

# The Sound of Red Dust

Jean Toomer, Marion Brown, and the  
Sonic Transactions of “Karintha”

*Jürgen E. Grandt*

## ABSTRACT

On his 1973 album *Geechee Recollections*, free jazzer Marion Brown tackles one of the most musical African American narratives, “Karintha” from Jean Toomer’s *Cane*. The velocity of sound Toomer’s text seeks to transcribe in literary form Brown transcribes back into music propelled by what I term *Afro-kinesis*. *Afro-kinesis* is a form of motion — a Benjaminian eddy rather than a Derridean trace — that improvises modalities of transaction with and in new-old sonic topographies, and in the process limns an aural modernity that constantly reinvents itself. This kinetic ecology of sound goes beyond acoustic transposition and instead aspires to effect a signifying exchange between the mercurial improvisation of free jazz’s “new thing” and the scripted stasis of literary text, a transaction of meaning across cultural time and physical space.

---

THE TRICKY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERARY TEXT AND IMPROVISED music has bedeviled even the most formidable of theoreticians. Emblematic of the challenges is the meeting of free jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman with deconstructionist Jacques Derrida in 1997 in France. A few days prior to a public performance, the philosopher sat down to interview the saxophonist, and their conversation predictably revolved also around the storytelling features of music-making. But it augured the ill-fated performance that was to follow in that it seemed as if the two were often talking past, instead of with, each other. When the exchange turned to how Coleman titles his songs, Derrida, with discernible satisfaction, prefaced his next question by relaying his extensive preparations for the encounter. One of the musician’s purported quotes had stuck with Derrida, and he read it back to him: “For reasons that I am not sure of, I am convinced that before becoming music, music was only a word”, and, just to be sure, he added, “Do you recall saying that?” Coleman’s answer was as unequivocal as it was succinct: “No” (2004, 328). The moment presaged what would happen

later under the lights of La Villette: when Coleman brought Derrida to the mic and the latter began to read a prepared text, the audience reacted with such animosity that the philosopher, no longer able to hear himself above the angry clamor, cut his guest performance short and fled the stage after barely fifteen minutes. He would confess later that it had been an excruciatingly “painful experience”.<sup>1</sup> As if discourse itself was teaching Derrida a lesson, it turned out that the transcripts of the earlier interview had been lost together with the tapes, so the signifying “trace” of the original interview that we’re left with is somewhere in the English re-translation of the French translation of the original conversation in English (DERRIDA and COLEMAN 2004, 319).<sup>2</sup>

Coleman’s own notoriously enigmatic expressions — both musical and verbal — and the breakdown of communication they produced in his conversation and performance with Derrida are anticipated by one of the most musical narratives in the African American literary tradition, Jean Toomer’s *Cane* (GRANDT 2009, 36–54). The story is well-known: the fledgling writer had been inspired by his two-month sojourn in Georgia’s Black Belt and set out to “drive straight for [. . .] the spiritual truth of the South” that he had seen and, significantly, heard (quoted in KERMAN and ELDRIDGE 1987, 95). But very quickly, the novelist began to doubt whether he had succeeded: in a poem he included in the cover letter of the manuscript he sent to his publisher, Horace Liveright, Toomer mused, “And when I look for the power and the beauty / I thought I’d caught, they too seem to thin out / and and [sic] elude me” (quoted in TURNER 1988, 154).

One of *Cane*’s aspects that oscillates between powerful beauty and elusive opacity is its relationship to music. The novel is set in land- and cityscapes that are awash in sounds, and central Georgia in particular resonates with Du Boisian sorrow songs. Literary critics have been reading its sonic transactions with two different lenses. One views in *Cane* a musical rescue operation of sorts, the result of a documentarian, ethnomusicologi-

1. Quoted in RAMSHAW 2016, 10; see also DERRIDA 2005, 331–3; WILLS 2008, 158–60, 164–6.
2. A similar over- or misreading of free improvised music was engendered by Sun Ra’s first performance in France: the Paris-based *Jazz Magazine* had called on a gaggle of journalists and intellectuals — Derrida was not among them — to discuss the puzzling multi-media spectacle the Arkestra had staged. One confused critic noted that the dancers “weren’t doing anything at all”, which caused another to muse, “What they were dancing to was the death of the sign” (quoted in SZWED 1998, 289).

cal impulse to preserve a quickly disappearing expression of vernacular folk culture through artistic reimagination.<sup>3</sup> The other gleans from its music a critical counterpoint to the racial and sexual politics of the Jim Crow South in particular, 1920s America in general.<sup>4</sup> What both interpretive schools share is that their readings are efforts to extract musical meaning from the literary text. But what happens when we effect a critical turnaround, as it were, and attempt to read the music back into the text? What transactive processes are at play when static literary script is immersed in fluid, freely improvised sound, and what resonances does musical improvisation in turn amplify in the printed word?

For this, we turn to one of Ornette Coleman's peers, Marion Brown. Brown was a member of the inner core of what fellow saxophonist and friend Archie Shepp called the "avant-gardistas" around John Coltrane and is, unjustly so, remembered mostly as the 'other' saxophonist on Trane's groundbreaking *Ascension* album (quoted in KAHN 2006, 3). A native Atlantan, Brown initially studied music at Clark College, but then transferred to Howard University's law program. Unable to resist the call of "the new thing" in jazz, he dropped out of college and moved to New York City, where he befriended Coleman, Shepp, Sun Ra, and also Amiri Baraka. In fact, Brown played one of the subway train passengers in the premiere of Baraka's *Dutchman*. It was Baraka, too, who introduced the saxophonist to *Cane*, which initiated a lifelong fascination with the novel. But like many African American jazz musicians, Brown was frustrated by the rapidly declining performance opportunities and relocated to Europe in 1967, where he became an integral part of the burgeoning free jazz avant-garde, particularly in his collaborations with German multi-instrumentalist Gunter Hampel. Three years on, however, Brown returned to the U.S. and his native Atlanta. His homecoming spurred a similar spell of inspiration as Toomer's brief sojourn in Sparta, Georgia, half a century earlier. The result was the Georgia trilogy, three albums recorded between 1970 and 1974: *Afternoon of a Georgia Faun* for the German ECM label, and *Geechee Recollections* and *Sweet Earth Flying*, both for Impulse!. Brown went on to have a distinguished career as an educator and musicologist, and in the 1980s began to develop a strong interest in painting as well.<sup>5</sup>

3. See BARLOW 2014, 192–4; HUTCHINSON 2019, XX–I.

4. See NUNN 2015, 133–5; GRAHAM 2013, 119–35.

5. See EDWARDS 2017, 183–6; ENGLISH n.d.; COLTRANE 2009; PORTER 2002, 246–54; SZWED 1998, 194–215.

From almost the beginning of his career, the musician had been fascinated by the intersection of speech and sound, a fascination that, if it wasn't fomented by the playwright Baraka, then was certainly amplified by him. In 1968, for example, a year into his European exile, Brown co-led with Hampel a quintet in Munich's Modern Theatre to record an album entitled *Gesprächsfetzen*. The title track — literally translated “snippets of conversation” and composed by Brown, not Hampel — gave sound to the saxophonist's programmatic approach. As Bertold Hummel tried to explain in the liner notes, this was improvised, instrumental music that conceived of “speech as sound, melody, and rhythm” akin to “overheard words that condense without meaning to impressions” (1976). On 1973's *Geechee Recollections*, Brown for the first time commingled free musical improvisation with literary text, and for that, he chose the book that had preoccupied him for years, Toomer's *Cane*, specifically the opening vignette of the triptych, “Karintha”. That he would be drawn to this particular chapter is no coincidence, for Toomer himself had declared that it expressed a “spirit saturate with folk-song” (quoted in TURNER 1988, 151).

In Brown's rendition, percussionist Bill Hasson faithfully narrates the text of “Karintha” in full, but it is accompanied by the collective free improvisation of the saxophonist's octet. Clocking in at almost ten minutes, the piece furnishes anything but the ‘soundtrack’ to Toomer's text. In fact, the only sonic mimesis occurs at the very beginning with Hasson's wordless humming, joined after a few seconds by a meandering mbira (the African thumb piano), some African percussion, and a few aleatory trumpet spurts. When the sketch first appeared in the January 1923 issue of *Broom* magazine, Toomer proposed to his audience that “Karintha” “*be read, accompanied by the humming of a Negro folk song*” (TOOMER 1923, 83). Yet the music that accompanies the opening words of the text alerts us right away that something other than mere musical replication is afoot: the ode to the protagonist's beauty, “Her skin is like dust on the eastern horizon / O cant you see it, O cant you see it”, is underscored by the cello's arco playing that extends and quickly deconstructs the melody of the ostensible folk song hummed at the outset. The entire piece is played in free time, that is, without a regular pulse or meter. The cello and an array of percussion remain the most prominent instruments for the duration of the song: the trumpet, bass, flute, and Brown's soprano saxophone weave in and out of the musical tapestry, somewhat like young Karintha's “sudden darting past you” that “was a bit of vivid color, like a black bird that flashes in light”. The quivering sonic texture builds to something of a climax with the incineration of the title character's child, but the song lyrics “[s]ome

one made” after Karintha’s return to town, Hasson — who, we’ll recall, hums a diatonic melody at the very beginning — doesn’t in fact put to a tune; he only recites the words (BROWN 2011; TOOMER 1988, 3–4). The only departure from Toomer’s script occurs when Hasson interpolates a series of “humphs” after noting that Karintha had perhaps witnessed her parents’ lovemaking in their cramped two-room shack. The track ends with Brown playing a bluesy minor pentatonic motif, and the final sounds we hear are those of fading bells.

Brown once remarked of Toomer, “He wrote in two ways, disguised and very open, and used a lot of metaphor” (quoted in ALLEN 2018). With but two brief exceptions that bookend the performance — Hasson’s melodic humming in the opening, and the vaguely eastern-sounding bells that close out the tune following the final invocation of Karintha’s skin tone as “dusk on the eastern horizon / [. . .] When the sun goes down” — the music Brown and his seven cohorts create is almost stubbornly non-referential. Just as the story never explicitly mentions either Karintha’s disposal of her baby’s body in the smoldering sawdust pile or the identity of the baby’s father the townsfolk obsess over, so does the music never ‘translate’ the singing of Sempter’s black women, or the song about the protagonist one Sempterite creates. Toomer’s frequent use of ellipses does not result in musical rests here either.

Musically as enigmatic as the text it amplifies, Brown’s “Karintha” nevertheless suggests how the oscillation of speech and sound plays into the literary script. The puzzling simile of the epigraph’s opening line associates the title character’s beauty more with time than with color: what color “dusk on the *eastern* horizon” is supposed to be the text leaves, to use Brown’s terminology, at once “disguised and very open”. Hasson’s repeated incantation, “O cant you see it”, reminds us that, of course, we can’t *see* Karintha’s beauty: literary language cannot make us see, just as it cannot make us hear — other than its own, muted echo as speech, that is (BROWN 2011; TOOMER 1988, 3–4). We can hear it, only figuratively, in the singing that Toomer’s literary text both reports and mimics. What Hasson’s recitation does remind us of, though, is that dusk is a moment in time — and both musicmaking and storytelling are after all acts that embellish the passage of time.

Thus, from the beginning, Karintha moves within and between competing velocities of time. “Men had always wanted her, this Karintha, even as a child”, the narrative begins, and “[t]his interest of the male, who wishes to ripen a growing thing too soon, could mean no good to her” (BROWN 2011; TOOMER 1988, 3). The objectifying male gaze seeks to subject the

young girl to an expediting trajectory of linear, teleological time. When Hasson speaks that sentence, Brown holds a series of long notes on his soprano saxophone, over a rustling and bustling carpet of percussion and cello: thus, the music, not the spoken words, pits an alternate conception of time — that is, free time — against the accelerating timeline of the male Sempterites' sexualizing gaze. The pubescent title character, however, tries to evade the acceleration of chronological time imposed upon her by enacting evasive movements of her own:

Karintha, at age twelve, was a wild flash that told the other folks just what it was to live. At sunset, when there was no wind, and the pine-smoke from over by the sawmill hugged the earth, and you couldnt see more than a few feet in front, her sudden darting past you was a bit of vivid color, like a black bird that flashes in light.

(BROWN 2011; TOOMER 1988, 3)

Once again, sight is circumscribed and superseded by movement through (suspended) time. The three-dimensional kinesis of Karintha's "darting", "wild" flights punctuates an otherwise static landscape where, at dusk, even the inexorably forward-moving vector of time appears momentarily arrested.

Significantly, before we hear the sound of Sempter's black women singing, we hear the sound of Karintha's motion:

With the other children one could hear, some distance off, their feet flopping in the two-inch dust. Karintha's running was a whirl. It had the sound of the red dust that sometimes makes a spiral in the road. At dusk, during the hush just after the sawmill had closed down, and before any of the women had started their supper-getting-ready songs, her voice, high-pitched, shrill, would put one's ears to itching. But no one ever thought to make her stop because of it.

(BROWN 2011; TOOMER 1988, 3–4)

It is the sound of Karintha's evasive kinesis that we hear, before we ever hear her voice. And in Bill Hasson's voice as he narrates this passage, we cannot help but hear — or, rather, listen for — the sonic, Derridean trace of red dust. By the time we listen for it, however, Karintha herself has already disappeared, out of our sight, and the narrative voice's sight. Perpetually just beyond our field of vision because just beyond the reach of literary language, Brown's Karintha actually enacts what it means to

improvise: after all, the etymology of the very verb, from the Latin *improvisus*, means dealing with the unforeseen (NORTON 2016, 263–4). The puffs of red dust the unseen Karintha leaves behind, we are also told, do not travel along a linear trajectory either, but they form a spiral, sounding at once that which is always already no longer here, and that which presages its own eventual return, forward and back, up and down. Toomer's use of ellipses, which increases over the course of the chapter, resonates with a quasi-contrapuntal frequency, for they suggest both temporal acceleration and suspension. Or, as John Coltrane, Brown's erstwhile employer, might play it, the red dust's spiraling kinesis sounds in "both directions at once" (quoted in KAHN 2018).

Karintha's running feet surely must have also touched the red dust of the Dixie Pike, which, as "Carma" famously tells us, "has grown from a goat path in Africa" (TOOMER 1988, 12). For *Geechee Recollections*, Brown secured the talents of master drummer Abraham Kobena Adzenyah, a native of the Fante tribe of coastal Ghana (FIGI 2011). But, neither is Toomer's text anthropological reportage, nor is Adzenyah's drumming simply a replay of Ghanaian polyrhythms. The velocity of sound Toomer attempts to transcribe in literary narrative, Brown *trans*-scribes, over and across the written text, back into music propelled by what might be termed Afro-kinesis. Extemporized as it is, happening in the moment, musical Afro-kinesis remains attuned to both the historicity and futurity of its current trajectory and is therefore antiphonal in nature. To put it differently, particularly in the context of free improvisation, that which is being played at any given instant acquires musical meaning only if it relates to that which has just been played in the previous instant, as well as to that which will have been played in the next. The Afro-kinesis in "Karintha", then, is a form of coiling motion that improvises modalities of transaction with and in new-old sonic topographies, and in the process limns an aural modernity that constantly reinvents itself.<sup>6</sup> This kinetic ecology of sound goes beyond acoustic transposition of written or spoken language, as we have heard,

6. This coiling form of motion is precisely what other genres of (black) music cannot amplify as well as the freely improvised transactions of the "new thing". Compare Brown's take on Toomer with, for example, Gil Scott-Heron's: "Cane", from the 1978 album *Secrets*, is set over a languid, radio-friendly soul-jazz groove and contains very little improvisation, certainly no free collective improvisation. While there is plenty of swirling percussion on the track, rhythmically everything comes back to the steady pulse dictated by co-leader Brian Jackson's drum set, and harmonically everything remains safely tethered to the chord progression of mostly minor and diminished sevenths. Afro-kinetic it certainly

and instead aspires to effect a signifying exchange between the mercurial improvisation of free jazz's "new thing" and the scripted stasis of literary text, a transaction of meaning across cultural time and physical space. The fact that the story of Marion Brown's "Karintha" unfolds in chronological time, but it is rendered in free time, is crucial here. The push-and-pull between Hasson's recitation of text and the free improvisation of sound by his cohorts results not in the unearthing of lost traces — traces of meaning, of sound, of authenticity, of origins — but in the layering of ever proliferating spirals. (And we perhaps remember at this point also that the musicological term for free time is "recitativo" or "parlando", whether sung or strictly instrumental.)

Yet, crucially, none of these layered spirals converges with Karintha's own voice, as she herself remains mute. The only time we read-hear Karintha's voice is when it fills the "hush" right before the "supper-getting-ready-songs", after she has left behind the sounds of spiraling red dust. Mediated through the narrator — Hasson as much as Toomer — it is a doubly disembodied voice, a voice described as "high-pitched, shrill". It is a wordless voice, too, for all we know, and its high-pitched shrillness certainly precludes it as "the humming of a Negro folk-song" that Toomer wanted us to hear while reading his story. It is a voice that, in contrast to the male gaze from which it runs away in a kinetic whirl, is omnidirectional and engulfs, spiral-like, all of Sempter. Likewise, its higher frequencies sound in both directions at once, with Ralph Ellison's invisible man marking black-and-blue time just ahead of and just below Jean Toomer's Dixie Pike: they sound to the future up ahead in that they anticipate what happens after Karintha comes back from the forest, having burned her baby's body, for "[w]eeks after Karintha returned home the smoke was so heavy you tasted it in water. Some one made a song: Smoke is on the hills. Rise up. / Smoke is on the hills, O rise / And take my soul to Jesus" (TOOMER 1988, 4). This, as Toomer emphasizes, is decidedly not a traditional folk song even as it responds to historical exigencies: it is "made up" as a response to the centrifugal pressures — sexual, racial, economic — of ever accelerating modernity. In the pages of the January 1923 issue of *Broom* magazine, the anonymous singer asked that his soul be taken simply "away"; by the time "Karintha" appeared in the pages of *Cane*, the need for spiritual redemption had apparently intensified (1923, 85).

---

is, too, but its coils are not nearly as expansive as Brown's (SCOTT-HERON and JACKSON 1978; see also GRANDT 2018, 12–16).

As such, the ‘made-up’ song points even further ahead. In the text, Sempter’s preacher is not exempt from Karintha’s mesmerizing beauty, but even when he catches her causing one ruckus after another, he “told himself that she was as innocently lovely as a November cotton flower” (TOOMER 1988, 3). “November Cotton Flower” is the title of the second of the two poems interpolated between the opening sketch and “Becky”, a poem that paints the scene of a southern wasteland devastated by the boll-weevil, yet a solitary cotton flower suddenly blooms at the threshold of winter, promising both redemptive “love without fear” and “beauty”. *Cane* itself concludes with “a birth-song” at the end of “Kabnis”, a song that spirals out from there to 1973 and Marion Brown’s recording session (TOOMER 1988, 6, 117). But Karintha’s Afro-kinesis simultaneously points in the other direction, too, back into the past. The shape of the “pyramidal sawdust pile” in which her baby’s body smolders echoes a mythical past, and in her wordlessly shrill voice that fills the interstices between silence and song, issuing forth in a landscape of exploitation and deprivation, resonates perhaps the wordless scream of Frederick Douglass’s Aunt Hester, a muted scream because, as the memoirist notes, its frequencies defied even his considerable abilities to transcribe into literary text and “commit to paper”.<sup>7</sup>

“Where shriek turns speech turns song — remote from the impossible comfort of origin — lies the trace of our descent”, argues Fred Moten (2003, 22), which returns us to the discomfort in the original starting point of my own thinking here, namely the conversation between Ornette Coleman and Jacques Derrida. “Being black and the descendant of slaves, I have no idea what my language of origin was”, the saxophonist told the phi-

7. TOOMER 1988, 4; DOUGLASS 1994, 18. In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, they don’t any longer: “‘Have mercy; Oh! Have mercy’ she cried; ‘I won’t do so no more;’ but her piercing cries seemed only to increase [the old master’s] fury” (1994, 177). However, the early chapters, too, resonate with muted screams, only this time, they belong to Nelly, another slave on the Lloyd plantation, and her children: her shrieks of agony, Douglass writes, “I have no heart to describe. [ . . . ] The cries of the woman, while undergoing the terrible infliction, were mingled with those of the children, sounds which I hope the reader may never be called upon to hear”, and which therefore are withheld (1994, 182). *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* also transcribes the screams of Hester — now called Esther — but Nelly’s cries remain unscripted (1994, 497, 500; see also BLIGHT 2018, 25). That Nelly’s agony is still soundless in Douglass’s final autobiography, with the failure of Reconstruction painfully evident, is clearly the memoirist’s scripting of what DoVeanna Fulton calls “strategic silence” (2006, 66).

losopher (2004, 325). Instead of some kind of “saxotelephonephany” — a transaction of meaning Derrida never got to participate in because that coinage occurs at the very end of his scripted remarks, long after he would be drowned out by the irate audience — instead, therefore, of a Derridean trace, Coleman’s harmolodic Afro-kinesis, as much as Brown’s, spirals around and over a Benjaminian concept of origin (DERRIDA 2005, 340):

Origin does not mean the becoming of that which has arisen, rather it means that which emerges from the process of becoming and vanishing. The origin stands in the stream of becoming like an eddy and sucks into its rhythm the very materials forming the process of origination. That which is original never reveals itself in the naked, manifest existence of the factual; its rhythm opens itself up only to a dual insight. It wants to be recognized as restoration and reconstitution on the one hand, but precisely for that reason as incompleteness, imperfection, on the other.

(BENJAMIN 1996, 28)

An eddy, of course, is a spiral of water in perpetual motion and without a discernible, stable source, whose rhythm asks the eye to look, the ear to listen, in both directions at once. The dialectical, ‘dual outsound’ of the spiraling grooves in the vinyl from which Marion Brown’s “Karintha” emanates, then, amplifies the title character’s un-seen restoration and un-heard incompleteness.<sup>8</sup>

8. That “Karintha” stands in approximately the middle of the “stream” that is Brown’s Georgia trilogy is in all likelihood coincidental. Yes, it is the second track of the middle album, but the first entrance in the series is by far the most experimental one. “The music you’re listening to”, Brown avers in the liner notes to *Afternoon of a Georgia Faun*,

is a collective experience involving six players, two vocalists, and three assistants. Although I am responsible for initiating the music, I take no credit for the results. Whatever they may be, it goes to the musicians collectively. The people that I chose to assist are not actually musicians, but people who have a sense of rhythm and melody. My idea here is that it is possible for non-musicians to participate in a musical experience without being technically proficient in a theoretical sense. In the future, I intend to use some non-musicians for the same reasons. It works. Try it sometimes. (quoted in OFFSTEIN 2008)

One of the “assistants” on the record is William Green, who plays a “top o’lin”, an invention of Brown’s, ever the Ellisonian tinkerer: the top o’lin is a board with cooking pot tops attached, which are then either played like a percus-

At the beginning of Derrida's scripted remarks for his non-dialogue with Coleman, itself incomplete and imperfect, is also a reconstitutive gesture:

I would like for all of you to hear Ornette's mother's voice by calling on her to speak or giving her back her voice [. . .]. *Sa voix a elle*, herself, **her own voice**, that has obsessed me for eight days and eight nights, to the point of hallucination. How to improvise a phrase with Ornette's mother whose first name I don't even know, and then dedicate it to her as a declaration of love, that is the wager, the part or the piece that I am going to play for you — sometimes without an instrument and without accompaniment, sometimes, when he so decides, in the company of Ornette Coleman, superimposed.

(2005, 332).

During the interview a week prior, the saxophonist had shared an anecdote from his youth concerning his mother's misgivings about pursuing a music career, and her haunting, "spectral voice" the philosopher now used as the harmolodic cue for his own ostensible improvisations on art and commerce, text and sound, composition and improvisation, race and identity.<sup>9</sup> How much of Derrida's performance would have been 'improvised' is impossible to assess since he got booed off the stage well before Coleman could "send [. . .] to me in music, in saxotelephony, in saxotelephonepiphany", the "**unpredictable gift**, of his mother's first name". Like Karinth's child and

---

sion instrument or like a string instrument, with a bow. With the following two installments in the trilogy, the music becomes progressively more melodic; gone, too, are "assistants". Perhaps this development was in part influenced by a switch in labels: *Afternoon of a Georgia Faun* was only the fourth record released by the fledgling ECM, whose producer, Manfred Eicher, was willing to take extraordinary risks in order to put his new company on the jazz map. *Geechee Recollections* and *Sweet Earth Flying* were both issued by the American Impulse! label, which wasn't quite as welcoming to experimental music anymore as it had been in its earlier days, facing a rapidly shrinking audience for jazz in the U.S. Furthermore, the Georgia trilogy fits neatly into Brown's 1970s work in that he began to flirt with commercially much more viable fusion verging on smooth jazz in the second half of the decade on albums like *Vista* — also on Impulse! — or *Awofofora* — curiously, for the Japanese Discomate label, so named because it secured the distribution rights for the oeuvre of Swedish pop juggernaut ABBA, whose releases comprised the bulk of its catalog (BROWN 1976; 2001).

9. DERRIDA 2005, 334; DERRIDA and COLEMAN 2004, 323; see also FROST FADNESS 2019, 451; SPELLMAN 1985, 83–95.

its father, Coleman's mother remains "firstnameless", a void troubling the French philosopher to the point of obsession, as much as it does the men of Sempster (DERRIDA 2005, 340, 337). Nonetheless, Derrida's aborted performance with Coleman is rich with intimations about the complex interplay between the fixed literary text of Toomer's "Karintha" and the freely improvised sounds of Brown and his seven cohorts, and how this interplay transacts, ironically, in Benjaminian eddies rather than Derridean traces.<sup>10</sup> "Could it be", asks Fumi Okiji, herself drawing on Walter Benjamin, "that jazz takes advantage of the inevitability of failure encoded in artistic pursuit? That it makes a virtue of irresolution and incompleteness?" (2018, 68).

The origins of Derrida's "Play — the First Name" lie in a voice that remains nameless. Said voice is a mute(d) one, just like Karintha's, whose voice also stubbornly resists 'naming' — that is, resists capturing it in literary script or on the musical staff. Both are maternal voices, and hence ordinary ones, yet Karintha's defies literary notation in Toomer, just as it defies musical notation with Brown and his seven cohorts, and just as Coleman's mother's defies Derrida's script. Instead, this voice is submerged somewhere in a heady swirl of words, or sounds — 'literary snippets', *Literaturfetzen*, in Toomer's case; 'musical snippets', *Tonfetzen*, in Brown's case, to riff on the latter's 1968 album title. Listening to Toomer's "Karintha" as a literary

10. While there certainly are affinities between Benjaminian eddy and Derridean trace, Gayatri Spivak's comments are instructive here: "Derrida, then, gives the name 'trace' to the part played by the radically other within the structure of difference that is the sign. (I stick to 'trace' in my translation, because it 'looks the same' as Derrida's word; the reader must remind himself of at least the track, even the spoor, contained within the French word.)" (1976, XVII). As Derrida himself puts it, "The trace is not only the disappearance of origin — within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin". While the trace "belongs to the very movement of signification", it is in and of itself not kinetic (1976, 61, 70). Derrida's trace — track, spoor — facilitates motion, but it is part of "a ciphered spacing" and not mobile per se (1978, 201–5). Benjamin's eddy, meanwhile, is in constant, churning motion. Again, the image of Toomer's Dixie Pike comes in handy at this point: it is a Derridean path/track/spoor in that it hearkens back to African (or Africanist) precedents if not origins and simultaneously points in both directions at once, but in and of itself it is a fixed feature of the ciphered spacing of Sempster's topography. It is only the sound of spiraling red dust kicked up by Karintha's running feet amidst the swirling free improvisations of Brown's octet that reveals Toomer's literary language as a series of Afro-kinetic eddies.

swirl stirred by Afro-kinesis also accounts for the author's multiple tracings of *Cane's* narrative arc. "CANE'S design is a circle", he wrote to his friend Waldo Frank, and "[b]etween each of the three sections, a curve. These, to vaguely indicate the design" (quoted in TURNER 1988, 152). According to Toomer himself, one circle begins in the South, another in the North, yet another in the upper Midwest with "Bona and Paul" — but only in the printed form is one of the three curves in "[b]etween". Were we to visualize these ever-shifting, mobile circular shapes, what we would therefore see is something more akin to an eddy. As perpetually swirling elements of the larger Afro-kinetic eddy that is *Cane*, the three curves — fragments, "Fetzen", snippets — hearken back, perhaps, also to the African ring shout (GRANDT 2009, 35–8).

For all its hypermodernist investment in and reflection of fragmentation, *Cane* nevertheless finds, as per Okiji via Benjamin, virtue in its own irresolute and incomplete nature. In fact, Toomer had first intended what would become the opening sketch in his novel as part of his play *Natalie Mann*. Its titular heroine is a beautiful young woman chafing under the stultifying social and moral codes of black Washington's upper crust. The story of her struggle to escape, a tale frequently halted by lengthy philosophical discussions about art and the New Negro, race and class, sex and politics, family and self-actualization, is underscored from the very beginning by music. While waiting for her fiancé, Nathan Merilh — another one of Toomer's semi-autobiographical artist-figures — to arrive at a tea party, the protagonist is asked to entertain the guests with her skills as a pianist: "*Natalie, with none of the silly modesty of so-called parlor artists, complies. She runs her fingers over the keys, musing. Recalls the presence of the others, and plays a light inconsequential piece, which is obviously quite foreign to her mood. Then, unconcerned as to the consequences or possible inferences, pours her very soul into the Presto agitato of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata*" (TOOMER 1980, 253). What the Washington elite considers Natalie's romantic recklessness is, at the beginning of the play, still contained by the script of European classical concert music. Indeed, also under pressure from her mother, the protagonist dissolves her engagement to Nathan after the would-be artist is spotted at the Black Bear Cabaret reuniting with a former flame of his, dancer Etty Beal. Succumbing to the "*frankly sensual demands of the place and time*" and "*swing[ing] into the obvious implications of the rhythm*" the jazz quartet performs behind Etty, Nathan joins her in a risqué dance which, Toomer tells us in the stage directions, "*becomes a spontaneous*" — that is, improvised — "*embodiment of the struggle of two souls, against external barriers, for freedom and integrity*" (1980, 276). Natalie's spiritual and artistic liberation over the course of the play takes her from the scripted parlor

music of Beethoven and Wagner that offers only limited space for authentic self-expression to the improvised blues and jazz modalities of ‘authentic’ blackness championed by Nathan and embodied by Etty Beal — named, perhaps, after Memphis’s Beale Street, immortalized by none other than W. C. Handy, the “Father of the Blues”.<sup>11</sup>

Following that scandalous éclat, society gossip links Nathan to a bootlegging operation allegedly run out of the Black Bear; his wealthy father disowns him, and Natalie breaks off their engagement. Consequently, the restless artist decides to leave Washington, and the eve of his departure finds him in his study “playing on a mandolin and humming Negro spirituals. ‘Deep River’. ‘Roll Jordan Roll’. ‘Steal Away’. And one or two near folk-songs which he and Natalie have written” (TOOMER 1980, 296.). At this very moment of communion with the source of black musical creativity, Natalie enters, joins him in the singing and, unable to deny her love any longer, decides to elope with him to New York City. It is there that “Karintha” makes its first appearance. At a gathering of bohemian artists in their apartment, Nathan is asked to share one of his manuscripts in progress, and he proceeds to read what would become the opening prose piece in *Cane*, while the guests “hum an adaptation of a Negro spiritual” (TOOMER 1980, 310). But *Natalie Mann* was never performed on stage in Toomer’s lifetime. Producers rejected the play because its action, what little there is, is overburdened by much pontification (FOLEY 2014, 150–2). *Cane*, however, restores “Karintha” practically verbatim. In transporting the text from a bohemian apartment in New York City back to its native soil of red dust in Georgia, *Cane* does more than restore it — the novel reconstitutes it in fundamental ways, with Marion Brown’s version in turn irradiating its Afro-kinetic dynamics.

In *Natalie Mann*, on the other hand, black music propels the character development teleologically; it is a linear kinesis that the sonic transactions affect. The same evening in Nathan’s study that sees the two lovers reunited, Natalie bares the nature of her passionate love by telling him the “folk-tale” of Coomba, an African princess. Her father, the king, disapproved of Ali, her lover, and sent him into captivity to the coast, whence he was shipped to the New World. In an act of what Rahsaan Roland Kirk might call “Volunteered Slavery”, Coomba “sold herself that she might

11. After all, Handy’s “Beale Street Blues” also famously contains a paean to sexual shenanigans frowned upon by polite society: “If Beale Street could talk — / If Beale Street could talk, / Married men would have to take their beds and walk” (ARMSTRONG 1997; see also HANDY 1991, 122–7).

accompany Ali to the other shore”.<sup>12</sup> There, the two worked side by side in the cotton and rice fields of the American South as “the real pioneers”, but their relative bliss was short-lived:

One day, in her sight, Ali was killed. Before night-fall, Coomba had been cruelly violated. The story tells of how, that night, America heard the first folk-song. . . . I love with the passion of that woman. My love is the need of working with you day by day. Of planting and harvesting. Of clearing ground. Of seeing the sunset in your eyes at night. Like Coomba, when passion cools, or dies, then, it will be that I will sing my first song.

(TOOMER 1980, 301).

And so, precisely because music pushes the play’s action forward to its inevitable climax, the story of Coomba foreshadows the ending of *Natalie Mann*. Returning to the District when they learn of the terminal illness of a mutual friend, the final scene finds the couple at the Black Bear, which “has been made as respectable as possible” for a charity benefit (TOOMER 1980, 319). ETTY is part of the event, and once again she beckons NATHAN to join her in her provocative dance. As he does, Toomer’s stage directions have the jazz orchestra stop in awe of the performance they are witnessing, but then, “[a]s if from some indefinite region, a music is evoked, an interpretive music, symbolic of the dance and triumph of souls. Beginning as a medley of national, racial folk-tunes, it spirals into a music that is individual and triumphant. At the very crest of creation, something inside of Merilh gives away, and his limp form is saved from sinking to the floor by the firmness with which ETTY holds him”. In the ensuing confusion and chaos, “Natalie seems to [be] growing by inches” and experiences an epiphany — likely the true meaning of the myth of Coomba. As she condemns the society women for their weeping, “ETTY springs to her feet before Natalie. They face each other, not in jealousy, but in the glow of an instant mutual recognition” (1980, 324–5).

12. “Volunteered slavery has got me on the run, / Volunteered slavery has got me having fun” (KIRK 1993a). In the liner notes to the album of the same title, Kirk explains, “We are all driven by an invisible whip. Some run, some have fun, some are hip, some tip, some dip, but we all must answer to the invisible whip” (quoted in WILLIAMS 1993). The love story of Coomba and Ali that engendered the first American folk song is propelled by also literal whips, Natalie and Nathan’s by figurative but no less injurious ones. Not quite coincidentally, therefore, “Volunteered Slavery” would often transform, Afro-kinetically, into a rousing rendition of “Hey Jude” — after all, the Beatles exhorted their addressee to “[t]ake a sad song and make it better” (KIRK 1993b).

True, the modernist music that prepares Natalie and Etty each to recognize herself in the other also moves in spirals, we are told — like the red dust kicked up by Karintha's feet. It is indeed a music of tragedy and triumph both, or, to put it in Benjaminian terms, of imperfection and reconstitution. But in *Natalie Mann*, music is not an eddy. Instead, the play maps a linear trajectory of sound: with the murder of Ali and the violation of Coomba, black music has a concretely identifiable locus of origin and then develops to “grow” into the climactic dance scene. Here, music is merely representational, a sign reflecting the narrative arc and the characters' inner being, as well as the signpost guiding the creation of black art in the Harlem Renaissance, as evidenced by Nathan's reading of his manuscript. The play's sonic transactions begin with Coomba and, with Beethoven and Wagner as a literal counterpoint, end in the Black Bear. In *Cane*, on the other hand, music turns the printed word itself into an Afro-kinetic eddy, a transformation that Marion Brown's freely improvised music churns loose. Once Toomer repurposed his alter-ego's manuscript for his novel and shepherded the title character of “Karintha” from an artist's chambers in the Big Apple back to the dusty goat paths of the Peach State, the return effected at least a partial restoration of *Natalie Mann*, the play that was never produced and would remain unheard and incomplete, unseen and imperfect.

The difference, then, between the text the Toomeresque Nathan reads to his bohemian buddies and the text Bill Hasson recites to the collective improvisation of Marion Brown and the others is subtle, but absolutely crucial. For Moten, “the question ‘What is a language?’ is not eclipsed but illuminated by the question of what happens when we hear a sequence of sounds”, and he adds,

there is a certain black study of language (music) that is itself derived from the inaugurative event of Afro-diasporic experience understood precisely as an interplay of disembodiedness and disembeddedness, from which the materials of stolen life, its self-contextualizing, corpulent multiplicity, continually emerge. It's not that syntax just hovers out there, but that there is a serialization of the syntactic moment, at once oblitative and generative, that is materialized by bodies, in context; there is an (ongoing) event out of which language emerges that language sometimes tries to capture.

(2016, 131–2)

Once “Karintha” is ‘disembedded’ from literary text and reimbedded in freely improvised sound — the “corpulent multiplicity” of Brown's octet (as

opposed to the textual multiplicity of the voices surrounding “Karintha” in *Natalie Mann*) — it generates its own Afro-kinesis. And Afro-kinesis is nothing if not a serialized syntactic event become sound, the sound of spiraling red dust. Awash in the sounds of free improvisation, “Karintha” reveals the sonic transactions in Toomer’s novel as discursive eddies. Which is to say that in and as literary text, Coomba’s folksong remains perpetually silent, precisely because she embodies it in and as text. What words Coomba sang in this, the first, original and originary American folksong, we shall never know — but, as Walter Benjamin reminds us, the original changes and renews itself perpetually anyway: “There is a maturing on, even of fixed words” (1977, 53). And so, Coomba’s singing voice assuredly swirls somewhere in the Afro-kinetic eddy of Brown’s “Karintha” along with the sounds of spiraling red dust, precisely because the saxophonist is tuned into how the novelist rearranged the ostensible fixity of the printed word in such a way as to *trans*-scribe *Cane*’s “Karintha” as a sonic Afro-kinetic eddy.

Brown’s *trans*-scribing of “Karintha” over and across the printed word into freely improvised sound is a process that certainly shares affinities with the critical concepts of transcription, translation, transcoding, or transmediation, but it is also a process that isn’t fully captured by them (TAYLOR 2009, 93–6). It still involves scripting in the conventional sense not just because of Hasson’s recitation of the literary script, but because the means of technological reproducibility have reinscribed the octet’s free improvisations into the spiraling vinyl groove of the LP. Exactly how Brown’s Afro-kinetic *trans*-scription differs from other transactions of meaning is captured in a late nineteenth-century account by a Kentucky freedwoman of the origins of the spirituals: “Us ole heads use ter make ‘em up on de spurn of de moment” — that is, improvisationally — “arter we wrassle wid de Sperit and come thoo. But the tunes was brung from Africa by our granddaddies”, she insists. She recalls Sunday services where

de white preacher he’d splain de word and read whar Ezekial done say—“Dry bones gwine ter lib ergin”. And, honey, de Lord would come a-shinin’ thoo dem pages and revive dis ole nigger’s heart, and I’d jump up dar and den and holler and shout and sing and pat, and dey would all cotch de words and I’d sing it to some ole shout song I’d heard ‘em sing from Africa, and dey’d all take it up and keep at it, and keep a-addin’ to it, and den it would be a spiritual. Dese spirituals am de best moanin’ music in de world, case dey is de whole Bible sung out and out. Notes is good enough for you people, but us likes a mixtery.

(quoted in ROBINSON MURPHY 1899, 662)

To “cotch de words” of (white) scripture infused with a quasi-Benjaminian aura “come a-shinin’ thoo dem pages” results in the Afro-kinetic *trans*-scribing into the performance-based, process-oriented musical vernacular of the black congregants, ultimately reproduced — “gwine ter lib ergin” — by moveable type. In spiral-like motion, printed word turns spoken word, turns “some ole shout song [. . .] from Africa”, then turns vernacular discourse and, finally, turns transcript whose phonetic approximations attempt to “cotch” not just the words uttered by the redoubtable ex-slave, but also their *sound*: yet another serialized syntactic event of sonic transactions, as per Moten. Richard Wistreich calls this the “‘quantum’ identity of music”, where sound-turned-script is “both/either *process* and/or *thing*” (2012, 2). The old Kentuckian calls it simply, and most profoundly, “a mixtery”. What the transcript of her account also reveals is that this mixtery is Afro-kinetic, traversing not just over and across the printed word of scripture and the sung word of lyric, but propelled too by corporeal movement of “jump[ing] up dar” and patting.

Mixtery, then, is Afro-kinetic *trans*-script, a sonic modality of semantic transaction, sounded by the unheard song of the mythical Coomba as much as the unheard sound of red dust generated by the elusive Karintha’s running feet. Bill Hasson’s recitation of the printed word “comes thoo” Brown’s collective improvisation and amplifies yet another mixtery. If we think of *script* as also directive — the exhortations of scripture as much as the text of “Karintha” in Hasson’s hands — and of *transcript* as sound turned notation — the spiraling groove in the vinyl of *Geechee Recollections* — then Brown’s Afro-kinetic *trans*-scribing of “Karintha” in the recording studio “keep[s] a-addin’ to it”, coiling “on de spurn of de moment” new eddies of meaning.<sup>13</sup> “I don’t play words”, Marion Brown once declared: “you can’t get to it through words. You have to find your own way” (quoted in EDWARDS 2017, 184–5). Or, as Coleman tried to explain his musical

13. EDWARDS 2017, 80–1; FULTON 2006, 28–30, 40, 105–8. Peter Shillingsburg points out that “transcription always involves the decoding and re-encoding of symbols in a sign system with elements that are frequently invisible or at least transparent to the nonspecialist user of texts” (2006, 15). Textual transcription is closely related to Brown’s *trans*-scription: the re-encoding of Coomba’s folk song from *Natalie Mann* or of the humming that is to accompany one’s perusal of *Broom* remains “invisible” to the nonspecialist listener of *Geechee Recollections*. By foregrounding free improvisation’s Afro-kinetic properties, though, Brown’s *trans*-scribing re-encodes Toomer’s symbols in a *sonic* “system”, and it is only the fluidity of collectively improvised sounds that reveals “Karintha’s” eddies.

improvisations to Derrida, “I’m trying to find the concept according to which sound is renewed every time it’s expressed” (2004, 320). And this, then, is what Toomer and Brown do in concert: to recast the literary form as an Afro-kinetic resource, to find the concept, to circumnavigate the eddy, in and from which literary language is renewed every time it’s read, and to keep a-adding to it.

*University of North Georgia*

## Works Cited

- ALLEN, Clifford. 2018. “Marion Brown (September 8, 1931–October 18, 2010) — Pieces of a Conversation”. *Ni Kantu*. <http://cliffordallen.blogspot.com/2010/10/marion-brown-july-8-1931-october-10.html>.
- ARMSTRONG, Louis. 1997. “Beale Street Blues”. *Louis Armstrong Plays W. C. Handy*. Columbia CK 64925, CD.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. 1977. “Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers”. In *Illuminationen: Ausgewählte Schriften 1*, edited by Siegfried UNSELD, 50–62. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- . 1996. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- BARLOW, Daniel. 2014. “Literary Ethnomusicology and the Soundscape of Jean Toomer’s *Cane*”. *MELUS* 39.1: 192–211.
- BLIGHT, David W. 2018. *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- BROWN, Marion. 1976. *Awofofora*. Discomate DSP-5502, LP.
- . 2001. *Vista*. Recorded 1975. Impulse!, UCCI-9098, CD.
- . 2008. *Afternoon of a Georgia Faun*. Recorded August 10, 1970. ECM 1004, CD.
- . 2011. *Geechee Recollections / Sweet Earth Flying*. Recorded 1973 and 1974. Impulse! 06051 2780943, CD.
- BROWN, Marion, and Gunter HAMPEL. 1976. *Gesprächsfetzen*. Recorded September 20, 1968. Calig CAL 30 601, LP.
- COLTRANE, John. 2009. *Ascension (Editions I and II)*. Recorded 1965. Impulse! LC 00236, CD.
- DERRIDA, Jacques. 1976. *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty SPIVAK. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 1978. *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan BASS. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 2005. “Play — The First Name: 1 July 1997”. *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 36.2: 331–40.
- DERRIDA, Jacques, and Ornette COLEMAN. 2004. “The Other’s Language: Jacques Derrida Interviews Ornette Coleman, 23 June 1997”. *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 37.2: 319–29.

- DOUGLASS, Frederick. 1994. *Autobiographies*, edited by Henry Louis GATES, Jr. New York: Library of America.
- EDWARDS, Brent Hayes. 2017. *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- ENGLISH, Henry H. P. n.d. *You See What I'm Trying to Say? A Study of Marion Brown*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=6dRJR5qN79o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=6dRJR5qN79o).
- FIGI, J. B. 2011. Liner notes. *Geechee Recollections / Sweet Earth Flying*, Marion BROWN. Recorded 1973 and 1974. Impulse! 06051 2780943, CD.
- FOLEY, Barbara. 2014. *Jean Toomer: Race, Repression, and Revolution*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- FROST FADNESS, Petter. 2019. "Free Spirits: The Performativity of Free Improvisation". In *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, edited by Nicholas GEBHARDT, Nicole RUSTIN-PASCHAL, and Tony WHYTON, 443–53. New York: Routledge.
- FULTON, DoVeanna S. 2006. *Speaking Power: Black Feminist Orality in Women's Narratives of Slavery*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- GRAHAM, T. Austin. 2013. *The Great American Songbooks: Musical Texts, Modernism, and the Value of Popular Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- GRANDT, Jürgen E. 2009. *Shaping Words to Fit the Soul: The Southern Ritual Grounds of Afro-Modernism*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- . 2018. *Gettin' Around: Jazz, Script, Transnationalism*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- HANDY, W. C. 1991. *Father of the Blues: An Autobiography*, edited by Arna BONTEMPS. New York: Da Capo.
- HUMMEL, Bertold. 1976. Liner notes. *Gesprächsfetzen*, Marion Brown and Gunter Hampel. Calig CAL 30 601, LP.
- HUTCHINSON, George. 2019. Foreword. *Cane*, Jean TOOMER, XIII-XXXII. New York: Penguin Classics.
- KAHN, Ashley. 2006. *The House that Trane Built: The Story of Impulse Records*. New York: Norton.
- . 2018. Liner notes. *Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album (Deluxe Edition)*, John COLTRANE. Impulse! B0028228-02, 2018. 2 CDs.
- KERMAN, Cynthia Earl, and Richard ELDRIDGE. 1987. *The Lives of Jean Toomer: A Hunger for Wholeness*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- KIRK, Rahsaan Roland. 1993a. *Volunteered Slavery*. Rhino/Atlantic, 8122–71407–2, CD.
- . 1993b. "Volunteered Slavery". (*Eye, I, Aye*): *Live at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Switzerland 1972*. Rhino/Atlantic 8122–72453–2, CD.
- MOTEN, Fred. 2003. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2016. "Jurisgenerative Grammar (for Alto)". *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, edited by George E. LEWIS and Benjamin PIEKUT, vol. 1, 128–42. New York: Oxford University Press.

- NORTON, Glyn P. 2016. "Improvisation, Time, and Opportunity in the Rhetorical Tradition". *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, edited by George E. LEWIS and Benjamin PIEKUT, vol. 1, 262–88. New York: Oxford University Press.
- NUNN, Erich. 2015. *Sounding the Color Line: Music and Race in the Southern Imagination*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- OFFSTEIN, Alan. 2008. Liner notes. *Afternoon of a Georgia Faun*, Marion Brown. ECM 1004, CD.
- OKIJI, Fumi. 2018. *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- PORTER, Eric. 2002. *What Is this Thing Called Jazz? African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- RAMSHAW, Sarah. 2016. "The Paradox of Performative Immediacy: Law, Music, Improvisation". *Law, Culture, and the Humanities* 12.1: 6–16.
- ROBINSON MURPHY, Jeanette. 1899. "The Survival of African Music in America". *Popular Science Monthly* 55: 660–72. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Popular\\_Science\\_Monthly\\_Volume\\_55.djvu/682](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Popular_Science_Monthly_Volume_55.djvu/682).
- SCOTT-HERON, Gil, and Brian JACKSON. 1978. "Cane". *Secrets*. Arista, 2 C 070 61647, LP.
- SHILLINGSBURG, Peter L. 2006. *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Text*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SPELLMAN, A. B. 1985. *Four Lives in the Bebop Business*. New York: Limelight.
- SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1976. "Translator's Preface". *Of Grammatology*, Jacques DERRIDA, IX-LXXXVII. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- SZWED, John F. 1998. *Space Is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- TAYLOR, Gary. 2009. "In Medias Res: From Jerome through Greg to Jerome (McGann)". *Textual Cultures* 4.2: 88–101.
- TOOMER, Jean. 1923. "Karintha". *Broom: An International Magazine of the Arts* 4.2: 83–4. [http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/exist/apps/bluemountain/issue.html?titleURN=bmtnaap&issueURN=bmtnaap\\_1923-01\\_01#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&z=-4221.531%2C-355.6667%2C12828.062%2C7113.3333](http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/exist/apps/bluemountain/issue.html?titleURN=bmtnaap&issueURN=bmtnaap_1923-01_01#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&z=-4221.531%2C-355.6667%2C12828.062%2C7113.3333).
- . 1980. *Natalie Mann. The Wayward and the Seeking: A Collection of Writings by Jean Toomer*, edited by Darwin T. TURNER, 243–325. Washington: Howard University Press.
- . 1988. *Cane*, edited by Darwin T. TURNER. New York: Norton.
- TURNER, Darwin T., ed. 1988. *Cane*, Jean Toomer. New York: Norton.
- WILLIAMS, Ed. 1993. Liner notes. *Volunteered Slavery*, Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Rhino/Atlantic, 8122–71407–2, CD.
- WILLS, David. 2008. "Notes toward a Requiem, or the Music of Memory". *Discourse* 30.1/2: 157–76.
- WISTREICH, Richard. 2012. "Introduction: Musical Materials and Cultural Spaces". *Renaissance Studies* 26.1: 1–12.