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Abstract

This paper proposes an ethnomusicological approach to Djibril Diop Mambéty's films, as a means of reading their diverse musical soundscapes. Paying particular attention to *Touki Bouki* (1974), it demonstrates how, in this film, the approach delineates what may be seen as a reclamation of Josephine Baker - an international figure who has been objectified for her race and gender - resituating her within a wider global African cultural heritage.

At the beginning of Djibril Diop Mambéty's first film, the 21-minute *Contras City* (1969), we find an early example of the director's interest in the manipulation of music as a means of generating culturally significant meaning. Initiating a scathing critique of neo-colonialism in Senegal, the film imposes a recording of Handel over a downward tracking shot of Dakar's city hall, over which we hear an anonymous female voice proclaim 'Oh my sweet France'. A male voice swiftly retorts – 'Your sweet France apparently can't stand the sun...this is Dakar sweetie'. At this point the music 'winds-down', slowing and gradually lowering in pitch, as if it were playing on a gramophone to which the power had been cut. The electronic failure represents the wider failure of Europe's colonial legacy in Africa, where the initial hope offered in upbeat European classical music is interrupted by the reality of contemporary Senegal. With this manipulation of musical sound, Mambéty establishes the vital importance of music within his work, from the outset invoking the wide-ranging functions of music as a

cultural signifier, and as a means of generating narrative meanings that extend well-beyond those offered by the image.

Contras City's radical uses of music, and those of its follow-up, the 56-minute *Badou Boy* (1969), set the tone for Mambéty's first feature film around five years later, *Touki Bouki* (1974), which also incorporates a self-consciously eclectic musical track within the framework of an experimental narrative. The film revolves around Mory (Magaye Niang) and Anta (Myriam Niang), a young couple who decide to leave Dakar in pursuit of their utopian idea of Paris. On this premise, Mambéty constructs a kind of road movie, our protagonists motorbiking their way to the port but – at least in the case of our male protagonist, Mory - barely getting any further. Deploying vernacular music, European songs, and contemporary African American music, the film structures a tripartite matrix of musical meaning which articulates the paradoxes of the cultural exchange between Europe, America, and postcolonial Africa. From the outset, Mambéty's musical strategies demand attention to their meaning; as with *Contras City*, Mambéty manipulates the musical track, but in the later film he makes this manipulation the narrative cornerstone, the most well-known aspect of which involves the use intermittent use of a recording by the internationally recognised figure of Josephine Baker, which punctuates key moment in the protagonist's journey.

With his utilization of diverse musical structures, Mambéty is engaging in what might be seen as a kind of ethnomusicology, orchestrating a chain of associations that form a comment on the shape of contemporary Africa and its relationship to the past. These techniques correspond – in an overt manner - with Mark Slobin's contention that "*every film is ethnographic, and every soundtrack acts like an ethnomusicologist*" (Slobin's

emphasis).ⁱ From this perspective, Mambéty's particular structuration of music within his films consciously solicit interpretation (even though it may often seem impenetrably polysemic), offering not only a taste of the aesthetic diversity of his subjects, but also multi-layered shades of meaning; through Mambéty's use of a tripartite musical structure and the use of internationally-recognised musical figures (America's Josephine Baker, France's Mado Robin, and Senegal's Aminata Fall), the director invites us to infer a range of meanings that relate not only to the contemporary context of post-Independent Senegal (in the early 1970s), but also to the colonial history of Africa in general and the emerging global African consciousness that is a characteristic aspect of the period to which the film belongs.

While Slobin's model is articulated in relation to classical Hollywood, or what he calls the 'superculture' of film music, the ethnographic approach has considerable potential as a mode of reading film music that operates outside this system. Slobin argues that in the 'superculture' we find an 'implied author' who is also an 'ethnographer'.ⁱⁱ Since music offers such an overt ability to articulate cultural identity, it forms a key aspect of filmic meaning which serves two key functions: "to produce...a musical ethnography of a given community...and...to use conventional markers of feeling to target and guide the viewer's journey through the narrative".ⁱⁱⁱ While the second function is obviously of specific relevance to classical Hollywood scoring practices and has only minor relevance to Mambéty's work, the first function provides a starting point for understanding his engagement with various musical genres and characteristics in relation to their cultural significance. Thus, the idea of the soundtrack's implied author – Mambéty – as ethnomusicologist enables an appreciation of the musical choices that attends to their particular musical idioms, the cultures to which they belong, the ways

these are then structured within the film, their relationships to the images, characters and narrative, and their manipulation within the broader sonic track.

Some of these meanings have already been delineated in Vlad Dima's analysis of 'sonic space' in Mambéty's films, which considers, in particular, how sounds interact with visual space (as well as with each other), concentrating in particular on what the author calls 'sonic rack focus'.^{iv} The functions of musical genre and idiom, and how they relate to visual and sonic space, are also explored in some detail; yet, it is not only these aspects that generate significant meanings; in fact, Mambéty often deploys and even manipulates musical structures in a way that articulates intricate cultural relationships, whose associations become even more complex through the connotation of the broader textual characteristics of the various musical recordings used. Thus, this paper will demonstrate that an even more finely grained analysis of music reveals additional nuances of meaning, meanings that are generated through the specificities of musical structure, as well as through the cultural significance of the genres and performers heard.

Djibril Diop Mambéty was part of a first wave of African filmmakers that emerged in the 1960s alongside the often cited 'grandfather of African cinema' Ousmane Sembène (also from Senegal), Med Hondo (Mauritania), and Souleymane Cissé (Mali), whose work intersects with an international movement of anti-colonial filmmaking that came to be understood under the rubric of 'Third Cinema'. Arising in Latin America during a period marked by what Roy Armes describes as 'a sort of Third World Euphoria',^v Third Cinema has evolved into a broad term that refers to a diverse set of films united by a revolutionary sensibility, represented by filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha in

Brazil, Miguel Littin of Chile, Jorge Sanjines of Bolivia, and of course Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino of Argentina, who founded the term in their manifesto ‘Towards a Third Cinema’.^{vi} Although Third Cinema does not refer to a specific film aesthetic, certain tendencies may be identified across these works, in particular, the deployment of musical strategies that draw from both vernacular and global cultures. Examples of this strategy can be found as far back as Rocha’s *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964), whose original score by Sérgio Ricardo operates in counterpoint to Brazilian folk singing, the latter of which embodies the voice of ‘the people’. Moreover, the deployment of vernacular music and songs marks many examples of African cinema specifically; for instance, Ousmane Sembene’s first film, *Borom Sarret* (1963), shifts between Wolof music in the slums of Dakar and European classical music in the plateau (European area), while the soundtrack of *La Noire de...* (1966) shifts between French easy listening to indigenous *Mande* song. In this sense, *Touki Bouki* might aesthetically belong within this global movement of filmmaking that is motivated by a growing postcolonial consciousness.

However, Mambéty’s work represents a departure from this tradition inasmuch as his films adopt a more ambivalent position in relation to politics. Indeed, whereas his contemporaries in Africa and elsewhere were driven by a revolutionary sensibility, Mambéty’s work is notably more poetic and abstract. Yet, paradoxically, his films adopt an experimental style that suggests the enthusiasm of a youthful filmmaker exploring the aesthetic possibilities of the medium, with a particular interest in manipulating sound. A further comparison to Sembene reveals some of the differences here, particularly in the light of Manthia Diawara’s account of ‘West African cinema’^{vii} organized around a “‘Sembènian” cinema’,^{viii} to which Mambéty’s cinema represents

‘the most serious challenge to Sembènian socialist realism and the utopian narrative of independence’.^{ix} *Touki Bouki* forms the most sustained articulation of this aesthetic departure, being a film that is radically experimental in its style and form, deviating from the more realist modes of representation favoured in independence narratives. Indeed, the film represents Mambéty’s most rigorous experimentation with music, as well as with sound in general. Later in his career, the director is less overtly experimental in this regard, often leaving the non-diegetic score to his younger brother, the musician Wasil Diop; yet Diop’s scores themselves exhibited a musical eclecticism, while Mambéty populated the diegetic world with folk and popular musicians.^x Thus, throughout his oeuvre there is a clear fascination with music, and its ability to generate cultural meaning. As Mbye Cham argues in his brief but informative article on folk music in Mambéty’s *Le Franc* (1994):

[S]o central is music and sound to the very fabric of Djibril’s film narratives that it can be seen as retaining a certain measure of aesthetic independence, an autonomy that confers on music the status of a character, a narrative entity unto itself that aggressively calls attentions to itself and compels equal analytic focus as the visual and other narrative elements that have so far been the focus of much of the critical commentary on the work of Djibril.^{xi}

This ‘aesthetic independence’ of the soundtrack may well be seen as a result of Mambéty’s early experiences of cinema, where he seemed to encounter the medium through its sounds. During his youth, this consisted almost exclusively of illicit trips to the open air ABC theatre in his home town of Colobane, with lack of money forcing him to remain outside and merely listen to the Westerns and Hindi films exhibited

there.^{xii} His only formal training was in drama in Dakar, where he worked as an actor at the Daniel Sorano Theatre (moving into film only after his dismissal from the theatre after an alleged fracas with a colleague).^{xiii} This exposure to film's sonic - rather than visual - dimensions perhaps explains why Mambéty's musical soundscapes rarely follow a conventional pattern (perhaps it is where he learned to think of the two things independently). Frequently featuring a disjuncture between music and image, Mambéty's structures might be characterised by a subversion of the narrative functions that typifies music in classical cinema, in particular those theorised by Claudia Gorbman as 'unheard melodies'.^{xiv} Yet, like his images, his soundtracks have a meaning beyond the resistance of convention and/or interpretation; indeed, Mambéty's musical choices are often carefully thought-out, sharing a relationship to the diegetic matters in hand while – in his first three films at least - quite overtly referring us to more global ideas, such as the contemporaneous growth in postcolonial consciousness. In contrast to the 'unheard melodies' of the classical Hollywood soundtrack, Mambéty's music is often deployed in a self-conscious manner that is *meant* to be noticed, but not – as is implicit in the analysis here – simply *for the sake of* being noticed (as, for instance, a modernist interpretive framework might suggest).^{xv} In fact, his musical strategies demonstrate a sophisticated thematic and formal complexity that generates quite specific cultural meanings, suggesting a system of signification more akin to that delineated by an ethnomusicologist, rather than a filmmaker concerned with avant-garde strategies such as free association.

Thus, there is a particular set of meanings generated in the presence of the internationally-recognised Josephine Baker in *Touki Bouki*, meanings which are accrued in relation to the figures of Robin and Fall, and more widely in relation to the

tripartite musical structure adopted throughout the film. *Touki Bouki*'s instances of non-diegetic music may be broken down as follows: 1) indigenous music (played on a type of flute particular to the nomadic *Fula* people); 2) a contemporary score largely played on untuned percussion; 3) a recording of Josephine Baker singing 'Paris, Paris', a cabaret-style *chanson française*; 4) a recording of Mado Robin singing Johann Martini's aria 'Plaisir d'amour'; 5) diegetic praise-singing performed by Senegalese *mbalax*^{xvi} singer and actress Aminata Fall (as Mory's Aunt Oumi); and 6) contemporary African American funk, which appears over the final images of the film. These may be divided culturally into three broad musical types: indigenous music (representing a local vernacular), European classical and cabaret (representing two sides of the colonising European culture (from which indigenous Africans have mostly been excluded), and finally African American funk, which signals the global influence of African culture in the contemporary context, but also the hybridisation of those cultures. Josephine Baker's position within this tripartite structure straddles all three of its cultures; as an African American deploying aspects of West African performance and working in Europe, she simultaneously provides the connecting tissue between Africa, Europe and America while embodying the globalisation of African heritage and political consciousness.

The musical framework for Baker is initially established in the film's opening scene, where a performance on the indigenous *Fula* flute straddles a set of diverse but interrelated shots. The first of these shows a young boy herding cattle in long shot walking towards the static camera (the boy rides one of the cattle), over which the credits appear while we hear the unaccompanied flute performing in the traditional a-rhythmic form associated with the region's traditional music. The flute both signals

African tradition at the same time as it represents nomadism (the *Fula* being a nomadic, pastoralist people who became dispersed across West Africa and the Sahel). The camera lingers on the boy and cattle until they begin to fill the frame and the credits conclude, at which point the image cuts to another shot of the boy, here in a noticeably different (though still-rural) location. As the boy and cattle again begin to fill the frame, the music fades and gives way to the sounds of cattle being slaughtered, and the image cuts to a bloody scene in an abattoir. In two shots, Mambéty takes us from a pastoral image, to an image of industrial-scale production, moving from nostalgic rural serenity to contemporary urban reality. After a drawn-out abattoir sequence, the film abruptly cuts back to the boy, this time shown riding a single cow, and likewise the *Fula* flute returns. The camera again lingers on this image, until the roar of a motorbike fades in. We cut to images of our protagonist, Mory, riding his motorbike around an area of Dakar straddled by the Colobane railway bridge (a well-known landmark that links the slums – our protagonist’s home - with the main areas of the city); in these scenes, tracking shots of the slums, its inhabitants, and the surrounding area are taken from the perspective of the bike, while the *Fula* flute continues over the roar of the bike’s engines, interspersed with the cheers of small children as they run alongside Mory. Eventually, Mory speeds away into very long shot, leaving the camera behind as he passes under the Colobane bridge.

In these shots, Mambéty has linked three ideas of movement through the use of music, all of which prefigure the protagonists’ journey. The *Fula* origins of the flute link both to the pastoralist movement of the boy and the cattle and the nomadic society of the *Fula* people, which in turn prefigures the journey of our protagonists that will form the narrative backbone of the film. The reference to the *Fula* people also invokes a post-

slavery narrative that is reified by the appearance of Baker, since the *Fula* were one of the largest ethnic groups transported by the Atlantic slave trade. Finally, we cut to the movement of Mory's bike, redolent of industrialised modernity (as imported and developed by European colonialism). Yet, it does not dominate the flute; the two key sounds – the bike engine and the flute – are mixed in a way that suggests cultural encounter, just as the boy's shepherding of the cattle to the abattoir integrated traditional pastoralism and industrialised modernity. In these four short scenes, completely absent of dialogue, Mambéty draws on the ethnographic aspects of music to structure a complex narrative regarding cultural encounter, hinging on fundamental aspects of tradition, migration, and industrialisation.

After these opening scenes, music is absent from the movie for some time. Instead, Mambéty concentrates on sound effects, which contrast to his earlier musical choices in their distinct lack of cultural meaning (they often seem to be used to articulate character interiority, although this idea is beyond the scope of this article).^{xvii} The next occurrence of music creates an even more complex set of meanings through the manipulation of a recording by Josephine Baker, which is eventually heard five times in the film, punctuating the narrative at pivotal points. This appears as our protagonists decide to 'split for Paris', their notion of the city being embodied in the characteristic voice of Baker performing her '*chanson française*' in which she sings Paris, Paris, Paris/It's a corner of paradise on earth'. Exploiting the music's connotations of a 'golden age' European metropolis, Mambéty completely reconfigures the song, extracting the first two lines of Baker's extended refrain and reducing it to a repetitive motif, thereby suggesting the illusory nature of its subject. Mambéty uses two samples from 'Paris, Paris', one featuring Baker (as shown in bars 5-9 of figure 1), and the other

her male backing vocalists (as shown in bars 1-4). These are then repeated numerous times until they fade out. This structure forms a musical pattern that is both jarring at the same time as it is memorable, and which is completely distinct from the tonal and rhythmic logic of the original recording. This is partly achieved in the way the male voices frame each occurrence of Baker's lines, interrupting before her part has had a chance to develop, and forcing a premature sense of return. Moreover, Mambéty creates a rhythmic structure that is particularly jarring in the way it interrupts the time signature; as fig.1 demonstrates, the music would be scored in 4/4 time until bar 5, where the abrupt cut renders that bar within a 1/4 time signature as the voice of Baker interjects on what would be the second beat of the bar. Thus, the repetition of the section always feels like an interruption, an intrusion. We never become comfortable with the music's organization, the jarring rupture after the first beat of bar 5 repeatedly drawing our attention to its incompleteness.^{xviii}

In sharp contrast to 'Paris, Paris', Mambéty also uses Mado Robin's voice over almost surreal scenes at a private pool by the coast, in which we hear the coloratura soprano's ethereal rendition of Johann Martini's aria 'Plaisir d'amour'. As our protagonists reach a point of hiatus, where their journey seems to have stalled, Mory remembers his wealthy friend Charlie (Ousseynou Diop), who holds a sexual interest in Mory. They meet at the serene pool, where affluent members of Senegalese society ostensibly indulge in a decadence lifestyle, against the backdrop of a turbulent Atlantic Ocean. After Charlie has dismissed the increasingly jealous Anta, Mory joins him on a pedalboat and the pair exchange flirtatious remarks, while gently pedalling around the sectioned off pool, its calm waters contrasting to the temperamental coastal backdrop.

In its contrast to the previous scenes around Dakar, this scene suggests, with the help of Mado Robin's aria, an unreal, dream-like space, perpetually trapped in some affluent, upper-class past (but precisely not the era of Baker's light orchestra/cabaret).^{xix} The operatic idiom of Robin's voice also locates this in the realms of affluent Europeanized society, in strong contrast to the strains of Baker which connote the 'melting pot' of the metropolis. Robin's song is allowed to continue and conclude in an uninterrupted fashion, serenading the well-heeled revellers while exhibiting no sign of Baker's 'stuckness'. This is, of course, because there have been no signs of postcolonial Africa in this scene. Instead, the scene presents a space whose wealth protects it from any kind of social reality. Although Robin's aria unfolds in full, it seems to belong to the past, perhaps serenading the decline of a socially disparate leisure class. Indeed, the beach's inhabitants seem bored and listless, with one woman gazing vacantly into the distance; despite the wealth on display, the space is inert, irrelevant to the social reality of contemporary Africa. Accordingly, once Mory has robbed Charlie, our protagonists show no interest in remaining at the beach, maintaining their sights firmly on Paris, their journey propelled by a desire to reach the utopia it evokes, rather than a need to escape poverty.

The narrative significance of both Baker's and Robin's vocals (and the other aspects of the songs) is closely linked to the wider sonic characteristics of the music's presentation, where Baker's vocals occupy the dead acoustic akin to the cabaret club, while Robin's voice resonates in the live acoustic found in the opera house. Rick Altman has delineated such distinctions in terms of the 'spatial signature',^{xx} which describes the characteristics accrued by a 'sound event' through the circumstances in which it is recorded. Pointing out that what 'the record contains is not the sound event

as such but a record of a particular hearing, a specific version of the story of the sound event', Altman argues that '[e]very recording is thus signed, as it were, with the mark of the particular circumstances in which it was heard.^{xxi} Thus, the Baker and Robin recordings differ not only in terms of the musical performances that were recorded, but in the circumstances of their recording, acquiring very different sonic characteristics in addition to the contrasting musical characteristics. Yet, for Altman, the acoustics of the recording space do not tell the whole story, since the sound of the recording is influenced by a multitude of other factors, such as the types of microphone used, as well as their positioning. Thus, the sound characteristics of a given recording are influenced by a range of factors, in addition to the characteristics of the original 'sound event'. From this perspective, in 'Paris Paris' and 'Plaisir', the significant aspects of their spatial signatures lie not only in the acoustics of their recording venues, but extend to wider factors such as the limitations of the available recording equipment.

In the contexts of their uses within *Touki Bouki*, these characteristics signal the life of each recording before they appeared in the movie, in that they both bear the characteristic lack of spatial depth and dynamics typical of monaural recording in the first half of the twentieth century (along with a generous dose of shellac disc surface noise). These characteristics are in no way disguised or reduced in the sound mix; indeed, they are an emphatic presence, contrasting with the production values of the film's relatively clean optical soundtrack and thus recalling an earlier epoch in the technology of sound reproduction, marked by a lack of dynamic range and spatial presence. In particular, the limited dynamic range of Robin's recording imbues a sense of its age, with Robin's soprano taking on a constrained quality that is, however, lifted by the ostensibly reverberant acoustic of the recording venue. This gives it an ethereal

sheen that situates it in a nostalgic space beyond living memory, suggesting an epoch that greatly predates the ‘golden age’ represented by Baker. In this regard, it is significant that the film has not only appropriated the music of particular musicians (Baker and Robin) but has also deployed the characteristics of particular recordings; the spatial signatures correlate with the songs’ French lyrics and particular musical idioms, positioning them as relics of particular cultures that are completely removed from the day-to-day lives of contemporary Africans.

An additional comparison of spatial signature may be made to the *Fula* flute recording from the film’s opening. The recording’s signature is notably devoid of any sense of acoustic space, sounding almost as if it were recorded in the open air. This corresponds to the pastoralist associations of the flute, which suggest that it would typically be played outdoors, and also corresponds to the exterior shots, suggesting that the recorded sound belongs within the diegetic space. Thus, one might infer that the flute is playing somewhere within the off-screen space as the boy moves towards the camera, belonging as it does to the pastoral culture and the outdoors, the latter implied by the recording’s spatial signature as well as the cultural connotations of the instrument and its musical idiom. In contrast, Baker’s and Robin’s recordings place both performances firmly within interior spaces that are at once removed from the diegetic spaces of the scenes. In turn, this situates them within the non-diegetic world and, most importantly, within particular epochs that are irrelevant to the lives of our protagonists. Paradoxically, the vintage of Baker’s recording (like Robin’s) also suggests that our protagonists are harking to an era that predates African independence movements and the rise of postcolonial consciousness in general. It is also an era in which African culture is

exploited by modernist art (in the form of primitivism) and in popular culture (in the form of exoticism), and thus represents a retrograde step by our protagonists.

In this sense, the Baker recording, and in turn the figure of Baker herself, forms the centrepiece of Mambéty's complex ethnomusicology, which offers a kind of reclamation of Baker, and in turn reclaims the artistic and political movements she has come to represent. Thus, the musical fragmentation and reintegration of Baker's performance represents a particular appropriation of the performer that may be seen in the context of her African American heritage. As 'the sensation of Paris in the 1920s'^{xxiii} Baker herself signals a set of connotations surrounding post-colonialism, in particular the cultural encounter invoked by the Atlantic slave trade. Yet there is a paradox in this significance, in that Baker has epitomised the objectification of the black, female body by the Western viewer. Often framed in an appeal to what might be called the ethnographic gaze, Baker's performances emphasised both her race as well as her gender, often incorporating West African traditions specifically, as well as more globalized aspects of African culture. This is evident in Kathryn Kalinak's description of a production number from the 1935 feature *Princess Tam Tam*, in which she plays a starring role:

This production sequence encodes and relays culturally empowered definitions of gender and race in a number of fascinating ways: the structure of the narrative itself, which posits Baker's character as powerless to resist the rhythms of the conga drum; the gaze of the spectators, diegetic and otherwise, who construct Baker as spectacle; the montage, which literalizes Baker's fetishization; the chorines' visual representation and their conventional Busby Berkeley-style

choreography set in opposition to Baker's strikingly modern dance based upon West African traditions; the juxtaposition of musical styles between the idiom of the French music hall in the chorines' introduction and the exotic conga rhythms for Baker's appearance; the convergence of Baker's offscreen and onscreen character through her dance; and the historical context of the French fascination with black women. In fact, this production number foregrounds and links Baker's gender and race to such an extent that I would call it a flashpoint in the representation of gender and race in film^{xxiii}

In manipulating Baker's voice then, Mambéty refers to a history of cultural appropriation that relates to the fetishization of African culture through the objectification of the black, female body. In particular, Baker is presented as 'Other', as primitive spectacle, fetishized for both her race and gender. As Kalinak goes on to demonstrate:

The specter of race haunts Baker and her various filmic appearances but that specter is complex and multifaceted; it carries with it the lure of race as well as its disavowal. French colonialism, along with racist underpinnings, has always incorporated a certain fascination with the exoticism of the Other. In the twentieth century, that fascination was circulated as a cultural commodity, most notably through the work of the Modernists.^{xxiv}

It is this 'Othered' figure that Mambéty re-appropriates in the course of the various 'Paris Paris' sequences, to the extent that the appropriation becomes an act of 'reclamation'. This becomes clearer when the macro aspects of Mambéty's musical strategies are framed in relation to those musical genres that engage in similar forms of

musical appropriation. From this perspective, the looping of the excerpts, and the way in which this effectively constructs a new musical text and in turn a new meaning, may be compared to the sampling of pre-recorded music that is an abundant characteristic of a number of African American popular musical forms (even though *Touki Bouki* historically predates these forms).

The most well-known of these in this context is probably hip-hop, in which sampling – where short excerpts of previously existing musical material form a basis upon which performers verbally extemporize – forms a comparative practice. This technique holds a symbolic value, inasmuch as the works often sample the recordings of white rock musicians – who themselves draw from a musical heritage dominated by black musicians – thus re-appropriating their work within an African American form. Indeed, Ted Swedenburg compares this practice to the situationist’s technique of ‘détournement’; drawing from Greil Marcus’s words on punk radicalism’s adoption of this practice, he describes how détournement ‘involves “the theft of aesthetic artefacts from their contexts” – thereby negating their original value – and the diversion of those artefacts “into contexts of one’s own devise”’, which in turn creates ““a politics of subversive quotation”’.^{xxv} Swedenburg goes on to point out that African American rappers practice their own version of détournement, which recalls the radical politics of punk but operates specifically as a response to the history of black oppression. In this practice, rappers’ sampling of white rock musician’s recordings represents the reclamation of the rock heritage that African Americans themselves pioneered, but from which they have historically been excluded. As Swedenburg puts it:

...rappers do not 'détourn' in exactly the same way as punks or situationists, for rap is not simply about the devaluation or negation of earlier artistic elements in order to reinvest them in a different context. This is certainly *part* of rappers' strategy when they sample snippets of sound by established white rock stars[...]. By placing such instantly recognisable rock riffs in the context of black music, rap artists 'reinvest' them as black. They thereby assert African-Americans' familiarity with, and claim to, the segregated rock heritage, while proclaiming the largely unacknowledged debt of that heritage to the work of black musicians.^{xxvi}

Swedenburg's reading of the politics of this technique provides – even if only coincidentally – a fruitful interpretive framework for *Touki Bouki's* manipulation of 'Paris, Paris'; when understood in terms of détournement, and specifically the particular form of détournement practiced in hip-hop, Mambéty's sequences might be understood as a reclamation of Baker from Europe, displacing her from the European musical idioms within which she has been appropriated and normalized as exotica for the 'ethnographic gaze'. Concurrently, Mambéty also rejects the European musical idiom that frames Baker's presence, refiguring it in the form of a bricolage that both reclaims and repudiates the musical tradition to which she became a central component. Thus, we see Mambéty unwinding a complex ethnomusicology that engages with a history of black musical influence, ranging from the indigenous, local sound of the *Fula* flute through to the international figure of Baker, at the same as he 'reclaims' that influence for Africa at a time of increasingly global black consciousness.

Moreover, *détournement* is only one of a number of aesthetic practices that shed light on the meaning of Mambéty's version of 'Paris, Paris'. The reconfigured song, which originally operated within the relatively rigid structures of Western rhythm, might also be more closely aligned to the structures of African music. Indeed, the abrupt manner in which the song is cut and looped, in particular its cut across the bar line, creates an effect that may be likened to the polymetric rhythmic structures of African music, in which the bar line and meter are difficult to discern. This characteristic is demonstrated in John Chernoff's study of Ghanaian drumming,^{xxvii} a tradition in which 'the Western conception of a main beat or pulse seems to disappear', standing in sharp contrast to the more rigid structures of Western music.^{xxviii} As Chernoff goes on to explain:

The diverse rhythms establish themselves in intricate and changing relationships to each other analogously to the way that tones establish harmony in Western music. The effect of polymetric music is as if the different rhythms were competing for our attention. No sooner do we grasp one rhythm than we lose track of it and hear another.^{xxix}

Indeed, this kind of polymetric structure is heard in exemplary form in *Touki Bouki* during a scene involving a traditional wrestling match, which is held in a large stadium and accompanied by drummers playing *djembes*, probably the most widely-recognised West African drums. Yet the space here – like Charlie's pool – is occupied by wealthy onlookers, and we soon learn that this is another of Mambéty's bizarre scenarios, as it is announced that the event is raising funds for a memorial to de Gaulle. As with the use of the *Fula* flute during the film's opening, the *djembe* brings strong associations with tradition that are soon resituated within the context of contemporary Senegal (represented here by the ridiculous fundraiser, rather than the abattoir and motorcycle).

However, just as importantly, the *djembe* also establishes a polymetric touch point within the film, against which the sampling of Baker's recording accrues significance. Although the reconfiguration of the latter certainly does not approach the same level of rhythmic complexity and ambiguity as we find in the *djembe* performance, there is at least a sense that Mambéty rejects Western rhythmic organization and travels in the direction of African musical methods, particularly where the cutting of Baker's recording undermines the bar line, with an abrupt edit taking place just before the final beat of the bar is completed, undermining the relatively rigid rhythmic structure that characterizes the original work. In this sense, not only does Mambéty reclaim Baker's voice, he also refers us back to her West African lineage; caught in the exoticizing space of the '*chanson française*' and the Western rhythmic orthodoxy that structures it, Baker is resituated within African aesthetic practices via a relatively simple reordering of her recording. From this perspective, *Touki Bouki* may be understood as removing Baker from a Eurocentric space in which she is exoticised for her gender and race (here that space is the 'utopia' of Paris) and resituating her within an encounter between Europe and Africa, deploying the Western-invented apparatus of sound capture and editing to refigure the conventions of African aesthetic practices. Thus, the prevailing division between African music and Western music is broken down, with the various recordings collectively forming a narrative of cultural encounter, establishing a direct line that intersects the *Fula*'s forceful migration on slave boats to the USA, through to Baker's migration from the USA to Europe; Baker's voice is then reclaimed for Africa by Mambéty, thereby completing a triangular journey that demarcates the 'Black Atlantic'. This link is finally reified with the use of African American, electro-acoustic funk over the final shots of the shepherd boy from the film's opening. At the film's dying moments, Mambéty wrenches the musical track into the contemporary global space,

deploying a musical idiom that connotes African American pop culture in the early 1970s and in turn a global black consciousness. The pastoral, nomadic *Fula* culture represented by the shepherd boy finally meets its contemporary legacy, a legacy generated by colonial intervention, and in particular by the forced migration of slaves to America.

Thus, the complexity of Mambéty's 'détournement' within the macro and micro structures of the musical track, and the sophistication of meaning it offers when placed under interpretive scrutiny, demonstrates the potential of an ethnomusicological approach to film music analysis, in which – as Slobin proposes - the soundtrack is regarded as 'ethnomusicologist' generating 'a musical ethnography of a given community'.^{xxx} Although Slobin's model operates in relation to the classical Hollywood cinema, the heterogeneity of such an approach means it may be extended beyond the boundaries of that model, in this case revealing how the interrelationships between diverse uses of music generate a narrative that specifically reclaims the figure of Baker, positioning her refigured recording as a uniting musical element within the film. However, Slobin's work has obvious limitations in that it only considers the cultural dimensions of music. This is particularly problematic in a film like *Touki Bouki*, where the cultural connotations of the music heard form only one aspect of its meaning; there are also meanings generated in the structural and non-musical characteristics of the recordings, with the latter, in particular, tending to be overlooked. Indeed, attention to the textual qualities of the musical recordings provide a sense of the ways in which the music is imbued with a clear sense of historicity, upon which much of the complexity of meaning in Mambéty's ethnomusicology is generated. Once both of these approaches are taken into account, the multi-layered meanings invoked

by the particular uses of music may be delineated, revealing a rich tapestry of meanings and associations. Thus, a combination of Slobin's and Altman's approaches offers a framework that reveals the complexity of music's meaning, operating within what has become an almost iconic example African cinema, but one which has tended to resist interpretation.

The results of this analysis also demonstrate the need to extend the range of methodologies employed in reading film music, enabling us to acknowledge the myriad of meanings that are generated by the multitudinous ways in which music may operate in film. In this instance, ethnomusicology has provided such an extended methodology, alerting us to the importance of musical practices within given communities and temporal spaces, which may then be deployed by the filmmaker in the service of creating particular sets of meanings through music's relationship to the various components of the film. However, this study has also emphasised that such readings must also consider the wider sonic characteristics of the music's recording; in other words, music should also be understood *as sound*. These characteristics are not discrete from the musical performances heard, but rather they form an intrinsic aspect of their meaning. Thus, the interpretive framework offered by an understanding of both the sonic character of the recordings, and the ethnographic significance of music, demonstrates our need to constantly look beyond the horizons of film music theory in the process of interpreting the musical components of film.

ⁱ 'The Steiner Superculture' in *Global Soundtracks: Worlds of Film Music*, ed. Mark Slobin, (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 3-4.

ⁱⁱ Slobin, 'The Steiner Superculture', 4.

ⁱⁱⁱ Slobin, 'The Steiner Superculture', 29

^{iv} Dima, Vlad. *Sonic Space in the Films of Djibril Diop Mambéty*, (Bloomington IN: University of Indiana Press, 2017), 41-73 and 'Aural narrative planes in Djibril Diop Mambéty's films'. *Journal of Film and Video*. 64. 3. 2012. 38-52.

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- ^v Armes, Roy, *Third World Film Making and the West* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1987), 88.
- ^{vi} Solanas, Fernando and Getino, Octavio, 'Towards a Third Cinema' in Bill Nichols *Movies and Methods Vol. 1*, Berkley CA: University of California Press, 1976, 54 – 64.
- ^{vii} Diawara, Manthia. 'The Iconography of West African Cinema' in *Symbolic Narrative/African Cinema: Audience, Theory and the Moving Image*, ed. June Givanni (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 81-89.
- ^{viii} Diawara, 'The Iconography of West African Cinema', 84.
- ^{ix} Diawara, 'The Iconography of West African Cinema', 85.
- ^x Cham, Mbye, B. 'Djibril Diop Mambéty: Sounds in the Key of Ordinary Folk'. *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*. 21. 2007. 68-73.
- ^{xi} Cham, Mbye, B. 'Sounds in the Key of Ordinary Folk', 69.
- ^{xii} Givanni, J. 1995. 'African Conversations' in *Sight and Sound*, 9 (10) (London: BFI, 1995), 30.
- ^{xiii} Pfaff, Françoise, *Twenty Five Black African Filmmakers*, (New York, Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1998), 217.
- ^{xiv} Gorbman, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 47.
- ^{xv} Malkmus and Armes suggest that the musical repetition heard here has been interpreted in the terms of modernism, in that it allows the narrative 'to generate itself' (Malkmus, Liz, and Armes, Roy. *Arab and African Filmmaking* [London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1991], 33).
- ^{xvi} The ethnomusicological significance of Aminata Fall's appearance lies in her associations with *Mbalax*, a hybridized, popular dance music from Senegal and Gambia which draws from both traditional indigenous music as well as Western popular and jazz styles. However, she does not perform in this style at any point in the film.
- ^{xvii} A detailed account of non-musical sounds in *Touki Bouki* may be found in Dima, Vlad. 'Aural Narrative Planes', 38-52.
- ^{xviii} Elsewhere I have suggested that this restructuring of Baker's recording problematises readings of the film based on a tradition/modernity opposition (Fisher, Alexander. 'Music, Modernism and Modernization', in John Hill and Kevin Rockett, *National Cinemas and World Cinema*, Dublin: Four Court's Press, 2006, 127-133.
- ^{xix} Interestingly, Josephine Baker herself recorded 'Plaisir d'amour', accompanied by an ensemble which is closer to the light orchestra/cabaret sound of her 'Paris, Paris' recording. If Mambéty was aware of the recording, it is interesting that he used the operatic idiom of Robin's recording, which completely contrasts with the music hall idiom of Baker.
- ^{xx} Altman, Rick. 'The Material Heterogeneity of Recorded Sound' in *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, ed. Rick Altman (London and New York, Routledge, 1992), 24.
- ^{xxi} Altman, Rick. 'The Material Heterogeneity of Recorded Sound', 24.
- ^{xxii} Kalinak, Kathryn. 'Disciplining Josephine Baker: Gender, Race and the Limits of Disciplinary' in *Music and Cinema*, Eds. James Buhler et al, (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 318.
- ^{xxiii} Kalinak, 'Disciplining Josephine Baker', 316-317
- ^{xxiv} Kalinak, 'Disciplining Josephine Baker', 322
- ^{xxv} Swedenburg, Ted. 'Homies in the Hood: Rap's Commodification of Insubordination' in *That's the Joint! The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, Eds. Murray Forman and Mark Antony Neal, (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2004), 580.
- ^{xxvi} Swedenburg, 'Homies in the Hood', 581.
- ^{xxvii} Chernoff, John. *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 45-46.
- ^{xxviii} Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, 46.
- ^{xxix} Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, 46.
- ^{xxx} Slobin, *Global Soundtracks*, 29