Black and blue: A metaphoric criticism

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BLACK AND BLUE:
A METAPHORIC CRITICISM

by

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ABSTRACT

Black and Blue: A Metaphoric Criticism

by

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First, the purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which blues lyrics apply rhetorical invention, specifically metaphor. Analysis of a sample of songs from the Blues Hall of Fame first explores how classical rhetorical devices are utilized in blues lyrics.

Secondly, through metaphoric criticism the unique idiom of the blues reveals a strong trend towards self-abasement. And finally, despite intensified racial awareness of genre of folk (blues) music it is not a closed Communicative act, but through the utilization of archetypal metaphor, a universal one.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Between 1915 and 1970 seven million southern Blacks migrated to northern cities. What started tentatively advanced into a full-scale diaspora by the 1920's. During this period of social instability, the blues served as an anchor of familiarity and collective relief for those who departed the south, and chose to migrate north. The rural south offered little more than sharecropping and Jim Crow policies of segregation to Blacks. The industrial north, compelling with its promises of greater freedom and prosperity, in reality employed the majority of Blacks as manual laborers (Morgan, 1993).

Field hollers cultivated work songs along with cotton. Mississippi Delta Blacks were often forcibly conscripted to work on the levee and land-clearing crews. They were often abused and then hurled aside or worked to death (Lomax, 1993).

Nevertheless, Black sharecroppers sang their work songs often lyrically obfuscating true meaning (Oliver, 1960). At times, singing directly to farm animals or another sharecropper communicated insults about White masters that for obvious reasons couldn't be communicated directly (p. 12). Such utilizations of metaphor served to close communication for the subculture to the exclusion of the minority dominant White culture.

Prison road crews and work gangs were a common sight in the American South.
Not only did the prisoners find their collective voice in music, but some managed to leave a legacy that persists in contemporary music. Hudie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) was a country blues artist with a nefarious temper that landed him in jail for a good part of his adult life. Leadbelly would sing about a train that departed Houston every midnight in route to the West Coast. Its beacon would illuminate his prison camps pillared along the tracks. Subsequently, the name Midnight Special has two meanings. Not only is it used to identify that train, but is synonymous with the yearning for freedom's ride.

Additionally, not only did the Midnight Special become a tremendous commercial hit for the contemporary rock band, Creedence Clearwater Revival, but also became the theme song for a former television program by the same name.

This study suggests that the blues are more than a crude communicative act. As compared to volumes that have been researched and published about jazz, the blues have been given comparatively little consideration. Many theorists suggest that the blues are little more than unrefined twelve-bar rhythms and lascivious lyrics that do not meet the standard of Western music models. However, the music provided a conduit through which Blacks voiced frustration at the dominant White culture while at the same time revealing themes that are common to all men.

Definition of the Blues

The New Grove Dictionary (1980) of Music and Musicians defines the the blues as "a secular Black American folk music of the 20th century which has a history and evolution separate from, but sometimes related to, that of jazz (p. 812). This broad definition does not take into account the most salient feature of the blues, however, the
use of the blue note.

The blue note is the meshing of major and minor tonality (Walton, 1972). In other words, the blue note is a major note in a minor context. Tanner and Gerow (1984) suggest that these tones developed from the West African desire to find comparative tones not included in European pentatonic scale. The authors claim that the West African scale has a third or seventh tone and it does not have a flatted seventh or third. They state, “Because of this, in the attempt to imitate either of these tones, the pitch was sounded approximately midway between [the minor and major third, fifth, or seventh], causing what is called a blue tonality” (Tanner and Gerow, 1984, p. 37). Field hollers would use the subtle tonal shadings, but it wasn’t until the 1920’s that imitating the tones was duplicated instrumentally (Kamien, 1984).

Why Study the Blues?

Between 1990 and 1992, the number of blues clubs in the United States increased by over fifty percent from 896 to 1,360, while attendance increased by 75 percent (Jones 1993 p. 50). This resurgence not only includes commercialization of clubs, but a proliferation of magazines, books, and accessories. The blues renaissance has found mainstream audiences - even at the White House. George Bush’s inaugural featured performances by some of the best known blues artists of the past 50 years. Even Bush’s campaign manager, Lee Atwater, was a Southerner and noted blues enthusiast. If the blues have gained such popularity among both Blacks and Whites, it must have something to say beyond the separation of Black sharecropper and White master.
Commercialization spiked in the early 1980's after the release of the highly popular film *The Blues Brothers*. Thereafter, more restaurants served barbeque ribs and chicken wings, more patrons of those restaurants sported sunglasses and cool leather jackets (Lieberfield, 1995). By 1990, Joe Camel was dressed in a Blues Brothers outfit to sell cigarettes, while commercialization extended to contracting blues lyrics for television advertising by multinational corporations. In the early 1990’s, bluesy soundtracks were behind ads for gas, beer, and even laundry detergent. (Lieberfeld, 1995).

According to one vice president at MCA Records, today’s middle aged baby boomers may seek an emotional continuum through the music that inspired rock and roll, thereby accounting for the upswing in popularity of blues (Jones, 1993 p.51). Unable to connect meaningfully with the predominant Black music of the later generation - rap - the boomers may seek youthful continuity through lyrical sentiment.

However, baby boomers are not the only targeted consumers of advertisers utilizing blues music. Despite market research that showed a teenage and young adult preference for rock and even country music, Levi Strauss of San Francisco strives to gain the attention of youths by using blues music. They must have done something right. Strauss’ 501 Blues Jeans advertising campaign has won no fewer than fifty advertising awards between 1984 (when the campaign started) and 1988. (Edmondson, 1988 p.49).

It is interesting to note the irony associated with the commercialization of the blues. That is, the blues are far more commercially popular outside of the United States. Seventy percent of blues record sales worldwide are from Europe - a region unaccustomed to the social context from which the blues emerged (Colvin, 1977). Major
blues copyists have emerged from such improbable places like Northern Ireland and Sweden. In fact, Europeans are so enthusiastic, that audiences give a standing ovation to scholars who present research on the subject - as Yurchenko (1995) reportedly discovered.

In addition to global popularity, the blues is the foundation of rock and roll. The bridge between blues and rock and roll was strolled a great deal by Elvis Presley who, nevertheless, refused acknowledgment of the origins of his popular songs during the 1950’s. However, by the 1960’s, both “the Beatles and the Rolling Stones acknowledged that they obtained their music from African American Blues artists” (ya Sallam, 1995).

This latest development in popular Black music as the music of choice among today's youth is rap. However, today's generation may not be cognizant of the progressions of Black music.

No study of the blues can be undertaken without understanding where its roots evolved to. Howard Stovall (1996) of the Sunflower River Blues Association states:

The cadences and tonalities of this music later evolved into rock and roll.

In short, the musical development that was centered around the Maxwell Street [Chicago] area forms the cornerstone of one of the most important musical and cultural developments in our generation. (p 1)

Maxwell Street was where it all came together for Chicago musicians. The open-air market jumped with new arrivals from the South, as well as Chicago performers who gathered to jam, or talk about possible gigs.

The significance of studying the blues can be best summarized by Paul Oliver:

It is unlikely that [the blues] will survive through the imitations of
the young White college copyists, the "urban blues singers," whose relation to the blues is that of the "trad" jazz band to the music of New Orleans: sterile and derivative. The bleak prospect is that the blues probably has no real future; that, folk music that it is, it served its purpose and flourished whilst it had meaning in the Negro community. At the end of the century it may well be seen as an important cultural phenomenon—and someone will commence a systematic study of it, too late. (quoted in Rudinow, 1994, p.127)

This study has value in that it has the potential to increase understanding in at least two areas: (1) to expand the scholarly discussion of the rhetorical potential of song and, (2) add to the understanding of the nature of blues song rhetoric. The study of the blues is significant not only because it communicates knowledge concerning African American musical and cultural heritage, but it provides a way of transcending boundaries of lyrics.

Finally, Steven G. Smith (1992) states that "bluesness [to use a junction term] is an affectively important way of apprehending a musical process and the human world; a way of steering through musical composition and through worldly affair" (p.41).

**Literature Review**

What makes a song rhetorical? Do lyrics persuade? The notion that music is an influential vehicle for human communication is not new. Socrates warned Adiemantus,
“never are the ways of music moved without the greatest political laws being
moved…” (Bloom, 1968, p. 102). Confucius was not only a music patron, but found
music to be socially redeeming (Gutheil 1952, p. 26).

The ancients seemed to be in agreement on the subject of the importance
of studying music. However, expanded literary theories and lyrical critiques seems to
have started with Aristotle. Barker (1959) states in *The Political Thought of Plato and*
*Aristotle*:

> It is not mere music, but good music, which will be a delight to leisured
ears; and good music which mirrors in itself the goodness of the world.

This is what links the hearing of music to contemplation of the world’s
purpose (p. 438).

Stanford (1967) suggests that the ancient Greeks believed hearing to possess the
most poignancy of the five senses. Because that sense “depends on perceptible
movements and rhythms, these, it is assumed are akin to emotional perturbations”
(Stanford, 1967, p. 79).

LeCoat (1976) applies what early rhetoricians said about literature to musical
compositions. That is, from the early part of the sixteenth century to the end of the
eighteenth century, composition was guided by classical appeals of ethos, pathos, and
logos. The researcher suggests that (1) rhetorical theory of those periods influenced the
theory of composition of music, and (2) better understanding of the composition of
music in that period can be gained by knowledge of rhetorical theory (p. 157). LeCoat
suggests that by the end of the eighteenth century the focus on self expression
gradually weakened the links between rhetoric and musical composition (p. 158). Prior to
the 1960's, rhetoricians customarily focused on speeches for rhetorical criticism. The rhetorical power of song was largely neglected in pursuit of more traditional rhetoric. That is, rhetorical criticism focused on oratory. The many elements that contain speechmaking such as delivery, content, audience, situation provide an infinite number of ways by which speech communication can be interpreted. Sanger suggests that “critics of rhetoric of song have not yet taken such in-depth analysis as their purpose” (p. 17). A medium for persuasion that is used frequently by composers is redundancy. Booth (1976) was one of the first to analyze the redundancy principle as a song formula. Borrowing a word or line from a familiar song, familiarity breeds high ascriptive value. According to Gonzalez and Mackay, ascriptive value refers to the “associative power of a symbol or symbol pattern” (p. 50). Barlow (1989) suggested that because the blues remained closer to its folk roots for generations a higher degree of redundancy occurs. To illustrate redundancy, some five years after Clarence Williams sang in “Jail House Blues”, “Thirty days in jail with my back to the wall,” Sam Collins sang in an Indiana recording studio, “When I was lying in jail, with my back turned to the wall (Taft, 1983 p. 64).

Research on music communication broadened to include popular music when Gonzalez and Mackay (1983) analyzed rhetorical ascription of the music by Bob Dylan. Dylan's rhetoric included "significant messages which mirror the thoughts and feelings of people around the world" (p. 2). The researchers applied the redundancy principle to religious songs and provides either low or high ascriptive value. Analyzing both intrinsic redundancy and extrinsic redundancy, Gonzalez and Mackay (1983) studied Dylan's musical sound throughout two decades of performance. The researchers suggest that both redundancy principles are apparent in Dylan's gospel songs. High ascriptive value was
recognized for both religious and secular audiences. Therefore, Gonzalez and Mackay (1983) opined that Dylan's sound and lyrics appeal to both types of audiences.

Root (1986) sought to construct an outline of the dynamics of popular music. Forming a symbiotic triangle, the elements of composition, performance and response contain interacting elements. According to the author, the element of performance contains sub-elements consisting of speaker, subject and audience, (p.16). The author draws a parallel among the sub-elements and classical rhetoric:

Ethos is attention to the persona of the speaker, the character he projects, his personality. Logos is the way in which the subject of the speech-act or communication or composition - in this case, the song - is presented, its treatment or development. Pathos is the appeal to the audience, the attention to the auditor’s interests, attitudes and likely responses (Root, 1986 p. 16).

Root (1986) concludes that the paradigm helps other researchers to understand the ways in which rhetorical elements interact with one another (p. 25).

The audience’s perceptions of a musical piece has been researched by Booth (1976), who outlines the importance of audience perception of vocal performance. If a singer is perceived as generating a personalized message rather than a message for the broader listening audience, that is - singing for you and you alone - a sense of identification is forged between singer and audience (p. 247).

Conversely, within a narrative the listener does not identify with the characters in the narrative but with the rhetor and their attitudes or implicit state. Sympathy may be evoked for the rhetor, as well as empathy for the characters' predicament. However, in a
song that directly addresses a person, such as in cases of love songs, the audience identifies with the rhetor and not that of the recipient of such emotion. Booth concludes that cumulative effects may differ from the audiences' initial experience with a song, and a song may offer modification and enrichment to an audience that is willing to listen (1976, p.249).

According to Rein (1972), audiences everywhere listen with preconceived expectations of the content. Therefore, an audience may not be ready to receive messages of persuasion at a particular point in time. However, music combined with political intent renders an audience less resistant to the content of political rhetoric. Because the psyche is prepared for reception through music, discourse may be more acceptable. This strategy is employed among preachers, who may choose specific hymns that render the parishioner more sensitive towards receiving the sermon to follow (Thomas, 1974).

Horowitz approached musical style from a sociological perspective, questioning the problem of “unity” in musical form (1978, p. 7). The author asserts there are several types of atavistic musical styles. One example is the stylistic sequencing from the baroque, classical and romantic periods. These styles from the 17th century through 19th century are still evident today. Horowitz (1978) attempted to negate any previous musicological theory that attempted to show causal relationship between a period of time and the musical style of the era. For example, a correlation can’t be drawn between the music of Beethoven and revolutionary times.

Holmberg (1985) analyzed the song’s melodic structure, chord progressions, rhythm, instrumentation, and harmonic fluctuation. Using jazz as an example of
modernism, the author analyzed the new amalgamations that spring from that source, such as jazz-rock, and symphonic jazz. As such, contemporary styles do not necessarily create new styles as "change the mix of inherited styles" (Horowitz, 1978, p. 8). The author concludes by stating that music is 1) a complementary aspect of sounds created by humanly created produced machinery and 2) contemporary music has become eclectic, and has lost its purpose of moral enrichment or didactic instruction.

The prevailing method used by researchers to analyze song communication is to examine specific performers, or to analyze a selection of songs. Homberg (1985) analyzed rhetorical significance concentrating on the one song, "Dixie". "Dixie" was a tremendously popular song, that served at one time as the quintessential song for life in the south. The author suggested that "Dixie's" impression is significant lyrically as well as melodically, and concluded that "Dixie" is a moving rhetorical artifact that inspirers people to various activities.

The American South has been fertile ground for many musical forms. One of the most popular contemporary musical forms is known simply as country music. While associated with the south, country music has an extremely avid following in diverse geographical regions.

The rhetoric of country music has been researched by Smith (1980). The author's analysis of 2300 songs revealed geographical influences of country music.

Beginning with the first stage of Smith's analysis, 110 songs contained one or more references to a specific region, and three quarters of those references were of the American South in general or a specific southern state. The south was portrayed positively for personal relationships and as a viable community. Additionally, the south
was suggested to be a promising place for prosperity, in contrast to non-southern states, which were portrayed as filthy, cold, overcrowded, and unhealthy (Smith, 1980 p.166).

The author concludes that persuasion is prevalent in country music, and is accountable for shaping perceptions of the American South.

Kozokoff and Charmichael (1970) suggest that previous studies haven’t focused on songs as media for persuasion. Analyzing the intensity of protest, the researchers concentrated on the songs of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Pete Seeger. Kozokoff and Charmichael (1970) began with three hypotheses: 1) Protest songs will produce significant attitude changes in the vein of the particular spirit of the song; 2) Borrowing the content of experimental lyrics, speeches of a protest nature will be more efficacious in changing attitudes; 3) The effects of protest songs and speeches will have a cumulative effect in contrast to the effects of only lyrics or speeches (p. 298).

The researchers composed three song lyrics with an instrumental arrangement, each advocating a particular political stance. Lyrics were then converted into speeches. Subjects took a pretest and post test to measure attitude change (Kozooff and Charmichael, 1970, pp.298-300).

No significance was found in the song-only condition. However, significance was found for one speech advocating against professional boxing, and for all positions advocated in the speech/song combination (p. 301). The primary difference between music as persuasion and music as mimetic is found in studying the audience. That is, persuasion seeks to clarify how the audience is affected, while mimetic seeks to understand how the audience is reflected (Winebrenner, 1988).

Mimetic criticism was first extrapolated from speech to music by Merriam
(1964). The author suggests that music is the function for collective emotion, and the lyrics divulge society's attitudes: "In discussing song texts, we have had occasion to point out that one of their outstanding features is the fact that they provide a vehicle for the expression of ideas and emotions not revealed in ordinary discourse" (p. 219). Musican thus function as a release for expressing convictions and ambitions which otherwise may not be directly stated (Winebrenner, 1988).

Lomax (1968) asserts that lyrics reflects a society's way of life in that they function for social as well as personal expression. He states that the primary purpose of song is to "express the shared feelings and mold the joint activities of some human community..." (p. 3).

Chesebro (1985) applied five types of communication systems to popular music utilizing songs from 1955 to 1982. The five patterns were utilized from a previous study by Cheseboro revealing the characteristics of popular television series from season to season (1978/1982, p. 119). Chesebro extrapolated these patterns to include lyrical criticism. In his analysis, the five types of communication systems are, 1) Ironic communication system 2) Mimetic communication system 3) Leader-centered communication system 4) Romantic communication system and 5) the Mythical communication system.

In the ironic communication system, the central character possesses less intelligence and has less ability to control the circumstances than that of the audience. In the mimetic communication system, the central character is compassionate, and equivalent to the audience in intelligence and possesses the ability to control circumstances. The leader-centered communication system posits a main character who
is superior to the audience, but who can only exert the same degree of control over circumstances as the audience. In the romantic communication system, the central character possesses more courage, stamina, insight and intelligence than the audience, along with circumstantial controls. In the mythical communication system, the central character displays a superior intelligence and ability to control circumstances to the point where the character may be perceived as supernatural.

Chesebro et al (1985) analyzed the communication system after operationalizing the behaviors using the Burkean ideas of stages of dramatistic process. After analyzing the lyrics, the researchers offered their results in terms of four decades, thematic context, five musical eras, and predictions for the future. Their results showed that popular music is a reflection of youth's changing attitudes which mirror an substantial ironic perspective of human relationships (p. 115). Chesbro's (1985) analysis of popular music 1955 - 1982 found increasingly ironic posturing with the exception of a slight upswing towards romantic communication in the 1980's.

Method of Study

In the study of rhetorical discourse it is possible to first examine the artifact with a purpose centered upon the critical dimensions of the message. This study suggests that a specific rhetorical trope, metaphor, can be analyzed. For this study a sample of the classics of blues recordings (singles) on record from 1920 to the year 1996 are analyzed. These single recordings were deemed by the Blues Foundation to be worthy of induction to the Classics of Blues Recording Hall of Fame. This study will focus on half of the
single recordings from the sampled years deemed outstanding classics of blues recording.

Quintilian states that “the metaphor...a noun or verb is transferred from the place to which it properly belongs to another where there is no literal term or the transferred is better than the literal “ (Harris, 1992). Belonging to the element of style found in the five canons of rhetoric, a metaphor is generally divided into two parts. The first part, the tenor, is the subject to which the metaphor refers. The second part, the vehicle, is the metaphorical term through which the tenor is applied.

Metaphors come in many forms. Some are in more everyday usage than others. Among the most common metaphors are the complex metaphors. For example, to speak “that sheds some light on the situation” places one identification upon another. There is no actual light that sheds; shedding light is a metaphor.

In discerning a metaphor in a piece of literature, a connection must be made between two apparently unlike things. Sometimes, the tenor is not apparent but implied (implicit metaphor). For example to say, “I am on fire,” is meant to imply burning passion.

Chapter 2 seeks to provide an overview of the history of the blues, starting with its African musical origins. The songs of the field hollers and sharecroppers laid the foundation for the itinerant musician to transform. Once on the road and rails, the roving songsters left the rural South and headed for northern industrial cities. The blues sound was reconstructed in the big cities, as the music reflected cultural and regional differences, gained broader accompanists, and became electrified.

Additionally Chapter 2 presents the status of the blues during the Post WWII era, the advent of the first blues recording, and discusses the harmonic, melodic and tempo
characteristics of the blues. Lyrical construction of the blues is emphasized.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE BLUES

Referred to as an "oral history of American Blacks," the precise origins of the blues is difficult to trace due to the paucity of empirical studies (Rein, 1972 p. 81). Only through the work of a very few dedicated researchers do we enjoy early blues recordings. However, the most comprehensive discussion of the blues published to date is Oliver's *Blues Fell This Morning: The Meaning of the Blues*. Oliver's in-depth analysis of blues origins illuminates the social machinations from which the blues flowered. The author states:

With some speculation on the origins of the blues, which are admittedly obscure, it has been pitiable to trace its process of evolution and change in a sequence which becomes progressively more clear after the turn of the century. Buried deep in the fertile ground of the Revival hymn, the spiritual, the minstrel songs, the banjo and guitar rags, the mountain "ballits", the folk ballads, the work songs and field hollers, lie the roots of the blues which began to take form at some indeterminate time in the late nineteenth century. Above all the meandering, interminable "arhoolies" and hollers, improvised by the field-hands of a thousand Southern plantations influenced the growth of this extempore song (p. 5).
Not all historians believe that the blues had nebulous beginnings. Some researchers suggest the birth of the blues took place at a five-thousand acre plantation in Mississippi known as Dockery Farms (Merrill, 1990). Will Dockery attracted entire families to work the fields since his reputation was one of fairness to his field hands. Bill Patton brought his family, including his guitar-playing son Charley, to work for Dockery Farms in 1897. (T.O.M.B. 1997). Word spread that Charley and friends played after hours at local dances and barbecues. Contrary to popular belief, Charley was not an illiterate field hand, but the son of a very successful land owner (Sage, 1987). As such, he was educated better than most Black men of the era, and popular with both White and Black audiences.

Charley’s popularity would eventually lead him to record an unprecedented forty-two blues songs in a single year (Yazoo, 1980). Nevertheless, Charley never gave up the lifestyle of an itinerant bluesman until his death in 1934.

African Musical Origins

What is certain is that the blues is a distinctly American musical form with an African heritage. Ya Salaam (1995) asserts that there are no fewer than forty-three subdivisions of Black-American music that evolved from African musical roots. The author offers the beginning of the blues from “work songs, field/street call and protest songs” of 17th century America (Ya Sallam, 1995, p. 183).

Music is an integral part of West African culture. A few slaves brought their music and instruments with them. Slaves, worked, sang, and lived in groups, but were rarely allowed to keep their instruments.
A first glimpse of what was in store for most African-Americans in the 17th century is provided by Oliver (1960). The author presents the musings of a White Christian plantation owner in 1623, when confronted with the first auction of Black slaves in America:

> Now these black animals have human form, but they are not really human, for God would not have made men to look like that. So, I am free to buy them and work them on my tobacco plantation without incurring the wrath of God. Yes, I'll buy five of these...

(p. vii)

Religious rationalization was widely used to ease any guilt from landowners for devaluing slaves' status. In fact, when missionaries began converting slaves in the 17th century, plantation owners were concerned that baptisms would elevate them from their abysmal conditions of servitude to freedom. So disconcerting was this idea that slave owners were able to lobby successfully for passage of a law which decreed that baptism wouldn’t exempt slaves from enslavement (Asma, 1997).

However severely demoralized, Africans attempted to incorporate the musical culture of their homeland through the playing of string instruments. The jelli or griots acted as the tribe's historians and fulfilled roles "not unlike those of the later blues singers" (Sadie, 1980, p. 813). After several slave revolts had used drums to signal impending insurrections, the law subsequently prohibited the use of drums by slaves. Walton (1972) suggests that the enforcement of anti-drums laws is the most significant development in African-American music. The drums were buried and subsequently, rhythms were carried out by stomping one’s foot, and hand clapping. These new rhythms
were particularly remarkable during church spirituals. However, many spiritual songs were not of a religious nature, but also disguised communication for escape or revolt (Walton, 1972, p.28).

The typical field slave was physically restricted to one area (Walton, 1972). Unlike their captives, the teamsters were required to cover their masters' property on foot. In order to let the owner know where he was, the teamster would holler. Each teamster had a particular style and method of emoting that would later have important implications for the blues (Walton, 1972). Given the magnitude of farmland worked by the early Americans, the teamster would necessarily have to excel in vocal projection and tonal clarity.

The field hollers continued to create work songs, the themes of which mirrored the constant communal situation they were subjected to (Walton, 1972). In the same manner that some spirituals were used, the field songs were coded to disguise plans for escape or revolt. Poignantly, they expressed the desire for freedom and human pride (p.28).

Post-Reconstruction South

After the Emancipation Proclamation, three quarters of Blacks remained in rural areas. Most of those Black rural dwellers lived on the Mississippi delta. Three choices of marginal livelihood were permitted to the Black man: Seasonal collective labor, sharecropping, or itinerant bluesman. As transportation and commerce needs boomed during this era, railroads and roads were built by Blacks. Even more Blacks were attracted to the area by labor agents working for White planters (Oakley, 1976). Small,
leased, landholdings were tended by many Blacks. However, the sharecropping system frequently put a new twist on White ownership. Many Blacks found themselves as de facto serfs who were paralyzed with debt. A Texas sharecropper observes the situation in song: “His clothes is full of patches, his hat is full of holes, po farmer, they get all the farmer make” Lomax, 1993 p. 96).

The Itinerant Musician

Until the end of the 19th century, the blues culture mostly was an amalgamation of work songs, field hollers, and spirituals. However, for the poor, handicapped, blind, rural dweller with no land and no other marketable skills, music was a way of survival (Yurchenco, 1995, p. 448). This subsistence existence led the musically gifted to an itinerant way of life. Bluesmen played the “devil’s box” (acoustic guitar) on street corners and in train stations. Some sold their compositions for pennies. “Ballits” (as the bluesmen called them) were printed on note cards and sold to interested audiences. Performing wherever necessity dictated, the itinerant guitarist packed his guitar on the roads and rails. The blues pianist had to plan an itinerary to places where a piano would be available, thus limiting mobility.

Chicago Bound

By the 1920’s many musicians in the South hopped the rails headed for Chicago. Some disembarked and stayed to play in Memphis, St. Louis, or Kansas City juke joints, barn dances, barrelhouses, fish fries, speakeasies, or bordellos. The gin mills and dance halls proved to be dangerous places for the musician. Raw emotion flowed along with raw whiskey. While some musicians managed to play and stay detached from the chaos
that was surging on the dance floors, others found themselves victims by virtue of the fact that they were talented. Some men perceived that as threatening to their women.

Nonetheless, the city blues initially was little more than the country version rehashed. Spencer (1992) asserts that while the city’s impact changed the musical aspect of country blues, it did not change the “mythology, theology, and theodicy, since these things involved an entrenched religious cosmology” (p. 26).

Eventually, three variables did emerge to intensify the city sound in contrast to the sound of the country. Spencer (1992) discusses one change as the electric guitar replacing the folk guitar. The guitar sound was not an ordinary strumming instrument but, “In city blues, as in country blues, even the guitar in many cases had to be a ‘talking guitar,’ one that not only responded with interpolations to the blues singer’s articulations, but would, ... sing it by itself” (Spencer, 1992, p.26).

The second change that emerged was the use of accompaniments. The city blues artists were more likely to be accompanied by pianists or harmonica players. And so, the Country blues were recorded in earnest in the city neighborhoods (Titon, 1990).

The third variable that emerged was hewn in the rough conditions of Chicago during the depression. Those tough times accelerated “aggressive, extroverted blues sound and collective performance” (Sadie, 1980 p.817).

By the 1940’s the urban blues were obviously distinctive from the “down-home” singers from Mississippi. The changes that continued to mark the urban blues were due in part to the city musicians learning their craft by listening to the radio (Spencer, 1992). The rural players, were more likely to be listening to records, as radio broadcasts were not well received by isolated sharecroppers or hill dwellers.
At this point, the church was a weakening factor in shaping the lyrics of the blues (Drake and Cayton, 1945). Additionally, the newspaper the Chicago Defender, read clandestinely by Mississippians, galvanized the Chicago migration. The editor urged the southern arrivals to leave behind their folk beliefs, which included religious attitudes. The decreasing community lifestyle of the urban dweller and relaxed societal sanctions on worldly behavior allowed increased permissiveness. Pioneers of the early Chicago scene now included legendary Mississippians Muddy Waters and B.B. King. These artists broke the ground in which rock and roll would flower.

The overwhelming pressure shaping the lives of Americans in the 1930’s was the Depression. It would be expected that in mimetic criticism songs from this era reflected dismal affectations.

However, in popular music the reverse was true. Frivolous, lighthearted, songs in a fantasy world of silvery moons and playgrounds in paradise were generated to foster a sense of optimism in what seemed to be a hopeless future. Radio was a vital source of entertainment unburdened by a sense of societal responsibility or acknowledgment of reality (Shapiro and Pollock, 1985). Record sales were one tenth of what they were in the previous decade. During the Great Depression the record companies eliminated the field recordings in the Southern cities. Meanwhile the Chicago migration was well underway, and the Southern migrants were bringing their music with them (p. 7).

Postwar Blues

The Post WWII era witnessed the fruition of the discreteness between the country blues and urban blues. The country musicians were uneducated in precision and
complex harmonies compared to the finely detailed sound from the urban cocktail lounge (Titon, 1990)

During the 1940's shellac was used in the production of records. Despite shortages of shellac and the musicians union ban on producing recordings, the blues survived. This was due in part to the upcoming fashionableness of using electric amplifiers that could be heard above the cacophony of sounds in the nightclubs (Bayles, 1993).

Up until the end of World War II, major recording studios controlled most of the production of blues records. However, in the late 1940's smaller start-up companies saw the potential profit in recording different types of music. For a comparatively small investment, one hit song could reap a lucrative return. Many of the small companies in fact were owned by Blacks (Sadie, 1980).

In the 1990's there remains a handful of Black, elderly legendary blues artists, but Whites now dominate the blues scene. ya Sallam (1995) theorizes that these amazing artists came from a period in history when blues were a functional genre. And so, because the conditions from which it was created are not present in the 1990’s, it is unlikely the blues will survive the future.

Not all researchers base the progression of the blues on the previous continuum. ya Sallam (1995) offers three distinct categories of blues that have emerged to date. The first was the early country blues, which was popularized by Robert Johnson of Mississippi. Although Johnson only recorded 29 songs before his untimely death, he set the example for many performers, including contemporary rock artists. Even today, some fifty years after his death his style and lyrical content are borrowed by popular recording
artists (p. 365).

A second form of blues according to ya Sallam (1995) was the classic blues. This genre was led primarily by women. During the 1920's and 1930's female musicians such as Ida Cox and Ma Rainey radiated earthy vitality. At that time minstrel and vaudeville shows were the primary venues for successful Southern performers, and the first ever professional venue for Blacks. These shows bridged the gap between folk music and entertainment and projected Blacks as desirous of success. They additionally represented the first wave of commercialization for Black music. Such commercial representation of Black music culture exploited certain cultural dilemmas “posed by gender, race, and class identities” (Lieberfeld, 1995, p. 218).

Specifically, a nefarious side to the minstrel show emerged. Blacks were often required to make fun of their own skin coloration. Performing in Blackface, the images were a vehicle for acting out contentiously, often rebelliously, while still appeasing White audiences with prevailing racial stereotypes. Stearns (1970) puts it:

The Negro employed his many talents at playing with the mask, adding to it, letting it slip on purpose, making fun of it. He would act a little differently that he was supposed to, pretending to be - and this was exciting and dangerous - just what the white man didn’t expect or want. Or, he would say indirectly exactly what he felt, covering up with comedy a lot of what might be insulting and hostile. In Chicago during the early twenties... the mask was slipping a little. Individual solos were... unusually assertive and - in the case of Louis Armstrong - almost explosive...
The recordings of Louis Armstrong - especially the vocals - during the later twenties are documents in the creative handlings of the mask. (p.53).

Simultaneously, the popularization of blues continued to be led by women who managed their own bands and production companies. These women were known for their business shrewdness as much as for their musical talents. According to ya Sallam (1995), it is conceivable that the White males dominating the recording industry could not accept strong, assertive competent Black females:

Never again have women performed leadership roles in the music industry, especially not African American women. The entertainment industry intentionally curtailed the trend of highly vocal, independent women-most of whom, it most be noted, were not svelte sex symbols comparable in either features or figure to White women, but robust, dark-skinned, African-featured women who thought of and carried themselves as the equals of any man.


The third category of the blues, according to ya Sallam (1995) is the urban blues. This form germinated from the Southern itinerant musicians who migrated to the big city, and eventually flowered into pop music. Talented children as young as age nine would leave the rural South, with full consent of their parents. Their parents understood that the children's chances at success were better playing music on the big city streets than they could ever be harvesting cotton, (Colvin, 1997).
Blues on Record

The first blues recording was made by a woman. The recording was also the first time any Black singer was published. Mamie Smith was not originally contracted to sing “That Thing Called Love”. However, at the last minute she was asked to stand-in for a White singer. Sales were sufficiently profitable that she was asked to return to record again (Oliver, 1960).

Most Whites were largely ignorant of the blues as musical genre until W.C. Handy published the blues melody Memphis Blues in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1912 (Odum and Johnson, 1926). W.C. Handy was an educated jazz musician from Alabama who found he could make more money when he ostensibly played the music of the poor country dweller (Ransom Group, 1997). Although Handy is considered by many to be the father of the blues due to his popularization of the genre and recorded compositions, in fact two songs were published before “Memphis Blues”. Artie Matthew wrote the “Baby Seal Blues” and A.W. Hart, a White songwriter, wrote “Dallas Blues” early in 1912 (Spencer, 1983, p. 338).

Asma (1997) highlights the sacred and secular dissonance felt by talented blues musicians. On the one hand, when record companies were issuing race records in the 1930’s, blues composers could make a living, but on the other, the existence was considered an evil one. Considerably, the gospel artist would strive for higher spiritual development and be deemed sanctified, albeit penniless. Simply put, blues artists went to hell, gospel singers to heaven, and you could sing either, but you couldn’t sing both (Asma, 1997, p. 9).

Bloodworth (1975) questions whether rhetors’ motives are primarily for musical
expression prompted by social concerns, or achievement of commercial success (p. 306).

In fact, by the time country blues musicians played the cities, the city versions were
consciously targeted for a mass audience (Cohen, 1981). Ellison (1994) suggests that
blues singers have proved “capable of transcending the limits of capitalist obsession with
the most acceptable, profitable product” (Ellison, 1994, p. 19).

Further flowering of the blues took place in the Southern prisons. John and Alan
Lomax were two researchers in the 1930’s who saw the value in transcribing prison work
songs. Prisoners worked in chain gangs and carried on the slave tradition of singing
while working. These songs had a steady syncopation when heavy labor demanded it,
such as splitting wood or digging ditches.

Mood Communication

Instruments communicate mood through tempo and tone. A slower tempo is
used to communicate melancholy, and a faster tempo is generally used to communicate
an upbeat mood. In terms of tones, major tones usually connote happiness and brightness,
while minor tones connote solemnity.

The early county blues had eight and sixteen bar forms before evolving into a
twelve bar rhythm. The first line was repeated, giving the singer time to spontaneously
create the third line (Oliver, 1960). The progression of the I, IV, and V chord (one, four,
and five, respectively) in sequence is most often associated with the blues. Typically
starting at C the twelve bar rhythm progression goes to F and then to G.

Lyrically, blues are usually written in four half-lines, followed by two line-refrain
form or three line verse. Rhythm scheme for the verse stays in an A-A-B pattern. The
first line is repeated with the second line, while the third rhyme with the first two. Typically, the third line reveals or comments upon a situation. Thus: “I’m gon’ get up in the mornin’, I believe I’ll dust my broom. I’m gon’ get up in the mornin’, I believe I’ll dust my broom. Girlfriend, the black man you been lovin’ girlfriend, can’t get my room.”(Johnson 1936)

The three line stanza is a throwback to Africa (Spencer, 1983), and is rarely a component of European and American folksongs. In African music, form was a function of content, rather than the reverse, as in the western model (Walton, 1972, p.29). There remains a parallel between gospel and blues music (Asma, 1997). The chord progressions, pentatonic scales and rhythm structures are similar enough that many a gospel singer has made the conversion to blues (and back again).

Harmonic

Most commonly associated with the blues is the twelve-bar construction. The first four measures start with the I chord, up to the IV chord for two measures, back to the I chord for two measures, up to the V chord for two measures, and ending on the I chord for two measures.

Melodic

The three versed rhymed stanza of 12-16 bars is mostly commonly associated with the blues (Lomax, 1993). Because of the widely used twelve-bar rhythm, studio musicians could play knowing where their musical exits and entrances would be. Country musicians were more likely to improvise on the twelve-bar rhythm. By 1927, the guitar and piano playing revealed the dominance of the three-line verse form and
harmonic support, but other verse forms were recorded as well, showing that standardization had not occurred.

Inherent in many blues compositions is a communication system of call and response (Rein, 1972). Musically, the composition of the lyrics is known as the call. The subsequent musical space is known as the response. The instrument response may then originate from any type of instrument. Lomax explains:

The harmonica became a companion because it could answer back- it could sing the melody with almost human nuance; … One important function of melody is to enhance the emotional impact of a given stretch of speech, to allow this heightened communication to be uttered without disrupting the communication. However, since black country English is more highly charged, more loaded with nuance, more varied tonally than everyday English, so to is black melody. Thus, when a black musician… has his instrument talk the tune, he unleashes strong and subtle feelings. When the guitar or harmonica begins to answer the player back, the emotional content of the phrase can well make you laugh or cry. (1993 p. 346-347).

Chapter 3 discusses the relationship between music and emotion, and addresses the concept of music as symbolic communication. Additionally, Chapter 3 presents the notion of a blues theology.
CHAPTER 3

MUSIC AND EMOTION

Music has substantial effect on the emotions and behavior. Nettlebeck, Henderson, and Wilson (1989) sought to replicate a previous study in which six specific sounds would be identified as either emotion or feeling. The results were interpreted and revealed a strong association among a particular sound and the emotion communicated. In describing the emotional impact of music, Fransesconi (1986) states that "musical elements do have emotional impact; for example, the use of music to heighten response to the action or plot of a movie, or to heighten patriotic fervor at a political rally" (p. 37).

Budd (1985) contends that the correlation between music and the emotions can be stated in two ways:

...that the value of music as an art-form and the different musical values of different musical works must be explained by reference to music's relationship with something outside music and in which we have an independent interest, or (b) That the essential value of music as an art-form is purely musical...the value of music is essentially unrelated to the emotions (p. xi-xii).

Meyer (1956) seeks to examine a correlation between the time sequencing of sounds on aesthetic response. The author considers the affective meaning of music similar to the gestalt patterns he found in literature. He cites the necessity of examining
cultural context in order to arrive at meaning. Furthermore, Meyer (1956) suggests that emotions are the product of the suppression of senses. Their subsequent release, created through patterns, are manifested in music.

Katz (1989) explored the what the sophists might have known about the music of language studying in an oral culture. He concludes that rhetoricians need "to recognize time as a dimension of meaning in language" (p. 12).

What makes a song rhetorical? Do lyrics persuade? A significant body of research on musical persuasion focuses upon protest lyrics. Both former and contemporary lyrics of discrete genres are likely to contain political elements.

Mashkin and Volgy (1975) drew a positive correlation between musical preferences and political attitudes (p. 458). The authors found that those who prefer folk music would be more likely to display an attitude of distrust towards the government. Furthermore, folk music patrons tend to experience antagonism towards the government. The researchers found that those who prefer country/western music felt more allegiance to the government. Mashkin and Volgy (1975) conclude that post-bourgeois ideology, defined as the rejection of materialism, is found to be positively correlated with rock and roll fans.

The role repetition plays in assimilating lyrical discourse deserves mention. Foss states that repetition is usually perceived by the auditor as having a "pleasurable rather than persuasive intent"(p. 64). McLaughlin (1971) discovered that learning through repetition open synaptic circuitry in the brain, thus rendering lyrics (or words) readily recallable with a little facilitation from certain stimuli. In fact, Mursell (1971)
states that the cause of any negative perceptions when subjects are exposed to repetition is due to fatigue (p. 216). Nevertheless, any high school student knows the mental anguish of having to memorize an arid poem or passage from classical narrative. The memorization for the most part is accomplished only by arduous repetition. Resistance to rapid memorization could be encountered due to one's expectation of the passages' persuasive possibilities. Consider the same student who endlessly plays a recording of a beloved pop performer. Entirely aware of the lyrics, the student seemingly is less resistant to any persuasive assimilation that occurs.

Not only have scholars isolated the redundancy principle as a vehicle for persuasion, but the influence of rhythm was tested empirically by Crow (1970). The author asserts that changes in rhythm in a musical piece can sell perspectives and concepts: "By changing rhythm within a musical piece you can have a strong impact on the listener, and the subliminal effect is to push the 'message' much more strongly" (p.208). Thus, repetition and rhythm combined make a powerful aid towards motivating persuasive action. The blues can be quite repetitious and rhythmic.

A variance in opinion persists regarding the question of whether blues lyrics are a rhetoric of discord. In fact, communication scholars investigating the arena of music as venue for meaningful communicative exchange, disagree pointedly.

Foss, (1989) states that the rhetorical element of song has been studied only sporadically (p.50). To the contrary, Cooper and Burns (1992) suggest that there has been much scholarly activity (p.2). Alternately, Rybacki and Rybacki (1991) argue that lyrics can be criticized as rhetorical activity.

One plausible explanation to the polarity of research findings may be located in the
evolution of studies regarding song as rhetorical. However, during the 1960's Kenneth Burke, Edwin Black, and others argued the need for a comprehensive explanation of rhetoric and for modernistic ways of analyzing rhetorical style and function (Sanger, 1991). In fact, the 1971 Pheasant Run Conference of the SCA-NEH National Developmental Project on Rhetoric recommended that rhetorical critics broaden their scope of research. Thus, "Rhetorical criticism (should) examine the full range of rhetorical transactions; that is, informal conversations, group meetings, mass media messages, picketing, sloganeering, chanting, singing, marching, gesturing, institutional symbols, cross cultural transactions, and so forth" (Sloan, 1971 p. 225).

Music as Symbolic Communication

There is a significant body of research that addresses music as symbolic communication. Kingsbury, (1991) sought to establish a relationship between the metaphorical imagery of music and its sociological implications. The researcher suggests that the narration of music is analogous to the horizontal weave of fabric. The vertical weave of fabric represents the way musicians interpret the narrative. The author terms these dimensions "warp" and "weft" for the narrative and interpretation respectively. With regard to the weft, the author maintains that through architectural metaphors, musicologists and musicians imprint their own voices into the meaning of pure music, thus maintaining control over its meaning.

Kingsbury (1991) seeks a connection between architectural metaphors in music analysis and the expression of the value of social stability. Social values and musicological imagery are rarely obvious concludes the author, and may be partially
dependent upon the reader's subjectivity.

Furthermore, Kingsbury (1991) draws a parallel among music, musicological texts, and the rhetoric of law. For example, musicians may play a piece exactly as it was written by the original composer. In legalese that action would be considered as following a doctrine of original intent. The author concludes what is crucial is the "rhetorical links connecting the fictions of the text with the social facts - and perhaps the factions of the interpreting institutions.

McLaughlin (1970) argues rhetorical value of song from a Jungian perspective. Assimilating the unconscious-collective, or that of an individual, song appeals to various archetypes long enough to burst forth into conscious forms. Whether the audience is relaxing at a concert or an individual is humming a tune inattentively, the tension-producing conflicts between the conscious and unconsciousness of the brain are temporarily suspended. The author additionally suggests that the technical components of rhythm and harmony play a role in the reconciliation of various parts of one's personality (p.105).

Burke (1945) investigated the way to examine the rhetorical significance of music. Through the pairing of the rhetorical with the dialectic, Burke's conception of form shows that audiences' expectations can be socially altered using symbolism.

Rein (1972) suggests that blues rhetors are performers of ceremonial rhetoric, and yet the author offers the persuasive dimensions of the blues. As Rein (1972) puts it, "the blues is an indirect, but one of the earliest means of social persuasion and dissent." (p. 80).

Taking the notion of ceremonial rhetoric a step further, Hay (1987) suggests a
comparison between Delta blues and ritual secularization. The term ritual secularization was described by Radin (1957) as occurring - among additional venues - in ancient Greek drama and in morality plays of the Middle Ages. The concept refers to ritual drama that became increasingly utilized for lay purposes. Hay (1987) compares secularization with Swzed's (1970) functional description of the country blues. Swzed (1970) states that:

They were, in their folk setting in the American South, something akin to religious chants (although never a part of orthodox religious belief). Emotionally charged, deeply personalized, the blues were in part a problem-solving technique, closer to the confessional than to the stage. The blues audience responded to the common plights presented to them by the singer as personal experience. As the singer overcame his problems, or was overcome by them, so the listeners shared in the catharsis (1970, p. 319).

Blues Theology

Spencer (1990) suggests that the blues maintained an intimate connection with the church before World War II. The author asserts that since the lyrics are truthful and that telling the truth is ethical, subsequently there is a blues theology. By way of an example, the author cites the prevalence of interjections in lyrics that call upon God. Most "familiar interjections as 'O Lord', 'Good Lord', 'Lordy, Lordy', 'Lord have mercy', 'the Good Lord above', 'my God', 'God knows', 'for God's sake,' 'so help me God,' and 'great God almighty,'" were not necessarily blasphemous (Spencer, 1990 p. 112). The researcher states that the truth-telling was in the presence of God, akin to a
religious experience.

Cone (1972) was the first to investigate the blues from a Christian theological viewpoint. He suggested that the blues activated the divine Spirit that moved people toward wholeness. The author wrote that the blues rejected distinctions between the body and soul, and his insights made “significant strides in revealing the false barrier between the blues and Black religion (p. 36).

Chapter 3 explores the relationship between music and emotion. Additionally, the chapter reviews discussions on music as symbolic communication. The chapter also considers the notion of a blues theology.
CHAPTER 4

RHETORIC AND THE BLUES

The commandeering of Africans to America as slaves began a narrative of oppression which can be read in the blues. Sanger (1984) asserts that Black slave spirituals were basically rhetorical. Their testimony was gathered by scholars. The author suggests that with limited venues for personal expression, slaves sought to bring about change through their songs.

Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1988) coined the term ‘Signifyin’ as the Black rhetorical trope that is greatest among all tropes. The African cultural form of ‘Signifyin’ is used as commentary, and to subvert the dominant culture. In fact, the researcher writes about the many rhetorical strategies evident in oral and written artifacts.

Gates (1988) also developed the term intertextuality, which suggests the creative use of formulaic phrases in oral narration. Public speaking, including toasts and preaching, rely upon the recombination of stock phrases, in an unique way from one context to another rather than on forming phrases that are notably original in themselves (Brackett, 1996).

Leo Strauss (1952) developed a theoretical framework for understanding systems of communication that flower under repressive regimes. Even within the most despairing, oppressive regimes, the “human spirit will continue to seek, recognize, and
communicate the truth privately” (Rudinow, 1994 p. 133). Rudinow states that the “blues is essentially a cryptic language, a kind of secret code” (1994 p. 133). Walton, (1972) argues that interpreting double entendre changes affective influence and sociological implications. Furthermore, the author suggests that the blues should not be categorized as either African songs or socially formed event. If social oppression created the climate in which the blues evolved, why didn’t poverty-stricken Oakies, or, any other White disenfranchised sub-culture produce the music? The answer is that singing was the only way Blacks were allowed to preserve their culture.

As prejudiced and dogmatic regimes tend to engender covert communication strategies (Rudinow, 1994, p. 133) Holt (1972) illuminates why Blacks might have developed a homogeneous communication system:

Blacks clearly recognized that to master the language of whites was in effect to consent to be mastered by it through the white definitions of caste built into the semantic/social system …

[that is] a form of linguistic guerrilla warfare protected the subordinated, permitted the masking and disguising of true feelings, allowed the subtle assertion of self, and promoted group solidarity (p. 221- 222).

Referring to Black music as GBM (Great Black Music), ya Salamm (1995) suggests that Black music is the guiding light for literature, (1992 p. 353) He believes that all Blacks have allowed musical form meaning:

More than any other form of communication, “the music”
expresses at the deepest levels, the realities of our existence. The most profound and serious moral lessons are generally articulated by the speaker shifting into the "talking-singing" style of orature (sic) that is an extension of GBM ... the music is our mother tongue, even those of us who otherwise eschew any use of the vernacular, (1992 p 353).

Rein (1972) postulates that when blues are performed to Black audiences, the performance functions as epideictic rhetoric, not dissimilar from an eulogy or Fourth of July oration. While the blues are often sung today by White performers, for White audiences, neither are re-affirming their values and history. Therefore, according to Rein (1972), the blues are "nativistic in that its presence is a reminder to Blacks and other creators of the blues that a person cannot totally abandon his culture" (p. 86).

Whittaker (1994) asserts that a parallel can be made between Homer, the 9th century B.C. Greek poet, and early blues singers. Homer was blind and blues became a means for survival for blind Blacks with no property. The author suggests that both the Homeric tradition and blues traditions are oral traditions. Not much is allegedly known about Homer, as is true of some early blues musicians. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey make recurrent use of stock epithets, which is reflected in blues songs by the use of formulaic and composite phrases (Whittaker, 1994, p. 22). The author concludes that studying the oral tradition of the blues is amenable to students, and, is a means of enhancing study of classical poets. Garon (1978) writes that:

[The blues'] role in shaping the modern sensibility is already large
and shows every sign of expanding. It should be emphasized, since so many critics pretend not to notice it that all authentic blues and jazz share a poetically subversive core, an explosive essence of irreconcilable revolt against the shameful limits of an unlivable destiny. Notwithstanding the whimpering objections of a few timid sceptics, (sic) this revolt cannot be “assimilated” into the abject mainstream of American bourgeois/Christian culture except by way of dilution and/or outright falsification. The dark truth of Afro-American music remains unquestionably oppositional. (p.3)

Moreover, Garon states that:

If we realize that a basic prerequisite for revolutionary thought is the supersession of "reality" (alienated work, surplus repression), we can see how the blues, in an even larger sense, can, through its assertion of the primary desire in the face of reality, lay claim to being revolutionary. (p. 65)

Purnell (1972) also suggests that rock concerts serve as epideictic rhetoric. Applying the Burkean notion of symbolic transcendence, the rock concert serves as both identification and unification for a subculture. Certain forms of dress and behavior are associated with the rock concert, therefore, according to Purnell, the rock concert establishes itself as a kind of subculture ritual:

In an otherwise diverse and disparate society, the rock concert may be the greatest single unifying ritual for the youth culture. The
concert is a symbolic act, a form of epideictic rhetoric, designed to bridge divisions between individuals, to establish their identification with each other and as members of a special subculture. It is a personal and social ritual of unification. (p. 7)

Blues as Protest Music

Among the blues songs of social protest are those by Bessie Smith. Ms. Smith implored the rich man to open his heart in “Poor Man’s Blues” (1930). In order to stop the hard times experienced by the poor man, she points out social and economic inequities, and tries to make the rich man aware of the starvation occurring right under his nose.

Spencer (1990) claims that the blues belong to the genre of protest music, and that blues culture is actually a religious subculture. The author asserts that only self-righteous church members made a case for blues as the devil’s music. Further radicalization is apparent in the blues “ethos of eros” (Spencer, 1990, p. 116.) In an era where a Black man could be convicted of crimes based upon suspicion, sexuality was the one area of life unencumbered by state law, county law, vigilantes, lynch mobs, and the KKK. Finally, the author suggests the blues “radically oppugned” Jim Crowism (p. 117).

Asma (1997) offers the case for blues artists as revolutionaries. Blues artists did not endorse the values of mainstream Christianity which was predominant in the rural South. Asma (1997) states that the challenges to dominant value systems can be
divided into internal or external critiques. An internal critique calls for changes in practices from inside the prevailing system. An external critique, according to the author, is one that challenges the dominant system from the outside. Close examination shows just how unifying songs are, and it is not surprising that so many were used as freedom songs by the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's. Songs like "Go Tell it on the Mountain," "We'll Never Turn Back," "Walk With Me Lord" "Been in the Storm so Long," and "Freedom Train" were all spirituals being used a second time to stir up a spirit of resistance.

Bethell (1991) compares the blues with the songs from the American civil rights movement:

  The blues contain much aesthetically coded protest,
  making the music seem to express private sorrow, not potential insurrection. The coding also enables us to enjoy the blues today purely as music, and it ensures that others will still be doing so a hundred years from now. (p. 33)

Titon (1990) writes that introducing an antagonist (mistreater) and describing the mistreatment, the singer draws up what is in effect a bill of indictment. Then, with the listener's imagined sympathy, the victim becomes the judge, and the drama turns on the verdict. Will the singer accept the mistreatment, try to reform the abuser, or simply leave?:

  Resignation and acceptance with attempts at reform resolve only a minority of downhome blues lyrics. Most often, the victim, declaring independence, steps out of his or her role with an ironic parting shot and leaves. Not resignation but freedom is the major
There remains many ways in which rhetorical devices can be utilized in speech. Some like onomatopoeia, are discussed in the next section of this chapter. This section discusses the history of metaphor, the definitions of metaphor, and studies of metaphor and music.

Aristotle, the first to examine the use of trope, "provided the direction for the study of metaphor for the next several centuries" (Foss, 1989, p. 187). In fact, according to Kakonis and Wilcox (1969), Aristotle stated that "the most important point is to be able to use metaphors, for this is the one thing that cannot be learned from other; and it is also a mark of genius since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity of the dissimilar," (p. 200).

Contemporary theorists differ in their interpretations and uses of metaphor. Empirical philosopher Thomas Hobbes considered metaphor to be one of the "four abuses of speech" (Foss, 1989, p. 187). According to Foss, (1989) Hobbes suggested speech cloaked in metaphor is deliberately used to mislead and deceive the audience. Whately (1963) wrote in Elements of Rhetoric "a new or least unhackneyed metaphor...if it be not farfetched and obscure, adds greatly to the force of expression" (p. 284).

Dipippo (1971) suggests that the nature of metaphor is not "so much an analytic as an imaginative process," (p. 140). Likewise, Henry Louis Gates Jr., (1988) suggests that language does not always function as enlightening, that sometimes it serves to
Irvine and Kirkpatrick (1972) found that metaphor is used to amplify meaning which stems from contrasting or complimentary association of one of three musical forms: 1) Recognized patterns of musical variables with other accustomed patterns; 2) Familiar arrangements of musical variables with patterns that are unrecognized by the artist/listener; and 3) Unrecognized patterns of musical variables with non-acquainted patterns (p.273-274). The authors constructed four paradigms to uncover motive by the artist. Suggesting that song may be operationalized rhetorically by the expressive/persuasive; expressive/reinforcer; rhetorical/persuasive; and rhetorical/reinforcer models.

Seven variables, according to the researchers, have the ability to influence rhetorical interchange. They are: 1) The nature of the instrumental sources; 2) The melodic structure of the song; 3) The lyrical structure of the song; 4) The ethos of the source; 5) The nature of chord structure and progression; 6) The structure of the communication system; and, 7) Rhythm.

Terms that were familiar in the environment, along with culinary terms of the day, were used as sexual metaphor in the blues. Thus, phrases like “biscuit roller” “black snake”, “jelly roll”, and “coffee grinder” were in prevalent usage. Many served as discreet functioning metaphors. “Sugar” could be interpreted as money, as money is

Music and Metaphor

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Blues and Trope

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sweet to have (Oliver, 1960). Or, it may be a metaphor for sex. Some blues songs went
as far as the times would permit without actually breaking the pornography laws. While
metaphors were plentiful in this genre, little attempt was made to write euphemistically
about sexual relationships. Record companies colluded in the creation of lascivious
lyrics as it proved to be profitable.

And yet the word 'blue' became synonymous with salacious meaning not due to
the association that blues lyrics have with lasciviousness. Prior to the 18th century, one
who had the "blue devils" was one in a state of depression (Cohen, 1981). This idiom
was shortened to having the "blues" later on.

In addition to metaphor, analysis of blues lyrics reveals other rhetorical devices.
Inversion, used to give a word its meaning as its opposite, developed as part of the
cryptic communication systems under repression. For example, "mean" is used to describe
a piece of music, as in "he plays a 'mean' piano" (Neal, 1972). Sid Hemphill, a blind
bluesman from Mississippi, spoke about his musicianship, "I learned to play from my
daddy. He was a good un. Told me he got all his tunes from his colored cousin. Down in
South Mississippi. An awful fiddle player" p. 315. Hemphill here really meant "awful" to
be extraordinary talented or awesome.

Not only is trope utilized lyrically, it is adapted instrumentally. Consider the
example of Slim Harpos' "I'm a King Bee." This performer echoes the verses with guitar
sliding that sensationally sounds like the buzzing of a drone. This "bzzzz" imitation is
equivalent to king bee onomatopoeia. Consider witnessing the audience's response to
the typical Sunday gospel choir. Singing after a preacher gives words of inspiration, the
audience's response is a mix of praises, interjections, and corroborating exaltations. For
Berry (1988), call and response also includes “primordial human instruments, the sound of the feet hitting the floor, the hands clapping, the body movements responding…” (p. 6).

The railroads and trains serve as tropes in many blues recording. Not only do they symbolize the attainment of freedom lyrically, but the sounds of a moving train are incorporated instrumentally in a type of onomatopoeia (Murray, 1976). Particularly piano players elicit bell and whistle tones, reminiscent of trains blasting by. Lumbering, chugging wheel sounds, and clickety-clack track-pounding pitches lend incredible brilliance to blues music. However great the Black migration and sounds of the railroad influenced the blues, the church remained an omni-present influence. (Murray, 1976). In fact, Murray states that the call and response patterns familiar as the minister and congregation communicative exchange may have also been derived from “the solo call of the train whistle and the ensemble response of the pumping pistons and rumbling boxcars; and there is good chance that there are times when a little of both exists in each” (1976, p.124).

There remains evidence that railroads and trains figure prominently in blues music not just in terms of how many times a train or similar terms are mentioned, but also in terms of trope. Consider the example of the song, “Smokestack Lightning.” The singer identifies with trains so much so that personification is present. Smokestack lightning refers to a train, but Howlin’ Wolf calls it by terms of endearment, considers it precious, and questions when “baby” is coming home. Additionally, Wolf comments upon the mistreatment he feels at the mercy of his beloved. Although he misses it, he sings about how poorly he is treated by the train. He and wants to know when it is
coming back.

Anastrope, similar to inversion, is transposition of normal word order for rhetorical effect. Consider the example found in Sweet Home Chicago. While the word "boyfriend" suggests an intimate relationship, "friend-boy" possibly could be interpreted as the relationship between the singer and his friend is non-sexual. The question that remains is why invert the word at all. Why would the author think it important to tell us he has a friend of the male gender?

Another form of trope, parenthesis, normally is used as an insertion of a verbal unit that interrupts normal syntactic flow (Silva Rhetoricae, 1996). In "Statesboro Blues" the singer interjects his thoughts about goin' to the county, with or without his sweetheart. In "Statesboro Blues" paraprosdokian, which is a surprise or unexpected ending is evident in the third verse. By the sound of the first two verses, one expects the third verse to rhyme and yet the author sings, "Well my momma died and left me, My poppa died and left me, I ain't good looking baby, I want someone sweet and kind." (Peer International, 1929)

Because our predilection to formulate symbols protect us from sensory overload, what does the use of metaphors suggest about the rhetor who produces them? (Foss, 1989). An additional rhetorical device, metonymy substitutes one word for another which it suggests. Consider the example of the apparent metonymy, "pigmeat" in the following verse, "Look here papa, you don’t trust pigmeat the way you should, Ooh, don’t treat pigmeat the way you should, If you don’t believe that it’s pigmeat, ask in the neighborhood,"(Oliver, 1960)

Belittlement is used in some blues lyrics. It's meaning is metaphoric for a Black
male. In order to understand its value as metonymy, it becomes necessary to examine the cultural attitudes that spawned it. Livestock were of more importance to Southern plantation owners than the sharecroppers. Moreover, historically slaves were bred like livestock. The Bible and the Christian religion that rationalized poor treatment of sharecroppers suggests that the pig is the most contemptible and squalid of all animals. Subsequently, the Black male internalizing the prevailing attitudes towards him, believed himself to be as esteemed only as a pig, and consequently sings about himself in self-abasement (Oliver, 1960).

Keeping this in mind, Chapter 5 provides an explanation of the analysis that is used in this paper. Following a discussion section, a conclusion and suggestions for further research on the blues are provided.
CHAPTER 5

LYRIC ANALYSIS

The first step in metaphoric criticism is to become familiar with the text or elements of the artifact and its context to gain a sense of the complete experience with the artifact (Foss, 1989, p.190). The meaning of most metaphors must be reconstructed from clues in the setting, occasion, audience, and rhetor. (Foss, 1989, p.191). Attention to the context is particularly important because some metaphors generally are understood in particular ways without attention to the context in which they are used, the meaning of most metaphors must be reconstructed from clues in the setting, occasion, audience and rhetor (Foss, 1989, p. 191)

Next, the critic isolates the metaphors employed by the rhetor in their various contexts (Foss, 1989, p. 192). In many instances, only the vehicle is actually present in the artifact, and the tenor implied (Foss, 1989, p. 192).

In the third step in the analysis, the critic sorts the identified metaphors into groups, either according to vehicle or tenor (Foss, 1989, p.192). By using the interaction theory postulated by Black (1981), two discreet terms named the “tenor” and the “vehicle” are related by a system of assorted characteristics.

Next, groups of metaphors - either metaphors around various tenors or various vehicles around the same tenor - are analyzed to reveal the system of metaphorical concepts in the artifact (Foss, 1989, p. 193). The critic then may suggest what effects the
use of the various metaphors may have on the audience and how the metaphors function to argue for a particular attitude toward the ideas presented (Foss, 1989, p. 193).

In the final step of metaphoric criticism the critic is in a position to assess or evaluate the metaphorical system of the artifact (Foss, 1989, p. 194). The critic makes a judgment about the metaphors in some way - perhaps assessing the nature of the reality that results for the audience and the rhetor or judging whether the use of the metaphors accomplished the rhetor's intended effects (Foss, 1989, 194).

The following 17 songs were chosen for the analysis:

1.) I'm a King Bee by Slim Harpo (1957)
2.) Dust my Broom by Robert Johnson (1936)
3.) Sweet Home Chicago by Robert Johnson (1936)
4.) Smokestack Lightning by Howlin' Wolf (1956)
5.) I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man by Muddy Waters (1954)
6.) Good Morning Little School Girl by John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson and Big Joe Williams (1937)
7.) Terraplane Blues by Robert Johnson (1936)
8.) Big Boss Man by Jimmy Reed (1960)
9.) I'm Ready by Muddy Waters (1954)
10.) Call It Stormy Monday by T-Bone Walker (1942)
11.) Come On In My Kitchen by Robert Johnson (1936)
12.) Hellhound on My Trail by Robert Johnson (1936)
13.) Cross Road Blues by Robert Johnson (1936)
14.) Statesboro Blues by Blind Willie McTell (1928)
15.) Wang-Dang Doodle by Koko Taylor (1965)
16.) Baby Please Don't Go by Big Joe William (1947)
17.) I Can't Quit You Baby by Otis Rush (1956)

The analysis of the seventeen songs revealed two clusters of vehicles that appeared consistently throughout the lyrics, with three additional clusters materializing. Namely, these are, “women’s anatomy”, “man”, “dark-light”, and “heat-cold”.

The first vehicle featuring “women’s anatomy” contained many tenors, including but not limited to, “starter”, “hood”, “oil”, “generator”, “batteries”, “coils”, “wire”, “plug”, “tank” and “Terraplane” The notion that woman’s bodies are analogous to an automobile suggests that she is perceived as a piece of property, to be tinkered around with; fixed when it is questionable whether anything is really broken.

The most obvious use of this metaphor is found in Robert Johnson’s “Terraplane Blues”. Johnson sings about “mashing her starter” to get her to “give him fire.” He sings about the “generator won’t get a spark.” As if it isn’t trivializing womanhood enough by comparing it to a motor vehicle, Johnson adds further insult by picking a Terraplane for his comparison. The Terraplane was an inexpensive car made by Essex in the early 1930’s, and is suggestive of that which is cheap and dispensable.

Next, the “man” cluster comprised of such animal and insect terms as “Poodle”, “Chicken Head,” “monkey” “bee” and “dog”, and “tiger.” In “Baby Please Don’t Go” singer Joe Williams pleads with his woman to not leave him for another man. He grovels, he’ll “be a dog.” Devoted and companionable like a homeless mutt, he’ll “kiss your way” as “you walk along”, if she would only come back to him. Of course, a
homeless mutt has to be fed and sheltered, and this is what the singer is hoping for in winning the beloved back again.

In “Wang Dang Doodle” two men are actually named “Poodle and “Chicken Head”. Both apparently are partygoers, even if the evening’s entertainment takes a dangerous turn, it doesn’t seem to matter to them.


“Cross Road Blues”, (1936) which was possibly the most famous of Johnson’s songs, has vehicles in the dark-light cluster. The songs speaks to the aftermath of an encounter with the devil, whom Johnson allegedly sold his soul to in exchange for extraordinary musical talent:

Incredibly, the symbolism of being at the cross roads lends to the overall chilling mood of these lyrics. The cross roads symbolizes the choices confronted by all of us. The cross roads are where important decisions are made. Obviously, he is pleading for help in the face of a situation he feels powerless to control. The symbolism of the sun slowly slipping away at sunset is one of tragedy and sadness. Johnson sings “Dark is gon’ to catch me here.” This apocalyptic line suggests the fear he must be experiencing. There was scarcely a worse position to be, in the Mississippi Delta of 1930, than one of a Black man out alone on the road at night. Literally a life-threatening crisis in that period of history, gangs of White men didn’t need evidence of unlawful behavior before assaulting a Black man. The imagery of the impending darkness suggests that the forecast is death, and Johnson is aware this could well be his fate at the cross roads.
Vehicles in the heat-cold cluster include, "kitchen", "lightening", "winter", "howlin’ wind", and "rain". "Come on in my Kitchen" is another widely covered song today. Apart from the alliteration in the title, the rhetoric of the song suggests many symbols.

These lyrics indicate a profound loneliness felt by the rhetor, and the apparent hope of alleviation of that loneliness through female companionship. The endings of both takes are very different literally, but serve the same purpose as a vehicle for inviting female companionship. A kitchen is usually a place of warmth, literally and metaphorically. Benevolence flows in a kitchen, where strangers and friends alike are received. However, in Johnson’s world, the wind doesn’t just blow outside, but howls. This image reflects the isolation of his emotional life. This contrast is used by Johnson. He utilizes the power of inclement weather to convince the woman of his loneliness. “Throwing down” a good woman is a somewhat violent metaphor for gossiping about her.

Furthermore, Johnson states how karmic his attachment to women is. The woman he had was someone else’s and things came full circle when somebody wooed her away from Johnson. So, Johnson reveals here his need for a woman - any woman to replace the one who’s “up the country.” His invitation is like a plea from a motherless child, which in a sense he remains. “My mama dead/ pappa’s well to be/Ain’t got nobody to love and care for me” suggests that his primary motive for issuing the invitation is not lascivious but rather for one of nurturance. Vehicles in the sex cluster indicate the following: “baby” “rider”, “kiss”, “chauffeur”, and “hoochie coochie”. In “Good Morning Little Schoolgirl”, the singer is trying to get the attention of a young schoolgirl. He sings
of buying an airplane to travel about town with, spreading the message that she is so pretty.
He is quite sexually attracted to her, and sing about wanting to "be your chauffer" and "ride your little machine".

Discussion

Rhetorically analyzing blues adds to previous discussion to blues music. Agreements and conflicts are revealed from earlier studies of music as communication. Although metaphoric criticism is not widely used in literature to reveal rhetorical insights, the following divulges how the results of the analysis compare with previous studies about music.

While the use of metaphors are not presented in all sampled songs, nonetheless, five out of the seven metaphors uncovered can be categorized with three out of Osborn's (1967) four characteristics of archetypal metaphor.

First, archetypal metaphors are prevalent in discourse. Next, the archetypal metaphor occurs across all cultures, regardless of historical changes. Third, the blues are what Orborn (1967) calls "grounded in prominent features of experience in objects, actions, or conditions which are inescapably salient in human consciousness (p. 116). While these archetypal metaphors may not have been sung with conscious control and full knowledge of their power, nevertheless Osborn (1967) postulates that there is a "persuasive potency" of archetypal metaphors, "because of a certain universality of appeal provided by their attachment to basic, commonly shared motives, the speaker can expect such metaphors to touch the greater part of his audience"( p.116).

The most salient metaphors in this analysis would fit Strauss' framework
whereby the attempted control of the thought and communication of a subjugated minority cannot maintain a political arrangement because, "a man of independent thought can utter his views in public and remain unharmed, provided he move with circumspection. He can even utter them in print without incurring any danger, provided he is capable of writing between the lines (p. 240).

One song in the sample, "Big Boss Man," contained no salient metaphors, and yet could be interpreted as a protest song, lending agreement to Garon's position that "to insist that the blues is 'protest music' is a vast misconception" because "after all, most blues unfortunately don't even deal with the subject". (p. 64.)

The analysis would not agree with the either/or paradigm set forth by Bloodworth that an artist attempts to express social concern, or "he was strictly out to gain commercial success" (p.306). That is to say that not any Black man or woman can sing the blues and remain authentic, (neither can any White person). But, the blues were originally an oral tradition that facilitated survival for many Blacks. Not just physical survival, but they served as a spiritual and psychic catharsis.

Suggestions for Future Research

Perelman (1979) dictated that "A rhetorical study of these [analogy and metaphor] must not be limited to an examination of them in a particular context and from a specific perspective, because it risks considering as general what is only the specificity of usage and context," (p.63 ).

The blues are rarely discussed in narrower terms of decades. First, in music, the year a piece is recorded is not necessarily the year it may be published. Secondly, neither
of those years may be the year the song became popularized. Lastly, the year the song or
singer won a performance award differs still. Therefore, what figurative value judgment
is placed upon tenors or vehicles may not correspond with the decade studied.

An expanded random sample of blues lyrics subsequently analyzed by decade
would not only generate some further insights into the rhetoric of blues music, but reveal
cultural attitudes as changing or static. Furthermore, study of the blues should attempt to
incorporate musical arrangements, and musical ascription to gain a clearer understanding
of a song's impact and meaning. Public opinion sampling on blues music is severely
lacking. Any surveys could be aimed at fleshing out attitudes and perceptions (or
misconceptions) on the blues. This is particularly true where today's youth are
concerned, who have not experienced the machinations of culture from which the blues
flowered.

Further study needs to be conducted to keep consciousness raised on the origins
and communication used in the blues. The unanimous autobiographical nature of the
sampled songs may be a direct result of freeing the individual personality which was
often held in check by slavery.

Conclusion

What blues music lacks in metaphors, may be more revealing than what it
contains. The genre lacks metaphors that suggest attitudes such as egalitarianism,
justice, and prosperity. Such lack of language to indicate these attitudes may have
contributed to the problems facing Blacks trying to achieve those goals. In particular, the
label that man is an animal, heard in lyrics repeatedly, presents a danger to the audience
internalizing that doctrine that the rhetor already believes it to be true. Once the label becomes internalized, it takes on a virus-like property and spreads to others. Since most of the song in the analysis were written when media influence was sporadic, greater weight must be assigned to the influence of the social relationships of the rhetor in shaping the metaphors of the songs. The resulting intrapersonal and interpersonal communication can either be facilitating or debilitating.

The language used by any group of people is directly related to the world view of the group. The Black culture then, stood far apart from converging with the White culture, but was forced to encounter and function within the dominant culture. This inherently stressful situation, along with negative interpersonal and intrapersonal communication may have depressed the individual’s capacity to adapt on a cognitive, affective, or behavioral level.

Blues music flowered best in the decades from the 1920's to the 1950's at a time when the music of the Black American was not thought to be important enough to treat seriously. Many early illiterate, handicapped bluesmen were unconscionably exploited by the recording industry, other itinerants died on the road at the hand of violence. Some were so poor as to construct makeshift guitars out of broom handles and wire, or use broken glass in place of a slide. And yet, all the while producing music under the most dangerous, dismal, and demoralizing circumstances, that music cuts across all culture and is preferred by many discreet peoples.

As rich with metaphor most blues lyrics are, the symbolism utilized is readily more apparent within the cultural subtext. Many early blues players led difficult lives both personally and professionally. Neither their value as humans nor their musical talent
was esteemed by the dominant society. As a particularly poignant example, despite the
tragedy of never meeting his father and his young wife dying in childbirth, it is
noteworthy the level of poetry that Robert Johnson’s lyrics reveal.

Analysis of the selected sample of blues lyrics shows that because of archetypal
metaphors, the blues remain popular outside of the Black culture, even through
homogenization. As such, the genre of folk (blues) music is not a closed communicative
act, but through the utilization of archetypal metaphor, a ubiquitous one.

Archetypal metaphors osmose into the human psyche, in every century, in every
civilization. Osborn (1967) states that the persuasive potency of archetypal metaphors
provides music as rhetoric does not have to include the classical definitions of persuasion
and protest. Thus the blues have rhetorical value, without necessarily motivating one to
take action.

Many contemporary blues performers are White. Many artists, blues
associations, and blues enthusiasts report that blues today have been homogenized
by White audiences, scholars, publishers, and club owners who dominate the blues
experience (Ward, 1996). Garon (1978) states that the danger of the "White predator"
threatens the blues (p.20). Rudinow raises the issue in aesthetics classes: Can White
people sing the blues? (p. 127). Just as likely, “The Blues is dead because the soil that
produces the Blues either lies fallow or has been covered with concrete” (ya Sallam,
1995). And so, it is only through the dedicated efforts of a very few researchers do we
have a history of the blues available when it matured in the Black community.

In conclusion, there remains abundant rhetorical dimensions in the blues, which
have been passed at least two generations without scarcely a thought for is rhetorical
value. As the intergenerational gap is highlighted most commonly through music, this
gap can become a bridge when blues is used as a conduit.
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