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## **The Curious Case of the Invention of Diasporic Identity. A Story of Jazz, Politics, Africa, and Revolution**

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**Abstract:** When Malcolm X visited Africa in 1964 and gave a lecture at the University of Ghana, he introduced himself as an exiled in his own country: “I’m from America but I’m not an American”. He was not the only one in this situation; most of the jazz performers of that age understood themselves in a similar way. As exiles in their own country, they did not simply jump to the alternative of Africa as a home to return to, but viewed it as an opportunity to be seized, more universal than any paradigm allowed before, and especially more universal than the universalism of the whites. We will investigate the possibility of such an invented and open diasporic identity. We will consider it, at least for the context defined above, as an X that provides the chance of a radical change in articulation both with the emergence of free jazz and with the independence of Africa.

**Keywords:** Diaspora; Identity; Revolution; Jazz.

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### **Malcolm X Visiting the University**

When Malcolm X arrived on 25 January 1963 at the University of Pennsylvania to speak in front of the students, the Irvine Auditorium was fully packed with a crowd of around 2500 listeners. They were of course most of them white and in many cases hostile, uneager to hear talk about the complete separation of races and of the crimes committed by the white race but were curious enough of the charisma and force of this figure of emancipation. Contested and considered at best controversial and at worst a terrorist at the time, the figure of Malcolm X has not been recuperated by the liberal ideology in its hijacking of former radical figures as tamed versions of themselves, made palatable to its version of history. This is a phenomenon that *did* happen to Martin Luther King: “The accolades and bouquets of late twentieth-century Black struggle were awarded to veterans of the civil rights struggle epitomized by the martyred Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elevated by white and Black elites to the heights of social acceptance, Dr. King’s message of Christian

forbearance and his turn-the-other-cheek doctrine were calming to the white psyche. To Americans bred for comfort, Dr. King was, above all, safe.<sup>21</sup> Malcolm X, however, and the Black Panther Party were not. They have remained not only “the antithesis of Dr. King,”<sup>22</sup> but also purveyors of ideas and a vision of the world still difficult to accept. One example is to be found in the lecture of Malcolm X at the Penn University.

He spoke of the difference between black nationalism (mainly intent on self-determination) and black national separation (the specific program of Elijah Muhammad’s Black Muslims or the Nation of Islam). In order to point out the importance of the latter, he used the *house slave/ field slave* dichotomy. The first term names a history that led to the venerated civil rights movement from the perspective of house slaves who built their identity in relation to the fortunes and the model of their masters. In his view, this was a history that erased or marginalized the one that articulates the field slave and its brutal exploitation with the violence and the wished-for death of the master. History viewed from the perspective of the field slave had been disfavored and needed to be reclaimed. Only this alternative history could be articulated with a radical critique of colonialism. This had been in fact the position taken by Jean-Paul Sartre in 1948 in an essay (*Black Orpheus*) written as an introduction to Leopold Senghor’s *Anthology of New Negro and Malagasy Poetry*, where he considered “negritude” a political event: “In *Black Orpheus*, Sartre presents means for a struggle against the dominant ideology and affirms the right of Africans to fashion a new mode of thought, of speech, and of life.”<sup>23</sup> This paradigm shift could only be attained – and this was also Malcolm X’s key point – in

connection with the emergence of the new (Idea of) Africa. The Black Man, he considered, was a kind of a figure-on-the-threshold, uniquely disposed to this opening of the times, because of his split identity: only the White Man could be American, because America was built through colonial means. A new, different identity was necessary in order to escape this frame of thought: “African blood, African origin, African culture, African ties. And you’d be surprised, we discovered that deep within the subconscious of the Black man in this country, he’s still more African than he is American. He thinks that he’s more American than African, because the man is jiving him, the man is brainwashing him every day.”<sup>24</sup> What is however the meaning of being African? According to X, it is something that requires an articulation between an ancient and great history and an invention of a new world. To the students gathered in front of him, he pointed out that “if I were president of one of the black colleges, I’d hock the campus if I had to, to send a bunch of black students off digging in Africa for more, more and more proof of the black race’s historical greatness. The white man now is in Africa digging and searching. An African elephant can’t stumble without falling on some white man with a shovel.”<sup>25</sup> A year later, in a speech given at the Founding Rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, on June 28, 1964, he went further: “He can invent a society, a social system, an economic system, a political system, that is different from anything that exists or has ever existed anywhere on this earth. He will improvise; he’ll bring it from within himself. And this is what you and I want.”

He himself had been to Africa. His first visit, in 1959, included Ghana. He returned there in 1964, freshly excluded from

the Nation of Islam, and he met there Muhammad Ali (still at that point an Elijah Muhammed supporter) to whom he had been very close. It would take a few years more for Ali to follow his path and become an icon of the opposition to the Vietnam War. On this second visit, X gave a lecture at the University of Ghana on May 13, 1964. He introduced himself as a non-citizen without identity: "I'm from America but I'm not an American. I didn't go there of my own free choice."<sup>6</sup> An exiled without a home, the terms in which he defined himself are close to what Ariella Azoulay would later call a "governed non-citizen". Indeed, on the one hand Malcolm X pointed the ambiguity of the identity of the Blacks: "our position in America is an informal position." Such a position is usually connected to the victims, and it was obvious that Blacks were the victims of an astute ideological system, able to portray itself as democratic and free: "So I just try to face the fact as it actually is and come to this meeting as one of the victims of America, one of the victims of Americanism, one of the victims of democracy, one of the victims of a very hypocritical system that is going all over this earth today representing itself as being qualified to tell other people how to run their country when they can't get the dirty things that are going on in their own country straightened out." On the other hand, there seemed to be a way out of this conundrum: an identity to be invented, a home to be chosen (as opposed to given). Just as potential history imagines that we could go back to 1492 and (re)start from there, a potential identity can be conceived beyond what passports or places of birth tell us. In the case of Malcolm X, he confessed that, on this visit, he was

discovering that such an endeavor was not only possible, but it was happening. The Africans had just given him a name: "*Omo-ale*, which they say means in Yoruba – if I am pronouncing that correctly, and if I am not pronouncing it correctly it's because I haven't had a chance to pronounce it for four hundred years – which means in that dialect, *The child has returned*." He was also careful to point out that a potential identity could only be envisioned from a position on the threshold. It was not something accessible to those present in Africa while being on the payroll of the US government (which would in fact rule out many jazz performers): he was "not sent back here by the State Department, but come back here of my own free will." A potential identity could only be attained within the work of a deconstruction of ideology, an understanding that every compromise with America is also a compromise with capitalism and thus an activity against freedom: "I don't feel that I am a visitor in Ghana or in any part of Africa. I feel that I am at home. I've been away for four hundred years, but not of my own volition, not of my own will. Our people didn't go to America on the Queen Mary, we didn't go by Pan American, and we didn't go to America on the Mayflower. We went in slave ships, we went in chains. We weren't immigrants to America, we were cargo for purposes of a system that was bent upon making a profit." The position of Malcolm X here (who pointed out that the anti-white violence in Harlem should be understood as a fight for justice, not as gang-like terrorism as the American "free" press considered them) was close to the one of Trinidadian historian C.L.R. James. In his analysis of the Haitian revolution, he had made a similar point: "The

cruelties of property and privilege are always more ferocious than the revenges of poverty and oppression. For the one aims at perpetuating resented injustice, the other is merely a momentary passion soon appeased.”<sup>7</sup> Incidentally, C.L.R. James had also written a play about the Haitian Revolution, that was performed in 1936 at London’s Westminster Theatre, with Paul Robeson in the title role. The connection with jazz was apparently never too far<sup>8</sup>.

An often-repeated accusation against Malcolm X pointed out that he was himself a racist (because his uncompromising stance was perceived as violent and intolerant, in comparison to the perceived tolerant position of Martin Luther King). Was this indeed racism or in fact it was the only authentic way towards a universalism that was far more profound than the liberal ideology of tolerance that later called itself multiculturalism? The problem had been identified earlier, for example once again by Sartre: “The Negro creates an anti-racist racism. He does not at all wish to dominate the world; he wishes the abolition of racial privileges wherever they are found; he affirms his solidarity with the oppressed of all colors. At a blow the subjective, existential, ethnic notion of Négritude passes as Hegel would say, into the objective, positive, exact notion of the proletariat.”<sup>9</sup> The problem is still present. In the age of anti-wokism rhetoric (part of the official discourses of heads of state like Trump and Macron, for example), radical positions are still not perceived as acceptable. To understand the contemporary tensions, it probably helps to revisit the 1960s when these problems reached a peak. In 1963 for example, LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) published *Blues People*, the first profound analyses of jazz and its histories beyond the

often very rigid simplifications of the white critics, visible mainly in their negative reactions to free jazz. Such critics were desperately trying to defend what had become *their* jazz, the jazz that they managed to make acceptable to the white audiences, that they had codified, explained, valued and canonized, a jazz that was now completely turned upside down. The relationship previously not discussed (by white critics) between music and politics is also in play in Jones’ texts, in the connection between music and a reconfiguration of history, of time and space. However, Jones was later himself criticized by the Black Panthers as an accomplice (just as they criticized Stokely Carmichael) to the capitalist and racist exploitation because he only (or mainly) focused on the cultural dimension. The Black Panther Party had gained national exposure in 1968 with the campaign for its imprisoned leader Huey Newton who faced the gas chamber (he was later murdered in 1989, a late aftereffect of the FBI’s counterintelligence work that in 1971 succeeded in breaking the Black Panthers into factions that would be ready to fight each other). The Party was successful in the articulation of a different geography, one through which the problems of the US South were related not only to Africa, but also to the Cuban Missiles Crisis and the class divide in the West with the ideology of equality from China. Space was no longer, in such a view, defined by local coordinates, but through *distant similarities*. You could thus be Black *and* Maoist, African *and* Communist. If globalization was later to triumph (as a stage of capitalism ready to cover more of the globe), its counterpart, planetarity, was already at work in this decade. The peak of the Party was contemporaneous with the Black Arts Movement which had its roots in

groups such as the Umbra Workshop. Umbra was in 1962 a collective of young Black writers based in Manhattan's Lower East Side of which Archie Shepp was a member. The political was not only linked with the aesthetic, it was in fact no longer distinct from it. This is why the problem of anti-racism racism should be related with the solution of (Black) aesthetics as a (potential) universal path: "When we speak of a 'Black aesthetic' several things are meant. First, we assume that there is already in existence the basis for such an aesthetic. Essentially, it consists of an African-American cultural tradition. But this aesthetic is finally, by implication, broader than that tradition. It encompasses most of the usable elements of the Third World culture. The motive behind the Black aesthetic is the destruction of the white thing, the destruction of white ideas, and white ways of looking at the world."<sup>10</sup> It does sound radical enough and, on the surface, it looks like an engagement on behalf of one particular identity against another. However, what if, as we suggested above, the authentic way towards universalism and a geography of the commons can only emerge through a violent act and a radical position? What if one could only be universal by being anti-white? The key answer may be found in an apparent paradox: the strong positioning suggested by Malcolm X, the Black Panthers and many jazz performers leaves however an important opening: somebody white could be perceived as Black.

### Fidel is Black

**U***huru Africa*, an essential jazz album by Randy Weston, was recorded in November 1960, two months after the admission of sixteen African nations to the

United Nations, an event that brought to New York many leaders including Fidel Castro. Encountering a hostile reception, the Cuban delegation found peace and understanding in a Harlem hotel where Fidel met with Malcolm X among others. The Cuban Revolution had ended segregation and put into practice radical axioms of equality. During his stay<sup>11</sup>, Fidel was continuously cheered in Harlem with chants of "Fidel is Black", an expression which would be used quite often by jazz performers in the 1960s, including Archie Shepp, who was not afraid to point out the problems with the American system: "In my estimation, [the United States] is one of the most vicious, racist social systems in the world - with the possible exception of Northern Rhodesia, South Africa and South Vietnam. I am, for the moment, a helpless witness to the bloody massacre of my people on streets that run from Hayneville through Harlem... I ask only: don't you ever wonder just what my collective rage will - as it surely must - be like, when it is - as it inevitably will be - unleashed? Our vindication will be black as the color of suffering is black, as Fidel is black, as Ho Chi Minh is black."<sup>12</sup>

It is clear here that *black* is no longer used as a determination of a particular race, but as a universal subject, one obtained through suffering (and are we not here already close to Giorgio Agamben's *homo sacer* or Ariella Azoulay's *non-citizen*?) and subtraction: one attains universality only by subtracting, escaping the *white* dominant Master-subject. In this reading, the black universal is not only opposed to the white universal (this is only the first step, like the Hegelian opposition that leads to dialectic), it exposes the latter for what it

really is: a generalization of a privileged model, not in any way an opening, or an invention. The (only) apparent paradox that Fidel could be perceived as black is not a case of him representing better the blacks; it is not a case of representation or of the question of who speaks better in the name of the subaltern<sup>13</sup>. It is symptomatic that our age seems to have forgotten the solution of “Fidel is black”, caught as it is in debates about who can speak about what and with what legitimate right. For Archie Shepp and the 1960s the key question was not one of legitimation, but of the emergence of the possibility of a universalism that cuts across particular identities. Significantly, this is not far from the way in which, in the first constitution of Haiti (written in 1805), all Haitians, regardless of the color of their skin, were identified as black, including mulattos and whites (for example German and Polish troops who had fought against Napoleon). Thus, the term Black functioned as the first political universal, a signifier of emancipation that distinguished the Haitian revolution from the American and French ones as the only Revolution that protected at all costs the idea of equality<sup>14</sup>.

The definition of *black* was not limited to *non-white*. It contained its own stories, or at least it was about to create them. In Malcolm X's words in front of his Ghanaian audience, the way to judge the *black* man is indeed related to how the whites perceive him (“the object we use to measure him is the attitude of America<sup>15</sup> toward him. When we find a Black man who's always receiving the praise of the Americans, we become suspicious of him.”), but it is primarily connected to a few universal principles that even the *white*

man pretends to support: “if this is the land of justice, then give us some justice. And if this is the land of equality, give us some equality.” We are here on the threshold<sup>16</sup> between the cry for justice from a people who had been grossly mistreated as a particular identity and the possibility of a new, radical identity that would not be limited at the identities already in play. In this sense, it is a threshold that should not be confused with the opposition between the idea of segregation (*black* as a different entity) and integration (inside the lines ultimately defined by the *white* entity). Jazz itself had to navigate such a zone, between the emergence of Black Power (closely related to free jazz) and collaborations with the State Department propaganda. Albums (although we should perhaps call them Events, even in the Badiouan sense) like *Uhuru Africa* or *Freedom Suite* were in this sense very significant.

*We Insist! Freedom Suite* was written and recorded in 1960 by Max Roach and Oscar Brown Jr, and it told the musical narrative of African American history in five movements. The liner notes were not shy of radicalism: “A revolution is unfurling – America's unfinished revolution. It is unfurling in lunch counters, buses, libraries and schools – wherever the dignity and potential of men are denied.”<sup>17</sup> The revolution is thus first of all one of space, territory and the way people relate to those. As Michel de Certeau would observe later<sup>18</sup>, there is a key difference to be considered between strategy (the privilege of the powerful, the key element of policing space under the pretense of scientificity) and tactics (the only way of dealing with space that the nomads – those without rights, those outside the order – have). It is also important

to note that it is an unfinished revolution (and thus related to previous revolutionary acts) and not in any way limited to a particular identity: it talks of the dignity of men, regardless for example of the color of the skin. There were many creative disputes between Brown Jr (leaning towards the softer stance of Martin Luther King) and Roach (who followed Malcolm X closer), but they also had a lot in common. Brown's model for a politically engaged art was Paul Robeson, a figure radical enough to act as a bridge between the two key political figures of the 1960s. The album was thus, in de Certeau's terms, a tactic that could subtract the *black* from the strategies used by the State Department. The State Department use of jazz as propaganda was a prime example of what a State Apparatus could do very efficiently in terms of promoting and imposing an ideology through systematic and very organized (in detail) activities. To be invited as a Jazz Ambassador, one had to check many boxes, and for this reason some of the key performers of the day (Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk or Charles Mingus) were avoided. It was also increasingly seen in the 1960s as something that jazz performers should not do<sup>19</sup>. This was for example the opinion of W.E.B. DuBois: "Some of our best scholars and civil servants have been bribed by the State Department to testify abroad and especially in Africa to the success of capitalism in making the Negro free. Yet it was British capitalism which made the African slave trade the greatest commercial venture in the world; and it was American slavery that raised capitalism to its domination."<sup>20</sup> The procedure was similar to the one used in Hollywood. The short films of Pare Lorentz and Joris Ivens, made at the specific

request of the Democratic administration as an ideological discourse in support of Roosevelt's New Deal, are such an example. Ironically, they borrow so much from Soviet cinema that the films are in fact a simple form of citation of mechanisms and aesthetics that paste a different content on these forms. Obviously, they miss the essential point (of which authors like Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov were well aware) that aesthetic forms cannot go and should not go with any content. The error was also visible in the case of Alfred Hitchcock's propaganda movies: the 1944 *Lifeboat* and the atrocious 1969 *Topaz* come to mind. Such propaganda can be contrasted with the work of directors like Paul Strand and his *Native Land*, where the form (because he understands from Eisenstein and Dovzhenko, whom he met in 1936, that cinema is a political art of montage) fits the theme (the social reality of the exploitation of workers). The essential problem in regard to such political art - especially in relation to jazz - is asked by Ingrid Monson: "what musical means did Max Roach and his band choose to convey the socially engaged message and how do the structural and symbolic aspects of the music combine?"<sup>21</sup> A few short examples suffice here. In the case of the album *We Insist!*, on the song *All Africa*, Abbey Lincoln recites the names of dozens of African ethnic groups, while Olatunji, the drummer, responds to her through interjections in Yoruba. In the percussion solo that follows, a seven-stroke bell pattern is used which in and by itself creates a musical geography articulated with an Idea of an Africa who could paradoxically cover the entire planet, as it is a pattern found not only in West Africa, but also in the Caribbean

and Brazil. In the case of *Uhuru Africa*, the first movement, *Uhuru Kwanza*, starts with a spoken invocation by Tuntemeke Sanga, a diplomat from Tanzania. On the second part, on his piano, Randy Weston goes through all the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale. The relation between word and music is essential for the political and aesthetic message. The word is still the main way to assert history, to bring an event into discourse where it has a chance to endure. As such, each event is concrete, it has roots in a specific geography, but in order to gain universality it has to transform this specific occurrence or trait into a different grammar. The twelve pitches suggest such an opening: universality is open to all, and the music should assert that.

As any *open* geography should reflect, the traffic between Africa and America was not only one way. The story of Miriam Makeba, the first African musician to achieve international fame, is relevant in this context. Her first solo album came out in 1960, a year after she had appeared in the film *Come Back Africa*, a piece of political cinema in the style of Jean Rouch by Lionel Rogosin. The film centered on the life of a migrant worker in Johannesburg and it was filmed under the false pretense of doing a commercial movie. Rogosin helped Makeba afterwards to arrive in America where initially she encountered great success. However, she quickly lost the support of white Americans when she married Stokey Carmichael. By that time, she was radical enough for the US to cancel her visa. As a result, she and her husband settled in Guinea (where Carmichael changed his name to Kwame Toure). In clear contrast to the US government, she was quickly issued passports by Algeria

and Ghana. She started composing music critical of the USA, including the songs *Lumumba* and *Malcolm X* (1974). Her performances around the world functioned as the opposing argument to the US propaganda: she had been to the USA and was now marginalized for her views. Her return to Africa told the story that the US didn't want to be heard. Makeba performed more frequently in African countries, and as countries became independent of European colonial powers, she was invited to sing at independence ceremonies, including in Kenya, Angola, Zambia, Tanganyika, and Mozambique. In September 1974 she performed alongside a multitude of well-known African and American musicians at the Zaire 74 festival in Kinshasa. Her performances in Africa were immensely popular: she was described as the highlight of FESTAC 77, a Pan-African arts festival in Nigeria in 1977, and during a Liberian performance of "Pata Pata", the stadium was so loud that she was unable to complete the song. "Pata Pata", like her other songs, had been banned in her native South Africa. Another song she sang frequently in this period was "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika", though she never recorded it. Makeba later stated that it was during this period that she accepted the label "Mama Africa". Her messages always related the race problem to the other inequalities of sex or class. She was however critical of what she called "luxury feminism" (already prevalent in America) that remained blind to these articulations, another reason why she was and still is an uncomfortable case for liberal ideology. She suffered, even on the part of critics who liked her, from being portrayed in terms that reinforced the view of people of African heritage as primitive,



wild and animalized. Her critique of Western standards of beauty (for example through her choice of not wearing make-up) was not well received, as was also the case with her self-confidence which was perceived as arrogant.

Makeba often encountered on musical stages Archie Shepp. One of the key figures of free jazz, he was also radical enough to not even be considered as a possible US ambassador. In 1969, after the scene at PanAfrican Festival in Alger, where he uttered the famous words: "Jazz is a Black Power!"<sup>22</sup>, he recorded, only days later, in Paris three essential albums, between 12 and 16 august 1969: *Yasmina*, *A Black Woman*, *Poem for Malcolm*, and *Blasé*. All of them are confident creations, relevant both aesthetically and politically. In fact, such works make such distinctions impossible. On the one hand, as Philippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli noticed in their book, in relation to an interview Shepp had given to DownBeat in 1966, "il est contre la guerre; contre celle du Vietnam; il est pour Cuba; il est pour la libération de tous les peuples."<sup>23</sup> On the other hand he was on the verge of rearticulating the main directions in music at that point: free jazz, blues, the avant garde, the spiritual dimension inherited from his master, John Coltrane, but also from Albert Ayler and many others. His African experiences are evident in his work, especially in the use of percussion instruments and (again) spoken incantations. These techniques would remain essential in his career afterwards up to the duo with Jaon Moran that led to the 2017 album *Let My People Go* (initially a collaboration for a concert at the Festival de La Villette).

During a concert for Peace in Helsinki at the beginning of the 60s, a young French

jazz player named François Jeanneau discovered on the scene the towering figure of Archie Shepp. The experience was revelatory and paradigm-shifting: "Ça nous a fait un choc: il y a avait une puissance d'incarnation dans cette musique, une énergie, une radicalité impressionantes. On ressentait physiquement que les choses étaient en train de changer."<sup>24</sup> The French scene would indeed feel the wind of change. Jeanneau himself started experimenting in a group under the supervision of another very interesting character, François Tusques, a French pianist whose experience during the war in Algeria changed him forever. His music became imprinted with a strong political dimension which articulated experimentation (connecting the American free jazz with the blues and also with Webern or Schönberg) that culminated in a key album in 1965, *Free Jazz*. "Jouer cette musique c'était prendre position, participer d'un processus révolutionnaire qui allait trouver son climax politique in 1968."<sup>25</sup> The French scene was well aware at this point that jazz could be and in fact was a fundamental element in a process of decolonization. Trumpeter Jacques Coursil suffered a comparable change. In 1958 he left France for Africa. He spent three years in Mauritania and Senegal, and became close to Senghor. He returned to France, studied literature and mathematics, worked as a schoolteacher and attended the Conservatory. In 1965, after learning of the assassination of Malcolm X, he left for New York, worked for a while as a bartender and joined Sunny Murray's band. In 1969 he recorded the *Black Suite*, an epic creation that sought to challenge stereotypes and racism, with a band that included Anthony Braxton. He would later obtain

two doctorates, one in Linguistics and another one in Science. After a long hiatus from jazz, during which he mainly taught in several Universities including in Martinique, he returned to recording jazz and this return culminated in two key albums: 2007's *Clameurs* and another epic musical narrative in 2010, *Trail of Tears*, in which he articulated the story of the relocation of Native Americans with the narrative of the slaves transported from Africa to America. These were not, according to Coursil, particular histories. They had a universalist dimension. The history of the world was in fact the history of common suffering. In a way, *Clameurs* and *Trails of Tears* draw another potential geography in which places like Tagaloo, Georgia or Tahlequah, Oklahoma reclaim the power to signify that is best captured in the words of Frantz Fanon rendered on the song *Frantz Fanon 1952* (from the 2007 album that cites *Black Skin, White Masks*): "I am a man, and it is the past

of the whole world that I must reclaim." The *Fidel is Black* message reaches here the full circle. The seven movements of Coursil's suite trace the procession of displaced Cherokee from Georgia to present-day Oklahoma and conclude in Senegal's Île de Gorée, one of the earliest European settlements in Africa and an important outpost for slave traders. Histories and timelines are articulated in surprising ways, as if to underline both the radical wound at the center of (Western-based) history and a more fundamental, more truthful geography. A geography not of facts and measurements, but of nomadic lines of flight and tactical connections, a musical geography, one that teaches how to read maps with the help of sounds, be they sounds of sufferings or cries for justice, how to understand that each identity is in its essence diasporic and that is why, through such an internal wound or split, an opening towards universality is still possible.

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## NOTES

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2. *Ibidem*.
3. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa. Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, Indiana University Press, 1988, p. 96.
4. Malcolm X, Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Ballantine Books, 1992, p. 171.
5. *Ibidem*, p. 182.
6. [http://malcolmxfiles.blogspot.com/2013/07/university-of-ghana-may-13-1964\\_1.html](http://malcolmxfiles.blogspot.com/2013/07/university-of-ghana-may-13-1964_1.html). All the citations from his discourse in Ghana are from this source.
7. Cyril Lionel Robert James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 1938, p. 197–98.
8. Another connection is worth mentioning here: in 1939 he met Trotsky and discussed how the Black revolution could represent a paradigm-shift in the history of the world and the development of radical ideas of emancipation.
9. Jean Paul Sartre, *Black Orpheus*, Présence africaine, Paris, 1976, p. 59.
10. Larry Neal, *A Turbulent Voyage: Readings in African American Studies*, Collegiate Press, San Diego, 2000 (3rd edition), pp. 236–246.
11. An excellent rendering of Fidel's stay in New York is to be found in Simon Hall, *Ten Days in Harlem: Fidel Castro and the Making of the 1960s*, Faber and Faber, 2020.
12. Archie Shepp, "An Artist Speaks Bluntly," *Downbeat* (December 16, 1965), p. 11.
13. Incidentally it is herein that the famous text by Gayatri Spivak finds its limit: it remains concerned with the problem of representation and of the voice, without taking into consideration the solution of a universal subject that mediates beyond the particular identities, because it still reads universalism only through its white prism.
14. See Peter Hallward, *Damming the Flood. Haiti and the Politics of Containment*, Verso, 2007, p. 11, wherein the author points out that "the mere existence of an independent Haiti was a reproach to the slave-trading nations of Europe, a dangerous example to the slave-owning US, and an inspiration for successive African and Latin American liberation movements." As expected, as a model for such subversive revolutions to come (the Russian and the Cuban ones spring to mind), the independent country was immediately locked in a crippling and crimes-against-humanity type of embargo.
15. It is important to note here that for Malcolm X, America means the *white* people, because Blacks, as we have seen, are not Americans.
16. One could also revisit here Léopold Sédar Senghor's Négritude movement, and Mobutu Sese Seko's view of Authenticité as concepts relevant to this discussion.
17. Cited in Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds. Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 172. The liner notes were written by A. Philip Randolph, a Black socialist politician who in 1963 would be one of the key organizers of the famous March on Washington where Martin Luther King delivered his "I have a dream" speech.
18. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, 1984.
19. Randy Weston's 1967 tour, seven years after the *Uburu Africa* album, comes in this context. The US propaganda tried to portray jazz musicians as examples of the liberation allowed by capitalism: unsurprisingly the arguments regarded mainly private property, the fact that they owned homes or cars etc. Weston's tour included (among 14 countries visited between January 16 and April 9 of 1967), Ghana, Liberia, Niger, and Egypt.
20. W.E.B. DuBois, *The World and Africa*, New York, International Publishers, 1965, p. 338.
21. Ingrid Monson, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
22. The slogan "Black Power" was created by Stokely Carmichael in 1966, at that point the President of SNCC (Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee).
23. Philippe Carles, Jean-Louis Comolli, *Free Jazz*, Paris, 1971, p. 47.
24. François Jeanneau in an interview from 2020 published in the *Jazz Magazine*, n. 740, août 2021, p. 20.
25. *Ibidem*.