Dissonant Heritage. Lives of musical forms. Hibridizations of black music at the contemporary moment

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Abstract

This work is concerned with the study of contemporary lives of musical forms, paying attention to the processes of crystallisation and reconfiguration of the black music cultural heritage in Argentina and Italy. The aim is to describe transformations, permanences, and hibridizations of cultural forms to know what parts of the past are selected in the current moment in the memory and mediatic system, from a perspective that deals with cultural and media co-evolution.

Project description

The cultural system is understood as a semiosphere i.e. the memory of a society that is not genetically transmitted and that can be preserved and updated in a semiotic space of relative uniformity structured, in our case study, from the formation of the Black Atlantic[1] (Gilroy, 1993; Lotman, 1996; Zierold, 2008).

Cultural Heritage is that part of the past that is selected in the present for contemporary purposes. The importance of *CH* as a concept is directly linked to that of nationalism and the nation-state, and the national scale remains pre-eminent in its definition and management. *CH* its knowdelge but also an economic resource that contributes to economic development and rural and urban regeneration (Ashworth et. al, 2007).

Heritage can be redefined as a "contact zone", "a place where different pasts and experiences are negotiated, a site of mutual translation" (Peckham, 2003: 57). In semiotics words, like a *macro-class of genres* where discursive microsystems are nested allowing transpositional trajectories that define *border areas* (Lotman, 1996; Hartley et.al, 2020).

In this context, the emphasis is on *dissonant heritage*, i.e. the condition of discordance or lack of agreement and coherence in terms of naming certain practices, cultural processes or meanings as cultural heritage (Ashworth et. al, 2007: 35).

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[1] It is about the historical "stereophonic, bilingual or bifocal cultural conjunction of forms originating from, but no longer exclusively owned by, the dispersed blacks" (Gilroy, 1993: 3).

In operational terms, the focus will be placed on *mediatic forms of musical life,* insofar as they constitute the most encompassing type of semiosis capable of being identified today as forms of cultural organisations where meaning is inhabited, interacted with and produced[2], taking place in the system of production, circulation and consumption of offline-online music (Fontanille, 2015; Fernández, 2021).

State of the art

Authors from the field of musicology, cultural anthropology point out a lack of agreement to define the contemporary cultural heritage of afro roots (Cirio, 2010; Frigerio & Lamborghini, 2011; Corti, 2015). At the same time, there are works that deal with cultural appropriations of genres of black culture in specific territories in the current moment (Androutsopoulos, & Scholz, 2003; Vecchi, 2013; Marino, 2020).

The cultural system is internally articulated on the basis of a border as a line and as a space -virtual and non-virtual- (Leone, 2015), which gradually complexified its topological properties by dividing different subsystems within it.

On the one hand, from the different migratory currents of the african diaspora. On the other hand the subsystem of afro-american roots observable since the end of the 19th century in the United States and globally expanded during the 20th century due to the mediatization of sound and image. But also thanks to american academia which began to work on the canonization of jazz from the 1950s, when it became part of university curricula coming to be called "*the American classical music of twentieth century*"[3] (Thomas, 2002).

Samuel A. Floyd (1998) asks for the aesthetics of diaspora in *"visual, verbal, and auditory thinking, and its unification by attending to manifestations in five art forms: poetry, prose, painting, music, and dance"* (p. 25).

William C. Banfield (2010) refers to five musical periods that define a "*map of black musical/artistic aesthetics: the Harlem Renaissance, the bebop era, the soul movement, the Black Arts movement and hip hop*" (p.23).

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[2] From the point of view of *expression*, they cover both text-statement figures, objects and specific practices.

[3] Other relevant expressions of this phenomenon at the academic level are the consolidation of *hip hop studies* or, at the institutional dimension, the *Black Music Centre Research* at the University of Chicago.

A part of the specialised literature attributes the consolidation of the archetypal black culture artist to the figure of griot/griotte[4] from an evolutionary line that can be summarised as follows: "*griot/griotte, spiritual Singer, plantation fiddler, slave preacher, blues singer, singing preacher, poets of the Black Arts movement and rappers*" (Banfield, 2010: 67).

General objective:

To describe the transpositive trajectory of the *Cultural Heritage*, investigating the mediatization of identity nodes in *musical life forms* of the cultural system, both in Argentina and Italy.

Specific objectives:

- To define a corpus of *musical life forms* with a set of features attributable to the cultural heritage in written, sound, visual, audiovisual, spatial and digital materialities.

- To analyze transformations in the semiotic codes in the transpositional trajectory of genres belonging to the cultural system of black music.

- To describe the role of digital mediatization in discursive practices of the border areas of the cultural system.

Hypothesis:

The forms of life studied contribute to the reordering of culture through the emergence of new aesthetics, mediatized and non-mediatized social practices, and new codes that generate hybrid identities claiming both the African diaspora and the regional cultures that re-generate them.

Methodology

The case studies may vary between texts, artists, producers, platforms, applications, productive tools, A.I, performative practices and networks.

The methodological design is summarised as follows:

A. *Methodology for the study of mediatized forms* (Fernández, 2021).

a1. Semiohistory: to situate the object in its time; functioning, describing relations with other objects of similar functionality that preceded it.

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[4] *Griots/griottes*: male and female bards from West Africa and spread to different latitudes of the African diaspora.

a2. Socio-semiotic status: for each text or set of texts, it must be determined which technical devices are used, which genres and styles are in play and which transpositional trajectories can be described.

a3. *Discourse analysis*: for the operations of meaning production that make a text, in its socio-semiotic state.

B. Ethnographic approaches

b1. Netnography: It is considered useful to comparatively study phenomena that have certain similarities and generate opposite or concomitant results in mediatized cases.

B2. Ethnography of art: the productions are analyzed in a relationship scheme focused on the reconstruction of causality vectors that provoke meaning (Gell, 2016).

Schedule of activities

- *Year 1*

Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State of the Art and project revisión	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mediatization analysis						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bibliographical analysis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Non-mediatized Fieldwork												
Production of academic articles and conference presentations												
Updating Results												

- *Year 2*

Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State of the Art and project revisión												
Mediatization análisis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bibliographical análisis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Non-mediatized Fieldwork	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Production of academic articles and conference presentations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Updating Results												

- *Year 3*

Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State of the Art and project revisión	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mediatization análisis						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bibliographical análisis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Non-mediatized Fieldwork	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Production of academic articles and conference presentations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Updating Results	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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