which Monk was a part – Ellington called it "the Marcus Garvey Extension" – was a movement, in its reaction to swing, from noun to verb. It was a revolution that influenced a great number of writers, Brathwaite included, as can be seen, among other places, in his early poem "Blues."¹⁹ Its impact upon Baraka's work and thought can be seen not only in *Blues People* but also in the poetics, the valorization of the verb, in the 1964 essay "Hunting Is Not Those Heads

On The Wall."²⁰ There he espouses a poetics of process, arguing: "The clearest description of now is the present participle . . . Worship the verb, if you need something." Halfway through the essay he mentions Charlie Parker, having earlier remarked: "I speak of the *verb process*, the doing, the coming into being, the at-the-time-of. Which is why we think there is particular value in live music, contemplating the artifact as it arrives, listening to it emerge." The sense he advances that "this verb value" is an impulse to "make words surprise themselves" recalls the popular description of jazz as "the sound of surprise."

The white appropriation and commercialization of swing resulted in a music that was less improvisatory, less dependent upon the inventiveness of soloists. The increased reliance upon arrangements in the Fletcher Henderson mold led to a sameness of sound and style among the various bands. In *Blues People* Baraka quotes Hsio Wen Shih's comments regarding the anthology album *The Great Swing Bands*, a record Shih refers to as "terrifying" due to the indistinguishability of one band from another. It was against this uniformity that bebop revolted. "Benny Goodman," Howard McGhee recalls, "had been named the 'King of Swing' . . . We figured, what the hell, we can't do no more than what's been done with it, we gotta do somethin' else. We gotta do some other kind of thing" (SB, 314). ("Some other stuff," a common expression among black musicians, would become the title of an album by Grachan Moncur III in the sixties.) Mary Lou Williams said of her first meeting with Monk in the thirties: "He told me that he was sick of hearing musicians play the same thing the same way all the time."²¹ Monk himself summed up his music by saying: "How to use notes differently. That's it. Just how to use notes differently."²² It is no accident that bebop was typically performed by small combos rather than big bands as was the case with swing. It accentuated individual expression, bringing the soloist and improvisation once more to the fore.

Baraka emphasizes nonconformity in his treatment of bebop in *Blues People*, stressing what he terms its "willfully harsh, *anti-assimilationist* sound" (BP, 181). The cultivation of a unique, individual style that black music encourages informs and inspires his attitudes toward writing. In his statement on poetics for the anthology *The New American Poetry 1945–1960* he echoes Louis Armstrong's ad-libbed line on a 1949 recording with Billie Holiday,²³ calling it "How You Sound??" The emphasis on self-expression in his work is also an emphasis on self-transformation, an othering or, as Brathwaite has it, an X-ing of the self, the self not as noun but as verb. Of the post-bop innovations of such musicians as Albert Ayler and Sun Ra, he writes: "New Black Music is this: Find the self, then kill it" (BM, 176). To kill the self is to show it to be fractured, unfixed. The dismantling of the unified subject found in recent critical

theory is old news when it comes to black music. I've seen Bukka White break off singing to exhort himself: "Sing it, Bukka!" Charles Mingus's autobiography begins: "In other words, I am three."²⁴ A recent composition by Muhal Richard Abrams has the title "Conversation With the Three of Me." Craig Harris remarks of the polyrhythmicity of one of his pieces: "It's about cutting yourself in half."²⁵

Our interest in cultural diversity – diversity within a culture as well as the diversity of cultures²⁶ – should lead us to be wary of hypostasis, the risk we take with nouns, a deadend that will impede change unless "other," "self," and such are "given the possibility of 'infinite' qualification." Wilson Harris, whose novel *The Infinite Rehearsal* I referred to earlier, has written of "qualitative and infinite variations of substance clothed in nouns," arguing that "nouns may reveal paradoxically when qualified, that their emphasis on reality and their inner meaning can change as they are inhabited by variable psychic projections."²⁷ In his new novel *The Four Banks of the River of Space* he speaks of "the instructive bite of music" on the way to suggesting that "breaking a formula of complacency" consists of "becoming a stranger to oneself."²⁸ As Monk's tune "Jackie-ing" tells us, even a so-called proper noun is a verb in disguise – present-participial, provisional, subject to change. John Gilmore, tenor saxophonist with Sun Ra's band for some thirty years, tells a story about the time he spent with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers in 1965. After about a month, he says, the music was at so inventive a level that one night in Los Angeles, following one of his solos, trumpeter Lee Morgan looked over at him and asked: "Is that you, Gilmore?" Morgan then took a solo that caused Gilmore to ask the same thing of him: "Lee, is that you?"²⁹

II

The "nounization" of swing furthered and partook in a commoditization of music that, in the West, as Jacques Attali points out, had been developing since the 1700s. "Until the eighteenth century," he writes in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, "music was of the order of the 'active'; it then entered the order of the 'exchanged.'" ³⁰ The process was completed in the twentieth century, he argues, with the birth of the recording industry and its exploitation of black musicians: "Music did not really become a commodity until a broad market for popular music was created. Such a market did not exist when Edison invented the phonograph; it was produced by the colonization of black music by the American industrial apparatus" (N, 103). The transition from "active" to "exchanged," verb to noun, reflects the channeling of power through music it is the point of the book to insist upon:

Listening to music is . . . realizing that its appropriation and control is a reflection of power, that it is essentially political. . . . With music is born power and its opposite: subversion. . . . Music, the quintessential mass activity, like the crowd, is simultaneously a threat and a necessary source of legitimacy; trying to channel it is a risk that every system of power must run. . . . Thus music localizes and specifies power, because it marks and regiments the rare noises that cultures, in their normalization of behavior, see fit to authorize. (N, 6, 14, 19–20)

Attali is at all points alive to the shamanic roots of music, its magico-prophetic role, no matter how obscured those roots and that role tend to be by the legal, technological, and social developments he goes to great lengths to analyze and describe.

The idea of music as a conduit of power, a channeler of violence, a regulator of society, is particularly visible – unobscured – among the Carib-speaking Kalapalo of the Upper Xingu Basin in Brazil. Ellen B. Basso, in her study *A Musical View of the Universe: Kalapalo Myth and Ritual Performances*, deals with their ideas regarding sound and what she terms "orders of animacy," a hierarchic taxonomy at the top of which the Kalapalo place entities known as "powerful beings." These beings are nonhuman, though they sometimes appear in human form, and, Basso points out, "they are preeminently and essentially musical":

Powerful beings are different from concrete historical figures because they and their acts are "always" and everywhere. . . . This multiplicity of essence or "hyperanimacy" is coupled on the one hand with a multiplicity of feeling and consequent unpredictability and on the other with a monstrous intensity of some feeling or trait; hence powerful beings are dangerous beings. . . . Their hyperanimacy and multiplicity of essence are perhaps what is deeply metaphorized by their association with musical invention.³¹

Music represents the highest degree or level of animacy, hyperanimacy, and in their musical performances the Kalapalo model themselves upon their images of powerful beings, aspiring to the condition of powerful beings. They seek both to endow themselves with and to domesticate hyperanimate power. Basso writes:

. . . music (or more exactly, musical performance) is identified by the Kalapalo as having controlling force over aggressive, transformative, and wandering power; it is also a manifestation of that power. The ability of music to control and channel aggression, to limit hyperanimacy in ways that are helpful to people, has further consequences for understanding its importance within ritual con-

texts. This is because in such contexts of use, political life – the relations of control that some people effect over others – achieves its most concrete and elaborate expression. (MV, 246)

I would like to highlight two features of Kalapalo thought and practice concerning music, and bring them to bear, by way of analogy, upon the minstrel show, a form of theatrical performance unique to the United States that emerged during the 1820s and reached its apex between 1850 and 1870. An appropriation of the slave's music and dance by white men who blackened their faces with burnt cork, going on stage to sing "Negro songs," perform dances derived from those of the slaves, and tell jokes based on plantation life, the minstrel show is an early instance of the cannibalization of black music to which we saw Attali refer. "Minstrelsy," Robert C. Toll observes in *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*, "was the first example of the way American popular culture would exploit and manipulate Afro-Americans and their culture to please and benefit white Americans."³² The first of the two aspects of Kalapalo thought and practice I would like to highlight is the fact that powerful beings are associated with darkness and with the color black, that for ritual performances the Kalapalo shaman darkens himself with pot black as a way of becoming, Basso explains, "less visibly human and appearing more like a powerful being" (MV, 248). Blacking up, the white minstrel practice of donning blackface makeup, amounts to a pseudo-shamanic performance in which the power of black music is complimented yet simultaneously channeled, caricatured, and contained. As is not the case for the Kalapalo shaman, for the white minstrel "less visibly human" means less than human, even as the appeal and the power of the music are being exploited.

Minstrelsy reveals the ambivalent, duplicitous relationship of nineteenth-century white Americans not only to black people but to music and language as well. The second aspect of Kalapalo thought and practice I would like to highlight relates to this, having to do with the distinctions the Kalapalo make among calls, speech, and music, and among degrees of animacy. Human beings share with entities of lesser animacy the ability to emit calls and with entities of greater animacy, powerful beings, the ability to speak and to make music, but it is speech that is regarded as quintessentially human. Speech is the form of sound by which humans are characterized and symbolized in the taxonomic order, music the form with which powerful beings are identified. Interestingly, calls as well as music are considered more truthful, more trustworthy than speech:

... human beings can express truthful and empirically motivated feelings best through *itsu* [calls]. Pain of varying degrees of intensity, deep sadness, shame, joy, sexual passion, frustration with

oneself, indeed, the entire range of human emotion is expressed most succinctly (and by implication as truthful feeling) this way.

Human beings are distinguished from other *ago* [living things], however, by their ability to speak, and it is through language that they are most commonly symbolized and distinguished from other categories of entities. . . . But language allows people to do something very different from animals. Human beings were created by a trickster, whose name "Taugi" means "speaks deceptively about himself" Hence human beings are in essence deceitful beings because of their ability to speak. Therefore, people are capable not only of truthfully expressing their feelings, but – and this is the unmarked understanding of human speech for the Kalapalo – of creating an illusory screen of words that conceals their true thoughts. (MV, 67–68)

Music, the Kalapalo believe, is more to be trusted than speech because, rather than masking the mental, powerful beings "in J.L. Austin's sense . . . are performative beings, capable of reaching the limits of awareness of meaning by constructing action through a process that is simultaneously mental and physical" (MV, 71).

Calls and music both put sound in the service of sentience. In this they differ from speech, which valorizes the sentence, the humanly constructed realm of meaning, grammaticality, predication. The minstrel show, in its recourse to music (the slave's music, moreover, in which calls, cries, and hollers played a prominent part) and in its "translation" of that music into songs of sentiment (Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home," "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground," and so forth), critiqued even as it exemplified the deceptiveness of language. The implicit critique, the recourse to music and to sentimentality, to songs that advertised themselves as innocent of ambiguity, insincerity, or circumlocution, was accompanied by an explicit critique. This took the form of the stump speech and its malapropisms, the heavy reliance upon wordplay and puns in minstrel humor and such routines as the following, called "Modern Language":

Bones: How things have changed of late. A man can't depend on anything. A man must discount his expectations by at least 80 per cent.

Midman: In other words, "never count your chickens before they are hatched."

Bones: That sort of language is not up to the four hundred. You should say that this way: Never enumerate your feathered progeny before the process of incubation has been thoroughly realized.

Midman: That does take the rag off the bush.

Bones: Wrong again. You should not say that. You should say: That removes the dilapidated linen from off the shrubbery.³³

While the stump speech poked fun at black people's alleged insecure hold on language, such humor as this poked fun at language itself, at language's – especially elevated language's – insecure hold on the world. Minstrelsy, under cover of blackface, was able to vent apprehensions regarding the tenuousness of language, even as it ridiculed its target of choice for a supposed lack of linguistic competence. In regard to language as in other matters, the minstrel show allowed its audience to have it both ways.

One of the reasons for minstrelsy's popularity was what Alexander Saxton terms “the flexibility of standards which flourished behind the fake facade of blackface presentation.”³⁴ That facade made it permissible to refer to such topics as homosexuality and masturbation, which were taboo on the legitimate stage, in the press, and elsewhere. Sentimental songs and female impersonation, as did the blackface facade, allowed performers and audience alike access to a world of emotion that was otherwise held to be off-limits. Minstrelsy's wide appeal had largely to do with the illusion of escape from conventional strictures it afforded, the degree to which it spoke to a white, predominantly male imaginary. Minstrel star George Thatcher's description of his feelings after seeing his first minstrel show as a boy alerts us to the deep psychic forces at work (and also, incidentally, sheds light on the title of John Berryman's *Dream Songs*, which, dedicated to Thomas D. Rice, the “father” of blackface minstrelsy, makes use of the minstrel figure Bones): “I found myself dreaming of minstrels; I would awake with an imaginary tambourine in my hand, and rub my face with my hands to see if I was blacked up. . . . The dream of my life was to see or speak to a performer” (BU, 33).

The influence of blackface minstrelsy extended well into the present century, having an impact upon vaudeville, musical comedy, radio, movies, television, and other forms of popular culture. It tells us a great deal regarding the obstacles in the way of a genuine multiculturalism or cross-culturalism, a genuine, non-exploitative cultural exchange. Toll recounts that in 1877 Bret Harte and Mark Twain wrote a minstrel play based on a poem of Harte's about the “heathen chinee.” On opening night Twain explained to the audience: “The Chinaman is getting to be a pretty frequent figure in the United States and is going to be a great political problem and we thought it well for you to see him on the stage before you had to deal with the problem.” Toll goes on to remark that Twain's is a clear and accurate statement of one of minstrelsy's functions: “Although on the surface they just sang songs and told jokes about peculiar people, minstrels actually provided their audiences with one of the only

bases that many of them had for understanding America's increasing ethnic diversity” (BU, 169). This base, however, was an impediment rather than an aid to cultural diversity, a strategy of containment through caricature designed to consolidate white privilege and power. The minstrel made use of music to channel power in the service of “orders of animacy” in which whites came out on top, to uphold unequally distributed orders of agency in which violence, albeit under control, was never out of the picture. Saxton remarks of a minstrel song: “This ‘comic-banjo’ piece, as it was described, appeared in a songster published in New York in 1863. Geographically and emotionally, it was only a block or two from a song such as this to the maiming and lynching of blacks on the sidewalks of New York during the draft riots of the same year” (23).

The subject of cultural diversity and the goal of a healthy cross-culturalism are haunted by the specter of such appropriation as the minstrel legacy represents. We should not be surprised that not only pop-cultural but also high-cultural and avant-garde venues number among its haunts. I'm thinking, for example, of Gertrude Stein's early piece “Melanctha,” described by her in “Composition as Explanation” as “a negro story.” Katherine Mansfield, reviewing the book in which “Melanctha” appears, *Three Lives*, heard sentences overwhelmed by sound and sentience, much to her alarm. Moreover, she heard it as a minstrel band, a channeling of black musicality into prose:

. . . let the reader go warily, warily with *Melanctha*. We confess we read a good page or two before we realised what was happening. Then the dreadful fact dawned. We discovered ourselves reading in *syncopated time*. Gradually we heard in the distance and then coming uncomfortably near, the sound of banjos, drums, bones, cymbals and voices. The page began to rock. To our horror we found ourselves silently singing “Was it true what Melanctha said that night to him” etc. Those who have heard the Syncopated Orchestra sing “It's me – it's me – it's me” or “I got a robe” will understand what we mean. *Melanctha* is negro music with all its maddening monotony done into prose; it is writing in real ragtime. Heaven forbid Miss Stein should become a fashion.³⁵

The analogue to what Mansfield misapprehends as black-musical monotony, Stein's notorious use of repetition advances a critique of language that is not unrelated to the one we see in the minstrel show. Under cover of blackness, she issues an avant-garde caveat regarding the trustworthiness of the linguistic sign and of the discursive, ratiocinative order it promotes. The search for and the nature of “understanding” are pointedly

at issue in the story, especially in the relationship between impulsive, sensation-seeking Melanctha and reflective, respectability-minded Jeff:

"Yes I certainly do understand you when you talk so Dr. Campbell. I certainly do understand now what you mean by what you was always saying to me. I certainly do understand Dr. Campbell that you mean you don't believe it's right to love anybody." "Why sure no, yes I do Miss Melanctha, I certainly do believe strong in loving, and in being good to everybody, and trying to understand what they all need, to help them." "Oh I know all about that way of doing Dr. Campbell, but that certainly ain't the kind of love I mean when I am talking. I mean real, strong, hot love Dr. Campbell, that makes you do anything for somebody that loves you." "I don't know much about that kind of love yet Miss Melanctha. You see it's this way with me always Miss Melanctha. I am always so busy with my thinking about my work I am doing and so I don't have time for just fooling, and then too, you see Miss Melanctha, I really certainly don't ever like to get excited, and that kind of loving hard does seem always to mean just getting all the time excited. That certainly is what I always think from what I see of them that have it bad Miss Melanctha, and that certainly would never suit a man like me. . . ." ³⁶

On a typical page of dialogue between the two, the word *certainly* occurs as often as twenty times. Such repetition undermines the word, underscoring the uncertainty in which the two of them are immersed. Words are treated as though, rather than sticking, as Jack Spicer put it, to the real, they were continually slipping from it. Repetition compulsively moves to make up for that slippage, accenting all the more the words' insecure grip on the world. Not unlike the Kalapalo, Jeff at one point complains that "the ordinary kind of holler" would offer "much more game," much more forthright expression (TL, 127). The story strongly suggests that the order of what the Kalapalo term *itsu is* where "understanding" most unproblematically resides:

And now the pain came hard and harder in Jeff Campbell, he groaned, and it hurt him so, he could not bear it. And the tears came, and his heart beat, and he was hot and worn and bitter in him.

Now Jeff knew very well what it was to love Melanctha. Now Jeff Campbell knew he was really understanding. (TL, 145)

"Melanctha" recalls minstrelsy in that Stein uses one form of marginality, blackness, to mask another, to mask two others in fact – the avant-garde linguistic experimentation that we just noted (experimental

writing being relegated to the fringes by middlebrow, if not outright philistine American predilections) and, albeit much less evident, lesbianism. Janice Doane and Carolyn Copeland argue that "Melanctha," as the latter puts it, "is not really a story about the ethnic reality of Negroes,"³⁷ that the story reworks material from the earlier novel *Q.E.D.* "Melanctha" is *Q.E.D.* done in blackface. Doane writes that "the lesbian affair of *Q.E.D.* is converted into the heterosexual affair of the 'Melanctha' story."³⁸ Copeland says the same at greater length:

It will be recalled that *Q.E.D.*, written in 1903, concerned three homosexual women involved in a triangle. When one considers the trouble Theodore Dreiser had with *Sister Carrie* during that same period, it is not surprising that Gertrude Stein dropped the homosexual elements from her story before using the material again. Some very important elements of *Q.E.D.*, however, would have become problematic in a simple shift from homosexual to heterosexual in the story, and these elements must be discussed briefly.

In *Q.E.D.* Adele and Helen together undergo a full and complete series of sexual experiences, and obviously they are not married when they experience them. It is important to Adele's full realization of how completely "out of rhythm" she and Helen are that they not be married. Adele must be able to walk away from the experience with no ties such as marriage to complicate it. At the turn of this century in America the only background against which a writer could portray premarital sexual relationships without having an outraged white, middle-class public to contend with was one dealing with Negroes. It was part of the white man's view of the black man that they were sexually promiscuous. If Gertrude Stein wished to drop the homosexual elements and make them heterosexual, her choice of Negroes instead of whites allowed her to retain as much as possible of the important extramarital elements involved. And this is exactly what she did. (24–25)

Orders of marginality contend with one another here. It is instructive that blackness is the noun-mask under whose camouflage two other forms of marginality gain an otherwise blocked order of animacy or agency, an otherwise unavailable "verb-ness." We are again at the sacrificial roots of the social order, the ritual murder of which music, Attali argues, is the simulacrum. Under cover of scapegoat blackness, the otherwise marginal cozies up to the center.³⁹

I say this not to encourage turf wars among marginalized groups and/or individuals, but to raise a question. Wilson Harris writes of marginality in a way that is as promising as it is challenging. "Extremity or marginality, in my view," he writes, "lifts the medium or diverse experience

to a new angle of possibility. . . . It involves us in a curiously tilted field in which spatial pre-possessions and our pre-possessions are dislodged . . . marginality is a raised contour or frontier of habit in the topography of the heart and mind."⁴⁰ I think of this tilt⁴¹ as arising to contend with another form of tilt – that of unevenly allotted orders of agency, the unfair playing field, as it's commonly put. I think of the tilt of Edgar Pool's tenor saxophone in John Clellon Holmes's novel *The Horn*:

Edgar Pool blew methodically, eyes beady and open, and he held his tenor saxophone almost horizontally extended from his mouth. This unusual posture gave it the look of some metallic albatross caught insecurely in his two hands, struggling to resume flight. In those early days he never brought it down to earth, but followed after its isolated passage over all manner of American cities, snaring it nightly, fastening his drooping, stony lips to its cruel beak, and tapping the song.⁴²

The idiosyncratic tilt of "isolated originality," modeled on Lester Young:

It was only one of many bands he worked those years, the tireless jumping colored bands that flourished like a backwash after the initial wave of swing. But already he was blowing strange long lines, rising out of the section, indrawn and resolute, to stand before the circling dancers, tilt the big horn roofward from his body, and play his weightless, sharply veering phrases over the chunking of unsubtle drums. In those days, no one heard. (89)

I also, however, think of another tilt we see in the novel, that of a whisky bottle "tilted into the coffee as he [Pool] spiked it generously" (194) during the last night of an alcoholic binge, the last night of his life. The tilt of entropy, exhaustion, disillusionment. Hence, my question: Which tilt will it be? In order for the latter not to prevail, the discourse on cultural diversity will have to acknowledge both.

By this I mean that we need more than content analyses based on assumptions of representationality. The dislocating tilt of artistic othering, especially as practiced by African-American artists, deserves a great deal more attention than it has been given. While the regressive racial views of white writers like Stein and Ezra Pound tend to be regarded (if they're regarded at all) as secondary to their artistic innovations, black writers tend to be read racially, primarily at the content level, the noun level, as responding to racism, representing "the black experience." That black writers have been experimentally and innovatively engaged with the medium, addressing issues of form as well as issues of content, tends to be ignored. The ability to influence the course of the medium, to *move* the medium, entails an order of animacy granted only to whites when

it comes to writing. The situation with regard to music is a bit better, black musicians having been acknowledged to be innovators, even though their white imitators enjoy commercial success and critical acclaim greatly disproportionate to their musical contributions. The non-recognition of black artistic othering is symptomatic of the social othering to which black people are subjected, particularly in light of the celebration accorded artistic othering practiced by whites. This is a disparity the discussion of cultural diversity should be addressing.

Perhaps we can increase not only the quantity but also the quality of attention given to African-American art and cultural practices. Perhaps we can make it possible for the music of Henry Threadgill or David S. Ware to be as widely known as that of Wynton Marsalis, Ed Roberson's *Lucid Interval as Integral Music* or Will Alexander's *The Black Speech of the Angel* to win the sort of acclaim accorded Rita Dove's *Thomas and Beulah*, Amiri Baraka to be as well known for *The Dead Lecturer* as for *Dutchman*. If we are to do so, we must, à la Césaire, confront the neo-traditionalism that has taken hold of late with a countertradition of marronage, divergence, flight, fugitive tilt. Henry Dumas put it well in "Black Trumpeter": "the wing praises the root by taking to the limbs."⁴³

- 3 Robert Duncan, "Rites of Participation," *A Caterpillar Anthology*, ed. Clayton Eshleman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), p. 39.
- 4 Jay Wright, *The Double Invention of Komo* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1980), pp. 29, 6, 48.
- 5 Édouard Glissant, "Free and Forced Poetics," *Ethnopoetics: A First International Symposium*, ed. Michel Benamou and Jerome Rothenberg (Boston: Alcheringa/Boston University, 1976), p. 100.
- 6 Charles Olson, *Human Universe and Other Essays* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 3.
- 7 Amiri Baraka, "Pfister Needs To Be Heard!" in Arthur Pfister, *Beer Cans, Bullets, Things & Pieces* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1972), p. 4.
- 8 Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), p. 211.
- 9 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 59.
- 10 Maurice Blanchot, *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays* (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1981), p. 134.
- 11 Jerome Rothenberg, "Pre-Face," in *Technicians of the Sacred*, ed. Jerome Rothenberg (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), p. xix.
- 12 Wilson Harris, *The Eye of the Scarecrow* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 102.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- 1 This essay was first presented as a lecture as part of "Otherness: A Symposium on Cultural Diversity" at the Detroit Institute of Arts, March 1991.
- 2 LeRoi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Morrow, 1963), p. 143. Hereafter referred to as BP.
- 3 Dick Hebdige, *Cut 'n' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 12.
- 4 LeRoi Jones, *Black Music* (New York: Morrow, 1967), p. 66. Hereafter referred to as BM.
- 5 Liner notes, *Coltrane Live at the Village Vanguard Again!* (Impulse! Records AS-9124).
- 6 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 9-10.
- 7 Zora Neale Hurston, *The Sanctified Church* (Berkeley: Turtle Island, 1981), pp. 49-68.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-78.
- 9 Garrison, Allen, Spaulding, Armstrong, and Ludlow quoted in Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* 2nd Edition (New York: Norton, 1983), pp. 191-194.
- 10 Ed Roberson, "Taking the Print," *Hambone*, 9 (Winter 1991), p. 2.
- 11 Aimé Césaire, *The Collected Poetry*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 368-371.
- 12 James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 175-181.
- 13 Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *X/Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 129-130. Hereafter referred to as X.

- 14 Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Mother Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 121.
- 15 Edward Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 265-266.
- 16 Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 237.
- 17 Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Sun Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 56. Hereafter referred to as SP.
- 18 Ira Gitler, *Swing to Bop: An Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 153. Hereafter referred to as SB.
- 19 Edward Brathwaite, *Other Exiles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 12-16.
- 20 LeRoi Jones, *Home: Social Essays* (New York: Morrow, 1966), pp. 173-178.
- 21 Liner notes, *The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Thelonious Monk* (Mosaic Records MR4-101).
- 22 Liner notes, *Thelonious Monk Live at the It Club* (Columbia Records C2-38030).
- 23 "My Sweet Hunk O'Trash."
- 24 Charles Mingus, *Beneath the Underdog* (New York: Penguin, 1980), p. 7.
- 25 Liner notes, *Black Bone* (Soul Note Records SN 10550).
- 26 Artistic othering pertains to intracultural as well as intercultural dialectics. The will to change whereby African-American culture reflects critically upon the dominant white culture is intertwined with its impulse to reflect critically upon itself, the will to change whereby it redefines, reinvents, and diversifies itself. Bebop, for example, was a reaction to the datedness of the music played by black swing musicians as well as to its appropriation by white musicians. No last word, no seal of prophecy, bebop in turn became dated, subject to the changes initiated by Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, and others during the late fifties and early sixties. An aspect of intracultural dialectics that we should not overlook is the role of eccentric individuals whose contributions come to be identified with the very culture that may have initially rejected them. Think of Ornette Coleman being beaten up outside a Baton Rouge dance hall in 1949 for interjecting "modern" runs into an R&B solo (A.B. Spellman, *Black Music: Four Lives* [New York: Schocken Books, 1970], p. 101). The recent ascendancy of cultural studies in academia tends to privilege collectivity and group definition over individual agency and self-expression, to see the latter as a reflection of the former. In relating the two, however, we should remember that in matters of artistic othering individual expression both reflects and redefines the collective, realigns, refracts it. Thus it is that Lester Young was in the habit of calling his saxophone's keys his people. Bill Crow reports that when the keys on his horn got bent during a Jazz at the Philharmonic tour Young went to Flip Phillips for help. "Flip," he said, "my people won't play!" (*Jazz Anecdotes* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], p. 272).
- 27 Wilson Harris, *Explorations: A Selection of Talks and Articles 1966-1981* (Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press, 1981), p. 139.

- 28 Wilson Harris, *The Four Banks of the River of Space* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), pp. 140-141.
- 29 Art Sato, "Interview with John Gilmore," *Be-Bop and Beyond*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (March/April 1986), 21.
- 30 Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 57. Hereafter referred to as N.
- 31 Ellen B. Basso, *A Musical View of the Universe: Kalapalo Myth and Ritual Performances* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 69-70. Hereafter referred to as MV.
- 32 Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 51. Hereafter referred to as BU.
- 33 *Complete Minstrel Guide* (Chicago: The Dramatic Publishing Company, no date), pp. 49-50.
- 34 Alexander Saxton, "Blackface Minstrelsy and Jacksonian Ideology," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 1975), 12. Subsequent references will be cited in the text of the essay.
- 35 Quoted in Elizabeth Sprigge, *Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work* (New York: Harper, 1957), pp. 124-125.
- 36 Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990), pp. 85-86. Hereafter referred to as TL.
- 37 Carolyn Copeland, *Language and Time and Gertrude Stein* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1975), p. 24. Subsequent references will be cited in the text of the essay.
- 38 Janice Doane, *Silence and Narrative: The Early Novels of Gertrude Stein* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 52.
- 39 For a discussion of Stein's racist view of black people and of "Melanctha" as "the signpost of modernism's discourse on the nonwhite," see Aldon Lynn Nielsen, *Reading Race: White American Poets and the Racial Discourse in the Twentieth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp. 21-28.
- 40 Wilson Harris, "In the Name of Liberty," *Third Text*, 11 (Summer 1990), 15.
- 41 Hurston, in "Characteristics of Negro Expression": "After adornment the next most striking manifestation of the Negro is Angularity. Everything that he touches becomes angular."
- 42 John Clellon Holmes, *The Horn* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1988), p. 8. Subsequent references will be cited in the text of the essay.
- 43 Henry Dumas, *Play Ebony Play Ivory* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 52.