

INTERLUDE

Song and dance are, perhaps, only a little less old than man himself [sic]. It is with his music and dance, the recreation through art of the rhythms suggested by and implicit in the tempo of his life and cultural environment, that man purges his soul of the tensions of daily strife and maintains his harmony in the universe. In the increasingly mechanized, automated, cybernated environment of the modern world--a cold, bodiless world of wheels, smooth plastic surfaces, tubes, pushbuttons, transistors, computers, jet propulsion, rockets to the moon, atomic energy--man's need for affirmation of his biology has become that much more intense. He feels need for a clear definition of where his body ends and the machine begins, where man ends and the extensions of man begin. This great mass hunger, which transcends national or racial boundaries, recoils from the subtle subversions of the mechanical environment which modern technology is creating faster than man, with his present savage relationship to his fellow men, is able to receive and assimilate. This is the central contradiction of the twentieth century; and it is against this backdrop that America's attempt to unite its Mind with its Body, to save its soul, is taking place.

-Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice (202-203)

Long ago he formed an ideal conception of omnipotence and omniscience which he embodied in his gods. To these gods he attributed everything that seemed unattainable to his wishes, or that was forbidden to him. One may say, therefore, that these gods were cultural ideals. To-day he has come very close to the attainment of this ideal, he has almost become a god himself. . . . Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him much trouble at times.

-Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents (44)

I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.

-Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" (101)

DRUMMING

Why drumming? Why now? Arthur Hull uses drumming to create "village music circles," to revitalize a forgotten model of community (Cushman). Jerry Adler reports that for the mythopoetic men's movement percussion is "a link to man's primitive, vital, pagan past. . . the distillation of wildness" (53). Elizabeth Peterson calls rhythm "an ancient, primal force" (27). Betty Travland says, "I don't think you can drum without touching spirit" (Stum and Kirkpatrick 17). And Mickey Hart writes that "world music--and the percussive impulse that drives it--reaches. . .into emotional and spiritual dialogue with older oral traditions" (Planet Drum 7). As an advertisement for Drumming at the Edge of Magic put it, "Before words. Before music. There was the beat." Yet drumming is not simply nostalgic. Drumming is intimately linked to New Age spirituality, Dead Head culture, and more holistic views of the environment and other "progressive" political movements. Those interested in drumming actively draw from indigenous traditions (Native American spirituality, shamanic practices, and the pagan traditions of Europe), but these are rearticulated with contemporary concerns. Drumming can serve as a response to the alienation many feel in contemporary North American society: fragmented world views, the loss of community, the lack of contact with the earth and natural rhythms, increasing asceticism, and an excessive tilting of the scales toward technology and computers. The meanings Western culture has associated with drums and rhythm, meanings that have been used for their demonization--"primitive," "tribal," "natural"--are now the basis for their

appeal. (World beat fits into this same cluster of meanings, is constructed as more "authentic" while simultaneously carrying pluralistic, multicultural connotations.)

If Donna Haraway is right that "our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert" ("Manifesto" 69), then drumming and world beat can work to counteract such a tendency. Drumming gets people together, gets them moving and dancing. Drumming and world beat are about movement, about participation, about somatic excitation, and about breaking the rhythms of everyday existence under the technocracy. And, crucially, drumming in particular can be about people producing their own rhythms instead of passively entraining with the rhythms imposed on them: muzak, the assembly line, the clock, the television.

Before getting into a detailed discussion of what I believe the dynamics and potentials of drumming circles and world beat to be, I want to spend some time on the meanings I just reviewed. These clusters of associations raise two sets of concerns: the effects of commodification and the questionable benefits of a movement motivated primarily by nostalgia.

Commodification

In the conditions of capitalism, any object that enters the exchange system is inescapably commodified. Commodification carries a number of implications, enacts a series of transformations. Commodification abstracts the value of an object (or action) so it can enter the system of exchange. In this process, the intrinsic use-value and the specificity of the labor invested in the commodity are lost: it becomes, in practice, equivalent to all other commodities. In order to create the appearance of difference (and hence value) amidst this equivalence, additional meanings are attached to the commodity. The commodity becomes a fetish, a representation of values that have no intrinsic relation to the object's use-

value. These meanings are the (illusory) ends to which the commodity itself has become the means of attainment, thereby further distancing the commodity from its use-value. These meanings are reifications: their artificiality must be covered over, forgotten, collapsed into the object. This both enhances the illusion of the commodity's "intrinsic" (fetishized) value and serves to mystify the labor relations involved in its production. By covering up the actual conditions of production with reified meanings, consumers are not faced with an awareness of their participation in the exploitation of another's labor. Individuals as producers and consumers are atomized and collectivity is prevented. Ultimately, any values intrinsic to the object or service (use-value and the real social relations involved in production and consumption) are lost: commodities are reduced to the means for their own consumption.

To understand the commodification of drumming and world beat, I want to begin by examining three clusters of meanings associated with these activities. What is replacing the intrinsic meanings or use-values of drumming and world beat (whatever those may be¹)? What meanings,

¹Let's start with world beat. World beat is not the pure, authentic expression of a "folk" culture, but neither is it a pure expression of capitalism. World beat adapts traditional musics, whether in the form of Western musicians using instruments, rhythms, melodies, and so forth "borrowed" from another culture or in the form of the Western music industry fitting the traditional music into structures such as an audio recording of limited length. In both cases, the musics may already have been adapted from their "original" use in ritual, work, or play contexts. To discuss the use-value of those musics outside of those cultural contexts would be highly questionable. Who is to say whether a work song's "use" is in coordinating behavior, increasing energy levels, relieving boredom, celebrating the community, thanking the earth for what is being taken from or done to it, or any other possibility? And are those functions intrinsic to the forms, intrinsic to the labor being invested in those acts?

Drums are even more problematic because they can be employed in so

identities, social relations and pleasures are being offered as the "ends" attainable by the "means" of drumming and world beat? What are the problematics and possibilities involved in those reifications?

Community

One set of meanings layered on drumming and world beat centers around the creation of a community. This community takes two forms. In an immediate sense, drumming is the creation of physical communion and coordination among a relatively small group in physical proximity. So, for example, Mickey Hart writes, in a story I cited earlier, that the children at a summer camp "had created something that was alive, that had a force of its own, out of nothing but their own shared energy" (Drumming 238). Similar meanings are clustered around world beat music, whose compositions are often developed from work songs and other traditional forms. In the liner notes from Kodo: Heartbeat Drummers of Japan, George Ken Kochi writes that

In the past, the pulse of the taiko was vital in synchronizing the energies of men working together. The precise execution of a taiko piece has similar demands--the drummers should ideally

many different contexts, such as those just discussed. Drums produce sound. That sound is made possible by the labor invested in the drum by its maker(s) and the quality of the materials provided by the earth and/or produced by still other laborers. The drum is a fetish in many cultures: it may be the voice of a deity, for example. In African cultures, characterized by an animistic world view, "the drum, like many exotic articles, is charged with evocative power. The drum is not only a musical instrument, it is also a sacred object and even the tangible form of divinity. It is endowed with mysterious power, a sort of life-force. . ." (Diatunji, Drums of Passion liner notes). So what exactly is the "intrinsic" value of a drum? Can it be reduced to a use-value?

breathe as one. For Kodo's members, running together in groups reinforces the process of becoming one with oneself and with another. From this rhythmic harmony comes the strength of communal effort which is a key element in understanding Kodo and the qualities which make them uniquely Japanese. (7)

Similarly, Marilyn Green writes of Kodo that "the absolute unanimity of the rhythm doesn't come across as discipline imposed from the outside, but like an intrinsic response to a common impulse, an unseen conductor beneath blood and bone" (34). As in the case of Arthur Hull's "village" metaphor, these descriptions reference a preindustrial time characterized by communal integration and collective efforts, not Taylorism.

The second sense of community for which world beat in particular becomes a fetish is a vision of global unity. World beat musics of various kinds--produced by "multicultural" ensembles, created by Western musicians borrowing from non-Western traditions, or simply non-Western musics made available to Westerners--are valued as intercultural exchanges and as the discovery and performance of common bonds. The members of Kodo "dream of an international center which will attract all those with a common desire for global cultural exchange of the arts" (Kodo 5). Green reports that in 1988 that dream came true with the official opening of "Kodo Village" on Sado Island (Kodo's home since 1971). A week-long celebration drew artists from all over the world: "The reality of the deep connection with nature and the ancient bond with the drum allows them to move in the same rhythm" (Green 37). "Maybe Kodo...through the power of their drums, can bring us all closer together in our whole earth village" (Kodo 7). Quetzalcoatl Productions of Flagstaff, Arizona is promoting such a goal. Flyers from this organization are being distributed at various drumming events for "Drums Around the World: A Vision of Global Unity." The plan is to have 24 hours of continuous global drumming

on August 28, 1994, from sunrise to sunset in each time zone, "to initiate an annual day for the people of the world to drum for World Peace."

Predictably, this theme of a global unity that is simultaneously structured in diversity is particularly prevalent around recordings produced by "multicultural" ensembles. Mickey Hart describes the Diga Rhythm Band, of which he was a member, as "the world's percussion coming together for a brief moment in time. . . . It is music of the whole earth. Diga is a jewel" (Around the World, liner notes). The 1991 CD Planet Drum, produced by Hart, mixes the instruments, musical styles and compositions of percussionists from the U.S. (Hart), Brazil (Airto Moreira and Flora Purim), Nigeria (Babatunde Olatunji and Sikiru Adepaju) and India (Zakir Hussein and T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram). In the liner notes, Hart seems to try to highlight the "purity" of the multicultural endeavor by indicating that "there was no agenda other than to play and see what rhythms emerged. We each brought our own sounds to the ensemble." Here the emphasis is not on the purity of traditions (see below), but on the fusion of separate traditions. For example, in his description of "Island Groove" he explains that

this song evolved as the rhythms one person played reminded another of something in their own background. We were able to collectively draw upon our various traditions, and contribute individually to the creation of this composition.

These descriptions of the Planet Drum CD mirror the conception of "planet drum" put forth in Hart's two books.

Discussing these meanings in the context of "commodification" gives them a rather sinister bent. What is "wrong" with images of community and global unity? The potential objections are many. The nostalgia for a "village community" is both unrealistic and potentially dangerous in that it overlooks the limitations and oppressions involved in such a social system.

It also projects onto more "primitive" cultures ("the Other") the contemporary Western desire for purity, authenticity and oneness. In terms of the expansion of this idea of community to the contemporary global situation, the risks arise from the blinders created by a naive pluralism. Issues of disproportionate power and profit involved in commercial and cultural interactions between the "first" and "third" worlds are rarely highlighted (see Wallis and Malm). When such issues are raised, as with Paul Simon's Graceland project (see, for example, Hamm), the conventional, pluralist response is swift and vehement (e.g., Laing's "Call and Response").

I am going to explore these critiques in greater depth later in this essay. For now, however, I would like to insert Fredric Jameson's position concerning the importance of "utopian impulses" such as those for community and global unity. Jameson argues that "mass culture" does not simply impose the dominant ideology on a passive audience. Instead "genuine social and historical content must be first tapped and given some initial expression" (Signatures 29). Mass culture texts

cannot do their job without deflecting in the latter's service the deepest and most fundamental hopes and fantasies of the collectivity, to which they can therefore, no matter in how distorted a fashion, be found to have given voice. (30)

Jameson's bias leads him to assume that the culture industry is always successful in channeling these utopian desires toward hegemonic ends. In the case at hand, for example, the desire for community is channeled toward the consumption of a commodity, world beat recordings, that are (presumably) generally listened to in private. Not only is the system perpetuated by an act of consumption, but by an act--solitary listening--that is the opposite of the communal impulse that drives it. The case of drumming, or at least drumming circles, is more complex. Although circles do involve a group, the absence of an overt political consciousness would

presumably diminish the potential of such a collective from the point of view of a socialist program.

Despite Jameson's general pessimism, his argument concerning the importance the utopian impulse must be highlighted. For Jameson, the essence of the utopian desire is that "it expresses the unity of a collectivity," that it is the seed of true class consciousness (Political Unconscious 291). In addition to the "negative hermeneutic" (the story of incorporation and the management of anxieties) practiced by most marxist cultural critics, a "positive hermeneutic" is needed wherein the utopian desires in cultural texts and practices are deciphered and affirmed. As Jameson explains, all contemporary works of art have as their underlying appeal, in however repressed or distorted a form,

our deepest fantasies about the nature of social life, both as we live it now, and as we feel in our bones it ought rather to be lived. To reawaken, in the midst of a privatized and psychologizing society, obsessed with commodities and bombarded by the ideological slogans of big business, some sense of the ineradicable drive towards collectivity. . . is surely an indispensable precondition for any meaningful Marxist intervention in contemporary culture. (Signatures 34)

The desire for community, as well as other desires to be discussed below, represent "genuine social and historical content"; they are a response to the lived reality of the contemporary socioeconomic order. The strength of the impulse toward collective action and global solidarity in the discourse about drumming and world beat should not be negated by those interested in a socialist politics or other forms of opposition to contemporary conditions. Neither should we let down our critical guard, Jameson's negative hermeneutic. Take the next cluster of meanings linked to world beat and drumming. . . .

Tradition and Preservation

The desire for community is often cast with a decidedly nostalgic tone. Obo Addy's Okropong is subtitled "Traditional Music of Ghana" and the liner notes inform us that this "master drummer of the Ga people. . . is committed to passing along his traditions with people throughout the world through his recordings." Kodo's compositions and instruments are almost all "traditional," befitting the group's ideology:

They envisioned a movement to turn back the postwar tide of rapid and excessive westernization and with it the disintegration of traditional values. . . . Their mission was to instill youth with a commitment to a greater purpose--to preserve and to continue the past traditions of performing arts then being threatened by time and cultural erosion. (Kodo 4-5)

Similarly, the liner notes of Babatunde Olatunji's Drums of Passion open with a description of the small Nigerian town in which he grew up, thereby grounding his music--despite his long residence in the U.S.--in a "traditional" setting.

The meaning of "tradition" expands beyond a simple nostalgia for the idealized view of "community" in "traditional" cultures. The cluster of meanings here also includes purity, authenticity, and preservation. The liner notes to Addy's Okropong inform us that "a number of the songs you will hear have never before been recorded," as if their "aura" (Benjamin) would therefore be more intact, their purity unsullied by Western technology and Western ears: a kind of virgin territory. What we are being sold here is "authenticity." Listen to this description of "The World" series:

Rykodisc and percussionist/producer Mickey Hart's 360° Productions will present authentic musics from diverse nations and styles, selected for their beauty, power and significance in the precarious ecology of world music. Mickey Hart has recorded

these rare and inspiring performances with a near legendary pursuit of sonic accuracy, in locations ranging from the Nubian desert to Arctic tundra. The original tapes have been digitally mastered for utmost fidelity to the original experience. (Diga, liner notes)

This strikes me as an odd sort of "cultural" authenticity.

Attali notes that in the current musical network, repetition, the final recording is produced by engineers.

The performer is only one element contributing to the overall quality; what counts is the clinical purity of the acoustics. . . . The record listener, conditioned by these production criteria, also begins to require a more abstract form of aesthetics. Sitting in front of his set, he [sic] behaves like a sound engineer, a judge of sounds. . . . The new aesthetic of performance excludes error, hesitation, noise. It freezes the work out of festival and the spectacle; it reconstructs it formally, manipulates it, makes it abstract perfection. (105-106)

In short, "the absence of noise (of blemish, of error). . .has become a criterion for enjoyment" (124). Writing prior to the mass introduction of digital recording technology, Attali's comments are even more relevant now.² The drive for "authenticity"--defined at least in part by technical perfection--leads to attempts to "recover" the authenticity in old

²I can no longer stand to listen to my LPs; the pops and crackles quickly become unbearable. I always look at a new CD, hoping it is DDD, slightly disappointed if it is AAD (the As and Ds stand for analogic and digital, indicating the recording medium used at each stage--initial recording, the master and the mass produced form). I experience "DDD" recordings as having a greater level of acoustic "purity" and "perfection." In addition to this standardized labeling strategy, many world beat recordings, particularly those by Hart, contain "technical notes." Although beyond my level of understanding, the description of what type of studio layouts, microphones and recorders used to make the recording reassures me of its technical quality.

recordings. Hart serves on the board of the Smithsonian Institution's Folkways Records. He is working with their collections of recordings, such as those of traditional blues performers, made in the early parts of this century on spools that are so degraded that in some instances they can be played only once. They transfer the recording to a digital medium, then use computerized visual representations of the sounds in order to remove the "pops" and "crackles" and other "imperfections" and "degradations" (Invention).

Whether reworking old recordings or striving for "sonic accuracy" in his current recordings of world music, I honestly appreciate Hart's efforts. My musical aesthetics have been formed by the network of repetition, after all. But I do not have to think very far to question the link between a certain digital definition of "sonic accuracy" and the "authenticity" of a CD "containing" the traditional music of a non-Western culture. Just because the sound has maintained "the utmost fidelity to the original experience" by no means guarantees "authenticity." At the "Festival of the Drum" held in Springdale, Utah in October, 1993, one of the featured groups was the Nigerian Talking Drum Ensemble, led by Francis Awe. Awe explained, as we sat in our seats watching him on stage, that it did not make sense for us to sit passively and be separated from the performers; in his Yoruba tradition, there is no "audience," only participants of various kinds. We could not inhabit a Western-style amphitheater and have an "authentic" Yoruba drum performance (and that is without getting into even stickier issues of ethnicity and the lack of a "traditional" ritual context). How could my possession of a CD of the ensemble have anything to do with "authenticity"?

The final meaning in this cluster is, perhaps, even more problematic. It is hinted at in the description of "The World" series with the phrase "the precarious ecology of world music." In describing Steven Feld's recordings of the Kaluli, Hart writes that "what you are listening to is endangered

music, music on the brink of extinction" (Around the World). The project here is the same as for endangered species: preservation. The notes in Drums of Passion explain that

Babatunde Olatunji has recaptured some of his early impressions in his drum beats and has given them new zest and power in order to preserve the remnants of "primitive" folk music before its gradual disappearance from a fast-changing culture and continent.

This appears to be an instance of what James Clifford terms "the salvage paradigm, reflecting a desire to rescue 'authenticity' out of destructive historical change" ("Other Peoples" 121). A number of troubling assumptions drive such a project, at least some of which appear relevant to world beat.³

As Johannes Fabian and others have pointed out, at the core of mainstream anthropological endeavors in the twentieth century is the Western sense of time as linear and irreversible. Societies are ordered in terms of their "progress," from savage to barbarian to civilized (with, of course, European culture as the "furthest" along). In this system of meaning, space becomes transposed into time; in other words, cultures from around the world can be arranged temporally according to their level of development, their temporal proximity to Europe. As a result, the "ethnographic presents" of non-Western cultures represent European culture's past. "Temporality is reified and salvaged as origin, beauty, and

³The critiques in this and surrounding sections are not statements about the intentions of the individuals involved, nor attacks on their personal ethics. As Goodwin and Gore argue, that misses the point about the structural nature of cultural imperialism. Olatunji's preservationist project, for example, is motivated by a kind of nationalism (Gary Stewart); nevertheless, for many Westerners the salvage paradigm may well be the framework which confers value onto his works.

knowledge" (Clifford, Predicament 222). The value of other cultures (and their artifacts) is the insight they give us into our past; the preservation of other cultures is the preservation of our own (that is, European) history.

The impulse to preserve is heightened by what was referred to above as "the precarious ecology of world music." The assumption here concerns the role of "traditional" cultures in world development.

In a salvage/pastoral setup most non-western peoples are marginal to the advancing world system. Authenticity in culture or art exists just prior to the present--but not so distant or eroded as to make collection or salvage impossible. Marginal, non-western groups constantly (as the saying goes) enter the modern world. And whether this entry is celebrated or lamented, the price is always this: local, distinctive paths through modernity vanish. These historicities are swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist west and by various technologically advanced socialisms. (Clifford, "Other Peoples" 122)

Within such a framework, in which the stability, purity and essence of any non-Western culture is threatened from the point of its first contact with the West, authenticity "is produced by removing objects and customs from their current historical situation" (Clifford, Predicament 228). Kodo's home island, for example, "seems to exist in a time warp unhindered by the pace of modernization" (Kodo 5). As Clifford explains, within the framework of the "salvage paradigm" collecting "implies a rescue of phenomena from inevitable historical decay or loss. The collection contains what 'deserves' to be kept, remembered, and treasured" (231).⁴ Such a logic legitimizes

⁴The link between "collecting" and world beat music is appropriate on a number of levels. First, enthusiasts of world beat and other types of music often see themselves as "collectors." Second, Attali explains that under the network of repetition the stockpiling of other people's time, in the form of recordings, "becomes a substitute, not a preliminary condition, for use. People buy more records than they can listen to" (101). People work in order to make money to buy recordings, to stockpile use-time in

the rescue of "authentic musics. . .selected for their beauty, power and significance" from the "precarious ecology of world music."

As I indicated in my discussion of "sonic accuracy," I truly appreciate both the impulse to preserve and its consequences. The absence of "world beat" music, even if limited to the recordings of "traditional" musics, would represent an immense loss to my musical sustenance. I cannot speak to what motivates Hart or others engaged in the recording of non-Western musics. I do believe, however, that the salvage paradigm describes a set of meanings and assumptions within which the impetus to collect world music both makes sense and is commonly made sense of--there is a certain feeling (to my sensibilities quite legitimate) that much of it is, like that of the Kaluli, "music on the brink of extinction." I can agree with the "need," the value in such an endeavor (for me), while also recognizing the paternalist and colonialist (i.e., liberal) assumptions that guide it. What I am buying when I purchase a commodity called "world beat" is much more than the CD and the music encoded in it--I am buying reifications such as "tradition," "authenticity" and "preservation" as well as a reduction in my own guilt. Many world beat recordings include statements that part of the proceeds from the sales will go to "preserve" whatever culture or habitat is involved. The contradiction between the drives for "preservation" and intercultural interaction/global unity (see above) does not seem to be experienced as such.

Finally, the salvage paradigm carries with it a certain view of culture, particularly non-Western culture, as "enduring, traditional, structural (rather than contingent, syncretic, historical)" (Clifford, Predicament 235). The assumption is that the state in which a culture is "found" by

commodity form, and they thereby lose their own time. For further discussion of the dynamics of collecting, see Susan Stewart's On Longing.

Westerners is its pure, authentic state. "Traditional" cultures are assumed to be static and self-contained. However, as I argued in "Struggle," in my discussion of heteroglossia in the context of African and European music, such assumptions do more than simply border on racism. Rejecting the salvage paradigm entails, in part, reconceptualizing culture, and not simply Western industrial culture (as in Fiske's conception of "simple" and "complex" societies outlined in "Writing Ethnographies"), as an arena of conflict, appropriation, disorder, heterogeneity and emergence. Cultures are fluid, heccecities, becomings, not clearly-bounded, self-identical beings. Which is not to say there are no differences (see my discussion of Native American ritual, below, for problems with this revised view of culture).

Nature, Communion, and the Primitive Body

A third cluster of meanings linked to drumming and world beat centers around nature. Green explains that there is a "deep, physical awakening to the natural world that is at the heart of Kodo" (34). The desire to go "back to nature" is strong here. Listen to Justine Toms's description of an experience at the end of a lengthy rhythm workshop led by Reinhard Flatischler:

I am feeling a deep, deep peace. Not only has my mental chatter calmed down but the very cells of my body are relaxed. Feelings of great contentment sweep over me and I am safe in the universe. In this moment of quiet calm I have a flash of insight about my own birth.

Some time ago, I heard a tape of the sound environment of a fetus in its mother's womb. Surprisingly, this is not the quiet calm one normally associates with the womb. It is a loud environment filled with the pulsating rhythms of her heartbeat and blood flow. There is a counterpoint to this rhythm when she speaks and laughs.

Like many others who were born in the early Forties, I was taken away from my mother right after birth and put in a hospital

nursery with lots of bright lights, strange sounds and crying babies. Suddenly, I was in an environment devoid of my mother's rhythmic heartbeat.

All this memory is flooding back to me as I lie on the floor feeling peaceful and calm, hearing the cosmic rhythm playing my body as if I am a drum. As I'm listening with my inside ear, a deep healing is taking place. The fright of that first moment of mother and child separation is healed as I feel the pulsation inside me.

(12)

Such psychoanalytic narratives have their counterpart in discussions of nature, for nature is constructed as mother: "They slowly begin to hammer out patterns of primordial rhythms that seem to emanate from the womb of the earth" (Kodo 4). Technology blocks access to nature as the Oedipal complex denies access to the mother's body. Drumming creates the possibility of a fusion in response to this long-felt alienation from the natural world and its rhythms.

Drums are more than just the means to make a loud noise. They are also tools for exploring rhythm, one of the deepest mysteries in the universe. Science has taught us that we live in a rhythmscape in which everything is pulsing in time with everything else. Every atom, every planet, every star is vibrating in a complex dance. We live on planet drum.

And human beings, as multidimensional rhythm machines, are also embedded in this universe of rhythm. As a species we love to play with rhythm because it seems to connect us to something fundamental in the nature of reality. (Hart and Lieberman, Planet Drum 174)

"Toes do not tap for the drummers of Kodo; cells dance" (Green 32). If our technology and our cultural choices have blocked direct access to nature, and if we do not buy into the technocratic option, then the "womb" of the earth is accessible through a drumming circle, a rhythm workshop, a performance of Kodo, or a world beat CD. In relation to one world beat

recording, Hart writes that "the Kaluli believe the forest is a tuning fork, and they're just one of the voices in the forest. It's not unusual to see one of the Kaluli playing a duet with a waterfall or a bird" (Around the World).

That environmentalism overlaps with drumming and world beat should come as no surprise. Betty Travland's calling, her life-project "is to heal the earth and her people through drumming." World beat. Planet drum. Even the ubiquitous "whole earth image," icon of the mainstream environmental movement, is indirectly invoked: "A compulsion to drum has been loosed on this blue-green planet" (Hart, Drumming 38). (The publisher informs us, in both of Hart's books, that two trees will be planted in a Central American rainforest for every tree used in their manufacture.)

This desire for communion with nature coincides with the utopian impulse Marianna Torgovnick identifies within Western discourses of the "primitive." She draws on Lukács's notion of "transcendental homelessness" to describe the anxieties present in modern culture about a profound alienation from self, society, and "immanent totality": "the effortless awareness of meaning and purpose, the complete correspondence of personal desire and cosmos, the presence of secular grace" (227). No wonder rhythm's appeal is constructed in terms of its ability "to connect us to something fundamental in the nature of reality." Westerners are, in the terms of Torgovnick's description that seems to have been written with drumming in mind,

secular but yearning for the sacred, ironic but yearning for the absolute, individualistic but yearning for the wholeness of community, asking questions but receiving no answers, fragmented but yearning for "immanent totality." (188)

Peterson writes that "people are hungry for [rhythm]. They are hungry for roots" (27). Remo is more than willing to sell us this "immanent totality" in the form of their line of World Percussion Instruments: "The heartbeat

of life is the beating of a drum. It's that rhythmic pulse that reminds us of who we are and where we came from."

One of the reasons drumming responds so powerfully to these desires is the physicality of the experience (present, albeit to a lesser degree, with world beat recordings). Listening to and playing drums places me in my body in ways and to degrees that few other experiences do. This is another of the apparent reifications present in these commodity forms.⁵ Kodo's performances, for example, are described as "visceral and direct" (Kodo 6); "the overall experience is extremely physical and robust" (Green 34). Torgovnick argues that within Western culture "getting primitive" is congruous with "getting physical." Participating in a drumming circle or attending a live drumming performance is, for me, unarguably a primarily physical experience.

The utopian impulse here is a collective yearning that potentially could be actualized as a collective form of resistance to both the (residual) Fordist modes of production and the (emergent) new world information order. The impulse is not without its dark side, however. We are back to the problem of the "Other," to Western projections of our salvation fantasies onto non-Western peoples, turning them into instruments--that is, commodities--for our redemption. Simon Frith's argument about "the white pop, cultural studies obsession with black music" is highly relevant here:

My argument, in short, is not that African or Afro-American or Afro-Caribbean music is "naturally" or essentially physical and hedonistic but that the myth of the "natural" African is read onto

⁵For a discussion of whether the sounds of drums are "intrinsically" physical or if such meanings are culturally layered onto their sounds, see my critique of Rouget in "Consciousness."

African and Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean musical expression. ("Cultural Study" 181)

A desire for "pure" bodily expression and notions of the "primitive" are fused with percussion in The Apocalypse Now Sessions of the Rhythm Devils (a recording that predates the institutionalization of "world beat" but that classifies as such because of its inclusion, in digitally remastered form, in Rykodisc's "The World" series, its emphasis on percussion, and its inclusion of at least two non-Westerners). Francis Ford Coppola came to Mickey Hart and fellow Grateful Dead drummer Billy Kreutzmann, we are informed in the liner notes, to find the "missing percussive underscore" for Apocalypse Now. Coppola not only "wanted a performance in which the very breath of war permeated every gesture, every movement." He "explained to the musicians that their task was to conjure music not only relevant to Vietnam in the 60's, but which also extended back to the first man at the origins of existence." To accomplish this task, a

jungle of percussion was carefully arranged in maze-like pathways. . . . It was a sound-garden with paths for the musicians to move through, changing instruments whenever they wished: every mallet, every shaker, every drum in reach as a natural tool for instantly expressing our gut reactions to the flow of imagery.

Here we have communion with nature ("a sound-garden"), bodily expression ("gut reactions"), and the primitive ("jungle of percussion," war, and "the first man at the origins of existence") rolled into one. To reassure us that what we have in The Apocalypse Now Sessions is truly an authentic expression of the primitive body, we are told that the "sessions were sufficiently intense. . . that many instruments were destroyed through the impassioned playing."

A central contradiction of world beat's function as a fetish for both the

"natural" and the "authentic" is its intense reliance on technology. The "sonic accuracy" desired by consumers of world beat is made possible by some of the most sophisticated technologies available, from digital recording to computerized mixing to satellite communication networks.⁶ In both the Planet Drum CD and book, we are given a picture of the ensemble of musicians involved. The picture appears to have been taken outside and at night. The musicians are standing or sitting behind a good-sized fire, playing various percussion instruments, all of which appear to be "traditional" or "handmade." (None of Remo's plastic drumheads are evident here!) In other words, the "modern" and its advanced technologies have been elided from this photo, which serves as a condensation of the reifications "communal," "traditional," and "natural" that mystify the mode of production involved--a mode of production made blatant by the CD in the hands of the person looking at the photo.

Not only are drumming and world beat commodified, made into means toward the (illusory) end of recovering nature, the end itself is built on reifications: nature and technology are, arguably, not essential categories but themselves cultural fictions. Take a simple example: how is fire, as in the Planet Drum photo, not a "technology"? It was "invented"; humans learned how to initiate and control it, to create it "artificially." It also fundamentally altered the relationship of humans to nature. It completely changed the ecosystem of Australia, for example, long before the arrival of Europeans. Fire also "removed" people from nature's rhythms by providing heat and light when they wanted it. When I look into a fire, I experience a definite trance state: although not "artificially" controlled, there are optical rhythms that may work similarly to those of television or other

⁶See Frith's "Art Versus Technology" for a discussion of the contradictions between technological practice and ideology in rock and other popular music.

"photic drivers" to alter my consciousness. A similar argument can be made for drums or even music: drums are as much a form of technology as drum machines; music is the "artificial" manipulation of sound.

Commodification and Cultural Imperialism

Perhaps the most obvious critique of world beat (which applies to drumming as well, but I will get to that later) is that it is yet another form of cultural imperialism. Western musicians draw from non-Western sources who are rarely given credit, let alone compensated financially. When they are compensated, "fair" or "equal" compensation is hard to define. As with material resources, Westerners bring back cultural resources from the "third world" for their own benefit.⁷ The sacred is at best commodified, at worst profaned. The three broad clusters of meanings attached to world beat that I have reviewed here certainly support an argument that at a cultural level, colonization is taking place insofar as

⁷See Wallis and Malm, especially chapter 6, for specific examples of blatant economic exploitation as well as a discussion of the difficulties involved in international copyright compensation systems. Their analysis of the music industries of small countries and of the effects of the Western (primarily U.S.) music industry on them is quite insightful, as well as very applicable to an understanding of world beat despite the fact that their book predates world beat's formalization as a category. They cover issues, such as economic forces, government regulations, international agreements, technological changes and structural characteristics of the music industry, that are beyond the scope of my analysis here. For a more abstract discussion of the structural features of media imperialism, see also Boyd-Barrett. For an argument about the inapplicability of the cultural imperialism thesis to music, see Laing's "The Music Industry and the 'Cultural Imperialism' Thesis." He argues that the development of the thesis from analyses of the film and television industries makes it inappropriate for music because film and television productions require massive capital investments while music does not.

"authentic folk cultures" are being commodified and sold to Westerners. Euro-Americans such as myself are projecting our meanings onto non-Western cultural traditions, satiating our appetites with the "heartiness" of world music.

The apparent origin of the phrase "world beat" strengthens such an argument, if only by association. Near the end of On the Road, Jack Kerouac writes of dancing to mambo music: "The drums were mad. The mambo beat is the conga beat from Congo, the river of Africa and the world; it's really the world beat" (235). "The mambo never let up for a moment, it frenzied on like an endless journey in the jungle" (237). This scene takes place in a Mexican whorehouse, amidst and in-between young Euro-Americans renting the bodies of a multiracial mix of teenage Mexican women ("it's really the world beat"). Kerouac certainly offers support for Tagg's argument that the "white liberal idealization of the 'Afro-' in 'Afro-American' (music)" is a form of sexual projection. We "use music we imagine to be little or none of our own doing as a corporeal panacea for [our] own problems of subjectivity, powerlessness and alienation" (Tagg 294). Kerouac found a "little colored girl" the most compelling and attractive. He did not sleep with her, or approach her in any way, although "she needed the money most" (237). In his "madness" he "was actually in love with her for the few hours it all lasted" (238). Cultural imperialism indeed.⁸

⁸Andrew Goodwin and Joe Gore, in their review of the "World Beat and Cultural Imperialism Debate," argue for a complication of the two most common positions in the debate. The first view, in emphasizing the Western music industry's exploitation of non-Western cultures, too often conflates economics with meaning and fails to account for the meanings produced by consumers of world beat. The second position, however, which sees world beat as a progressive intervention in western culture, relies too heavily on an idealistic reading of the freedom of consumers to make their own meanings. They emphasize that acknowledging that consumption is an active process is not the same as identifying what that means politically:

Nostalgia

The utopian impulse behind the imperialist dark side of world beat should not be glossed over; its potential value in inciting collective consciousness and action is worth remembering. The implications of these desires for community, cultural authenticity and communion with nature, however, go beyond their articulation with the colonialist discourses of the primitive. World beat and drumming are driven by a (legitimate) fear of technology and a longing for a return to nature. I imagine many contemporary cultural critics would be uncomfortable with the reification and valorization of the "natural" that is at the core of the contemporary appeal of drumming, and that discomfort goes a long way in explaining the skepticism toward the New Age movement and most academics in general and cultural critics in particular embrace. As Mark Seltzer argues, "the rule-of-thumb that has guided much recent cultural criticism might be restated in these terms: When confronted by the nature/culture opposition, chose the culture side." The assumption appears to be that deconstructing the dichotomy "indicated merely the elimination of the first term and the

"Pop audiences will not be made counterhegemonic by scholarly or devotional fiat" (79).

In addition to tempering the two extremes, Goodwin and Gore make some other, crucial points for evaluating world beat. First, although traditional musics are being appropriated and in many instances obvious opportunities for compensation are being ignored, world beat does represent the addition of a degree of feedback in the traditionally one-way flow of culture from Europe and the U.S. to the "third world" (identified by Boyd-Barrett as a key ingredient in cultural imperialism). Second, they launch a now-familiar critique of notions of the "purity" of traditional musics, yet also clearly argue that such a position does not dismiss the concerns of exploitation. Recognizing the dynamic nature of culture and the fuzziness of boundaries does not dismiss indigenous claims to "ownership." People can still be exploited economically and cultural traditions can still be profaned.

inflation of the second" (155). A clear reason for embracing culture is the apparent political benefit: legitimating oppressive social systems by grounding them in "natural" patterns and behaviors is a classic tactic of the white, heterosexist, patriarchal, capitalist hegemony. If patriarchy is not natural, the logic goes, it must therefore be cultural, and thereby both lacking an absolute ethical foundation and open to de- and re-construction.

The desire for the "natural" that drives drumming and world beat, however, is not a rejection of the abstraction "culture," of relativism and its political benefits. What is being rejected is much more specific, more concrete in the sense of being part of lived social reality. Haraway argues that writers like Susan Griffin and Adrienne Rich and ideologies such as ecofeminism and feminist paganism that "insist on the organic, opposing it to the technological. . . would simply bewilder anyone not preoccupied with the machines and consciousness of late capitalism. In that sense they are part of the cyborg world" ("Manifesto" 92; emphasis added). So too, I believe, are the current practices of drumming circles and world beat music. Susan Stewart positions nostalgia as a response to the conditions of late capitalism:

Within the development of culture under an exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and, correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical. As experience is increasingly mediated and abstracted, the lived relation of the body to the phenomenological world is replaced by a nostalgic myth of contact and presence. "Authentic" experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated. (133)

Mainstream North American culture, as I experience it, continues to move further away from body, spirituality, sensuality, multiplicity,

fluidity, analogic communication, organic communities and toward disembodied existence, "virtual" reality, hyperscientism, singularity, solidity, digital coding, engineered totalities. This is the context in which alienated Euro-Americans are, among other things, taking up drums, producing their own rhythms, feeling them in and on their bodies, transforming their consciousnesses, and turning to the submerged cultural traditions of indigenous peoples for an understanding of the possibilities of rhythm, for alternative forms of organization: bodily, social, spiritual and environmental. Treating these desires, these moves, as simply and solely a part of the commodification process, as "nothing more" than the raising of utopian desires in order that they may be channeled to maintain the existing hegemony, too conveniently conflates the economic and the cultural. The meanings of world beat cannot be reduced to artificiality, to "reification," its status to "commodity." I believe these "meanings" of world beat and drumming to be legitimate responses to the existing and emerging political economies in the U.S. and the "developed" world. I stated at the beginning of this project that part of my challenge was to take drumming seriously, as seriously as the social theorists and cultural critics I read and teach. The meanings, which I analyzed above as a part of the commodity system, are, from my perspective, not just reifications but "genuine social and historical content." Let me make my case.

A Cyborg World

When I began to think of the cyborg in relation to the mechanization of production, I had little idea of how forcefully its frightening connotations would hit when I moved on to develop an understanding of the interrelations between rhythm, physiology and consciousness. If the boundary between organism and environment is permeable--if it is little more than a potent fiction befitting the definition of reality as "the set of statements too

costly to modify"--then the implications of mass industrialization go far beyond alienated labor, an altered sense of time, and even the instrumentalization of the body. Mechanization invests the body by means of its rhythms; these rhythms then form the physiological foundation for consciousness and the disciplinary foundation for the constitution of the subject. Taylor's pig iron handler was an embryonic cyborg: Taylor attempted to subject his body to a mathematical order through an imperfect medium, i.e., the foreman ordering him when and how to handle the pigs. Similarly, the clock imposed a mechanical order, but only insofar as people could be coerced into following its dictates. With the construction of large factories, in which machinic rhythms dominated the sensorium of workers, rhythmic entrainment to the machine deepened. With the assembly line--in which workers' senses are bombarded with machinic rhythms and their bodies have to manipulate in synchrony with the machine, becoming one with it--the medium of entrainment of body into machine was perfected. From muscle memory to brain wave frequencies to the organization of neural pathways, human bodies were subsumed into the rhythms of the machine.

Remember Chaplin's "little tramp." He was beset by palsies, his body involuntarily jerking to the rhythm of the machine. Eventually, increases in the line's speed drove him into a state of "insanity" marked by the only overt expressions of sexual desire in the film. In Bodies and Machines, Seltzer argues that in the machine culture of the turn-of-the-century United States, sex became a matter of mechanics. The "effeminate" hero of Jack London's The Sea-Wolf, for example, restores his masculinity by figuring out how to reset the fallen masts of the ship--i.e., by mastering mechanics. The roots of this link between sex and mechanics go back much further: an anonymous English tract of 1760 indicated that "no modest lady

now dares mention a word about winding-up a clock. . . . the common expression of street-walkers is, 'Sir, will you have your clock wound up?'" (quoted in Thompson 57). These are metaphors, symbolic devices that "infuse" nature with the more "potent" meanings of a particular social formation (remember Burke's model of language). In the essay on "Order" I argued that such infusions were much more than "merely" symbolic but quite literal and material. How might mechanics "infuse" itself into human sexuality?

Let me hypothesize. Kracauer identifies structural similarities between the Tiller Girls and the conditions of the factory. In my terms, each is driven by a common rhythmic sensibility, a common epistemology, a common will: machinic regularity, geometric uniformity, mathematical efficiency. The factory and the Tiller Girls are both spectacles, performances of a particular kind of organization that manifest themselves, in part, rhythmically. Kracauer argues that a crucial function of the Tiller Girls is to make the conditions experienced in the factory pleasurable. How? In the terms of biogenetic structuralism, workers "learn" to watch the Tiller Girls, to experience the ritual as pleasurable. Hence, certain rhythmic cues, both auditory and optical, potentially become linked with this particular neurognostic model of "pleasure." Given that there are structurally similar rhythmic cues present in the factory, the neurognostic model of experiencing the Tiller Girls could become attached to (or, to use the more blatantly sexualized metaphor of Laughlin et al., "penetrate") the neurognostic model called up by the rhythmic sensorium of the factory. Hence, work becomes pleasure, machines substitute for sex.⁹ In this context, the sexual energy of jazz becomes a threat because it

⁹I am not trying to claim that this necessarily worked, nor do I wish to oversimplify the dynamics involved: the causal relationships are far more multiple and circular than I portray them in this brief hypothesis.

"penetrates" sexuality as well, thereby "linking" it to different rhythmic cues, robbing capitalism of its productive energy.

This example of manipulation or canalization is frightening yet safely distant. I, and I presume most of my readers, are safely ensconced in white collar work. The assembly line is, at worst perhaps, a dim memory of a summer job during college. Besides, we live in a high tech society; Fordism is outdated and with it went the assembly line. However, millions of workers, including many in the U.S., continue to do some kind of assembly line work. It may be high tech, involving electronic circuit boards and computer chips (or it may not), but it operates on the same basic principles. In addition, the assembly line need not be so literal: whereas under industrialism work consists of sorting, linking, transporting and otherwise manipulating physical materials, in the "information age" workers are engaged in the manipulation of data and other representational forms (hence, the construction of a new "infrastructure," e.g., the "information superhighway").

Let me take this further, or should I say bring it closer. Although they may operate on an apparently less coercive basis, we live amidst machinic, electronic and computerized rhythms. I drive a car. In addition to the rhythms of the internal combustion engine, I do much of my driving in the city. Remember the scenes from Koyaanisqatsi, high-speed photography making evident the patterns of city driving (and walking): rush, stop, rush, stop. These patterns, which constitute the rhythms of city driving, are controlled by street lights that are, in turn, controlled by computers. These patterns are also formed by the spatial layout of the city: the length of blocks, the nature of intersections, the designation and control of primary, secondary and tertiary thoroughfares.¹⁰ I recall the chill that ran up my

¹⁰Feel the difference, for example, between the standard North

spine when the satellite photo of the city was juxtaposed with the computer chip, their isomorphisms laid bare. Cars and "bits" of information are channeled in similar ways. "Modern production seems like a dream of cyborg colonization of work, a dream that makes the nightmare of Taylorism seem idyllic" (Haraway, "Manifesto" 66).

I walk, maybe even live, under power lines, some carrying so much current that I can hear them humming--that is, pulsing--as I approach. Every building I inhabit is wired with electricity pulsing at an average of 60 times a second--and my consciousness is built on the electrochemical entity known as the nervous system. I spend anywhere from 5 to 50 hours a week sitting in front of my computer--like right now--staring at the display produced by a cathode ray tube (CRT). I normally do not notice, but if I stand at a distance I can see that the display pulses--remember: the human brain has been shown to be affected by photic pulses as well as auditory rhythms. "The trance state experienced by many computer users has become a staple of science-fiction film and cultural jokes" (Haraway, "Manifesto" 97).

Humming, headache-inducing fluorescent lights have become inescapable. Magnetic fields are produced by any electrical device, such as the electric blanket you may encase your body in every night. According to the story of quantum mechanics, we are composed not of particles but "probability fields": patterns of force and energy. And what about the hypnotic potential of film and television? Forget the music for the moment.

American intersection (two streets intersect at right angles, traffic flow regulated by lights) and the rotary intersections in Europe and some east coast cities. Faced with one of the latter, I lack a neurological model to cope with it, I freeze. I cannot "imagine" negotiating it. The circular flow feels wrong, dangerous. I have not been entrained into that kind of rhythmic organization. A parallel to this structure is, I believe, analogic and digital forms of coding (see "Order").

Standard motion picture film pulses at a rate of 24 frames per second. What does this imperceptible "strobe" effect do to my brain waves? What kind of a "trance" does it induce? And television? Mander argues that the 60 pulses per second of television screens as well as the accompanying reduction in eye movement (the screen is small enough to for us "take it all in" without needing to track separate movements) produces a hypnotic state characterized by alpha waves in viewers' brains, a state he describes as passively receptive. And what about television's other rhythms? Nutrition and elimination patterns, for example, are formed around the rhythms of prime time and commercials.

"Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power" (Foucault, Discipline 152). Is Foucault's description of late eighteenth century disciplinary power all that outdated? If we have been invested with machinic, electronic, and computerized rhythms in any of these multitude of different ways, how can we not be cyborgs? If, as Laughlin et al. describe, neurons become involved in hierarchy after hierarchy of neural networks and "those networks function as living organ-izations" (52), and if, as I am attempting to demonstrate here, the formation of those networks is influenced by a ubiquitous set of mechanical, electrical and digital forces, then how could we not be cyborg-organizations? As Donna Haraway explains, "biological organisms have become biotic systems, communications devices like others. There is no fundamental, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, of technical and organic" ("Manifesto" 97). A fair-sized portion of the percussion in contemporary music is produced by computers. Drums and their rhythm-keeping function are the first things to be handed over to digital machines.¹¹

¹¹As Malm and Wallis explain, "miniature organs with the same limited

The Informatics of Domination

In "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," Haraway argues that the cyborg is not a creature of science fiction but is central to the lived social reality of the late twentieth century. The cyborg takes form not only "literally" (the implanting of artificial hearts, for example) but even more inescapably in the sense that the barriers between organism and technology have been irrevocably breached. This breach is the result of "the informatics of domination," Haraway's label for what others call the "postmodern condition," the socioeconomic formation that has taken over from "white capitalist patriarchy." With the transformation of machine and organism, organization and biology, into information, they are all susceptible to the same mechanisms of control. Haraway explains that

communication sciences and modern biologies are constructed by a common move--the translation of the world into a problem of coding, a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange. (83)

With information theory, systems theory and cybernetics on the one side and the human genome project and immunobiology on the other, the distinctions no longer hold: technological, biological and social organization all become systems of codes to be discovered and manipulated (Schiller). Listen to Mark Dowie's description of nanotechnology:

selection of synthetic rhythms" are spreading to every country in the world. "Regardless of their own cultures, all performers have to relate to these pre-determined rhythms" (301). Programmed, technological uniformity is spreading to every culture on the planet.

Instead of merely redesigning the gene structures of living creatures, they're now into redesigning the molecular structure of absolutely everything. It's the new frontier. . .working with the infinitely small. . . . The idea is to zero down into the atomic structure of all materials and rearrange their molecules to get completely new forms, materials, and creatures. They barely make a distinction between what is an "organic" material and an "inorganic" material, since once you're down to the molecular level, it's all the same. . . . It's the "new physics" all right, right here and right now. Once they can move the atoms around and redesign the molecular chains--and they're gaining on it--they will be able to redesign the whole world, molecule by molecule, and that's exactly what they intend. It's the technological fix to end them all. (quoted in Mander 181)

"The boundary-maintaining images of base and superstructure, public and private, or material and ideal never seemed more feeble" (Haraway 84).¹² The insights of ecology, fractal geometry, quantum physics, chaos theory, and other seemingly "new paradigm" branches of science are brought into the service of the "new" world order. "Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of the spectrum" (70).

Given this fundamental transformation in the means and structure of domination, Haraway proposes that

¹²Schiller proposes a fascinating and closely-related argument about nature and culture: the active intervention in the structure of biological organisms made possible by information technologies "resurrects an ancient usage of culture--in the sense of cultivation, 'the tending of natural growth' in crops and animals" (102). Technology--a resident of the "culture" side of the nature/culture binary--is "cultivating" new forms of nature. In the "culture of information" nature is information.

It is time to write The Death of the Clinic. . . . Our dominations don't work by medicalization and normalization anymore; they work by networking, communications redesign, stress management. Normalization gives way to automation, utter redundancy. ("Manifesto" 69n).¹³

Dan Schiller argues that the proponents of the "information age" have attempted to separate their use of the term "information" from "culture" in order to create the illusion that they are two autonomous spheres, thereby establishing "a crucial analytical distance from lived, and conflictual, experience." Radical cultural critics "cannot afford any such displacement. . . . We must instead connect the study of information--that is, of the making of meaning in capitalist society--with the experience of the latter's divided population" (98). I am arguing that drumming is a means to resist this culture of information and its attendant forms of experience. I turn now to the latter, to make clear the necessity of oppositional practices and drumming's potential to fill that role.

¹³Take, as an example of Haraway's various arguments, the following description of my department's new building. Students, we are told,

will be welcomed by buoyant light and spaces that literally beg interpersonal communication. Instead of dark corridors, atrium-like centers will entice students to stroll from one critical nerve mass to the next. With their offices clustered around those skylit, sun-splashed nerve centers, teachers will step out of their personal spaces to engage students and each other. The environment will accommodate either group dialogue or intimate, one-on-one exchanges. (Linn 2)

Students-as-information bits, architecture-as-neurophysiology, technology-as-sunshine: "communications redesign."

Cowboys and Indians

The ideology of the informatics of domination is clearly articulated in a recent television advertisement from MCI, part of a campaign in which a young girl with an English accent prophecies the advantages of the telecommunications revolution. In this particular ad, standing on a beach and skipping through shallow water, she says (in classic syllogistic form):

The world is information.
 Information can be digitalized.
 Digital information can be transmitted.
 Every book, every movie, every piece of knowledge in the universe:
 [pause, then a sudden close-up on the girl's face] right here.

The dream of absolute, immediate control, made possible by the digitalization--the computerized coding--of everything, is being sold to the citizens of the "developed" world. "The ubiquity and invisibility of cyborgs is precisely why these sunshine-belt machines are so deadly. They are as hard to see politically as materially. They are about consciousness--or its simulation" (Haraway, "Manifesto" 71).

The simulation of consciousness is at the heart of William Gibson's cyberpunk novel Neuromancer, a chronicle of the dark side of the sunshine world of the information age. The metaphor that opens the novel is not merely a literal prophecy (though it may be that as well); it carries the same idea represented in the MCI ad: "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel" (3). As the sky is a television, the world is information. But there is "nothing" there: only the scrambled white, grey, silver and black that we call "snow." This "information" is meaningless to the world Gibson shows us, a world where the marriage of capitalism and computers is taken to its "logical" end. The world itself ("nature" if you will) has been sucked dry: of materials and of meaning.

Another form of commerce takes the place of the manipulation of material resources. Postmodernism, Haraway tells us via Jameson, is about texts and surfaces, and "the silicon chip is a surface for writing" ("Manifesto" 70). The informatics of domination appears to give up any sense of "reality" as the material world and replaces it with disembodied, computerized consciousness. What counts is the code.

Get just wasted enough, find yourself in some desperate but strangely arbitrary kind of trouble, and it was possible to see Ninsei as a field of data, the way the matrix had once reminded him of proteins linking to distinguish cell specialties. Then you throw yourself into a highspeed drift and skid, totally engaged but set apart from it all, and all around you the dance of biz, information interacting, data made flesh in the mazes of the black market. . . . (Gibson 16; emphasis added)

At the center of Gibson's novel is a construct known as "cyberspace," a new territory of sorts traversed by, among others, "cowboys."

Case was twenty-four. At twenty-two, he'd been a cowboy, a rustler, one of the best in the Sprawl. He'd been trained by the best. . . in the biz. He'd operated on an almost adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix. A thief, he'd worked for other, wealthier thieves, employers who provided the exotic software required to penetrate the bright walls of corporate systems, opening windows into rich fields of data. (5)

Case stole from one of his employers. They caught him and made sure he would never work again: "They damaged his nervous system with a wartime Russian microtoxin. . . . The damage was minute, subtle, and utterly effective" (6). Case could no longer enter cyberspace, but this meant much more than a loss of a vocation, of his identity as a cowboy. Case lost access to the "rich fields of data": to what replaced the earth and

materiality in his social reality. He could no longer break the "ice" (intrusion countermeasures electronics), go through windows to get at what is lies behind--data. Case lost access to the phallus, the founding signified, the ultimate referent in a world where reality is a code. He had only what most have: walls, windows, ice: surfaces, texts, signifiers.

For Case, who'd lived in the bodiless exultation of cyberspace, it was the Fall. In the bars he'd frequented as a cowboy hotshot, the elite stance involved a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh. (6)

The phallus in Case's world, a world of computers and data, is decidedly ascetic. He has sex with Molly, his business partner, but sex is not what Case desires; its role in the novel is insignificant.

Molly is a cyborg, a human with "a fair amount of silicon in her head" (Gibson 34). To achieve certain parts of their employer's plan, Case is connected to Molly via his cyberspace deck through simstim, a technology used primarily for entertainment in which the "viewer" is connected into all the sensory inputs of the "actor." Through this type of computer connection Case literally becomes one with Molly's body (but not her mind):

Then he keyed the new switch. The abrupt jolt into another flesh. Matrix gone, a wave of sound and color. . . . For a few frightened seconds he fought helplessly to control her body. Then he willed himself into passivity, became the passenger behind her eyes. (56)

Case finds Molly's body somewhat alien: "her body language was disorienting, her style foreign." He also finds "the passivity of the situation irritating" (56). The other problem is that Case dislikes simstim "because it was basically a meat toy. . . a gratuitous multiplication of flesh input" that disrupts the ascetic sensibilities of cowboys. Case admits to himself that cyberspace and simstim are basically the same

technologically, but "the cyberspace matrix was actually a drastic simplification of the human sensorium" (55). Both simstim and cyberspace are representations; however, one is a representation of the sensorium while the other gives access to "rich fields of data." That is what matters in the informatics of domination; data replace the real and the material, the body and the earth.¹⁴

MCI offers us, as Gibson's "cyberspace" offered his hero, access to what is real in the informatics of domination: information. We are being promised something much more than convenience (MCI) or riches (cyberspace) here: we are being offered a return to that which has been denied us--access to the world--in the form of data. "Right here." Digital information is being offered as the solution to our alienation. The next step, therefore, should come as no surprise: that this forms the basis for a new spirituality. That the MCI ad with which I began this section is set on a beach by the ocean now seems all the more fitting. Freud argues that the "oceanic feeling" his friend Romain Rolland claimed to be a religious experience is in fact the remnant of a desire for oneness, for access to that which has been denied. Although for Freud that is the mother's body, it can also be taken as direct access to the world denied us by language or access to nature made impossible by technology. Religion, mother, reality, nature: fixing the object of desire misses the point. The promise is no more fort-da: MCI offers us access to the world in the form of information that is "right here."

¹⁴Clearly, Gibson's novel begs for a Lacanian reading, but that is another project. One aspect of such a reading that is highly relevant here, however, is one of the alternate terms for cyberspace: "matrix," a term whose Latin predecessor means "womb." Like the Imaginary, the matrix is undifferentiated and represents an ideal with which actual, living women's bodies (i.e., meat) cannot compete.

MCI offers (sells) this, I believe, as a religious or spiritual experience. Another of their ads in the campaign takes place around a campfire. The light reflects, flickering, on the girl's face as she speaks and at one point we are shown an old, wise-looking Native American man whose face is also illuminated by the firelight. The nostalgic desire, metonymically condensed into this image, is called up to be connected to what MCI has to offer us: a peaceful, balanced, clean world where things are once again meaningful. Spirituality, community, holism and nature are offered to us in the form of digital information: the matrix. All we have to do is "jack in."¹⁵

Stuart Ewen argues that advertising as it has developed in the United States works primarily to address implicit critiques of the very system it works to perpetuate. These criticisms primarily concern the alienation, fragmentation, excessive regimentation and sensory overload of the modern city and its workplace. Ads call up these critiques (implicitly or explicitly), voice a kind of sympathy, and then, predictably, offer a product as the way out. Images of community respond to dislocation and the breaking of traditional bonds (MCI's "Friends and Family"), images of individuality respond to a feeling of being lost in the masses (Nike's "Just Do It"), and various gadgets offer ways to regain control over hectic lives (IBM's appropriation of Chaplin's assembly line gags from Modern Times to sell computers). In MCI's current campaign, all of these themes are present. Having any information "right here" responds to the need for control. The campfire cues nostalgic ideals of tribal community (e.g., story telling) and closer ties with nature ("roughing it"). The elderly Indian reinforces these metonymic links while adding meanings such as spirituality and a calm

¹⁵Are you jacked into bit-net, internet, or some similar e-mail and information "network"? Are academics not at the heart of the new spirituality, the digital ideal of "right here"? Or are we playing a game whose rules are set by others?

wisdom. All we have lost will be returned, MCI chants, through a fiberoptic network: a "New Age" embracing both nature and "clean" technology.¹⁶

Nostalgia (Take Two)

Given the emergence of the informatics of domination and its potentials to transform, extend and deepen already existing structures of oppression (and doubtless creating new ones on the way), I am arguing that the desires driving drumming and world beat must be taken seriously, not dismissed as "New Age" claptrap or a naive nostalgia. However, Haraway argues, we already live in a cyborg world produced by the informatics of domination: stark oppositions between organism and machine, human and animal, are no longer viable. The cyborg, according to Haraway, is not a style, an option, but like postmodernism is a cultural dominant and therefore requires a reworking of politics from within. "The certainty of what counts as nature--a source of insight and a promise of innocence--is undermined, probably fatally. . . . We cannot go back ideologically or materially. It's not just that 'god' is dead; so is the 'goddess'" ("Manifesto" 70, 81).

Ecology's organic holism, ecofeminism's "nature," the enviro-pagan "Goddess," psychoanalysis' pre-Oedipal/pre-Symbolic symbiosis with the world/mother, and Marxism's desire for unalienated labor and the recovery of use-value are all a kind of original unity that these political programs wish to recover. Postmodernism rejects origin stories, and hence the possibility of "origin," along with all other "master narratives."

From One-Dimensional Man to The Death of Nature, the analytic resources developed by progressives have insisted on the necessary domination of technics and recalled us to an imagined

¹⁶For a discussion of the contradictions of "New Age Technoculture," see Ross.

organic body to integrate our resistance. ("Manifesto" 71)

Haraway's radicalism in comparison to many cultural critics is that she does not simply "inflate" culture and technology at the expense of nature and organism (recall Seltzer's comments, above)--she takes the deconstruction of the binary to heart.

Haraway is by no means arguing for pessimism in the face of the inevitability of the loss of origin, purity and innocence.

From one perspective, a cyborg world is about the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet, about the final abstraction embodied in a Star War apocalypse waged in the name of defense, about the final appropriation of women's bodies in a masculinist orgy of war. From another perspective, a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. The political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point. ("Manifesto" 72)

Given the status of both "tradition" and "technology" as "reifications," the important question to ask, to return to Nietzsche, is not "what is it?" but "which one?"--what is the will which drives it? World beat's ambivalent relationship with technology is a good example of the impossibility of purity and of the possibilities that can be created by a fusion of traditional and modern technology.¹⁷ The Los Angeles-based group "Crash Worship" is

¹⁷A rebuttal against the demonization of technology in the context of music can be found in Frith's "Art Versus Technology." Among other things, he argues that most advances in musical technology have, at least initially, enabled resistance to corporate homogenization. David Byrne commented on the possibilities enabled by digital technology in this way:

another. Based on my experience of attending a performance of theirs, I would describe what they are doing as a contemporary bachanalia. Musically, they laid down a strong, compelling rhythm with drums while also projecting intense levels of electronic feedback. Fires were lit and strobe lights pulsed. "Audience" members (the lines were blurred) danced in a distinctly punk-derived style, painted their own and each other's bodies, and (I am guessing) consumed a fair amount of LSD and other synthetic substances. As with Timothy Leary's description of a rave as an "electronic consciousness alteration" that "puts the mind into a trance-like state where it can be broadened" (quoted in Isaiah Stewart 22), these type of events seem to combine the ancient arts of ritually- and rhythmically-driven altered states of awareness with technological (electronic and chemical) mechanisms without regard to some idea of natural purity. As Haraway writes, "ambivalence toward the disrupted unities mediated by high-tech culture requires. . .subtle understanding of emerging pleasures, experiences, and powers with serious potential for changing the rules of the game" (91). As I hope to make clear, drumming and world beat are two such "emerging powers."

It carries one step further the idea of splicing together different cultures--words, phrases, textures, everything. With a kind of technical perfection, anything can be mixed right in with anything else. . . . You get this massive rhythm going, and its bigger than any song or musical entity. (49)

Outside of the musical context, Mander criticizes the utopian myth of technology as a "democratizing" force. For a discussion of both the democratizing and totalitarian potentials of the new information technologies, see Tehranian.

Composition

Attali, writing in France in 1977, argued that we are nearing the end of the current stage of musical production and consumption, what he termed the network of repetition. In the nineteenth century, music was a spectacle (e.g., a concert) in which power was both localized and represented. Under repetition, made possible by recording technology and mass production, music (and its power) is both everywhere and nowhere. Music is stockpiled and listened to largely in private; alternatively, it creeps into every part of our daily activities as muzak and other background music. In repetition, music silences and isolates us before its endless monologue. "We are all condemned to silence--unless we create our own relation with the world and try to tie other people into the meaning we thus create" (134). Attali believes these new relations can be accomplished in the next musical network, composition, wherein people will begin to make their own music again.¹⁸ I believe drumming is a concrete site for such a (re)creation and that Attali's descriptions of composition are an adequate, if abstract, representation of my experiences and senses of drumming.

Composition entails "inventing new codes, inventing the message at the same time as the language. Playing for one's own pleasure, which alone can create the conditions for a new communication. . . . pleasure in being instead of having" (134). Central to composition is a new relationship between music and the body:

To improvise, to compose, is thus related to the idea of the assumption of differences, of the rediscovery and blossoming of the body. . . . Composition ties music to gesture, whose natural

¹⁸For a more extensive review of the three networks prior to composition (sacrifice, representation and repetition) see "Discipline."

support it is; it plugs music into the noises of life and the body, whose movement it fuels. It is thus laden with risk, disquieting, an unstable challenging, an anarchic and ominous festival, like a Carnival with unpredictable outcome. . . . To compose is to stay repetition and the death inherent in it, in other words, to locate liberation not in a faraway future, either sacred or material, but in the present, in production and in one's own enjoyment. (142-143)

Drumming, whether alone or in a group, is immediate, intuitive, nonrational.

Composition, however, is not an entirely private, ludic endeavor: "Music is no longer made to be represented or stockpiled, but for participation in collective play, in an ongoing quest for new, immediate communication, without ritual and always unstable" (Attali 141). Composition "gives voice to the fact that rhythms and sounds are the supreme mode of relation between bodies once the screens of the symbolic, usage and exchange are shattered" (143). ("Before words. Before music. There was the beat.") What is crucial about composition is the reclamation of the ability to produce our own "architectures of time," no longer accepting rhythms imposed from without, from above.

Time no longer flows in a linear fashion; sometimes it crystalizes in stable codes in which everyone's composition is compatible, sometimes in a multifaceted time in which rhythms, styles, and codes diverge, interdependencies become more burdensome, and rules dissolve. (147)

As with the previous networks, according to Attali composition foreshadows and lays the foundations for the emergence of radically new social relations and modes of production. Music "explores, much faster than material reality can, the entire range of possibilities in a given code" (11). Composition hails the possibility of an economic structure in which the distinctions between worker and consumer, doing and destroying, use-time

and exchange-time are brought into question. Composition entails an exchange between bodies through work instead of through commodities.

This constitutes the most fundamental subversion we have outlined: to stockpile wealth no longer, to transcend it, to play for the other and by the other, to exchange the noises of bodies, to hear the noises of others in exchange for one's own, to create, in common, the code within which communication will take place.
(143)

Although Attali was not writing in the context of the two emergent cultural forms I am focusing on here, his statements are remarkably applicable. The more obvious link is to drumming circles as a form of communication created by and exchanged between bodies in physical proximity, for no "productive" purpose other than individual pleasure, connection with a group, and/or a privileging of the body. Such groups have the potential of creating their own rhythms, of producing new codes, new pleasures, new forms of "collective play" that can lay the groundwork for new forms of collectivity, identity, organization, and production. Drumming is potentially about much more than individual pleasure and the alteration of consciousness. It is about rewriting the codes that in-form multiple levels of bio-social organization.

A Genealogy of Rhythm

I am admittedly skeptical of Attali's claim that each new musical network, including composition, not only predates but signals the development of a new socioeconomic structure. His causal links are a bit too linear and his optimism that composition necessarily entails a new social structure is too unguarded for my tastes. But his connection between music and the mode and relations of production must be kept in play here. Recall my argument, via fractals, that rhythm can be heard not

simply as a part of the superstructure or a means of altering an individual's consciousness, but as one possible code that underlies multiple levels of organization, from the neural to the socioeconomic. Given such a model, and in response to Ebert's anticipated critique of both Attali and my reading of drumming circles, I am not suggesting that drumming circles themselves (even if they became much more widespread than they are now) will transform the whole of society or its basic economic structures. What I am suggesting is that they develop a knowledge of rhythm: of its transformative power, of its social implications, of its use.

This knowledge does not simply appear spontaneously. And this is why I characterized this project, as well as the projects of Mickey Hart, Betty Travland and others, as a genealogy of rhythm: a rediscovery of "traditional," "submerged," "subjugated" knowledges and their subsequent rearticulation in terms of contemporary struggles. This also explains, I believe, why these projects have a decidedly nostalgic tone while not being reducible to that same nostalgia. The potential of drumming circles--by no means always or even generally actualized--is the intervention in existing struggles: gender inequalities, the continued subjugation of indigenous peoples, environmental destruction, the objectification of labor, and a general and pervasive alienation. I hope my previous essays made evident the relevance of alternative knowledges of rhythm to those struggles.

What forms do these knowledges take? Most people are skeptical of the "quality" of music that a group of untrained people can produce. At perhaps the most basic level, people need to learn to recognize that they have the capacity to make their own music in a way that is both meaningful and powerful. Few people, in my experience, walk away from a drumming circle lacking in this knowledge.¹⁹ And if people become aware of the "simple

¹⁹As I stated at the opening of this project, I do not claim my experiences are representative of the "typical" drumming circle. I have had

truth" that a group of unfamiliar nonmusicians can create "something that [is] alive, that [has] a force of its own, out of nothing but their own shared energy" (Hart, Drumming 238), what are the potentials of the collective action this could spark? Was it really accidental or coincidental that Plato carefully catalogued particular rhythmic forms, melodies and instruments to be banned from his Republic? That the drum was banished in the West, then contained primarily in the military? That parallel to the rise of capitalism and industrialism, music was made into an activity to be engaged in only by trained specialists? That standards of technical perfection were developed that devalued spontaneous, communal performance? That slave masters banned drumming by Africans in the Americas? That the "community leaders" of Arcata wanted to ban Dead Heads from drumming on the town's central plaza? That rhythm has been devalued as "primitive"? That rhythm has been, in Said's terms, hidden

drumming experiences that, if they had come earlier in my journey, would not have left me with a feeling of excitement, empowerment, joy, and--crucially--a belief in my ability to drum. These took place in contexts in which the "leaders" were too directive and/or too technical, very much the opposite of Betty's "intuitive" approach. They are the kind of people who led me to believe for most of my life that I had no musical talent.

For a discussion relevant to the dynamics of drumming circles, see Eisenberg. Although much of my experience with drumming circles confirms his description of the traits and necessary conditions of jamming, I would question his emphasis on skill, or at least his implicit definition of what constitutes it. Many of the members of groups I have drummed with are not musicians and have never drummed before, though this does not necessarily mean they lack rhythmic skills. I held a drumming circle in a class of mine recently: not only were most of us not musicians, most had no idea what a drumming circle was about and were extremely skeptical beforehand that we could really jam. Judging by the verbal and written responses I received, most people left the circle without their skepticism; many of them definitely "got it."

beneath piety, heedlessness and routine, awaiting restoration?

If the first "knowledge" of rhythm that can be restored through drumming circles is community, the second regards a deep connection to the body and the earth. When I drum, when I produce my own rhythms and am in the presence of others doing the same, I cannot easily not be in my body. The experience is too immediate, undeniable, pervasive and energizing. While drumming I am also deeply aware, in an other-than-cognitive sort of way, of my connection to the earth. Perhaps it is the vibrations of animal skins, the sound waves produced by rock, wood, hide, gourd and seed (even plastic), that create this awareness. Or perhaps it is, as Hart claims, that producing and experiencing rhythms puts me in touch with the rhythms of the universe. (The academic part of me is feeling like I am going a little too far here, getting a little too unverifiable, mystical, personal and intuitive, losing my "critical" distance. Oh well.²⁰) Whatever the "mechanism," if the result is an increasing sensitivity to materiality, to the rhythms of nature and the ways and extent to which those rhythms have been altered and destroyed, then other choices may be made in relation to the environment, new possibilities envisioned (sensed, felt, tasted, smelled, heard).

The third type of knowledge brought about by drumming circles stems from some of the practicalities of the activity. Drumming has led to people learning how to make their own drums, often in somewhat "traditional"

²⁰This description of the relationship between the drum and the body questions my earlier analysis of commodification: perhaps these traits are "intrinsic" to drumming, are not reifications but relatively unmediated experiences or at least meanings operating outside of the system of exchange. I believe they are one of the latter. I have to be careful: just because someone describes drumming in a certain way does not necessarily mean those meanings are part of the commodity system. As Fiske, among others, reminds us, the system just does not work that perfectly.

ways, i.e., with wood and hide, whether by themselves or in workshops. Alternatively, people buy drums that have been, until recently, primarily handmade by craftspeople (some Euro-Americans, some Native Americans). There is a network of sorts between existing craftspeople and those interested in drumming, spreading these knowledges around. Betty Travland was involved, for example, in bringing a drum-maker from Denver to Salt Lake several times a year to hold workshops. Eventually, she began to hold these workshops on her own, with the addition of ritual forms (some adapted from what she learned from a Native American medicine woman). In turn, all of the people who made a drum in these workshops (probably in the hundreds) now have a rudimentary knowledge of their own.²¹

In addition to the instruments, some kind of ritual/organization form in which to drum is helpful. Although these forms can be "invented" from scratch, many have turned to other cultures, particularly Native Americans, for a basic framework--such as the "drumming circle"--that is then adapted. Such a move not only creates a knowledge of alternative ritual forms (a crucial form of power given the insights of biogenetic structuralism), it also leads to an increased awareness of some aspects of native culture. New rhythms, dances, and other musical forms may be "borrowed" and adapted as well.

There is another source of "knowledge" about percussive music in general and alternative rhythmic forms in particular: world beat. World

²¹In this context, the moves by Remo to "tap into" this preexisting market with their line of plastic, mass-produced "personal percussion instruments" is troubling. It could be defended as democratizing, since handcrafted drums are expensive. However, people can make drums at home with old bowls, acetate cloth and Elmer's glue for less money than Remo's most inexpensive drum. While not "natural," these cheap, handmade drums are important because they put the knowledge of how to produce rhythmic instruments in the hands of "the people" themselves. Remember that the core of Taylorism is the divorce of knowledge from practice.

beat, at least in part, represents an early stage of Attali's network of composition. To go beyond the basic 4/4, marching-style rhythm entrained into most Euro-American bodies, to expand the limited repertoire of rhythms encoded into Western subjects, world beat is an ideal source. Just as musicians like David Byrne and Paul Simon draw from the rhythms of Africa or Brazil, world beat allows less well-financed individuals to do so as well. Along the way, world beat has the potential to spark interest in other facets of these cultures and perhaps to create an increased awareness of (or even a heightened political commitment to) the plight of traditional cultures all around the world. World beat offers access to different "architectures of time," different rhythmic and temporal sensibilities that can create the possibility of intervention and struggle.

Tactics and Transformations

Michel de Certeau distinguishes between strategic and tactical forms of power. He identifies strategic power as those forms used by the dominant forces in modern societies, technologies based on space and sight, as in the panopticon and conventional military strategy. Strategic power has as its corresponding form strategic knowledge, also based on sight and space. Johannes Fabian describes this type of knowledge in the context of the socialization and training of ethnographers:

The recommendations to use maps, charts and tables signals convictions deeply ingrained in an empirical, scientific tradition. Ultimately they rest on a corpuscular, atomic theory of knowledge and information. Such a theory in turn encourages quantification and diagrammatic representation so that the ability to "visualize" a culture or society becomes synonymous for understanding it. I shall call this tendency visualism. . .to connote a cultural, ideological bias toward vision as the "noblest sense" and toward geometry qua graphic-spatial conceptualization as the most

"exact" way of communicating knowledge. (106)

One of the immediate consequences of such a framework is the marginalization of large portions of the cultural milieu and the ethnographer's experiences. "No provision seems to be made for the beat of the drums or the blaring of bar music that keeps you awake at night; none for the strange taste and texture of food, or the smells and the stench" (108).²² With the marginalization of these experiences what is also accomplished is the direction of attention away from the transformational possibilities, the alternative knowledges, contained therein. Against this tendency, world beat can act as a kind of corrective.

Tactical power, according to de Certeau, is generally utilized by the dominated elements within a society. While strategic power is based on the definition and control of space, tactics are based on time. Guerrilla warfare, for example, is based on well-timed interventions and raids, not the control of territory. This lack of territorial control gives tactical power its autonomy, but it also means that "what it wins it cannot keep" (37). Listen to de Certeau's more elaborate description:

Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time--to the circumstances which the precise instance of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc. (38)

As I hope I have demonstrated, the dominant forces in a social formation can definitely rely on temporal techniques such as rhythm to maintain control. That does not deny, however, that dominant structures, whether

²²For additional discussion of the visual bias of ethnography, see Stoller.

temporal or spatial (most are probably simultaneously both), can be disrupted rhythmically and that such disruptions may require fewer scarce resources than strategic forms of opposition.

Given the potentials of tactical power, world beat can be understood as much more than a "resource" to be "mined" for alternative rhythms. World beat music can represent a difference--a different rhythmic sensibility, a different musical organization, and hence a different "code," an alternative sense regarding the nature of order and of relationships, both social and natural, cognitive and somatic. What might happen when an individual is exposed to the intense rhythms of another culture? Following biogenetic structuralism, there would not, presumably, be an existing model to deal with the experience. The rhythms may call up dormant models (paleoneurognosis), unintentionally activate ANS systems, or entrain structurally similar models (e.g., some form of "native" music and dance behavior). Or, they may confuse all of the existing models, thereby producing displeasure, confusion, a fight-flight response, or a nonsocialized form of ecstasy. Recall Hart's description of Europeans listening to Babatunde Olatunji: "the rhythm of the drum was calling up something from these sleek cosmopolitan bodies that had been asleep" (Drumming 91). Perhaps, given that music is a part of the externalized forms of order (i.e., rituals) that assist in the canalization of neural pathways, it could "open up" or "suggest" an alternative neural organization? In contrast to my previous critiques of world beat as a commodity, there are hints of an impulse different from the nostalgic and paternalistic ones discussed above. One description of Rykodisc's "the World" series opens with the rather vague statement, whose significance is perhaps made clear in this context, that "this series is designed to cross borders and transcend limits" (Diga, liner notes).

Think in Kristeva's terms. The rhythms of a particular social order serve

to canalize the presocial drives and thereby constitute the subject. Alternative rhythmic orders would, with the body as their site, enter into a struggle with the existing organization of drives and energies. Existing canalizations may be violated, followed by a corresponding shift in the nature of the subject, opening up "lines of flight": modes of awareness, bodily experiences, and intersubjective connections previously unavailable. Drumming in various forms--world beat, drumming circles, drumming alone at home or in some "natural" setting--has the potential to engage in a rhythmic struggle with the dominant social orders. Attali states it this way: composition "is the individual's conquest of his [sic] own body and potentials" (135). Although this may sound rather individualistic, I think of it in relation to Nietzsche's will to power: the will to power is life, a giving up of the will to control and other life-negating moralities, an embracing of possibilities whose results cannot be known in advance: turbulence, fluidity, multiplicity, becoming.

For violence is no longer channeled into sacrifice; it no longer mimics itself in representation; it is no longer threatening, as it was in repetition. The wager of the economy of composition, then, is that social coherence is possible when each person assumes violence and the imaginary individually, through the pleasure of doing. (Attali 145)

In the terms of my discussion of "Order," we need to weigh in on the side of ontology against its repression by epistemology. In this sense, both Attali and I probably fall into what Margot Norris calls the "biocentric tradition," inhabited by the likes of Nietzsche and Kafka, wherein the anthropocentrism of mainstream Western culture is critiqued and some kind of return to animality or nature is promoted. Some of the common traits of biocentric discourse are critiques of rationality, machines and the repressions required by culture, and the promotion of a certain kind of art.

Norris's discussion of the latter is of relevance here:

Biocentric art confronts the challenge of producing a physiological or aphrodisiac art, an art that stimulates rather than persuades, that communicates viscerally rather than intellectually, that is transmitted animal to animal, organism to organism, like an infection rather than a philosophy. Of course, the paradox implicit in this caveat, of producing an art within culture that is not of culture, is only imperfectly resolvable in practice. (15)

In Victor Turner's terms, I am advocating drumming circles as a form of *communitas*, "direct, immediate, and total confrontations of human identities" (46). The paradox that both Turner and Norris name is "that the experience of *communitas* becomes the memory of *communitas*" (Turner 47). The drive to replicate the experience "develops a social structure, in which initially free and innovative relationships between individuals are converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae" (47). Despite this paradox, the experiences of *communitas* such as those found in drumming circles can function as a liminoid event, "a temporal interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cultural 'cosmos'" (41).²³

Unlike many liminoid experiences, including listening to world beat, drumming circles need not be highly individualistic (I do not believe they would "work" if they were). They are a collective (of undeniably small scale) that can "break" the existing order, temporarily holding it in suspension as it were, and thereby make possible physiological, subjective

²³Although not crucial to the uses to which I put Turner's ideas here, it is important to note that Turner makes a distinction between liminal and liminoid experiences. He argues that the former are not possible in contemporary Western cultural contexts, that the experience of *communitas* entailed in liminoid events is less "genuine" while also being less a part of formal social structures.

and (perhaps) collective reorganizations. If it is to have significant social implications this struggle for reorganization must happen at both the individual and collective levels, as both "ludic" pleasure (disruptions of subjectivity and alterations in consciousness) and the performance of alternative communal forms made possible by the "new" and "tactical" forms of knowledge I outlined above. As Turner states, individuals who "become totally absorbed into a single synchronized, fluid event" (such as a drumming circle) develop a "'gut' understanding of synchronicity" that opens the door to social creativity (48). Drumming circles and world beat make possible both individual disruptions and the spread of knowledges (sensitivities, sensibilities, practices) necessary for transformation. I have been arguing, here and throughout this project, for a "subtle understanding" of drumming and world beat as "emerging pleasures, experiences, and powers with serious potential for changing the rules of the game" (Haraway, "Manifesto" 91). A potential exists here for collective actions and profound social transformations, a potential that currently is barely being tapped by only the marginal wings of a few progressive social movements such as environmentalism and by other movements (primarily those dismissed as "New Age") whose politics are held to be questionable by the more "intellectual" branches of the left.

Rhythm is one way to re-create our sensibilities about social organization, knowledge, order and nature. What I am advocating is not a return to simpler times, but the overcoming of what we have now and the performance of alternatives that could be characterized as fluid, oppositional, transitory and multiple. However, I do not deny a definite nostalgic tone in my discourse and that of others associated with drumming and world beat. My initial response has and continues to be that this nostalgia is absolutely legitimate: it is the manifestation of the inadequacies and hostilities of the existing social forms that dominate my

daily experience. In Grossberg's terms, the postmodern condition is characterized by an unlinking of ideology and affect. We can either thrive in the meaningfulness of meaninglessness (celebratory postmodernism) or we can live in the hope of a return of "authentic" meaningfulness that we know will never come. The first risks becoming apolitical (recall my discussion of Ebert). The second is doomed to fail, its imagined purity just that, only imagined, its past having "only ideological reality" (Susan Stewart 23).

There are other options. Haraway argues for the "political" use of the liberations postmodernism and the cyborg offer us, but I do not wish to accept the "ground rules" of the cyborg as Haraway does (I lack her optimism regarding its possibilities). The ludic position, with which Haraway is partly aligned, celebrates the lack of authenticity, of grounding, and the free play it enables. My chosen option is genealogy: the point is not to go back but to examine marginalized traditions and cultures for alternative knowledges that can be rearticulated with contemporary conditions. The genealogical character of my project is necessary, at least in part, because of "the stark impossibility of thinking that": hegemony works by amputating our creative faculties, by limiting our ability to conceive of alternatives and eliminating knowledges of how to enact such alternatives (the semiotic world is not characterized by free play as much as some would like to believe). Some nostalgic "residue" is therefore inevitable--and useful in motivating collective action.

Yet my genealogy carries with it some of the risks of nostalgia: it turns to marginalized traditions as "resources" of a sort, and turning the socially, culturally and economically marginalized into a resource begins to seem a lot like exploitation and colonization. Annette Jaimes explains:

The problem is one of cultural appropriation. Eurocentric intellectuals habitually take the knowledge of indigenous peoples

and incorporate it into their own thinking, usually without attribution. In the process, they tend to deform it beyond recognition, bending it to suit their own social, economic, and political objectives. Unfortunately this has, with very few exceptions, proven to be as true of professed "allies" of native people as it has of their avowed enemies. (quoted in Churchill 139)

Cowboys and Indians (Take Two)

For several decades, very likely since soon after first contact, Native Americans have protested the use of their spiritual forms and ideas (sacred pipes, sweat lodges, sun dances, vision quests, and so forth) by non-Indians as well as the profitable selling of such traditions by both Indians and non-Indians (so-called "plastic shaman"). With the continued spread of New Age forms, Gaia worship, the men's movement and various forms of drumming, these protests have heightened in recent years, including formal declarations by several Native American organizations. (see Alexie; Churchill; Johnson; also of note is a March 1994 Good Morning America segment exploring this issue with a particular focus on drumming).

Native Americans critical of these practices base their opposition on several grounds. First, these white people do not know what they are doing and therefore are engaged in the desecration of deeply meaningful spiritual practices and objects. For example, George Tinker, a theologian of the Osage nation, explains that "in my tribe the drum is most precious. The drum is the heartbeat of the earth, it's the heartbeat of the people." He goes on to explain that "when white new age wannabees drum, the drum represents nothing more than a nice beat" (Good Morning). Second, in the process of appropriating native practices they are transformed "into something that is new age-ish and individualistic. That mutation eventually makes its way back into Indian communities, back into Indian

language and Indian sentiments" (Tinker, Good Morning). Hence the already daunting difficulties of keeping native culture alive and anchored in tradition are increased (Churchill). Third, such appropriations complete the genocidal and colonizing project of Europeans in North America: having already taken away the land, resources, leaders and children of Native Americans, what remains of their culture and spirituality are now being carted off as well. Finally, such appropriations are often done with implicit or even explicit disregard of the past and present acts of violence against native peoples; in some cases the very "spirituality" being appropriated from indigenous peoples is used to justify the refusal of such "political" stances (Churchill). These appropriations are carried out with the interests of Euro-Americans in mind (e.g., our guilt and alienation) and little if any regard for the interests of the originating cultures.

When I think of these critiques in terms of my practices and those of others that I know to be careful and well-intended (e.g., Betty), I get a little defensive, even angry. (Drums are by no means "nothing more than a nice beat.") And then I get scared because my responses look and sound and feel a lot like the types of responses my students have, for example, to Marlon Riggs's critique of television's representations of African-Americans: "So what do they want?" "It seems like they wouldn't be happy with any image." "I can't be held to blame for the actions of my ancestors." "Im not racist." Part of me wants to say that many of the people investing in native spirituality, even if they are not particularly careful or reflective, are not simply "well intentioned" but are attempting to correct the pathologies with which Native Americans, among others, have diagnosed Western culture: a lack of sensitivity to the living, spiritual aspects of nature; an ignorance of the interconnectedness of all things; a refusal to acknowledge the validity of other understandings of the world, society and spirituality. In saying this I am not dismissing the negative political,

economic and spiritual implications of such appropriations. Unlike the question posed by the commentator of the Good Morning America report-- "Are they [New Age people] showing respect for Mother Earth or committing cultural piracy?"--I do not believe the transformative and colonialist implications of such practices are mutually exclusive. There is no pure stand of resistance.

I have in my possession a "theoretical toolkit" I can use to "deconstruct" many of the criticisms made by Native Americans against these varied groups of appropriators. First, these critics operate from a framework that seems to treat (native) culture as both static and monologic, something that is or was fixed and that is degraded by intercultural contact--not just appropriations characterized by unequal power relations, but by any appropriations by nonnatives. What is posited here appears to be a notion of "pure" native culture, a view that could be critiqued as both empirically untenable and politically reactionary along the same lines as Clifford's "salvage paradigm" or Tagg's deconstruction of notions such as "African music" (see "Struggle"). Finally, these critiques seem strongly grounded in an essentialist identity politics: I do not believe Churchill, for example, would grant that any white person could "legitimately" practice native spirituality, though he does not make clear how much the native/white distinction is racial and how much it is ethnic.²⁴

I am uncomfortable with such theoretical moves for several reasons, and hence I have merely named the possibilities without a full-scale rehearsal of them. Most if not all of the theory I would employ is decidedly European in origin; such a project feels a lot like justifying my needs and desires with my terms in blatant ignorance of the legitimacy of theirs. This

²⁴This could be an instance of the "strategic essentialism" advocated by Gayatri Spivak, but whether or not that is the case is unclear.

theoretical toolkit is also a result and manifestation of my various privileges. How different would its use be from that of the cannons and muskets of the Conquistadors? (Or perhaps the host of diseases Europeans brought into native communities is a better analogy?) On another dimension, the untenability (by my standards) of notions of cultural "purity" does not magically mean that cultural practices and artifacts cannot be appropriated and exploited. The lack of "purity" is not the lack of difference after all, nor does the deconstruction of "purity" negate power relations and the force of history. Similarly, leveling the charge of "essentialism" taken so seriously by many branches of "post" thought (postmodernism, poststructuralism and some feminisms and marxisms) does not mean everything is open, that "ethnicity" becomes a site for free play: ethnicity may no longer be conflated with race, but it is nonetheless "real" in its operations. I would not like to find myself in the position of trying to argue that many or even some sizable minority of people who drum and otherwise borrow elements of indigenous cultures are "ethnically" native. Highlighting "culture" (relativity) over "nature" (essentialism) does not magically erase history and lived social reality. As Charlotte Townsend-Gault states the issue in the context of exhibitions of native art,

the multiple permissions of post-modernism threaten to overwhelm the ethnically specific meanings without which the work cannot play the role it has assigned itself in the reconstruction of the native populations of North America. (99)

So if I am unwilling to "deconstruct" the "crude" philosophical underpinnings of the arguments advanced by the few Native Americans I have read on this subject (please get the self-directed sarcasm here), can I "salvage" anything, can I continue to argue for the potentials of drumming? The standard liberal defenses seem inadequate. Jerry Mander, in a short critique of New Age appropriations amidst his lengthy book on the

technocracy and its treatment of indigenous peoples, defends Carlos Castaneda's works by highlighting his engagement of the issues surrounding the treatment of native peoples by the invading Europeans. The Gaia worshippers interviewed on Good Morning America defend their appropriations by stating that they approach native culture with "respect and honor" and that they are trying to "empower," not steal. Arthur Versluis spends one paragraph in his book on "the spiritual landscape of native America" decrying the portrayal of native spirituality as "magical," "bizarre," and a form of entertainment. None of these nonnative people grapple with the native critiques adequately or in any depth.

A first and important step is to avoid any pretense about being "authentic," to make clear, as Betty does, for example, that when we smudge we are not being "real" Indians, nor could we be. This does not necessarily solve the problem of desecration, nor is it clear that not pretending to be authentic makes it possible to "borrow" from or interact with native cultures without exploiting them. As I so frequently argue with my students in the context of African-Americans, I cannot pretend history does not exist, I cannot simply draw a line in time and say that everything that came before is independent of what I do now. This issue is crucial, because my characterization of this project as genealogical seems to make intercultural interaction and borrowing necessary: it does not necessitate mimicking or pretense, but it does turn to submerged cultures for a way out--for "them" and for "us"--of the hegemony of Western cultural, social, technological and economic forms. Alternate knowledges and sensibilities concerning the role of rhythm, for example, can be rearticulated in the context of this hegemony as a counterhegemonic force.

Ward Churchill, while not necessarily representative of Native Americans (who would be?), makes it clear that he opposes any Euro-

American or European appropriation of native forms. His critique of the men's movement is biting, honest, polemical, almost cruel. Yet part way through the essay "Indians Are Us?" he stops and reflects:

With all this said, it still must be admitted that there is a scent of undeniably real human desperation--an all but obsessive desire to find some avenue of alternative cultural expression. . .-- clinging to the Men's Movement and its New Age and hobbyist equivalents. (229)

Besides, Churchill agrees, wholeheartedly, with the critique of Western culture that drives this "desperation." The apparent reason whites turn to indigenous cultures such as those of Native Americans is that "they seem sincerely baffled by the prospect of having to define for themselves the central aspects of this alternative" to mainstream Western culture (230). Whites often experience themselves as being "cultureless." Churchill's solution? Europeans need to look to their own indigenous, submerged traditions.

His reasoning begins with the claim that before Europe began colonizing anyone else, it had to colonize itself; that is, creating the entity known as "Europe" required the colonization of all the traditional cultures that inhabited the area we now call "Europe." That Europeans think of themselves as without indigenous traditions is simply an indication of the greater length and effectiveness of their colonization: "your colonization has by now been consolidated to such an extent that. . .you no longer even see yourselves as having been colonized" (234). Yet these traditional cultures, with alternative sensibilities regarding the earth, relationships, music, and so forth, were still alive not too long ago, as evidenced by the burning of witches. These "pagan" cultures, from what we know of them, have much in common with other indigenous cultures in terms of their holistic outlook, appreciation of nature, and so forth. Returning to pagan

practices and "cults" such as those of Dionysos and Cybele avoids some of the tensions involved in appropriations of things "Indian."

Various portions of this project provide another model for "appropriation." Although the likes of Nietzsche, Irigaray and Bakhtin may not talk much about rhythm per se, part of my attempt to develop an alternative rhythmic sensibility was not to "go back" but to draw analogs from these oppositional theorists: rhythm as the will to power and active nihilism, rhythm as fluidity and turbulence, rhythm as dialogue and polyphony. Koyaanisqatsi, Talking Heads and other cultural forms also provide some alternatives, though they do, admittedly, draw from non-European indigenous traditions.

Ultimately, I am not willing to deny the possibilities presented by other cultural traditions. The pluralist in me will not allow me to completely let go of the value of intercultural exchange, even if such exchanges are also, simultaneously, implicated in various forms of imperialism. After all, if I go back far enough, even "indigenous" European traditions borrowed from and originated in non-European cultures. "Europe" itself is a "fiction." It's turtles all the way down after all. There is no original utterance. There is no pure stand of resistance.

The Power of Impurity: The Tale of Kirin

My partner, Barb, made a drum at a weekend workshop run by Betty Travland. Barb picked out a premanufactured cedar hoop and chose a piece of a hide, both of which Betty purchases wholesale. During the weekend she made a generically "Native American" style hoop drum with a relatively thick hide, laced with rawhide strips around the back so that it can be held in one hand while beaten with a padded stick held in the other. Much of the workshop consisted of ceremonial "work," including a drum-induced journey to meet the spirit of the drum as well as the deer and tree that provided the

materials. As with Betty's drumming circles, the tone of these rituals is loosely but identifiably Native American. Betty has adapted and added to such ceremonies, perhaps most importantly in that she identifies her role as a midwife: the drum is made in the context of a birthing process (initially, Betty only made drums with women). As a result of this ritual work, the drum Barb made is a being, an entity: her name is Kirin. Here is how Barb talked about Kirin when I asked her to:

The entire process of discovering Kirin was intuitive, from picking the hoop out of a number of different ones to selecting the section of the hide to discovering what her voice would sound like, what her name would be, what her role or meaning in my life would be. I remember bringing home the hoop the first night and Betty had said for us to feel and sense and spend time with the hoop throughout the night, getting to know the hoop--the smoothness, the roundness, the depth. And then the next day in the morning we started the process of sanding and polishing the hoop. And we sat out on Betty's back porch in the sun in January. There wasn't much snow on the ground and we sat and polished and sanded and polished and sanded. It was so relaxing--although both of these people [Betty and another participant in the workshop] were essentially strangers, there was nothing strange about them.

Part of the process of making Kirin was so importantly about the rituals. The sense of drummings that we did, the candles, the string, the objects we brought with us that were meaningful, the journey. It was all so grounded in ritual. But there's another part of it that was just about the work, the hands-on work. From preparing the hoop to preparing the hide to cutting the hide, lacing the hide, tightening, knotting--it was very hard work to actually make it. And then just as I was almost done, I had the three knots made and there was a fourth knot I was making, I was pulling it tight, Kirin was almost completed, and then I felt a rip or tear just a little and then I pulled tight again and it snapped. And that instant of disappointment, of failure, of horror, was so quickly overcome by Betty and her being there to help me.

The sense of a strong older woman being there to assist me, to guide me, had been very present throughout all the process of

making Kirin, of birthing her. But it wasn't until that last moment when that piece of rawhide broke and Betty stepped into help me fix, to help me recover. In a lot of ways that was the best part about making Kirin.

I know her and I see her in a way that has so many layers to it. I still remember the images on the journey. I still remember the sense of her name coming to me so clearly, becoming part of her. I see the parts on her hide where pieces of other things that came from her birth water [the water the hide was soaked in] have left their mark on her. There's a lot of power in her that I rarely access but that I know is always available to me.

I feel her inside me whenever I play her. I can feel her moving and my body moving in response to her. And sometimes I sit in the drum circle with her, when all these drums and people and cells are moving in the room, and she and I will just sit there and I will just rest my fingers on her and I can feel her and I moving in response to the rest of the room. She's alive. She responds to my moods, to her environment, to the weather, to the seasons. And she responds, she listens and she never judges. It is very centering and calming to play her. And that sounds like such a cliché--I don't know how to describe or capture the feeling. I can place it in my body but the words just aren't there to describe it. And yet I very rarely play her.

Sometimes it seems like she doesn't make sense to be played in this environment. And yet on the other hand she represents such a disruption of this environment that it seems as if I should play with her all the time.

Kirin's sound is phenomenal: very deep, potentially quite loud. When I hold her and play her, the vibration runs up my arm and into my chest and head. I feel all of the drums I play but none have the sheer power of Kirin. She lays out a strong, pulsating, vibrating, all-encompassing blanket of sound and rhythm. To sit alone and play Kirin, even to keep up a very simple rhythm, like a heartbeat, is to have time change, to be calmed, to be grounded.

Prophylactic Theory

A day comes when we feel a certain need to loosen the theory a bit, to shift the discourse, the idelect which repeats itself, becomes consistent, and to give it the shock of a question. Pleasure is this question. As a trivial, unworthy name (who today would call himself a hedonist with a straight face?), it can embarrass the text's return to morality, to truth: to the morality of truth: it is an oblique, a drag anchor, so to speak, without which the theory of the text would revert to a centered system, a philosophy of meaning. (Barthes, Pleasure 64-65)

I have invested myself in critical reflection, in the importance of what Jameson calls the negative hermeneutic and what I think of in terms of skepticism, care, pessimism and subtlety. I have devoted the last several years of my life to such a project, and I anticipate my commitment will continue for at least a few more years. But criticism grounded too heavily in theory is not enough. I cannot reduce my experiences of drums, drumming circles and world beat music to their meanings (reifications, fetishizations) and their role in a system of exchange (commodity form). Drums may not have an intrinsic use-value, but they can nonetheless be used. They are material and they can, with the application of labor, produce a material event: sound, movement and rhythm. I cannot, as Rouget tried to do, consign them to the "safety" (ours, not theirs) of the "merely" symbolic. I cannot do so because the motive behind such a move, it seems to me, is clearly one of containment, a control of the threat posed by the materiality of drums and rhythm. I cannot do so because a central part of this project has been to question the opposition of material "reality" and symbolic "reality": by understanding discipline as neither persuasion nor coercion, by a rewriting of organizational communication in the context of

Koyaanisqatsi, by hearing rhythm as a site of socioeconomic struggle in and through bodies, by an analogy to fractals that removes questions of scale and "common sense" divisions between neural, cognitive and social organization. Put simply, I cannot "do justice" to my experiences and to my both intuitive and theorized senses of the potentials of drumming by using theory and critical reflection to "fix" drumming, to identify it (in the Nietzschean sense), to nail it down, to answer all the questions and concerns.

Larry Grossberg positions the critic as a fan rather than as a fanatic or an ideologue. "Fanatics invest affectively in ideological sites, but the investment empties the site of any meaning (whether substantial or formal); it becomes merely the necessary occasion for the investment" (65). The identity of the fanatic is performed by the investment itself, aside from its content or specificity. In the case at hand, someone might latch onto drumming simply because it is meaningful--regardless of what its meaning is, the sense that it has meaning makes it appealing amidst the existential inauthenticity of the postmodern condition. "Ideologues, on the contrary, make an affective investment based upon an exterior judgment of the quality of the specific text" (64). The specificity of the text or practice is unimportant: its abstract political articulations are what matter. "The ideologue's taste is always measured by standards outside of and adhered to independently of, the pleasures of everyday life" (64). So, for example, drumming may be critiqued for its colonizing appropriations of the practices of native cultures without the critic ever having experienced a drumming circle. Fans, as the third position, can invest in both affective commitment and ideological critique simultaneously or dialectically.

Fans make an affective investment in the objects of their taste and they construct, from those tastes, a consistent but necessarily temporary affective identity. Their preferences are determined by structures of relevance and effectivity; fans are

concerned with how particular practices enter into and effect changes within their everyday lives. . . . The fan's culture is the site of everyday enjoyment and pleasure, but also, of an affective empowerment which, as I have already suggested, provides strategies for survival and for a limited control over one's identity and life. (64)

Grossberg suggests that as cultural critics we articulate our social positions as fans and as critics. Our fan life provides the raw materials and the politics for our intellectual work. Our role as intellectuals enables us to gain a different perspective and to "articulate social possibilities" (68). *An impure politics, but there is no other kind.* Grossberg's critic-fan is a fair approximation of what I have been trying to do in this project.

Fanatics are marginalized by the norms of academic and critical practice: they lack any distance, they are too caught up in affect, blind to "real" concerns such as commodification and cultural exploitation. Both fans and fanatics--the former lumped in with the latter because of their common affective commitment, the "impurity" that results from their firsthand experience and enjoyment--are dismissed as "romantic" or "overly optimistic." Take the case of John Fiske's Understanding Popular Culture. Fiske's tone is too celebratory for the typical cultural critique; an approach such as his, which emphasizes the value of pleasure and the struggle over meanings, "may not be in a position fully to grasp contradiction" (Willis 13) --a cardinal sin for any good (pseudo) marxist. To take a more immediate example, my sense has been that at various times a degree of skepticism has arisen around my project because of a concern that I may be a "convert," a "one-true believer" in drumming. Am I into New Age? The men's movement? Or the Grateful Dead (I talk a lot about Mickey Hart after all)? If I am, should I admit it? Do I already go too far in admitting that I participate in drumming circles and listen to world beat music? How will

that affect my credibility? Whether or not I get fellowship money? A job?

Face it: academics are ascetics (I know I am). This does not mean we are not fans as well, but can we really be fans and academics at the same time? Certain kinds of politics can be entered into our academic discourses, but not pleasure, not enjoyment, not bodily ecstasy! These are compromising, personal, inappropriate unless discussed in the abstract: the body, not my body. It is a risk--not just to my credibility, but to my internalized identity as an academic: "I don't watch much television, just, uh, well, some PBS on occasion." I proudly pronounce listening to NPR. I am careful with disclosing that I avidly watch Star Trek: The Next Generation. I choose not to get into my other televisual tastes, even in the context of this discussion, even though it is crucial to the point I am making here--something holds me back. I call it social control. "Right here."

Susan McClary and Robert Walser critique popular music scholars for their willingness to speak in abstract terms, to engage in formal musicological or lyrical analyses, but not to speak directly about their own personal, visceral, sexual experiences of popular music when what they are talking about is the importance of the visceral and sexual nature of popular music experience. McClary and Walser center their discussion around a "Bloom County" cartoon--more specifically, around Opus's response to a grandly worded but abstractly empty review of their band, Billy and the Boingers: "Yeah, but do we kick butt?" Let me quote their core argument at length:

We would like to propose along with Opus that the inability or unwillingness to address this component of music--the bottom-line component, as it were, for most musicians and fans--is the greatest single failure of musicology.

Perhaps this is to be expected: it is, after all, the intellectually committed among us who become academics--those who are uncomfortable with inexplicable sensual responses and who wish to be able to control those responses rationally. Yet

musicologists are also individuals who find themselves drawn to music so irresistibly that they dedicate their careers to trying to figure out what makes it tick. This combination of intense attraction and fear of the irrational or of the sensual creates a strange set of priorities: to seize the objects that are most profoundly disturbing and to try to explain away--through extensive verbalization and theorizing--that which caused the disturbance. If one can take a piece of music that provoked a reaction and then analyze it in a totalizing way (laying it out as text, labeling its chords, tracing its semiotic parts, reducing it to ideological agenda), then perhaps it won't bite.

In fact, musicologists sometimes approach music with the same attitude that gynecologists (quite rightly!) approach female sexuality: gingerly. In both situations, a concerted effort is made to forget that some members of society regard the objects of their scrutiny as pleasurable. The staff historian takes the vital information (date of birth, height, weight) of the patient. Up into the stirrups goes the song. And the theorist, donning "objectivity" as a methodological rubber glove to protect against contamination, confronts the dreaded thing itself. Graphs, pitch charts, semiotic dissections, guidelines of political correctness--the Pap smears of musicology--are marshalled to detect pathological deviation, to reduce the threat of individuality to normative order. The song is buried under a barrage of theoretical insights, and--no, Opus--it doesn't kick butt any longer. That's the point. (286-287)

Theory as prophylactic.

I do not wish to wholeheartedly accept McClary and Waelser's every characterization or to imply that their narrative is a perfect fit with my situation. I am not a musicologist and do not claim that this project constitutes "musicology" in a disciplinary sense. I also like to think my desire to investigate drumming came from my sense of its potential, not a desire to contain it, protect myself from it, though I admit to a significant discomfort with my body (manifested, for example, in my fear of dancing in public settings or even applying the term "dancing" to what I do with music in private).

What is quite clear to me, however, is that most of what I have done in this essay--the extended critical analyses of drumming and world beat in terms of commodification and colonization--I have done less out of a conviction for their "truth" than from the felt need, originating from self-surveillance, to appear appropriately and adequately "rigorous." This is not to say I have no genuine concerns for these potential and actual incidents of violence and incorporation--since I have internalized the "academic" jailer, I experience these impulses very much as "my own." But I feel these "negative hermeneutics" do a certain violence to my experiences. They work too hard, and pretend too well, to have demystified drumming, to have explained it all (away). In this sense, even those conceptualizations designed to promote the potentials of drumming (such as my adaptation of biogenetic structuralism) feel wrong. Listen to Barthes once more:

The fact that we cannot manage to achieve more than an unstable grasp of reality doubtless gives the measure of our present alienation: we constantly drift between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. (Barthes, Mythologies 159)

I want to end this project by exploring my experiences of drumming--alone and in groups, as a participant and an audience member--and world beat music. None of what follows is to negate what has come before, and I do not pretend these descriptions are "pure," lacking in theoretical articulations and analytic moves. But I believe allowing my experiences to constitute my "final word" serves as an important corrective to tendencies in academic work in general and cultural criticism in particular.²⁵

²⁵I know, I know. Privileging "experience" risks essentialism, individualism, and a host of other critical-theoretical sins. Take Joan

Sound and Movement

One of my drums is reminiscent of a "tar": it is a large frame or hoop drum with a thin hide on one side that (it seems to me) should be played only with the hands. I purchased it inexpensively at a regular drum store. It includes a label reading "Made in India." It feels fragile and does not seem to have been crafted with a particularly great deal of care, but it is very sturdy and can make so many different sounds: deep, very high, flat, sharp, "twangy." Sometimes I sit down, preferably in the dark, with this drum. It suggests certain sounds, rhythms, patterns: the instrument itself seems to dictate, within the limits of my limited rhythmic imagination, what we will produce together. The process is very much a dialogue; the drum is not an object to be manipulated. The sounds and patterns we make together take me as close to a "trance" as I get when playing by myself. It is calming, hypnotic, allowing me to get lost and yet be very centered at the same time.

Barb and I heard Glen Velez, who plays similar kinds of frame drums,

Scott's argument in "The Evidence of Experience" for example: making experience, even marginalized experience, visible "precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system" that produces the experience (778). I am sorry, but I just do not think Scott gets (my) it--or perhaps I do not get (her) it. She calls for an approach "that takes all categories of analysis as contextual, contested, and contingent" (796). I am with her so far. But I refuse to reduce everything to discourse (see my critique of constructivist views of language in "Order"). Experience is political because of its discursive origins. Is it only political (and does that only mean "hegemonic")? Is it only discursive? Is discourse the only active player here? Scott ends by stating that experience should be "not the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain" (797). I have spent this entire project trying to explain my experiences of drumming and world beat music--and now I am saying that that is not enough, that explanation itself might be a key limitation here.

perform at the Festival of the Drum. After the last sound he would produce at the end of a "song" he would just listen, with his ear close to the drum, as the sound drifted off. He, of course, could hear it much longer than the audience could. They would start clapping very soon after he tapped out the last note--that was rather annoying. Velez explored the drum's sounds and then listened, reverently. Clapping seemed all wrong. It violated the soundscape. His performance felt more like sitting around a campfire. Clapping just did not fit. During each "song" it was so easy to trance out, to close my eyes and follow the sound, to travel somewhere without anything like images of literal places. I got lost in the music: not only, or even primarily, in the sense of being in my body like when I am in a drumming circle, but something much closer to a journey of sorts. No native spirits awaited me there, nor did I discover my totem animal or receive any "signs." This was not about pretending to be in the audience of a native shaman recovering my lost spirituality. It was, nonetheless, very spiritual and very much speaking to an absence.

I play my "Made in India" frame drum somewhat differently after I experienced Velez's performance than before. I have a clearer sense of this drum's ability, when played by itself, often when I am alone, to calm me, center or ground me, to help me get through how I may be feeling, to get my mind off of things without inciting an intensely physical "workout" like when I listen to and get lost in some good recorded drumming.

Velez also added to our sense of "getting to know" or "exploring" a drum or any other percussion instrument. Barb played the flute for several years, until she was a junior in high school. When we started drumming, she had a strong, typical bias against drums: there is no finesse involved, no real skill beyond being able to keep a steady beat. Drums could hardly be called instruments. I remember one day after I had purchased a few simple

percussion "toys" at a local drum shop, including some cheap claves: just two wooden sticks, about ten inches long, a little less than an inch in diameter. How hard could this be? How many possible combinations? Playing the claves, Barb came to a recognition of how very much there is a "skill" here, how long it would take to explore the sound potentials in such a simple instrument. She put this feeling into words in a way that I had not. We were so entranced by Velez, I think, because he so clearly and explicitly treated his drums in a similar way. In addition to our drums, we have sticks and rocks and other substances, all of which have a rich variety of sounds that I have to be open to, that I have to be sensitized to, that I have to take the time to listen to and for.

I bought my first drum, a dumbek, at Fertile Ground. It also has an animal skin and the shell is made of hand-thrown pottery, glazed a southern Utah red with a black cat-like animal shape taken from a petroglyph in southern Utah. It was made by a local craftsperson. The dumbek is a tricky instrument. Its sounds are not to be found easily. I remember the first time I went to Betty's drum circle. I took and played my claves. At one point I played a small dumbek of hers. The second time I attended a circle, I played it again, for two or three sets. The best way I can describe it is that with Betty's dumbek, and to a lesser but significant degree my own, you have to coax (tease?) the sound out of it. A dumbek is "meant" to be played with the hands only. It "has" to be held up: if the open end at the bottom of the hourglass shell is closed, like when set on the floor, it will produce very little sound, lacking resonance. It can be held with one arm in the lap while played with the other or, as I prefer to play it, held between my legs and played with both hands. Hitting it on the edge (which is hard--these dumbeks have ceramic shells) produces a high, sharp sound (almost metallic like a cymbal). Hitting the hide more on the center with a flat hand produces a dull but loud "thud" (I can feel the air quite strongly if I hold one

hand below the open end). Hitting the open hide with less of a flat hand, pulling it back more quickly, produces a deep, resonant, longer-lasting tone. And there are an infinite number of variations between these three and it all varies even more depending upon the temperature and humidity. During that second drumming circle, playing Betty's dumbek, I really came to appreciate not only how many different sounds it could produce, but how much sound such a little drum, in this case less than ten inches high and with a membrane less than seven inches in diameter, could produce. So when I bought my first "real" drum (i.e., one with a hide and that wasn't a "toy" or cheaply home-made) I bought a dumbek. It's a challenge: it's very rhythmic (as paradoxical as that sounds in distinguishing one drum from another) and can be painful if not played with care. It is much more of an ensemble drum, working better at drum circles or to accompany recorded music than, for example, the Indian frame drum. Some of the best and deepest grooves I have gotten into at drum circles have been while playing the dumbek: against the deep pulsing of the Native American-style hoop drums that dominate Betty's circles, the dumbek both stands out from and weaves within and between the deeper, steadier, more resonant base rhythms. Another woman who consistently attended the circles for about six months had a dumbek similar to mine: she and I would work together, getting some nice rhythms going that complemented both one another and the rest of the group. Her playing could bring out my ability to play some interesting and powerful rhythms on my dumbek, and it added to and meshed with the energy of the group in powerful ways.

Betty starts a beat and we all join in. We're all on the beat but as we start to find our own rhythm, our own space, as we search for the deeper energy flow, it's there but it's a little forced. Then after thirty seconds or five minutes...click. Ahhhhhhhh. Clack. Huh? Oh. Yeah. Uhm-hmmmmmm. In a good groove at a drumming circle, it just goes. There's a flow, and I'm

rocking back and forth, and the rhythms flow out of my hands and into the drum, and there are changes that add to what everyone's doing, or perhaps that call for a change in what I'm doing, but it just happens, nothing's forced, it just goes, and my hands just move, and there's no difficulty, no pain, no problem with the exchange between hand and drum, it's just right, there's a flow back and forth and both entities, the drum and I, are doing fine, the rhythm pulses in me, my feet move, I rock back and forth, I know--no, make that feel--where the pulses are, even when they are not clear or singular, and there's an entity, an energy, a flow in the whole room that is not separate from me or my drum or our relationship but it's all there and I close my eyes and a shaker's going somewhere that gets right into my ear, into my brain and it shakes and bright sensations (not lights) are in my skull while warm feelings are in my chest and abdomen from the bass sounds of the hoop drums and I'm alternating between playing high, sharp sounds and loud, resonant pulses but I don't have to think about any of it and it all fits, it just happens, and then someone starts chanting or whooping and we back out of the groove ever so slightly for just an instant and then there's this feeling in the energy flow like everyone just went "oh yeah" and we go back into the groove and start to get deeper and the chanting drives us on, then I open my eyes for a minute and there are all these people and most have their eyes closed and no one's looking at anyone else as if to say "what in the hell are you doing?" and that's great and I close my eyes again and get back into a conscious sense of the groove even though I haven't really left the groove and I can't will it but I can be in it and add to it and I can pay more or less attention to it (though that's not the right word) and the energy is circling around the room and I remember though I have forgotten because I can't remember exactly except when I'm in it what this is like and the groove is steady now and the energy flows and eventually we

start to back off, but then we go back in, and then eventually back off again, and maybe back and forth a few more times, then we slowly back off and there are drastic changes not just in volume and tempo but at the same time the same groove, the same pulse is there and I'm paying a little more attention to what I'm playing and then we keep slowly moving out and then we just stay there, mellow, still in the groove, calmer, and the energy cools and the flow slows and then it just stops and then, immediately, everybody exhales at the same time.

Sometimes Barb and I are sitting, maybe talking, and I pick up a drum and start tapping on it and sometimes we'll just keep talking. Other times, we both start playing, and for anywhere from 2 to 20 minutes, we just play and at some point we just finish. It always feels good. It does something. To tap out some sounds for a while, to do so with another person, without plan or need or judgment. And when we're done we know we've created something and we know we can go a lot further when we want.

I do not listen to the Rhythms Devils' Apocalypse Now Sessions very often. It is an intense experience, not to be entered lightly or, for me, frequently. This is bestial music. Violent, primitive, savage. And very powerful, very energizing. It gets the body moving in certain ways. A certain quality of rhythmic pulse that is, along with everything else I'm trying to say, very hard to describe. Behind the pulse are strange sounds--shakers, vocalizations and what not--that add another quality to it. Harsh changes, unpredictable outbursts from the always noisy but relatively quiet, constant soundscape of jungle, of war--masculinity in a scary but deeply coded sense. Maybe there really is something to activating programs from our early mammalian and reptilian brains. A driving rhythm, hard not to move to, but it's driving more than body movement, it's driving what's so dangerous about this music. I can't say I don't enjoy it. But I couldn't do this daily or weekly. It evokes a combination of war and jungle viscerally,

psychologically, emotionally--almost too well. This wouldn't sell too many of Remo's world percussion instruments: "The heartbeat of life is the beating of a drum." Drums can just as easily perform the rhythms of death.

The beam and napalm: two pieces of the brutal side of technology. "You can go lower and deeper with the Beam than with anything else I know, descending into vibrations that are perceived less by the ear than felt as shockwaves throughout the body" (Hart, Drumming 185). The last selection on the Apocalypse Now CD is "Napalm for Breakfast." The beam is a long I-beam with bass piano strings stretched along it; a large magnetic pickup feeds the vibrations into a huge amplifier. This piece attacks. The beam is accompanied by a berimbau, a bow with a wire-like string and an amplifying gourd, a very old instrument. The old and the new, in dialogue: Heart of Darkness and Apocalypse Now, Africa and Vietnam, tribal culture and techno-culture. The berimbau gives the piece its odd, eerie tone: the beam provides the raw energy for the assault. Turned up very loud, all the lights out, my body wracked with the waves of deep sound. I imagine this may be as close to being inside a napalm attack as I could get without being there (not that this is some deep desire of mine). Although not a percussive instrument per se, the electronic character of the beam "makes sense" as a representation of napalm: both are technological and absolutely brutal.

The other "primitive" tunes produced by Mickey Hart and his multicultural ensembles aren't nearly so dark as the music of the apocalypse. "The Hunt" is amazingly energizing with its combination of an African talking drum (dundun) improvising over an American drum set, shakers, Jew's harp, djembe and tabla. I can really get moving to this piece, but as with so much of the recorded drumming I have, it doesn't last nearly long enough: two, three, even six or ten minutes allows me to get into the groove but once I really find it, it's gone. "Jewe": call and response chanting with a background of percussion produced solely by bodies. This

one has insinuated itself deep into my consciousness and body, the subtlest two-syllable phrase will cue this one up and I hear it in my head and feel it in my body and I feel a need to move and to vocalize.

While at the Festival of the Drum we attended a drumming and dancing workshop put on by the Nigerian drum ensemble. The ensemble was an interesting group: Francis Awe, a "prince of the Yoruba" leading three male drummers, two of them clearly Euro-Americans and one of indeterminate ethnic/racial origin, and two female dancers, one presumably Awe's wife and the other much younger. Their performance the evening before, on the opening night of the festival, had been amazing. What stood out most were the dancers: these women could move their bodies in some phenomenal ways and it was a nice touch that their bodies didn't seem overly objectified, at least in part because they were so sensual yet violated contemporary Euro-American sensibilities of how women's bodies should appear and act. Towards the end of their performance, they invited anyone who wanted to come join them on the stage. About one hundred of the three hundred or so people in the audience did so and they danced and danced and no one wanted it to stop.

The next day at noon they held their workshop. About thirty people were there with drums (including me), another thirty or forty danced (including Barb) and only twenty or so people observed in a more passive sense. We spent about fifteen minutes warming up. Awe and the other drummers in the ensemble went around and gave each person a rhythm to play while his partner, the older of the two dancers, led those who came to dance through some basic dance moves. What followed was an amazing set, probably close to an hour, of constant drumming and dancing. It was energizing like a drum circle but with some crucial differences. First, it went on continually for an hour and at a steady and frenetic pace. Second, it wasn't a completely "free zone." The dancers, mostly Euro-Americans, had to learn how to move

their bodies in ways that were alien to their "styles of the flesh." Particularly difficult was learning to move the head, neck, shoulders, chest, abdomen, hips and pelvis separately. For the drummers, it was holding some different rhythmic patterns than those we had entrained with most of our lives. I hadn't known ahead of time about the workshop and since we were camping and had limited space I had brought claves instead of a drum. This caused me some difficulties, as the claves' sound stands out from the drums and is therefore crucial to keeping the rhythm: if the claves are off, they can throw everyone else off. One of the members of the ensemble kept giving me a rhythmic pattern to play; I would follow them for a while to pick it up but would only manage to maintain it for one or two or three minutes before I "lost" it. I would then watch the woman leading the dancers to pick up a basic beat and play a variation on that. Soon, the drummer would return and give me the same or another pattern. I was concerned that I was "screwing things up" but also sensed it wasn't a major problem. Clearly, sometimes the dance leader or Francis would have a hard time picking up the base rhythm amidst the relative "chaos" produced by the drummers, but absent my occasional feelings of inadequacy, it was an amazing experience: there was definitely a beat going, a kind of groove, albeit a little chaotic, and so many people dancing to it and drumming in it. It went on and on and on. Powerful, energizing: the cliches don't get to it.

To leave this workshop, to go sit in narrow, close-fitted, metal seats in long, curved rows in an amphitheater, to listen to another percussion performance, didn't feel "right." Leaving one of Betty's drumming circles, walking out to my car to drive home, never feels "right." My body and my mind are elsewhere--or maybe it is more that they are very much not elsewhere, that they are right here, that I am fully present. Being

distanced from my normal entrainments while being present to my self in a nonanalytic sense is a good and rare space-time to inhabit.

EPILOGUE

"Strike a membrane with a stick, the ear fills with noise--unmelodious, inharmonic sound. Strike it a second time, a third, you've got rhythm" (Hart, Drumming 12).

The world--including organisms, brains and "mind"--are composed not of particles of matter, but fields of force and probability: rhythm. Scale, like truth, "is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live" (Nietzsche, Will to Power 272). The boundary between individual and environment is little more than a potent fiction.

"There is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power--assuming that life itself is the will to power" (Nietzsche, Will to Power 37).