Biophilia
and the Aesthetics of Blues, Jazz, and Hip-Hop Music
in African-American Prose Fiction

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During the creative process of writing this doctoral thesis, it felt that certain developments or resembled the movements of a progressive fractal. It started off with a basis as an initiating idea, from where it took forms, step by step from one level to the next one, until up to the point where the form gradually began to perceive its beauty. However, to get up those levels was by far not as smooth as I had imagined in the beginning of this project. To transcend critical, despairing phases, I literally needed to take on a life-affirming stance as a prerequisite for finishing this process after a time period of five years on the whole. In this sense, I would like to thank my parents for having raised me with the possibility of developing a creative, independent and open-spirited mind in the natural environments of the countryside around a small village, as well as being role models for how to follow set aims despite critical moments in which obstacles rule. I am greatly indebted to Professor Doctor Hubert Zapf from the University of Augsburg, who introduced me to the teachings of cultural ecology, which inspired me to carry out this musical-literary intermedial project, in which I could follow my interests in blues, jazz, and hip-hop music. Professor Dr. Erik Redling from the University of Halle provided me kindly with helpful advice at critical stages, which motivated me for further research. I am also much obliged to the Hanns-Seidel Foundation for both ideal and financial support throughout the research and writing process. Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. Katharina Donn, Dr. Michael Sauter, Dr. Timo Müller, and Dr. Johanna Hartmann for their help in various matters. Along this line goes gratitude to the support of many friends who accompanied me along this road by confirming me in this endeavor and empowering my stamina.

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1. Introductory Remarks: The Ecological Trauma in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, human roots in the natural world have been erased and human life is less embedded in natural life cycles with the result of deep-rooted self-alienation, fragmentation, isolation, rootlessness, and emotional displacement (Bateson, *Mind and Nature*; Lasn and White).[1] The destruction of our nature has deprived us of countless opportunities for emotional fulfillment as the extinction of species has in some way been the extinction of our own emotional experiences (Milton 61-62).[2] In order to counter this ecological trauma in the 21st century, the modern "seemingly autonomous ego" is to be replaced by a more natural one, an "individual whose very completeness as an ego [is] possible" (Bookshin 211). We need to find equilibrium between the technological or synthetic world and our ties to nature (Lasn and White). The modern, seemingly autonomous self as the ideal in Western society is to be replaced by a more "natural" one, preferably rooted in a rounded and complete community (Bookchin 211).[3]

As human beings have been increasingly disconnected from nature, the ability to experience biophilia has been lost (J. Miller; Stokes, "Conservators"). *Biophilia* is defined as the "love of life or living systems"[4] (Fromm, *Heart*), and refers to the tendency of human attraction to all that is alive and vital, as it is proposed by Edward O. Wilson in *Biophilia* (1984). In a biophilic experience, human life is enriched by its broadest affiliation with our natural world. As our bond with nature is experiential, biophilia is best seen as being derived from learned experiences and through the

1 For more information on the unity of human mind and nature see Bateson, Gregory. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unit* (1979). NY: Hampton, 2002.

2 For more information on the extinction of emotional experiences see Nabhan, Gary P. and Sara St Antoine. "The Loss of Floral and Faunal Story, the Extinction of Experience: Ethnobiological Perspectives on Biophilia." *The Biophilia Hypothesis.* Eds. Stephen Kellert and Edward O. Wilson. Washington, D.C.: Island P, 1993. 232-56.

3 The awareness of profound unity of all life forms calls for a change in lifestyle with regard of the quality of experience and self-realization, instead of increasing wealth as a measure of personal and social wellbeing. The oneness of life requires diversity, complexity, and symbiosis of various life forms, including human beings for the benefit of all (Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* 168-201; "Shallow and Deep" 95).

4 The term biophilia stems from the Greek words for "love" and "life" (Ulrich 122).

practice of infusing responsibility for nature (Simaika and Samways 905). With respect to individuals, the term *nature* and the adjective *natural* used in this study refer to properties, inherent characteristics, and vital powers, or more generally, to human nature with its inherent impulse to act and sustain action. With respect to the material world, the words nature or natural refer to the dynamic creative and regulatory principles, which cause phenomena and their change or development. Consequently, humanity *is* nature within an eco-centric dynamic web of intrinsically dynamic interrelations, in which "[...] communities are enlarged to soils, waters, plants and animals" (Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism* 137; T. Clark 6).

Mental and physical health can be restored by achieving meaning and personal fulfillment in life (E. Wilson, *Biophilia* 1). For example, happiness can be a result of instinctive bonding with the natural environment (Katsui and Ghotbi 54). Studies on restorative effects through the exposure to nature have also indicated that such processes might lead to stress reduction or other related restorative effects for overcoming depression (Gullone, "Hypothesis" 303, 308). In *Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues, Jazz, and Hip-Hop Music in African-American Prose Fiction,* African-American novels and short stories with musical elements are regarded as a kind of "medicine bundle." Possibilities of experiencing biophilia as the "[...] innate tendency to focus on life and life-like processes" (E. Wilson, *Biophilia* 1) are offered, along with re-learning strategies for its perception. Currently, *aesthetics* as a preference for natural design over human design is used as a flagship to confirm biophilia (Kellert, *Biodiversity* 99-127; Simaika and Samways 904),[5] to which the following study contributes valuable insights regarding the aesthetic composition and reception of African-American prose fiction with musical elements.

African-American authors create authentic atmospheres of blues, jazz, and hip-hop musical environments, in which music functions as language of emotions.[6] During the reading process, a reader's engagement is activated while s/he opens up for biophilic experiences. Unconsciously, a reader might feel biophilia *via* literary acoustics or when a text resembles the structure of an ecosystem. By conscious con-

5 Research on biophilia is still at a relatively early stage of its development (Ulrich).

6 *Music* is defined as a special art form, in which tunes and sounds are arranged to a special form according to sound aesthetics and musical rules. The form and expression of feelings is its primary task (W. Schroeder 26).

templation, a reader makes sense out of a biophilic experience with the result of developing a life-affirming attitude and a creative approach to life.

In "Theorizing Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues, Jazz, and Hip-Hop Music in African American Prose Fiction" (2.), theories from reader-response, African-American musical-literary intermediality, and cultural ecology are applied. Wolfgang Iser points out that a literary work consists of two parts, the *artistic* and the *aesthetic* one (*Akt* 38). The artistic side deals with the text produced by the author, which will be presented in "Authentic Atmospheres and Literary Acoustics" (see 2.1). Fiction written under the influence of music naturally aspires to imitate musical structures, as well as it tends to emphasize sound and rhythmic patterns of a language by employing characteristics of musical compositions (Breton 1-2). Consequently, African-American writers become literary performers of "black" vernacular (Gysin, "Liberating Voices" 275) by creating sonic or acoustic environments, in which novels or short stories are closely as possible adapted to musical performances.

However, works of prose fiction are not fully transformed into musical pieces when African-American musical characteristics are imitated, but metaphorical ways for the imagination of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music with cognitive as well as emotive effects are provided (Redling, *Mimesis*). With the help of intermedial strategies such as explicit as well as implicit references, musical atmospheres are created. In the mode of "telling," musical environments are authentically depicted or thematized. In the mode of "showing," cognitive as well as emotive effects of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music are evoked by imaginary content analogy, partial reproduction, and structural or linguistic imitation, which contributes to a text's musicality.

In recent decades, the use of the term *intermediality* has become widespread with the recognition that media do *not* exist apart from each other (Schroeter, "Discourses"). Gabriele Rippl defines intermediality as

> [a] field of studies dealing with interrelations between different media – in the case of philologies, such relations can exist between texts and paintings, texts and sculptures, texts and architecture, texts and films, and texts and various forms of music. (Rippl 318-19)

In musical-literary intermediality, musical elements are transformed *via* original means within a literary medium. Even though musical contacts are less expected in the art of narration than in poetry, research in this field has recently gained attention (Wolf, *Musicalization* 93).[7] In *Kinds of Blue: The Jazz Aesthetic in African American Narrative* (2004), Juergen E. Grandt points out that African-American prose narrative has not drawn as much critical attention as music criticism in poetry (xxi). In order to fill this gap regarding African-American musical intermediality, I have decided to focus on the forms of the novel and the short story because of their ability to provide additional narrative explanations to the imaginative sound of blues, jazz, and hip-hop music, what poetry is less able to.

So far, African-American intermedial studies have mostly been carried out regarding formal representations of "black" music styles within their surrounding social contexts in a horizontal way. However, vertical analyses based on musicological knowledge have been more or less neglected.[8] However, African-American literature cannot be adequately understood unless it is contextualized within an interdependent environment of oral culture (Baker, *Blues Ideology* 20). If a critical African-American literary study is to be useful, it *must* be grounded on a firm knowledge of musicological aspects with social, political, or historical background, in which African-Americans have created it (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* 304). In order to fill this gap of lacking musicological knowledge in African-American criticism, three subchapters are dedicated to provide an overview of musicological and socio-historical aspects of blues, jazz, and hip-hop music (2.1.1-2.1.3).

7 Intermediality has proven to be one of the most productive terms in the domain of humanities (Schroeter, "Intermedialität" 1).

8 For instance, A. Yemisi Jimoh assumes in *Spiritual, Blues, and Jazz People in African American Fiction: Living in Paradox* (2002) that his reading audience know original spiritual and blues music lyrics, or comprehend the musical structure of a jazz music improvisation (Dunbar). Gene Bluestein focuses only on the aesthetic or symbolic use of blues and jazz music motives of selected works in *The Voice of the Folk: Folklore and American Literary Theory* (1972), without any vertical references.

In narratives, emotions have always been expressed through history, especially *via* music as a language of feelings.[9] Emotions form basic psycho-physiological phenomena in the production, linguistic transition and receptive viewpoint of literary works (Hillebrandt and Fenner; Hogan). Regarding elicited emotions, current major debates center around the differentiation between real and fictional feelings. The term *make-believe emotions* explains the fact that an individual knows or believes that a triggering event is unreal despite an actual perception of emotions (Gibson; Sander 13). The so-called *paradox of fiction*[10] explains a reader's ability to experience emotions even though the elicited event is known to be unreal. Fictional emotions can be authentic and rely on assumptions rather than on beliefs or suppositions (Gibson; Sander 13).

In this study, emotive discussions are carried out in three ways: firstly, biophilia is perceived *via* emotions; secondly, music serves as a language of emotions; and thirdly, a reader's emotions are stimulated by both compositional strategies and identification processes during the aesthetic reception. Hereby, an emotional bond of trust between author, reader, and a text is a prerequisite for a reader's openness for an aesthetic ecological experience. In the emotional inter-discourse, African-American fictional texts become an occasion for transactions between writer and reader, performer and audience (Alcorn and Bracher 342).

With music as a universal language, it is *not* a prerequisite that a reader is part of the African-American community in order to grasp the messages of African-American prose-fictional works influenced by blues, jazz, or hip-hop music. In this respect, Alex Aronson (1980) points out that musical forms or experiences have a truth to communicate which lies *beyond* any specific cultural context within a given

9 Understanding human emotions and their underlying mechanisms has been a central preoccupation of thinkers for millennia yet the scientific study is quite recent in comparison to that of other mental processes, having led to an *emotional turn* in literary studies (Armony and Vuilleumier 1). For example, Jenefer Robinson takes the insights of modern psychological and neuro-scientific research on emotions and answers with their help questions on a reader's involvement with music and literature in *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music and Art* (2005). Before the emotional turn, the adherence to a pseudo-scientific objectivity has suppressed affective approaches to literary artifacts and integrated the analysis of texts into rationalistic arguments (Ahrens and Volkmann 2).

10 The paradox of fiction is based on a triad of sentences, which have lead to the conclusion that genuine emotional responses to fiction are irrational (Tullman and Buckwalter 18).

social group (x).[11] Therefore, a reader in the 21st century who might suffer the above stated effects of the ecological trauma is presumed to be able to perceive emotions induced by the integration of musical elements.

In African-American fiction, there has always been an ongoing process of framing a concept of the self. The propensity for self-definition by virtue of the marginalization or exclusion of perceived otherness is a feature which demonstrates our sameness with the African-American culture, while, at the same time, seeking to make us distinct (Cornwell-Giles 87). The fact of marginalization itself is a powerful incentive to re-structure new order. African-Americans have had to balance themselves between the Western world and their African roots. Nowadays, we are to find equilibrium between a synthetic world and ties to nature. Especially so-called *Leerstellen*, gaps, fissures, or breaks provide an *implied reader* with the possibility to actively participate in the act of reading (Iser, *Akt* 88). According to the African-American musical principle of call-and-response, a writer calls a reader and waits for his/her response with the result of a reformation of the self. In his reader-response theory, Wolfgang Iser further states that an artwork is always dependent on the dimension time, in which meaning is produced (*Akt* 39).

In "Biophilic Healing in African-American Prose Fiction," I will portray such an experience of biophilia *via* blues, jazz, and hip-hop music elements as emotional transmitters. Biophilic experiences are perceived unconsciously, for example when a text is turned into an ecosystem by African-American dialect as a "wild" language, or the use of structures parallel to the form of a blues, jazz, or hip-hop song (2.3.1).[12] Biophilic-related feelings might also be perceived in active music-making scenes or passive listening scenes. Furthermore, ecological experiences can be deepened by various references to natural environments (2.3.2). In "Biophilia Education in African-American Prose Fiction," reading not only fulfills wishes but also formu-

11 Even though it is stated that represented encoded emotions might become a challenge for a culturally distinctive readership with possible lack of knowledge about African-American culture (Hillebrandt and Fenner), musical induced emotions can be understood because music functions as a universal language of emotions (Hesse 176).

12 Since the 1990s, ecology has been applied to studies of music with increasing fervor. Music ecology focuses on the connection of music to life on our planet by tracing mimetic imitations of elements of natural soundscapes in music, and by tracing inspirations with environmental processes or phenomena (Keogh 1).

lates a self with a life-affirming stance in combination with a creative approach to life. In "Creative Life Approach" (2.4.2), I will show ways in which the aforementioned musical characteristics can be transformed into philosophical assets with the aim of developing a creative approach to life.

In order to prove the possibility of receiving biophilic healing effects from blues, jazz, and hip-hop music elements in African-American prose fiction, analyses with excerpts from African-American novels and short stories are carried out in chronological order of the development of the respective music style. The first chapter, "Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues music in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot, Dirty Bird Blues,* and *Invisible Man"* is dedicated to blues music because it is regarded as the first secular African-American popular music style (D. Jones 672-73).[13] The blues is a reference to having "a fit of the blue devils," which means being depressed or sad, while the expression "having the blues" connotes a person feeling an emotion very intense (Jacobs 14; Miller, "Blues" 44). The analyses with elements from blues music start with the *Harlem Renaissance*[14] because since then, African-American musical elements have increasingly been incorporated into novels and short stories (Diedrich 434). Only since the twentieth century, African-American musical styles have exerted a powerful influence on writers, who seek to connect to an indigenous African-American art form, which acknowledges the importance of African roots and communities.[15]

13 The blues is the origin of many African-American music styles to follow, for example rock music, which at the same time proves its universal appeal (Jacobs 99-162; D. Jones 671, 690).

14 The *Harlem Renaissance* was a cultural flowering during the 1920s, a decade of extraordinary creativity in the arts. New York City's district Harlem was crucial to this movement. Harlem became home to all classes of African-Americans because of the segregation that made living conditions in the South more and more intolerable (Gates and McKay, *Norton Anthology* 953-55). During this period, folklore and oral traditions were no longer considered to be quaint and restrictive but as an ore for complex literary influence (Harris 9; G. Jones, "Freeing of Forms" 7). With a rebirth of African-American literature in the 1920s, African-American novelists gained more and more self-confidence and expressed their feelings in creative works rooted in their own culture. African-American writers incorporated musical elements in their longing for "primitiveness" as suppressed part of the psyche. Confrontation with "primitivism" also meant the confrontation with one's own self (Bernard 718-25; Cooper, "McKay 297-306; Diedrich 434; Ickstadt 251-55).

15 Before the Harlem Renaissance, African-American musical forms were mostly used in the art of poetry. Since James W. Johnson's preface of *The Book of the American Negro Poetry*, literary critics have recognized the presence and sounds of African-American oral traditions, for exmple in texts by Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker (Diedrich 434).

The first novel discussed is Claude McKay's *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,*[16] which is set in Marseilles, France, during the 1920s, when modernism meant the irresistible attraction to radical re-definitions of African-American identities (B. Bell, "Clarence Major" 5-9). Written during his self-imposed exile in France, Claude McKay included elements from early blues music (see 3.1.1). The protagonist Banjo is a life-affirming blues musician, who drinks, dances, and loves in numerous music-making scenes. Even though Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*[17] is critically known as a jazz text *par excellence,* it contains numerous blues music elements (see 3.1.2). The novel is structured along the form of a blues song with improvisational variations around the chorus of Louis Armstrong's "Black and Blue," which serves as the prologue and epilogue in the novel (Yaffe 90).

Clarence Major's *Dirty Bird Blues* (1992),[18] refers to country blues music from the 1950s with a rhythmic, vernacular style (Bell, "Clarence Major" 5-9). The author belongs to the group of "black" writers, who emerged during the 1990s, elaborating more room for artistic diversity and style than for the theme of the exploration of African-American experience in content (Ellis 233-43; C. Scott). Major incorporates numerous intertextual references to authentic lyrics from traditional country blues songs (Bell, "Clarence Major" 5-9), and takes on typical blues music topics, such as the traveling bluesman personified in the protagonist Man, a guitar player who moves from Chicago to Omaha *(DBB*).

In the second part of the analyses, African-American prose fiction is examined with elements from jazz music (3.2). Since the 1990s, jazz fiction has become an institutional academic fact which saw the publication of a considerable number of jazz anthologies of poetry and prose, linking the genre's politics with aesthetics (Jerving 648). Jazz music is rooted in thousands of years of old folk art and at the same time product of an urban culture (Feather, *Inside Jazz* 132-33; Jacobs 99-162). Jazz music itself is an art form developed by African-Americans who sought to inte-

16 All pages references preceded by *BJ* are to the following edition: McKay, Claude. *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* (San Diego: Harper and Brothers, 1929).

17 All page references preceded by *IM* are to the following edition: Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man* (NY: Vintage, 1995).

18 All page references preceded by *DBB* are to the following edition: Major, Clarence. *Dirty Bird Blues* (San Francisco: Mercury, 1996).

grate freedom with structure, spontaneity with forethought, individual expression with collective interplay, and West African residuals with European concepts and instruments (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* xiii). All in all, jazz music is arguably the most significant artistic movement of the twentieth century, and it is the African-American's unique contribution to a "universal" culture (Breton 6).

In *Jazz* (1992),[19] Toni Morrison creates an authentic atmosphere of the beginning of the *Jazz Age* in New York City (see 2.1.2). Morrison belongs to those African-American writers who view identity from a multi-dimensional perspective. In the form of healing process, folk culture and wisdom are praised as survival techniques. In a dynamic constructive dialogue, fragments of an African-American self are creatively put together into a new order or form (Diedrich 433-40). Stanley Crouch then creates a fictional environment of swing music by emphasizing its harmonious qualities during the 1930s (2.1.2). *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing*[20] is an excellent portrayal of jazz music's healing function in a time when borders of race, class, and sex are beginning to be crossed.[21] In the endeavor of saving her relationship with Maxwell, the protagonist Carla saves her own self while exploring her emotional and psychological dimensions in singing (*DL*).

In particular, short stories are appropriate vehicles for a jazz theme (Breton 3). For this reason, I have included Ann Petry's "Solo on the Drums" (1947)[22] and Amiri Baraka's "The Screamers" (1967).[23] Petry takes on an existential tenor within *social realism* (C. Scott) with the portrayal of a bebop music performance from the 1940s, while Baraka refers to free jazz music's inherent revolutionary mood. Baraka

19 All page references preceded by *J* are to the following edition: Morrison, Toni. *Jazz* (NY: Signet, 1992).

20 All page references preceded by *DL* are to the following edition: Crouch, Stanley. *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* (NY: Vintage, 2004).

21 African-American writers of the *New Black Aesthetic* differ greatly from their literary forebears, for whom the issue of African-American identity or authenticity was a constant, yet necessary preoccupation. There is a willingness to embrace the notion that African-American experience can be much broader, more diverse than previously imagined. Nowadays, the term African-American is recognized from a perspective, saying that we have always contained multitudes (C. Scott).

22 All page references preceded by "SD" are to the publication of Ann Petry's "Solo on the Drums," in Marcela Breton, ed., *Hot and Cool Jazz Short Stories* (NY: Penguin, 1990, 53-59).

23 All page references preceded by "S" are to the publication of Amiri Baraka's "The Screamers" in Marcela Breton, ed., *Hot and Cool Jazz Short Stories* (NY: Penguin, 1990, 260-68). In the following, the author's name Amiri A. Baraka is used, which he chose after his conversion to the Kewaida sect of the Muslim faith. Before, he was called LeRoi Jones (Liukkonen).

belongs to the *Black Aesthetic Movement* of the 1960s,[24] which contributed to establish the use of musical mode in African-American literature (A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 113).[25] Music had a profound influence on a writer's articulation as a radical reordering of Western cultural aesthetics with its separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology (Cataliotti xv). A closeness of creative and critical functions found its fullest expression during the 1960s and 1970s (Cornwell-Giles 90). In "The Screamers," Baraka transforms the energy of free jazz music of the 1960s into the literary form of the short story.

In the third part of the analysis, "Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Rap Music in *Philadelphia Fire, The Plot Against Hip Hop,* and *The Haunting of Hip Hop*,[26] novels which are influenced by rap music are focused on.[27] A current reader might be able to relate to the culture of hip-hop music because it has defined the contemporary cultural landscape not only in the United States but also around the world. Meanwhile, hip hop has permeated all aspects of our collective lives – from everyday language and fashion, to music and dance, to advertising and commerce, to sports, to local national and global discussions around the politics of class, gender, race, and sexuality (Nielson). Hip-hop culture is an inclusive and fluid concept that has shifted from being a medium of social protest, as it was so more in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to more of a big business promoting toughness and hedonism (Grassian 5). Nevertheless, hip-hop music is widely presumed to be the musical style with the most current relevance to everyday African-American life (D. Jones 668).

In his 1989 essay, "The New Black Aesthetic," Trey Ellis first paid notice to

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24 During the Black Aesthetic Movement, an oppositional attitude against white culture was established along the complementary Black Power Movement of the Nation of Islam and the Black Muslims. Writers expressed patterns of autonomous identity formations, and envisioned art that spoke directly to the needs and aspirations of African-Americans. Creative expression was supposed to lay closest to the emotional and experiential categories of African-American culture. Particularly after the assassination of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., burning slums and the Vietnam experience, positive self-affirmation was replaced by radical nationalistic consciousness (H. Baker, "Recent Criticism" 3-6; Diedrich 431-32).

25 Baraka was instrumental in the creation of what became the Black Aesthetic Movement. He demanded that African-American literature and music must be examined in the context of the culture that gave rise to it, with a particular focus on oral traditions such as storytelling, sermonizing, and both sacred and secular music (Caponi 21).

26 An additional analysis on the aesthetics of soul or funk music elements in African-American prose fiction might have gone beyond the scope of this work.

27 In the following, the terms "rap music" or "hip-hop music" are used alternately.

the nascent literary movement of African-American literature in the age of hip-hop music (233-43).[28] *Urban fiction or street literature* is a culturally inscribed literary movement with its beginnings in the 1980s, typically set in the "landscape" of a city, defined by socio-economic realities and culture, linking hip-hop music and lyrical boldness with social protest (Grassian 3; Tyler). Each of the analyzed novels with rap music elements conveys moods of various aspects of rap music history, from its beginnings in the 1970s to current socio-cultural aspects. For example, *Philadelphia Fire* (1990)[29] refers back to the beginnings of hip-hop music in city parks as well as the traumatic effects of the confrontation between MOVE, a predominantly African-American back-to-nature cult, and the Philadelphia city administration, culminating in a house bombing in 1985. As part of a larger upheaval in American cities since the 1970s, the disaster represents the urban environment, in which hip-hop music was created (Dubey 579-95).

Nelson George's *The Plot Against Hip Hop* (2011)[30] shifts back to the *golden age* of hip-hop music (see 2.1.3) and its subsequent decay resulting from its commercialization. George's novel is both an African-American detective story about the murder of hip-hop music critic Dwayne Robinson, and at the same time a rewrite of the history of hip-hop music in "gangster" style, which mirrors the music's transformation from an authentic means of expression to commodity (Nagy). Bertice Berry's *The Haunting of Hip Hop* (2001)[31] portrays the current hip-hop music scene, in which producers become entrepreneurs and the music's true values are overshadowed by business obsessions. The author delicately weaves together the ancient story of young West African Ngozi, who was stolen into slavery, and hip-hop music producer Harry Hudson or Freedom on his quest for truth in a polyrhythmic structure. Hereby, the drums play a special role in the correspondence between the living and the spiritual world, while both are on the search for inner wholeness. All in all, Wideman,

28 Hip-hop music in urban fiction as well as its criticism are still in its beginnings. Writers using such an experimental style distance themselves from the era of postmodernism and further preceding African-American literary traditions (Tyler 198-201).

29 All page references preceded by *PF* are to the following edition: John E. Wideman, *Philadelphia Fire* (NY: Henry Holt, 1990).

30 All page references preceded by *PAH* are to the following edition: Nelson George, *The Plot Against Hip Hop* (NY: Akashic, 2011).

31 All page references preceded by *HH* are to the following edition: Bertice Berry, *The Haunting of Hip Hop* (NY: Harlem Moon Broadway, 2001).

George, and Berry are members of a new generation of African-American writers, who branch out into different genres such as mainstream popular fiction, mystery, and science fiction or thriller (Ellis 233-43; C. Scott).

In this study, prose fiction by popular as well as less known writers are included, which is mirrored in the amount of secondary literature to the respective novels and short stories. While there exists a range of studies on classical works such as *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,*[32] *Invisible Man,*[33] *Jazz,*[34] "Solo on the Drums,"[35] "The Screamers,"[36] and *Philadelphia Fire*,[37] research on cultural ecological functions, in particular, biophilic healing functions, has not been carried out yet. Even though Major's fictional works have generally been well received by his critics in terms of postmodern techniques like indeterminacy, *Dirty Bird Blues* is neither widely known nor generally taught at universities or colleges (Bell, "Clarence Major" 5-9).[38] The title *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* already hints at the novel's critique of complexity in content and form (Thelwell 171-75). As a result, reviews have been limited and neither musicological nor ecocritical approaches have been dared yet (J. Campbell 14). Likewise, *The Plot Against Hip Hop* and *The Haunting of Hip Hop* have not yet drawn much attention.

Research regarding African-American prose fiction in ecological terms[39] is

32 Literary criticism has mainly focused on musical representations of music, or the topics of diaspora and identity.

33 Various studies on musical-literary intermediality have been carried out but approaches from a cultural-ecological viewpoint are missing.

34 An ecocritical analysis has not yet been carried out on *Jazz,* but Kathleen R. Wallace and Karla Armbruster (2001) focused on "wilderness" in *Tar Baby* (1981), Barbara Christian (1985) took a closer look at the centrality of nature in human communities in *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), and *Song of Solomon* (1977). Other critics resorting to cultural ecology are Vera Norwood (1993), who pays special attention on plants and animals in *Beloved (1987)*; Jhan Hochman (1998), who analyzes the image of trees in *Beloved*, too

35 Critical response to Petry's short story has foremost concentrated on her aesthetic strategies of the use of structural devices to express Kid Jones's hurt feelings from a social realistic perspective (G. Jones, "Ann Petry" 90-98).

36 Regarding this short story, literary critics have mainly reflected on it from an African-American aesthetic and political viewpoint, but not yet from a cultural ecological perspective.

37 So far, recent criticism on *Philadelphia Fire* has mainly focused on the development of an African-American literary language including hip-hop music style, historical as well as autobiographical elements and the topic of urban survival (Lucy 478-88).

38 Both the *African American Review* (1994) and the *Black American Literature Forum* (1979) devoted an issue to the study of Major's works. Some critics reject Major's bold assumption of Man's consciousness and voices of his blues, or resist his complex prose style and structure (Bell, "Clarence Major" 5-9).

39 *Ecology*, in Greek the "science of the household," is both a natural science and a school of

still in its beginnings despite the fact that critics have long ago called for an inclusion of cultural and ethnic aspects in conversations about *ecocriticism,*[40] especially since the increasing *environmental justice movement*[41] (Dungi xxi). Kimberly N. Ruffin postulates: "[C]ontinued reclamation of African American ecological vision should involve review of folklore/orature and oral history in an effort to chart African American eco art" (Ruffin, *Black on Earth* 14).[42] African-Americans continue to find forms of self-empowerment by connecting themselves to nature and worship their cultural roots (Ammons 128).

In the following I will show that African-American literary texts influenced by blues, jazz, and hip-hop music are one of a few sources available with strategies of re-naturalization in an age of environmental destruction and post-biological utopia (H. Boehme, "Aussichten"). "Black" culture has been influenced by its surroundings and reacted to it with the creation of music as ecologically stabilizing medium. The fact that African-American aesthetics not only survive but thrive is a powerful testament to its vitality (Caponi 7) and biophilic power.[43] Because of African-Americans' cultural rootedness in African spiritual and oral traditions, ecocritical approaches in African-American literature contribute valuable advice on how to solve the ecological problem in the 21st century.

thought, dealing with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings within a holistic, dynamic, life-affirming, and integrated framework (T. Clark 118, 152; Trepl 15).

40 *Ecocriticism* is defined as "[...] the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment [and] takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and culture" (Glotfelty and Fromm xviii-xix).

41 *Environmental Justice*, a rapidly growing grassroots movement since the 1980s, solves environmental-related problems in urban surroundings of mostly poorer sections of ethnic minorities. It is part of a worldwide attempt to broaden the scope of environmentalism to include basic needs as well as human rights of poor and politically less powerful groups (Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism* 141-42).

42 Kimberly N. Ruffin's *Black on Earth: African American Ecoliterary Traditions* (2010) is based on the so-called ecological *burden-and-beauty paradox*, the experience of ecological beauty resulting from individual and collective attitudes toward nature, which undercut the experience of racism and its related evils and vice versa (Ruffin 3-4).

43 Only a few studies stress such qualities. More often, the perspective has been pathological, stressing problems such as race relations in African-American history rather than the strengths and joys in their cultural lives (Caponi 7).

2. Theorizing Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues, Jazz, and Hip-Hop Music in African-American Prose Fiction

In the following chapter, the theoretical framework of this study's thesis is discussed. With theories from African-American literature and music, reader response , and biophilia, a reader's ability to perceive biophilic healing effects during the act of reading is demonstrated, along with subsequent changes in philosophical life approaches. Firstly, it is portrayed how African-American authors create literary acoustics in authentic musical atmospheres in prose fiction *via* intermedial strategies (2.1). Switching from the productive perspective to the receptive side, Wolfgang Iser's concept of the implied reader is presented to illustrate a reader's active participation in the act of reading (2.2.1). Subsequently, the subchapter “Emotional Engagement in the Reading Process” (2.2.2) exemplifies a reader's possible perception of biophilic-related feelings.

After elaborate discussions on the artistic production as well as the aesthetic reception of African-American prose fiction influenced by blues, jazz, or hip-hop music, light is shed on possible ecological healing effects (2.3). Restorative life-energies are perceived when a musical text resembles the structures of an ecosystem (2.3.1), or biophilic-related emotions are emitted in imaginative fictional soundscapes (2.3.2). Finally, a reader's overall attitude to life might be altered with the consequence of taking on a life-affirming stance (2.4.1) and creative approach to life (2.4.2). In “Biophilia Education in African-American Prose Fiction” (2.4), individual educative propositions are developed to counter individual, harmful consequences resulting from the ecological trauma of the 21st century (compare 1.).

2.1 Authentic Atmospheres and Literary Acoustics

In the artistic production of African-American prose fiction, writers create authentic atmospheres of blues, jazz, and hip-hop music. In contextual associations with music, authors come to know and act in response to socio-political environments (Kynard 359). Stylistic traditions in African-American music mirror historical occurrences, attitudes and social conditions.[44] Consequently, an integration of musical elements in African-American prose fiction is regarded as symbolic reference to an *authentic*[45] African-American experience (Kynard 359). Hereby, writers use their own language to offer interpretations of "the experiencing of the experience" (H. Baker, *Blues* 1-13).[46] Aesthetic, authentic *atmospheres* are created, which produce an ambient, spatial mood, an ontologically indeterminate quasi-object of perception, which lies between subject and object, literally in the medium of African-American prose fiction itself (Chandler 558-59).

African-American music has had an inspiring function on authors, and provides them with a wellspring of *intracompositional*,[47] intermedial (compare 1.) references, exalting originality of voice, idea, improvisation, and freedom of expression (Tracy, "Jazz" 853). In intracompositional intermediality, intermediality is an integral part of the signification and/or the semiotic structure of individual texts (Wolf,

44 Changes in African-American music reflect the community's changing perception of the world in an emotional response (Craig, "Morrison" 89).

45 The issue of authenticity runs through the African-American literary movements of the twentieth century (C. Scott). Critics of African-American art have usually fallen within two different camps: those who have believed that the arts should portray African-Americans in a positive sight and those who favored political and cultural aspirations of the African-American community. This could prove to be a dilemma to any writer who not only wants to be accountable to his/her community, but also wants to explore different ideas of what it means to be "black." W.E.B. DuBois believed that African-American art had a unique responsibility to uplift the race by portraying them in a positive light. Yet others, such as Langston Hughes or Zora Neale Hurston, embraced the idioms, music, and attitudes of African-Americans. For them, the only way to create authentic "black" aesthetic was to be their natural "black" selves (C. Scott).

46 In order to understand emotional messages from musicians on a rather rational level, or to interpret the meaning of blues, jazz, and hip-hop music, authors function as translators of a musician's experiences (Wolf, *Musicalization* 107). In this process, the author first interprets the African-American emotive experience with his/her music, and then the literary writer translates this music into words, adding his/her own voice of experience (Borshuk, *Swinging* 1-20).

47 Intracompositional intermediality occurs in two forms: 'plurimediality' or 'intermedial reference' (Wolf, "Literatur" 462-63). Extracompositional intermediality are relations between media that transcend individual works and compositions (Wolf, "Literatur" 462-63).

Literature 462-63), in this case, African-American novels and short stories. *Intermedial references* are references to another medium, here blues, jazz, or hip-hop music, using only the means of the referring medium (Wolf, *Literatur* 468).

Explicit reference occurs when the medium of music is *thematized*, e.g. discussed, mentioned, or musicians are represented as characters (Wolf, *Literatur* 468). In explicit intermedial reference or intermedial thematization, another medium, a work in another medium, or a maker of other media such as a musician is thematized in the mode of *telling* (Wolf, *Musicalization* 44-46, 55-57). African-American authors authentically depict musical environments by making African-American music styles the topic of a discussion, by referencing genuine song titles, instruments, musicians, historical settings, or placing musicians in typical musical settings. Imaginative scenes or fictional soundscapes are often modeled after real events (Wolf, *Musicalization* 90) from authentic blues, jazz, or hip-hop music history, in which musicians actively create or passively listen to music, along with musical symbols, motifs, folk figures such as a trickster,[48] or slang expressions.

In the mode of *showing*, no other medium, work, or artist is mentioned explicitly. *Implicit intermedial reference* means that a given medium evokes, partially reproduces, or formally imitates another medium (Wolf, *Musicalization* 44-46, 57-67). In *evocation* or *imaginary content analogy,* novels or short stories evoke cognitive or emotional effects of a medium such as music (Wolf, *Musicalization* 63-64) in prose fiction: "Such musical effects can, for instance, be emotional responses or images that are described in the text and ideally form an imaginary content analogy to elements of music" (Wolf, "Literatur" 466). For example, the effects of a musical performance on a character are described in fictional soundscapes (Schweighauser 481). Are blues, jazz, or hip-hop music translated into prose fiction, cognitive processes take place according to the so-called *Conceptual Metaphor Theory,* developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson: Metaphors are no longer mere linguistic devices but guide our everyday lives and the way we think and act (Redling, *Musicalization* 501).

48 A *trickster* is a folk hero, who is disempowered but triumphing over his/her adversary, using his/her superior wit and guile (Ervin, *Handbook* 31), being able to outwit anyone (Gates, *Signifying Monkey* 4-5; Kynard).

Implicit *partial reproduction* is present when prose fiction points to another medium, e.g. by quoting a melody from a blues song (Wolf, *Literatur* 468). Parts of one medial artifact of African-American music are produced in prose fiction without involving more than one kind of signifier. Are quotes of parts of song texts presented in African-American prose fiction in an intertextual way,[49] both the melody of the song and remaining words may be triggered in a reader's inner ear even though s/he does not know the song (Schweighauser 482).

With implicit *formal imitation,* structural analogies to music and word music are considered (Wolf, *Literatur* 460, 468). Translated phenomena leave discernible traces, and a felt reference to music as part of the significance of the referring whole is the result (Wolf, "Literatur" 467). *Word music* or *tonal semantics* means the foregrounding of the acoustic dimension of verbal signifiers reminiscent of musical sound (Kynard 359; Scher, Wolf, "Literatur" 460). For instance, African-American dialect or vernacular is often infused with onomatopoeia or neologisms (Gysin, "Liberating Voices" 276-77). Tonal semantics captures the sound of African-American music styles through repetition, alliteration, assonance, and internal rhyme (Kynard 359). Furthermore, *signifying*[50] takes place in the form of marking, loud talking, testifying, calling out a name, sounding, rapping or playing the dozens in an indirectly taunting, teasing, or insulting way (Caponi 22; Gates, *Signifying Monkey* 52).

Furthermore, African-American musical styles can be manifested in *fictional structures* resembling the composition of a blues, jazz, or hip-hop song (Caponi 22). Structural analogies to music refer to the creation of patterns in a verbal text with the effect of resembling structures in musical compositions, for example a theme with variations (Scher, Wolf, "Literatur" 460). African-American musical characteristics such as *improvisation,* which means to compose and perform simultaneously in an

49 *Intertextuality* is the interaction of texts, positing that a literary or non-literary text never exists in isolation; rather all texts are made up of references to or quotations from other texts, and are always in conversations with those other texts (Klages 44).

50 Henry L. Gates, Jr., defines the term *signifying* in his essay, "The Blackness of Blackness: A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey" (1983). According to him, signifying is playing a games, usually of ritual insults, in which one person tries to dominate someone else by coming up with the cleverest rhymes and rhythms (Klages 79). Signifying is an art of insult, in which humorous and quite decorous put-downs serve as indirect form of serious criticism or casual joking – verbal indirection, linked to cultural survival (Kynard 359). The act of signifying itself is inherently dialogical, always existing within a relationship with one another (Caponi 22).

unrehearsed way, can be recurrent in structural forms.[51] Improvised music is never heard the same way twice, except for brief, repetitive patterns, so-called *riffs* (Dauer, *Magische Musik* 328-29). In fiction, riffs[52] are employed as repetitions or breaks, bridges or interludes in cadences[53] (Guzzio, *Trauma* 27).

Polyrhythms are a structured coordination of different rhythms along the time line in a dynamic system of a musical or fictional piece, including interactive phenomena like synchronization, extinction, amplifying, and interlinking (Spintge 20-22). Storytelling can be circular with nonlinear, multiple feedback loops and changing time processes. This strategy is related to narrative sequencing or narrative interspersion, i.e. various other stories are narrated alongside a main plot (Kynard 359). Next to polyrhythmic effects, the *call-and-response* pattern can be mirrored in a novel's structure signified by multi-vocality, e.g. when multiple voices or points of view interact, e.g. an authorial speech, speeches of narrators, various inserted genres or characters' discourses (McDowell 374). In analogy to musicians, one voice plays or sings something, and another one throws it back in a slightly, new or altered form, adding new improvised variations (Dauer, *Magische Musik* 300-01).

Even though African-American texts with blues, jazz, or hip-hop music elements go beyond representing soundscapes of their time and place, they do *not* turn into a musical piece.[54] Nevertheless, novels and short stories become sounding objects themselves (Schweighauser 476), which Philip Schweighauser terms as *literary acoustics*. Literary acoustics are on the one hand the internal staging of acoustic worlds within the confines of literary texts and on the other hand, the external, communicational,

51 Each of the African-American music styles, to which authors refer to, comprise of the following African-American oral principles of call-and-response, multeity-in-unity, individuality, improvisation, polyrhythms, and engagement of the whole person (Caponi 10). Even though external forms of African-American music styles have changed over the years, the intensity of expression, essence, and the spirit of the music have remained the same (Jacobs 305-14).

52 Riffs are brief, repetitive patterns within a musical piece (Dauer, *Magische Musik* 328-29).

53 In a break, the established flow of rhythm or melody is disrupted, similar to a sentence pausing at a colon. Such gaps or fissures are opportunities for setting personal statements (Guzzio, *Trauma* 28).

54 African-American novels or short stories do not turn into the form of a musical song but only take characteristics from it. Especially prose fiction offers elaboration and coloration without replacing the music as it can never be fully eclipsed (Breton 10). Created intermedial products are not synthetic in the sense that prose fiction and music melt together into a new form, neither are they of transformational or ontological nature (Schroeter, "Discourses" 1). Intermedial or transboundary references are produced in one dominant medium, which only adopts blues, jazz, or hip-hop music elements.

cultural functions that literary texts assume as a result of that staging (Schweighauser 483). Conceptual metaphors indicate musical elements, e.g. dynamics or melody, in order to permit a readership to envisage a blues, jazz, or hip-hop song (Redling, *Musicalization* 503). Readers are allowed to discover the innovative ways, in which writers translate melody, dynamics, tempo, mood, and other musical elements into literal and figurative expressions to perceive blues, jazz, or hip-hop music in the imagination (Redling, *Mimesis*).

2.1.1 Blues Music

The blues is a special musical art form to express feelings resulting from African-American painful experiences: "The blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain" (Ellison, *Jazz Writings* 78-79). Consequently, its form is "[...] an autobiographical chronicle of a personal catastrophe [...]" (Ellison, *Jazz Writings* 78-79). Houston A. Baker (1984) developed a so-called *blues matrix* as a code for the basis of most African-American products: "The matrix is a point of ceaseless input and output, a web of intersecting crisscrossing impulses always in productive transit" (*Blues* 3-4). In novels and short stories, African-American writers translate deep and complex emotional realities from blues music, through which musicians cured psychological pain[55] from America's racial, sexual, and class politics in the act of creation (D. Jones 671, 690).

Various music styles such as early blues, country blues, urban or classic blues, represent respective adaptations to historical social environments (Baraka, *Blues People* 8, 93; Miller, "Blues" 46). With the help of intermedial strategies, African-American writers portray, for instance a character's attempt to overcome African-American pain by transporting suffering into the music, and transcending sorrows in this process (Steinberg and Fairweather xix). In novels with *early blues music* elements, lyrics as well as titles, symbols, or typical blues motifs are cited to portray this music style as pure entertainment and direct expression of life itself, in

55 Psychological pain is an unpleasant sensory perception from emotional injuries (Weiss 1-13).

which a singer voices his/her personal woes in the surroundings of harsh reality (Baraka, *Blues People* 96, 143). Early blues music was mostly played by African-American lower-class musicians. Popular figures are Papa Charlie Jackson, Blind Lemon Jefferson or Jelly Roll Morton, who had the capacity to enjoy their lives despite suffering (Hernton 80-81).[56]

By the 1920s, Chicago had developed as the center of blues music industry, having establishing renowned live music clubs and professional recording studios.[57] The popularization of blues music led to a diversification of styles with first recordings in two categories: traditional, *rural* or *country* blues music, and a more polished *urban or classic* blues[58] (Baraka, *Blues People* 131, 83-86).[59] While countrified blues music consists of sung improvisations, either without accompaniment or with only a banjo or a guitar (Baraka, *Blues People* 69, 126; Wald 251), classic blues singers usually have a band backing them (Baraka, *Blues People* 90, 144).[60]

Blues music lyrics usually talk about women, loneliness, sex, poverty, drinking, gambling, violence to white oppression, social protest, suffering, death or "the devil," in the form of loose narratives (Steinberg and Fairweather xvi, Redling, *Musicalization* 496). For example, blues musicians like Peetie Wheatstraw or Robert Johnson declared affiliations with otherworldly forces in their lyrics. Wheatstraw named himself "the devil's son in law," while Johnson made a deal with "the devil" to gain his musical talent at the so-called "crossroads" (D. Jones 681-88; Oakley 111-22; Wald 267). Furthermore, the theme about the traveling bluesman as well as

56 However, early blues music was also accused of being "the devil's music," and of inciting violence or other bad behaviors such as the image of spontaneous sexual dance movements (Baraka, *Blues People* 96, 143).

57 In the late 1930s and early 1940s, also many female blues musicians like Memphis Minnie, Madame Rainey, Ida Cox and Bessie Smith moved to Chicago, and contributed to the development of urban blues music (Baraka, *Blues People* 74-137; D. Jones 681).

58 In the late 1930s and early 1940s, urban blues music was called *boogie-woogie*, formerly called *barrelhouse style* (Charters, *Country Blues* 84, 107-30, 173-86; Keil 62-65).

59 Grown in after-hours joints, house rent parties, or other so-called gut parties, urban or classic blues music is regarded as the African-American musicians' entrance into the world of professional entertainment (D. Jones 681). Nevertheless, urban blues music still mirrors poverty, harshness, and hopelessness of city lives (Baraka, *Blues People* 90, 144).

60 Outstanding blues music singers like Jimmy Rushing, Joe Turner, or Walter Brown performed either with a big band or a boogie-woogie solo piano, developing a so-called shouting style reminiscent of the field holler. In the 1940s, a new style called jump blues music was created, which was influenced by big bands, who integrated a saxophone or other brass instruments and a guitar in the rhythm section to create a jazzy, fast sound with declamatory vocals (Charters, *Country Blues* 84, 107-30, 173-86; Keil 62-65).

the motif of the train ride are recurring (Gysin, “Liberating Voices” 281; Jimoh, Paradox; Kynard 363). For instance, with the closure of New Orleans's fabled Storyville district in 1917, leading African-American musicians gravitated toward Northern cities in search for work (J. Collier, *History* 193-95).

The structure of a novel influenced by blues music is often built analogous to the form of a blues song, which is fixed at twelve bars with the first two lines setting the stage by repetition, and the third line delivering the punch or conclusion (D. Jones 671). The verbal form consists of three-line stanzas, which feature an AAB-pattern with the first line (A) being repeated once (A), followed by a concluding third line (B) (Redling, *Musicalization* 495).[61] Such a form delivers aesthetic transcendent qualities of the African-American experience during the first half of the twentieth century (D. Jones 671). At the same time, it furnishes a good vehicle for a narrative of any length in the form of a loose narrative (Baraka, *Blues People* 96, 143). While the inner form of a blues song is taken from the West African call-and-response pattern, the over-all length and general proportions are derived from European harmony (Stearns 99-108). The blues stanza itself is tailored for live performances (Stearns 99-108), and a vast majority of blues songs is vocalized (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* xii).

Tonal semantics in African-American novels with blues music elements are mainly produced when linguistic tools characteristic for blues lyrics are used by an author. To express blues music's inherent sad or melancholic emotions in musical terms, rhythmic techniques such as syncopation as well as “bent” or “blue notes,” e.g. a flattened 7th, are utilized to create the typical “blue note.” Especially repetitions, alliterations, assonances, internal rhymes, and signifying are prevalent (Redling, *Musicalization* 496).

All in all, music styles such as early blues, country blues, urban or classic blues reflect psychological adaptations to respective social environments (Baraka, Blues People 8, 93; Miller, “Blues” 46). By incorporating elements of these forms of blues music into novels and short stories, African-American writers create authentic atmospheres and literary acoustics with music as lyrical expressions and affirmative responses to the brutal experience of racism in the African-American history.

61 Variations on stanzaic patterns occur in the form of AAA or ABB (Redling, *Musicalization* 495).

2.1.2 Jazz Music

When jazz music is represented in African-American novels or short stories, it leads to strong characterizations and powerful prose with jazz music's improvisational free play and dialogic substances (Cataliotti 99). As a consequence, traditional literary forms are being freed (Jones, "Petry"). By integrating jazz music elements from the Jazz Age, swing, bebop, or free jazz music era, African-American authors authentically portray African-Americans' dealing with alienation, rebellion, and endurance (Mellers 166) within the surroundings of the urban culture of "the new world's cities" (Feather, *Inside Jazz* 132-33).

> Jazz […] is one of the inherent expressions of Negro [sic!] life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro [sic!] soul – the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains and work, work work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile. (Hughes, "Negro Artist" 35)

As an inherent expression of African-American life in America, jazz music has always been a significant medium for black protest, or in Langston Hughes's words, "the tom-tom of revolt," "the tom-tom of joy and laughter," and an ironic engagement with mainstream discourses (Borshuk, "Jazz" 845). African-American authors translate a jazz musician's experiences into novels or short stories, and add their own voice of experience (Borshuk, *Swinging* 1-20). The use of intermedial techniques as described above leads to an authentic, musical atmosphere.

According to the form of a jazz song, a jazz text is somewhat complicated in its harmonies, rhythms, and surface structure. Its vocabulary and syntax are often ambiguous, strong in their accents, and tending to abstractions. Are jazz musical characteristics applied, a text becomes fluid in its rhythmical design and receives a syncopated understructure, with a faster pace and tempo than, for example a blues text (Jones 200). These distinctive and parallel characteristics of blues and jazz texts may stem from the fact that blues music tends to be a rather guitar-based vocal music

over certain chord patterns, whereas jazz music tends to be a horn-based, instrumental music, extending and amending the harmonic and rhythmic language of blues music (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* xv).[62] Musical elements of jazz music such as improvisation, dynamics, mood, pitch, tone color, and rhythm are translated into written forms with the help of punctuation, small and upper case letters and words, or a special layout (Redling, *Musicalization* 502).

In thematic aspects, African-American authors portray, for example, jazz music's popularity in the 1920s, which gave the era its name: the *Jazz Age* (Tracy, "Jazz" 851). It mirrors the hectic and dynamic of urban migration and experimentation when the "Big Apple" became jazz music's capital with venues like the Cotton Club or the Savoy Ballroom (Collier, *History* 193-95).[63] Hand in hand with the relaxation of social strictures in racial segregation in the 1930s, jazz music gradually became part of American popular music during the golden era of swing music (Jacobs 126).[64] *Swing* is named after its rhythmic momentum swing,[65] which compels the listener to dance or snap his/her finger to a jazz tune, and conveys the feeling of life and energy (Knauer 6-7).[66]

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62 Contrary to blues music, in which singers take on a prominent role voicing their sorrows, jazz music is predominated by instrumentalists (Berendt, *Story* 254-57).

63 Harlem was known for its booming nightclub scene, which drew attention from wealthy whites, who were eager to experience the district's supposedly "primitive" excitement. Nightclub owners made an effort to lure white clientele, and arguably, no club in Harlem was more alluring than the Cotton Club while the Savoy was the most glamorous and the community's biggest ballroom (Shaw ix-xiv). At rent parties, so-called cutting contests were held (Jost, *Sozialgeschichte* 75-80), in which masters of a dazzling virtuoso piano played emotionally and physically "hot" music, accompanied by "wild" dance styles such as the jellyroll (Shaw ix-xiv). The dance movements of the jellyroll or shimmy were said to be having a catastrophic impact on the national character. Despite its popularity in Harlem, jazz music became for a great part of Americans a threat in the 1920s, one more of loosening morals and frightening dislocation. For some, jazz music became synonymous with noise with its disturbing sounds and fast pace (P. Anderson 135-45).

64 People from all walks of life, young and old listeners, male and female, "black and white" embraced swinging jazz music (Bindas 3-19). Thereupon, swing music became one of the first defining elements of mass youth culture, but was at the same time commercially exploited by the 1930s, when it became part of popular music spread through record sales and radio stations (Bindas 3-19).

65 What makes jazz music swing is mostly the use of *syncopation*, a technique of placing accents or emphasis in surprising, unexpected places. For example, a normally unstressed beat in a bar is stressed, or a tone on an accented beat is somewhat neglected (Knauer 6-7).

66 With swing music, the big band became an oral synonym or aesthetic manifestation of American democratic and harmonious possibilities (Borshuk, "Jazz" 845; Mellers 166). Even though this jazz music style is known to be a collective sound, it offered individual musicians a chance to improvise in melodic and thematic solos, which could be very complex at times (Bindas 3-19; Stearns 197-217).

In the 1940s, jazz musicians such as Lester Young, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie began to re-imagine and re-vitalize the sounds of swing music with the result of a new style, *bebop*.[67] It reflected uninhibited expressivity with spontaneous modeling of individual ideas as well as feelings of rage or anxiety at the time of the beginning push for civil rights (Borshuk, "Jazz" 847; Jacobs 222).[68] Beboppers intellectualized jazz music by breaking down barriers *via* complex melodic, rhythmic syncopation, polyrhythmic as well as tonal values, and fast paced improvisational solos over altered harmonic chord progressions (Redling, *Musicalization* 499). Bebop musicians demanded a return to jazz's authentic origins and constitutive elements of African-American folklore (Jacobs 180-86, 199, 219).

More radical than bebop was the global revolution of *free jazz music*, which originated chiefly out of the work of saxophonist Ornette Coleman towards the end of the 1960s. With emphasis on energetic intensity in prose fiction, free jazz music acts as a catalyst of collective ecstasy, transmitting the feeling of chaos and disturbance,[69] questioning any kind of rule in an act of cultural resistance with a spiritual component of hope (Borshuk, "Jazz" 848; Jacobs 281-84, 289).[70] African-American authors mirror the music's dismissal of strict song structures in literary acoustics, liberating themselves from established patterns. Free jazz also reflects the psychological mindsets of its creators,[71] which in turn leads to authentic atmospheres of jazz musical soundscapes in African-American prose fiction.

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67 The mysterious and prophetic figure of Charlie Parker embodied the music of bebop, being admired by an increasing group of musicians and fans. Both Charlie Parker and Lester Young's way of life was excessive in any direction, which led to self-destructive attempts. Dizzy Gillespie or "Mr. Bebop" then profited from bebop music's boom and was officially held as the inventor of it (Jacobs 180-222). In general, most of the jazz musicians from the 1940s to the 1950s were driven to early graves, being misguided by white cultural references as an incongruity of their models with African-American reality (Stewart 8).

68 During the 1940s, only exceptional African-Americans felt free to describe oppression while many could not conceive of political action. However, those who were musicians could channel those energies into their songs (Feather 106-25).

69 For more information on free jazz music, see Jost, Ekkehard. "Free Jazz." *Die Story des Jazz. Vom New Orleans zum Rock Jazz.* Ed. Joachim-Ernst Berendt. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1975. 167-92.

70 A great deal of musical critics developed an aversion against free jazz music, and some of the older jazz musicians perceived it as being destructive with latent outrage. However, after a while, free jazz music's spiritual component could be detected with its hopeful indications (Jost, "Free Jazz" 126-45).

71 For more information on psychological healing functions of jazz music, see Jacobs, Michael. *All that Jazz. Die Geschichte einer Musik.* Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996. 99-162.

2.1.3 Rap Music

Rap music is described as "[a] genre of popular music in which lyrics (typically rhyming and sometimes improvised) are spoken rhythmically, and usually rapidly, over an instrumental backing which has a strong background beat" ("Rap"). More than any other contemporary form of African-American cultural expression, rap music articulates the chasm between urban lived experience and dominant ideologies about equal opportunities or racial inequalities (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 2, 21, 27-30, 100-03).

In African-American novels, writers authentically portray environments, in which hip-hop music offers vital resources for survival in postindustrial urban contexts of dwindling low-income housing, a trickle of meaningless jobs for young people, and mounting police brutality (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 22, 216). In thematic dimensions, extended character development, narrative descriptions and scene making (G. Jones, *Liberating Voices* 13), authors authentically reproduce environments from rap music's beginnings in parks in the Bronx of New York City, the golden age with its stylistic innovations, the form of conscious rap music with its emphasis on African-American identity formation, gangster rap music with its violent aspects, and the current hip-hop music scene, in which musicians become businessmen.

Worked out in parks as a "playground," hip-hop music originated in the Bronx of New York City in the mid-1970s as an integrated series of live community-based practices (Cohendet et al. 717; George, *Hip Hop America* ix). The notion of creating new music and previously undiscovered sounds from old records by sampling, using only a pair of decks, and giving turntables the role of the drum was a new form of the accelerated information blur in the technological 20th century (Toop xiii, 12). An underground cassette exchange system became very common and contributed to bring rap music out of the underground to the public listeners (Cohendet 717-18).

Thereupon, the period from 1984 to 1992 experienced a sheer number of

stylistic innovations, and it was consequently called the *golden age* of hip-hop music (Cobb 41, 47).[72] However, a dissing aspect of rap music, along with a parading of pure ego and malice became one of the enlivening features from the mid- to the late 1990s, when rap music families or crews pervaded the music scene (Dimitriadis 25-29). During this era of *gangster rap,* radical divides were widening with rising gang violence and the spread of drugs (Dimitriadis 25-29; Toop xii).[73] Nowadays, rap music has become *big business* with international multimillion record sales by artists such as MC Hammer, NWA or Vanilla Ice (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 91). Meanwhile, hip-hop music has opened up new opportunities for musicians to act as entrepreneurs, embodying various pressures and trajectories – from rap music as a complex lyrical art form to hip-hop as a kind of lifestyle brand, transcending the music itself (Dimitriadis 41-42).[74]

Today, African-American writers are members of the hip-hop music generation, and

> use […] hip-hop's aesthetics and sense of history – that is, that history is ever present, the past easily taken from ("sample"), repeated ("loop"), collaged together, unified often only by voice and by the rhythm of day-to-day life ("flow" and "beat") […]. These writers flow and then are willing to interrupt that flow, to challenge the aesthetic of quiet storm "smoothness" or sitcom solutions, that are hallmarks of a public need for "positive images" or "easy uplift." (K. Powell 6)

African-American writers refer to elements from hip-hop music use samples of blues or jazz music traditions and recycle them in a new creative way. Texts with hip-hop music elements are characterized by indirect criticism of urban failures, and held together by dominant, inherent rhythms, which in turn contribute to a novel's "flow and beat" (K. Powell 184; Scott). In hip-hop culture, a new language connects the art of

72 In this decade of inventions, DJ Kool Herc created the so-called break beat and Grandmaster Flash introduced scratching and backspinning. The *break beat* is a new collage of the peak dance beats from funk, soul, and disco. *Backspinning* is a repetition of phrases and beats from a record, which are rapidly spun backwards (Cobb 47; T. Rose, *Black Noise* 51-52, 208).

73 The accusation increasingly leveled at gangster rap music was that it had become amoral in its celebration of lowlife, firearms, misogyny, drugs, aggression, and noise. The environment of rap music has become extreme and surreal in its decay and disregard for human dignity (Toop 170).

74 For instance, Jay-Z has embraced his role as "aggressive" entrepreneur, who is able to move across social circles and classes (Dimitriadis 41-42).

ritualistic storytelling[75] with technology (George, *Hip Hop America* xiv).[76] For commenting on and challenging aspects of current power inequalities, cloaked speech and disguised cultural codes are used (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 193-205). Complex metaphors, vocal phrasing, rhythms, rhymes, style, storytelling, signifying and a new density in wordplay are increasingly used not only in the lyrics of a rap song (Diminitriadis 55, 60; Redling, *Musicalization* 507), and create word music in prose fiction.

To conclude, African-American literature articulates particular feelings *via* imaginary content analogy aroused by rap music in the processes of creation with music as a psychological survival technique. By embedding hip-hop music elements in urban prose fiction, authors re-create emotional as well as cognitive terrains, in which these music styles were created. In turn, literature itself becomes an acoustic medium *via* structural analogies, word music, evocation, imaginative soundscapes, or partial reproduction.

75 *Ritualistic storytelling* is a repeated action in hip-hop music, which constructs meaning through interpretations of the past (Eschborn 5-6).

76 For more information, see Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America.* Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1994. 193-205.

2.2 Musical Aesthetic Reception in Prose Fiction

Call-and-response or dialogic interaction is present throughout the African-American oral tradition and constitutes the relationship between writer and readership in African-American prose fiction (Cataliotti xii). Call-and-response is Samuel A. Floyd's master trope, which emphasizes the inherently dialogical nature of African-American music (*Power*) and highlights active participation[77] of an audience (Cataliotti xii). Total engagement in music – body and song – or the trope of the whole person implies body-centered interrelatedness between a reader and a novel or a short story (Floyd, *Power*). Hereby, African-American writers seem to be speaking directly to their audience, almost as if waiting for a response (Kynard 359). According to Wolfgang Iser's concept of the implied reader (see 2.2.1), s/he is emotionally engaged into the event of an artwork by sympathizing, empathizing, and identifying with thematized characters in imaginary, content analogical soundscapes. A reader can also be emotionally stimulated by word music or structural analogies to forms of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music (see 2.2.2; compare 2.1).

2.2.1 Iser's Concept of the Implied Reader

Iser's concept of the *implied reader* is a transcendental model, which represents an inherent role of a reader. It consists of a textual structure and an act structure (Iser, *Akt* 66). According to Iser, not a text itself but the communicative act signifies aesthetics. An artwork such as a novel or short story only comes fully alive during the process of reading, which constitutes the so-called *act or event* (Iser, *Akt* 39). In the communicative act of a text's condition and a reader's reception, the activity or receptive process of a literary work lies at heart. As a consequence, reading or the performance of an African-American text in the form of literary acoustics (compare 2.1)

77 Voices from the writers are seen as responses to musicians' voices. An identification of both of these calls and responses by musicians and writers highlights active participation of an audience in African-American aesthetic practices (Craig, "Morrison" 86-92).

constitutes the aesthetic event. Literary texts with musical elements become fields of interaction between author and the readership (Schafer 3-14, 131). Through the discourse between writer and musician, an intermedial relationship is established in the performative act of reading.

Moreover, Iser's *Leerstellenbeitrag,* break or fissure, offers an activity for a reader to take part in the meaning-making process of an African-American novel or short story (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 238-40). For Iser, meaning is the secondary product of a literary text, and it is produced when a reader tries to grasp the aesthetic experience (*Akt* 62). Structural polyphony or multi-vocality in African-American musical-literary texts (2.1) offer gaps, which are yet undefined, but speak to a reader. Usually they occur when some crucial part for the comprehension of a text is missing and is to be filled. Iser claims: "[W]henever the reader bridges gaps, communication begins" (*Act* 169). Gaps within a text are opportunities for readers to join in various segments of a novel or short story in a way that produces meaning in accordance to a reader's interpretations (Ward 17).

Following from this, gaps are crucial in what Iser calls "the game of imagination" (*Akt* 62), played by the author and his/her readership (Ward 17): "The reader's enjoyment begins when he himself becomes productive, i.e. when a text allows him to bring his own faculties into play" (Iser, *Akt* 108, my transl.). In so-called *spheres of play* human beings are motivated to extend themselves by developing and modifying their self-image in a continual process of imaginative boundary crossing (Iser, *Imaginaere*). In this process, a reader might end up in a discrepant situation, which is signified by unconscious tensions (Iser, *Akt* 62). Thereupon, a subsequent act of catharsis with "the hoped-for satisfaction" (Iser, *Act* 48) is supposed to follow. Iser points out:

> The significance of the work, then, does not lie in the meaning sealed within the text, but in the fact that the meaning brings out what had previously been sealed within us. When the subject is separated from himself, the resultant spontaneity is guided and shaped by the text in such a way that it is transformed into a new and real consciousness. (*Act,* 157)

Here, Iser proposes that the development of a reader's "new and real consciousness" takes place while s/he compares received information with available categories. In other words, a reader joins new information with known categories (Iser, *Akt* 62) with the result of adopting "an attitude toward the one offered him" (Iser, *Act* 46).

On the whole, an African-American writer induces active engagement of a reader by "calling" him/her in the expectation of a response. The author constitutes so-called *Leerstellen,* breaks, or fissures in a novel or short story to motivate an implied reader to take part in the performative act. After taking part in imaginative spheres of play, a reader might experience catharsis with an ensuing change of consciousness.

2.2.2 Emotional Engagement in the Reading Process

In the interaction with African-American prose fiction, potential emotional satisfaction can be obtained through a reader's active involvement in the process of constructing meaning (Ward 13). Musical-literary atmospheres incite emotions *via* a *Gefuehlsraum* as a created space of feeling (Rigby 146). During the reception of an artwork, feelings are sensed in bodily presence, motivated by sympathy, empathy, and identification, or structural as well as linguistic emotional stimuli, i.e. word music, structural analogies to blues, jazz, or hip-hop music, partial reproduction, and imaginary content analogy (compare 2.1).

Firstly, *figurative or phonetic effects* of literary acoustics have the ability to constitute a *Gefuehlsraum* and inflect a readership's state of feeling (Rigby 146). From a figurative or an imaginary perspective, emotions are transmitted with the use of metaphors, comparisons, and metonymies. Internal rhythms, repetitions, modifications, as well as new creations on grammatically syntactic or structural levels are emotionally stimulating (Hillebrandt and Fenner; Poppe) because they copy the sounds of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music.

Secondly, coded emotions such as suspense[78] or tension, disorientation or

78 Donald Beecher (2007) describes suspense as "[...] the arousal dimension of any emotion, such as hope or fear, or the cognitive urgency associated with vital information gaps or disorientation" (277).

surprise, can be produced by *compositional structures* (Hillebrandt and Fenner; Poppe) in works of prose fiction. While emotions of suspense are associated with search motifs (Hillebrandt, *Wirkungspotential* 115-23), tension is aroused in imaginative dramatic scenes (G. Jones, *Liberating Voices* 13). Contrary to the phenomenon of suspense or tension, the emotion of surprise is characterized by shorter time durations in emotive receptive processes, and at the same time offers a variety of possibilities for an ensuing cognitive schematization. Similarly, disorienting structural effects are characterized by somewhat rather negatively toned emotional stimuli, offering a range of ways for cognitive meaning-making processes (Hillebrandt, *Wirkungspotential* 124-25).

Thirdly, African-American novels and short stories offer spaces for readers to share feelings of pain, love, hope, and insecurities with *imaginative, fictional characters* (Oatley, "Emotions" 102-13). For example, an author and subsequently his/her created characters confront the same aspects of existence by which the reader's own self is threatened. A readership empathizes with respective characters (Alcorn and Bracher 349) by developing sympathetic emotions (Oatley, "Emotions" 102-13). Amy Coplan (2004) explains *empathy* as follows:

> [Empathy is a] complex imaginative process involving both cognition and emotion. When I empathize with another, I take up his or her psychological perspective and imaginatively experience, to some degree or other, what he or she experiences […] although I am deeply engaged in what he or she – the target of my empathy – is undergoing, I never lose my separate sense. (143)

Whereas, at the core of *sympathy* lies "[a] concern for the well-being of a particular person or character […], reflecting a […] deeply-embedded psychological disposition of the sympathizer" (Feagin 285), and prompts us to feel an emotion about a character. An author provides appraisal patterns, and we pick up those patterns as they apply to characters. As a result, we may feel sympathetic as well as empathetic emotions (Oatley, "Emotions" 102-13).

An author provides us with content that allows us to construct a dynamic model, which stimulates an environment of blues, jazz, and hip-hop music, its characters, and their interactions. By *identification* we are caught up in a character's expe-

riences, and we run their plans on our own planning processes. When those plans meet vicissitudes, we experience emotions in the process of sympathy and empathy. These feelings occur within our simulations, and they *are* our emotions (Oatley, "Emotions" 102-13). People who read literary art respond in kind to what could be the artist's own process of transformation though emotional change, encoded symbolically into the artwork (Djikic et al. 191-97).

Within the transcendent terrain in an aesthetic experience, identities are lost and newly defined (Lussier 256). By exercising and strengthening the capacity to identify with others, African-American literature provides us with the ability to allow further growth and adjustment as we encounter new realities (Alcorn and Bracher 351). By eliciting deep or unconsciously held primary values or *introjects*,[79] and by bringing conscious reflection or compelling values to bear on those values, reading or the interpretation of prose fiction has the potential to re-form a self. Even though readers might attempt to replicate an identity given in a text, such replication is often accompanied by significant variations in the readers' identities (Alcorn and Bracher 347-51).[80]

In sum, African-American writers constitute spaces of feelings *via* authentic portrayals of blues, jazz, or hip-hop musical environments (compare 2.1). Hereby, a reader is emotionally engaged by sympathy or empathy towards a fictional character as well as through the implicit intermedial references. As a result, a reader opens him/herself up for emotional experiences *via* prose fiction when s/he becomes conscious about such an emotional experience with the effect of possible changes in identity formations.

79 The inner world constitutes a kind of intra-psychic, cognitive map of the external world, i.e. between perception and action. It serves as a means, by which the ego regulates its interaction with the external world (Alcorn and Bracher 344).

80 Like many other forms of discourse, literature is able to extend a reader's intra-psychic cognitive map of the external world. In this way, literature can provide new, detailed overlays for a reader's cognitive map, revealing important features previously ignored or suppressed (Alcorn and Bracher 344).

2.3 Biophilic Healing in African-American Prose Fiction

With the intrinsic love for life, biophilia (Wilson, *Biophilia* 1), a more positively toned, emotional state as well as positive changes in physiological activity have been attested in health-related research studies (Ulrich 108). Biophilia enriches human life by its broadest affiliation with the natural world and it is likely to increase the possibility of achieving individual meaning and personal fulfillment, a sign of physical and mental health (Kellert, *Biophilia Hypothesis* 21). Mental benefits from biophilic experiences have been related to "[...] tension release, relaxation, peace of mind, and enhanced creativity derived from the observation of diversity in nature" (Kellert, "Biological Basis" 46).[81] Physiological or physical changes tend to be accompanied by sustained attention or perceptual intake that may, for instance, block or reduce stressful or worrisome thoughts with an effective reduction of negatively toned affects such as fear or aggressions (Ulrich 108). In view of the ecological trauma in the 21st century (compare 1.), biophilic life energies are therefore important ecocritical counter poles (Zapf, "State of Ecocriticism" 52-54) to prevent further individual mental health problems of postmodern human beings.

An aesthetic response reflects human intuitive recognition or reaching for an ideal in nature with its harmony, symmetry, and order as models of human experience and behaviors (Boehme, *Naturaesthetik* 90; Chandler 556). Gernot Boehme has called for a new aesthetics based on ecological embodiment, in which bodies act as nodes of earthly *relationality,* which implies that the most apt way of understanding nature *per se* is by means of aesthetics (*Naturaesthetik* 90; Chandler 556): In short, nature becomes known aesthetically (Boehme, *Naturaesthetik* 90; Chandler 556). Adaptational values of an aesthetic experience of nature in terms of beauty, absolute truth, and wholeness are then associated with derivative feelings of biophilic life-energies (Kellert, "Biological Basis" 59). Natural aesthetics, beauty, and absolute truth are the results of dynamic, evolving processes, which consist of order, structure as

81 Roger S. Ulrich (1993) explains: "One key function of the restorative category of biophilic responses can be characterized as compensatory. That is, a capacity for restorative responding would enhance survival chances in part because of its role in promoting fatigue and other deleterious effects stemming from behaving adaptively in a previous demanding situation" (98).

well as harmonious totalities. Following from this, a self can be concretely experienced and identified *via* aesthetics by prevailing metaphysics of fragmentation and new order (Bohm, *Creativity* ix).

The biophilia hypothesis further suggests that our tendency to respond emotionally to life and lifelike processes is innate or basic, a set of *emotional learning rules*, which evolved genetically (E. Wilson, "Conservation Ethic" 31, 38). An emotion is a basic mechanism or part of our evolutionary inheritance, which is able to connect us to our ecological environment (Armony and Vuilleumier 1). From an evolutionary point of perspective, emotions have been important for survival, and are the prime motivator of human activity as they produce appropriate reactions to dangerous situations such as fight or flight in the presence of a predator or a rival. Organisms, aware of having emotions as part of their life-regulating equipment, can increase survival chances (Damasio, *Feeling* 8; Milton 80-81), especially in the 21st century, when life is signified by the effects of the ecological trauma.

According to Wilson, humankind is "the poetic species," and "the symbols of art, music and language freight power well beyond their outward and literal meanings" (*Biophilia Hypothesis,* 74). While the primary aim of language is to communicate thought, one of the main goals of music is to heighten emotions and express them aesthetically (Aieollo 42). Music is akin to speech and articulates forms of feelings, which language is *not* able to express (Eisenberg, *Recording Angel* 161-64).[82] Through music as "emotional stimulus" as well as a "means to communicate one's feelings" (Schmidt-Atzert 42), it is indeed possible to experience biophilia as "[...] the innately *emotional* affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" (Wilson, "Conservation" 32; emphasis mine).

From an ecological point of view, music has the ability to provide biophilic satisfaction and awareness for life. In his introduction to *Music and the Novel: A Study in the Twentieth Century* (1980), Alex Aronson points out that music is unique for emotional affiliations with nature or to "[...] an invisible and ceaselessly transforming layer of this world, namely the Earth itself" (Abram, *Animal* 122-28). For

82 The essential nature of feelings is concerned without accessories in music. This art form is seen as being superior to architecture, sculpture, and paintings because it is not embodied but ideal and subjective (Eisenberg, *Recording Angel* 12-13, 199).

instance, rhythmic drumming has powerful effects: When the drums are played loudly, human beings feel reverberations as they hear them. Percussion was always present in ancient ceremonies of initiation, or attempts to make contact with other realms. Drumming helps to aid the attainment of ecstatic, trance-like states of consciousness, and thereby encourages synchronized collective activities like dancing. During an energetic activity of drumming, a strong link is produced with the rhythms pounding in our inner selves (Barrow 196).

Music as a connotative language of emotions arouses authentic or true feelings (Aronson x): In the process of recognizing transcendent essences or universal ideas in their purity, a mind gradually "frees itself from the prison of the body, attaining a transcendent, eternal state that is its truest home" (Abram, *Animal* 119-20). In these moments, sacredness or spirituality is experienced through the part of mind, which processes emotional or affective responses (Milton 83-84, 101-03). In the recognition of metaphysical unity, one is able to experience purgation. Engagement with such works of art enable human beings to perceive the mind freshly by implicitly allowing one to reconsider the naturalness of perceptual experience itself (Bohm, *Creativity* xiii). Reactions to beauty, harmony, or absolute truth in music produce an unusual feeling of wellbeing and pleasure. In the process of experiencing inner nature, a certain tension is dissolved (Hesse 96).

As a result, African-American prose fiction with elements of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music elements provide possibilities of healing biophilic life-energies. Readers of African-American prose fiction become emotionally aware of natural beauty and truth when musical texts, in particular word music and structural analogies to African-American music resemble characteristics of an ecosystem (2.3.1), or cognitive, or emotive effects are caused in musical imaginary content analogy in fictional soundscapes (2.3.2).

2.3.1 Musical Text as Ecosystem

A work of African-American prose fiction influenced by blues, jazz, or hip-hop music resembles an ecosystem *via* word music or structural analogies (compare 2.1).[83] Hereby, stored ecological energies offer biophilic-related experiences in the receptive process. Music in African-American novels and short stories contributes to reawaken our basic instincts of our affiliations with nature by unconsciously becoming aware of our inner selves.[84] Through a reader's emotional engagement by disorienting structures or the arousal of tense, suspenseful, or surprising emotions (compare 2.2.2), such sensitivity is spurred with the consequence of a readership's inclination for ecological experiences of biophilia.

The first law of ecology, as it is defined by Barry Commoner, says that everything is connected to everything else. It establishes the structural analogy between ecosystems and literary texts (Commoner; Mueller, "Literary Anthropology" 78). The dialogic open system model of an ecosystem builds on the continuum or open flow of inorganic matter, organisms, and cultural exchanges (Bates and Tucker 5).[85] In ecosystems, life exists within a circle or cycle of interconnected taking and giving, or more generally, a web of interdependence (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner). Ecological processes are always circular with multiple feedback loops, and a constant energy flow keeps the network in dynamics. Most environmental systems cannot accurately be described by linear equations of mechanistic science but are governed by nonlinear chaotic relationships, in which dynamics reign over structure (Gleick). The resulting complexity of such a network is then a consequence of its diversity, and the sum total becomes more than a network's single elements (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner).

83 Various relationships with non-human nature influenced the creation of African-American musical key elements (Ruffin 63-80).

84 The *unconsciousness* is one of three areas of the human psyche mapped by Siegmund Freud; the other two areas are the ego and the super-ego. It is the idea that there is a part of our mind, which is inaccessible to our conscious, rational mind. The unconsciousness governs our actions and thoughts in ways we cannot quite grasp or control (Klages 86-88).

85 In this system, there is no absolute separation between environment and organism, rather *every* environment makes and is made of the organisms and flows which compose an ecosystem. This concept can be applied to any environment because all life forms exist in open systems dependent on external sources of energy (Bates and Tucker 5).

Music comprises of ecological energy from mimetic analogies between its orders of harmonious sounds and the planets of the cosmos (Kaipainen).[86] When Pythagoras reported of the godlike origins of music, he pointed out that the laws of the harmonic division of strings copy the order of the world, and the orbit of planets is equivalent to the mutual relations of the intervals (Hesse 112). In African American music, improvisational and polyrhythmic strategies as well as call-and-response techniques are proofs of irregularity and predictability (Berendt, *Story des Jazz* 248-52) comparable to an ecosystem. For instance, external rhythms do not meet a passive or static organism but a dynamic, complex, and primarily rhythmic system of musicians (Spintge 20-22). Polyrhythms are one of the main characteristics of African-American music, symbolizing the principle of dynamics. Spontaneity and improvisation as well as polyrhythms are not only proofs of irregularity and unpredictability but also the love of complexity (Berendt, *Story des Jazz* 188-97).[87]

When African-American music is manifested in fictional structural parallels, compositional techniques (Caponi 22; Gates, *Signifying Monkey* 52), or the language in novels or short stories, characteristics of an ecosystem are discernible. The fictional interplay with blues, jazz, or hip-hop music shows that the number of interactions between entities is infinite, and the phenomena of polyphony by interacting, interrelated voices is enabled (McDowell 374). Circularity of an ecosystem is also mirrored in the applied African-American call-and-response pattern, which ensures that a text is alive and in flux.

Moreover, language – oral or written – is "wild" in the sense of being a self-regulating system or entity, with properties still opaque to human understanding and *not* a matter of instrumental control (T. Clark 53). With recourse to Gary Snyder (1990), dance, myth, sculpture or a poem should not be read as a cultural self-assertion of some group but as the "wildness" of human creativity, which responds to and mediates other modes of meaning and significance (T. Clark 54). Consequently,

86 *Music ecology* focuses on music's connection to our planet's life by recognizing mimetic imitations of elements of natural soundscapes in music, and by tracing inspirations with environmental processes and phenomena (Harley).

87 Rhythms's immanent function is to connect opposites according to Georg W.F. Hegel's swing of the pendulum between thesis and antithesis, which results in synthesis. It becomes thesis again and another antithesis is formed in endless continuation, held together by eminent rhythmic principles (Berendt, *Story des Jazz* 248-52).

ecological energies are created when the sounds of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music are copied in word music, e.g. linguistic repetitions, alliterations, assonances, or internal rhymes (compare 2.1).

Fictional ecosystems with "wild" language and structural compositional techniques imitate musical mimetic or natural forms, which comprise of affective powers, sensed in human bodily presence (G. Boehme, "Space" 122, 457-63; Rigby 143-44). Wilson notes that human beings "learn to distinguish life from the inanimate and move toward it like moths to a porch light" (*Biophilia*, 1, 74). In each of us, there resides a fascination for natural complexity and diversity (Kellert, *Biophilia Hypothesis* 24), and the interaction of parts from the inner world with the outer environment is triggered by difference. However, a prerequisite is the sensitivity to similarity and difference to perceive new orders and structures both in the objective world of nature and in the mind itself (Bohm, *Creativity* ix). Finally, the recognition of nature during a fictional, aesthetic experience leads to "[...] feelings of tranquility, peace of mind, and a related sense of psychological wellbeing and self-confidence" (Kellert, "Biological Basis" 50), and self-realization as an understanding of a self as broad identification with nature is possible (Devall, "Long-Range" 26).[88]

2.3.2 Imaginative Fictional Soundscapes

In imaginative fictional soundscapes, African-American literature becomes a medium for expressing true feelings aroused by music (Breton 1). A *soundscape* is a sonic environment, "[...] an ever-present array of noises with which we all live in" (Harley). Such environments are either a connection between human-constructed sounds with the natural world, or human-constructed sounds and the social, political, and economic environments (Schafer). Our conscious experience of our environment is directed by imagination, which lies at the root of all human creativity (Barrow 5). In the following, the term soundscape describes the aesthetic, imaginative music shell, which surrounds a reader of African-American musical influenced works of

88 *Self-awareness* is a function of feeling. Being aware of one's self means being aware of each part of the body, and being in touch with oneself (Lowen 55).

prose fiction. By implicit intermedial references, cognitive or emotional effects of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music are evoked (compare 2.1). When a reader sympathizes, empathizes, or identifies with fictional characters (compare 2.2.2), s/he is able to experience restorative biophilic life energies similar to the characters in active or passive music-making scenes. Hereby, a therapeutic, purifying, enveloping, and liberating quality of music makes a subject whole (Priestley 3).[89]

With the implementation of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music, emotional health can be restored either receptively or actively. Ecological healing processes take place either by musical expression in actively live music performing or dancing, and by passively listening to music (Priestley 1; W. Schroeder 30). In active music-making, self-awareness is increased (W. Schroeder 62): Active music therapy means expressing and perceiving one's feelings in musical improvisations with the result of solving inner conflicts.[90] In receptive music therapy, inner feelings are approached and accepted in the process of acoustic associations and remembrances (W. Schroeder 23-24).[91] In general, music helps to make a person whole, and to reunite inner parts of the self (Priestley 197). Traces to old and forgotten conflicts can be found, and connected feelings are brought back to the surface. Emotional experiences from loneliness, grief, anger or shame, which tore an inner self apart, are recognized, felt again, and finally re-integrated.[92] In such a way, a person is brought back to his/her own inner center, or in other words, freed from an estrangement from the self (W. Schroeder 24, 35).

89 The amount and diversification of studies in music therapy has been growing, and music's implementation in medicine is becoming ever more common. The creative therapy in the medium of music is a controlled application of music in the treatment of psychological and physical disturbances (W. Schroeder 27-28). In the oldest written proves for the existence of this art of healing, music is seen as part of a mystic, religious healing ceremony (Priestley 3). In Greek mythology, the medicinal powers of music made musicians into therapists: Pythagoras and Empedocles cured the possessed, and Ismenias cured Sciatica; Apollo was a god of music and medicine at the Apollo temple in Delphi (Priestley 2; W. Schroeder 19).

90 For example, Hans-Helmut Decker-Voigt (2004) and Fritz Hegi (1997) focus on improvisations in active music therapy.

91 In *Playing and Reality* (1971), it is shown that an individual's playfulness is important for emotional development. For instance, affects of happiness are conveyed *via* major scales, fast tempos, and consonant and big intervals, or high tone levels, which serve to move human, natural spirits. In contrast, one-colored sounds bring deep calmness or even trance-like states of being with intensified perception of the inner self and turning off external disturbing influences. While harmonies stimulate emotions, melodies stir the intellect (Priestley 172; W. Schroeder 37, 52).

92 In the ritual of naming and curing, overtly suppressed feelings are freed, which otherwise might have found some dangerous form of expression (Miller, “Blues heute” 146-67; Priestley 199).

Music therapy has the ability to harmoniously integrate Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical instances of the *id,* the *ego, and* the *super-ego* (W. Schroeder 63). Freud regarded music as a vehicle for the release of mental tensions and the return of the psyche to blissful equilibrium (Barrow 190). The so-called pleasure principle of the unconscious or the *id* is set free by the expression of emotions in spontaneous, creative processes, independent from time, space, or logic (Priestley 4; W. Schroeder 22, 63). Regarding African-American prose fiction, an imaginary audience or fictional musicians perceive biophilic life energies, which provide them with restorative life-energies in imaginative transcendent soundscapes. The act of music-making helps a character to emotionally affiliate with nature. In the recognition of a metaphysical unity, a character is able to experience purgation. In turn, emotional engagement with African-American novels or short stories enables readers to experience purgation of the mind by indirectly reconsider the natural of perceptual experience itself.

In addition, African-American writers of musical literary prose fiction refer to natural images, symbols, or portray natural landscapes in imaginary soundscapes of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music with powerfully ecological effects. Relationships with symbols or metaphors[93] from natural landscapes or animals have replaced interactions with living counterparts (Lawrence 331-32; E. Wilson *Biophilia* 1, 74, 84).[94] Elizabeth A. Lawrence (1993) explains: "[R]elationships with animals as they are symbolically perceived have to a great extent replaced interactions with their living counterparts" (332), and "animal symbolism is biophilia in that it represents another step in the age-old search for man's place in nature" (334). Meanwhile, our natural world is perfused with signs, meanings, and purposes, which are material and which evolve. It is in the human being's use of signs in language where ecological wisdom is preserved (Wheeler 279).

An aesthetic response to natural symbols and images of varying landscapes and species reflect an intuitive recognition of the greater likelihood of food, safety, and security in accordance with human evolutionary experiences (Kellert,

93 *Metaphor* is described as a creation of similar or identical associations between two otherwise unlike objects or ideas (Klages 53).

94 Nature itself ceased to be a living participant in the events of life. It was fragmented in metaphors and comparisons (Bakhtin 217).

"Biological Basis" 50; E. Wilson, *Biophilia* 104). For instance, it has been attested that health benefits can accrue from animal companionships (Simaika and Samways 904). Human beings also have particular landscape needs, and their fulfillment can reduce stress and increase productivity, happiness, and longevity (Simaika and Samways 904). Regarding African-American prose fiction, a reader connects to nature *via* symbols or images from the natural environment, and in turn perceives biophilic life-energies.

In short, during a reader's active emotional participation in active or passive transcendent fictional soundscapes, s/he experiences biophilia comparable to an imaginary audience or a musician. Music is the language of emotions and in a musical therapeutic process, the listener or musician experiences biophilic feelings of wellbeing. In soundscapes of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music, characters experience biophilia *via* the music they make or listen to. When a reader sympathizes, empathizes, or identifies with a fictional character in his/her healing process, s/he becomes part of the event, and perceives those feelings as well. Such ecological experiences are further deepened with imaginary references to nature in the form of images from natural environments or symbolic references to animals.

2.4 Biophilia Education in African-American Prose Fiction

Currently, we are facing a whole series of global problems, which are harming human lives in alarming ways that seem to become irreversible (compare 1.). For a sustainable future, though, it is central to examine the very nature of who we are and what our role is in relation to the natural world as human beings. These questions are essential to the possibility of who we will become as planetary species (Tucker, "Depths of Things" 2-3).

> We should worry […] about whether [we] will know how to live sustainably on Earth […] reshape education in a way that fosters innate biophilia and the analytical abilities and practical skills necessary for a world that takes life seriously. (Orr 433)

Therefore, our great challenge in the 21st century is to build and nurture sustainable environments, in which we can satisfy our social, cultural, and physical needs without diminishing the chances of future generations (Capra, "Challenge" 49).

To foster the ability of experiencing biophilia, African-American prose fiction offers education with African-American writers promoting a life-affirming stance within the realm of the concept of the love of life (2.4.1). For Theodore Roszak (1992), the ecological unconscious represents a repression, of which "[...] is the deepest root of collusive madness in industrial society" (320). Also Wilson points out that "[...] the brain evolved in a biocentric world, not a machine-regulated world" ("Conservation" 32). Consequently, fictional characters who follow the route of overcoming limitations set by Western society turn into role models who inspire effort in the development of a creative approach to life (2.4.2).

2.4.1 Life-affirming Stance

Planet Earth may be presently undergoing a transition period: "Chaos mathematics, disequilibrium thermodynamics, and complexity sudies have shown how certain structures, which seem fragile […] are […] at a bifurcation [or] a turning point [...]" (Sagan and Margulis 350). In transcendent times of the 21st century, it is essential not to "[...] think of utopia on too grand a scale" (Orr 431), and instead decide for biophilia as the love of life even though human beings tend to bear necrophilic tendencies.

> Destructiveness is not parallel to, but the alternative to, biophilia. Love of life or love of the dead is the fundamental alternative that confronts every human being. [M]an is biologically endowed with the capacity for biophilia, but psychologically he has the potential for necrophilia as an alternative solution. (Fromm, *Anatomy* 366)

African-American authors, who integrate blues, jazz, or hip-hop music elements, prefer a life-affirming stance to a "necrophilic" attitude to life. In doing so, they re-awaken the ecological unconsciousness from its repressions by technological or industrial aspects in our mechanized lives (Roszak 320). Biophilia or the love of life is favored in African-American authors's portrayal of the comic mode inherent in blues music, the improvisational qualities inherent in jazz music, and the concept of flow, layering, and ruptures in line in hip-hop music.

Firstly, in the world as revealed by comedy, it is essential to encourage life even though it seems meaningless in times of crisis (Meeker, "Comic Mode" 160).[95] Conflicts do not seem unsolvable and frustrating reality might not be eternal or unchangeable. On the contrary, the blues, as it is portrayed in African-American novels and short stories, restores and strengthens the power to actively solve existing

95 "Comic strategy […] sees life as a game. When faced with polar oppositions, the problem of comedy is always how to resolve conflict without destroying participants. Comedy is the art of accommodation and reconciliation" (Meeker, "Comic Mode" 168). It illustrates that survival depends upon the human being's ability to change him/herself rather than the surrounding environment (Meeker, "Comic Mode" 169).

problems (Miller, "Blues heute" 210-14).[96] At the so-called *crossroads* or the stage of a character's crisis, a continual movement with disruptions of norms and subsequent changes occurs (Kynard 360; Meacham).[97] Such a life phase is perceived as a challenge, and this crisis requires new information and strategies. In African-American culture, the crossroads connote the experience of a break. Improvisations in life become necessary revisions as well as alterations to standard applications, from which an affirmation with new relationships and encounters follows.[98] Thus, the crossroads can be regarded as a stage of transcendence (Kynard 360; Meacham 181-208). In the comic mode inherent in blues music, the right for a happy and fulfilling life is expressed in a self-confirming phrase (Stearns 99-108), favoring a life-affirming attitude.[99]

Secondly, a life-affirming stance is signified by the possibilities of improvisational free play in jazz music (Cataliotti 99). Increasing intensities in music create new dimensions with life-affirming qualities (Berendt, *Story* 254-57), after symbolically having destroyed "hithertho existing systems" (Berendt, *Story* 254-57). Jazz music emits creative energies on physiological, psychological, and artistic levels through its sensory intensities, analogous to the experience of biophilia *via* musical directness, vitality, and irrationality (Berendt, *Story des Jazz* 249).

In improvisational processes of imaginative active or passive soundscapes, emotions are addressed. The expression of unknown emotions is accepted and integrated into personality, while an imaginative musician or listener becomes aware of new, alternative possibilities in life (Priestley 199). Transcendence, which leads to development, is proposed, and "necrophilic" tendencies are negated. By the use of jazz music elements in prose fiction, hope is indicated by the imaginative portrayal of the multiple possibilities and diversities life has to offer.

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96 Despite somewhat dark topics, blues music has an empowering function by depicting a smooth triumph over negative experiences (Steinberg and Fearweather xxi).

97 Blues music's impulse is regarded as a process in three stages: brutal experience, lyrical expression, and affirmation (Craig, "Morrison" 88).

98 Maintaining equilibrium among living beings or things, and restoring it once it has been lost, is a talent shared by many blues "heroes" (Meeker, "Comic Mode" 158-59).

99 Greek demigod Comus, whose name is supposed to be the origin of the word comedy, was a god of fertility in a large but unpretentious sense (Meeker, "Comic Mode" 158-59). Especially satire is a tool for managing mental or psychological equilibrium. Satirical song elements, characteristic in many African-American rites, contribute to reducing stress (Caponi 27).

Thirdly, the concept of flow, layering, and ruptures in line (compare 2.1.3) suggests affirmative ways of handling profound personal dislocation and rupture. Within this concept, rhythmic motion, continuity, and circularity *via* flow are created and sustained, accumulated and embellished by layering (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 36-40). Threats to a fictional character's personal narrative are managed by building in ruptures that highlight the continuity as it momentarily changes (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 36-40). In African-American urban fiction, these philosophical propositions act as a blueprint for a life-affirming approach to life (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 38-49). Imaginative, fictional hip-hop musicians use style as a form of identity formation, which centers around these three elements of flow, layering, and ruptures in line. The same principles act as a blueprint for positive life affirmation: create sustaining narratives, accumulate them, layer, embellish, and transform them. However, be also prepared for rupture, find pleasure in it, in fact, plan on social rupture. When these ruptures occur, use them in creative ways as preparations for a future, in which survival will demand a sudden shift in ground tactics (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 38-40).

2.4.2 Creative Life Approach

"An organism […] has to fit the organismic identity into an ecosystemic integrity" (Rolston 394), and adapt him/herself creatively to individual circumstances in every possible way. In this sense, aesthetic and imaginative soundscapes of blues, jazz, or hip-hop music foster creative thinking in prose fiction: "[...] natural settings have been found to elicit positive emotional states, exposure to such environments may facilitate creative problem solving or high-order cognitive functioning [...]" (Ulrich 112). With a readership's active participation in the meaning making process of a novel or short story, a creative reformation of the self follows a preceding, conscious reflection on biophilic experiences (Lussier 258). The experience of biophilia *via* blues, jazz, or hip-hop music in prose fiction by imaginary content analogy (compare 2.1) enhances creative modes of thought, which are derived from the observation of diversity in nature (Kellert, "Biological Basis" 46), or fictional ecosystems.

Improvisation is the key to both natural and cultural creative evolution (Wheeler 273), which involves spontaneous and dynamic ways instead of static strategies of handling crisis. By this logic, improvising in music is regarded as an ideal because it allows the mind of spontaneity (Dauer, *Magische Musik* 328-29). Fictional characters show that a conflict or clash in life is a process of destruction or decay of partial orders, which later on produces new, harmonious and unified totalities. Only through an improvised and spontaneous creative approach to life, a fictional character can come upon the deepest harmony that is open to him/her after having solved a conflict, which might be painful while the mind tends to escape awareness of what is actually happening (Bohm, *Creativity* 10, 21, 61).

Biorhythms have evolved in the process of assimilating to cosmic rhythms in the evolution, and biological life is a rhythmically organized process with human life being embedded in such rhythmic organizations (Spintge 16-17). African-American prose fiction shows that each microcosmic rhythm has the function of keeping a body alive. Rhythms can be varied like the *polyrhythms* in the macro-cosmos of day and night, summer and winter, birth and death of the moon and stars. However, the basic inner beat is always unchanged (Priestley 202). Polyrhythms are able to dissolve antagonisms in music and become a symbol for tolerance or the fact that different opinions exist next to each other, implicating ambiguity of any kind (Berendt, *Story des Jazz* 188-97). Fictional characters act as role models in finding their own natural, individual melody, and not let the body function as "an instrument" when "the music or rhythms of machines" tend to accompany our lives in the 21st century (Priestly 3, 206-07).[100]

Biophilic life experiences in African-American prose fiction with musical elements convey the consciousness of life existing within a circle or cycle of interconnected taking and giving, a web of interdependence (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner).[101] The principle of *multeity-in-unity* or *diversity* is an integral compo-

100External influences have repressive and inhibiting influences on a human being but music helps to keep creativity alive, at least in the mindset (Priestley 3, 206-07).

101*Deep ecology* regards human life from a philosophical viewpoint. It implies a holistic approach to the environment from which human beings can neither be isolated nor separated (Matthews, "Deep Ecology" 221). Deep ecology envisages a relational understanding of selfhood "[...] based on active identification with wider and wider circles of being," and it emphasizes the realization of a transformed self through identification with nature (Matthews, "Deep Ecology" 221).

nent of African-American musicality: Even though each player develops his/her individual style in the group, interdependence prevails between the members of a band. Musicians listen intently to each other with an almost intuitive sense, an uncanny sixth sense felt between them (Dauer, *Magische Musik* 300-301). Fictional characters act as role models by paying special attention to community life, which is valued for its mutual sustaining relationships (Rueckert 103-23). Human beings, conscious of their roots in a network of natural phenomena, are advised to act accordingly to the principle of multeity-in-unity, and to develop both individuality as well as group consciousness with the will to cooperate.

Active engagement of the whole person is in demand for future ecological change. Especially in the age of postmodernism, thought has developed to a form of fragmentation. When each section of life is separately existent as well as essentially independent from the broader scope of the whole in which it has its origins, then one is also breaking the field of awareness into disjoint parts, whose deep unity can no longer be perceived (Bohm, *Creativity* 63). Human beings are motivated and inspired to reach a new wholeness by creative modes of thinking (Bohm, *Creativity* viii). Change and metamorphosis are distinctive to life-processes (Buell, *Environmental Criticism* 43) with active and creative engagement of human beings, which is mirrored in African-American prose fiction. A reader's creative mindset is motivated by musical characteristics, such as improvisation, call-and-response, group consciousness, and polyrhythms in imaginary performances or compositional techniques.

To conclude, *Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues, Jazz, and Hip-Hop Music in African American Prose Fiction* proposes that blues, jazz, and hip-hop musical elements in African-American novels and short stories offer possibilities for readers to experience biophilia and re-learn strategies on how to perceive them.

1) In the artistic production of African-American novels or short stories, a writer creates an authentic musical atmosphere *via* explicit references to blues, jazz, or hip-hop music in the mode of *telling*. Implicit references in the mode of *showing* produce literary acoustics by imaginary content analogy, partial reproduction, word music, and structural analogies to African-American music (2.1).

2) In the aesthetic reception of African-American prose fictional works, Iser's concept of the implied reader and the so-called *Leerstellenbeitrag* activate a readership in the event of a text with subsequent meaning-making processes during spheres of play. A space of feeling or *Gefuehlsraum* is created, in which readers are emotionally engaged into an artwork *via* figurative or phonetic effects, compositional structures, or imaginative characters in active or passive music-making (2.2).

3) A readership experiences biophilic-related wellbeing in the reception of a musical text, which resembles an ecosystem *via* word music regarded as "wild" language, or structural analogies to music. Further possibilities of experiencing healing biophilia are provided in active or passive music-making scenes, which are deepened by imaginary references to natural environments (2.3).

4) African-American writers offer biophilic education during the meaning-making process. The comic mode inherent in blues music, the improvisational qualities of jazz music, and hip-hop music's concept of flow, layering, and ruptures in line prefer a life-affirming stance. African-American musical characteristics such as improvisation, spontaneity, polyrhythms, individuality, diversity, group-consciousness, and active engagement of the whole person evoke a creative approach to life (2.4).

3. Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues Music in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot, Dirty Bird Blues,* and *Invisible Man*

In the following analyses, biophilic healing effects *via* the aesthetics of blues music in the novels *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot, Dirty Bird Blues*, and *Invisible Man* are illustrated with special emphasis on the comic mode inherent in blues music philosophy (compare 2.4.1). The authors McKay, Major, and Ellison create authentic atmospheres with literary acoustics by referring to elements from early, country, or urban blues music as lyrical expressions and affirmative responses to experiences of racism in African-American history (compare 2.1.1). In "Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues Music in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot, Dirty Bird Blues,* and *Invisible Man,*" I will shown how novels with elements from blues music contribute to a readership's experience of biophilia with subsequent conscious reflections on the life-affirming stance in imaginative soundscapes of blues music.

Firstly, McKay, Ellison and Major all express deep and most complex emotional realities *via* the intermedial use of blues music in prose fiction. Literary acoustics are mainly created in imaginative soundscapes, or by citing song lyrics, using African-American vernacular, as well as musical structural affinities. Major and McKay use foremost the techniques of tonal semantics or word music. Their works are full of repetitions, alliterations, assonances, and internal rhymes to capture the talk-singing of the protagonists Banjo and Man. African-American dialect is infused with onomatopoeia and neologisms, which give their novels a rather "free" mood.

In addition, McKay's novel is a prominent example for highly energetic performances with the song "Shake That Thing," while *Dirty Bird Blues* comprises of a multitude of cited song lyrics (compare 3.1.1; 3.2.1). *Invisible Man* is a more refined novel with less black vernacular speech, but a more elaborate structural affinity to a blues music song (compare 3.3.1). Nevertheless, blues musical lyrics are a prominent feature in all of the discussed works, resulting from the fact that the majority of blues

music songs are vocalized (compare 2.1.1). Each of the three discussed novels makes blues music the topic of a discussion, while the thematization of music is rather implicitly interwoven with the proceedings of the plot in Ellison's work (compare 2.3). Ellison uses Louis Armstrong's “Black and Blue” with thorough explanations for a reader, song lyrics are cited by Major and McKay without explicitly commenting on them.

Regarding thematization (compare 2.1), references to musical works, composers, musicians, instruments, clubs' names are hints to special blues music styles, by which an author illustrates historical changes, attitudes, and social conditions in the respective literary piece. Typical blues music themes like a lost love or a traveling bluesman are recurrent. For instance, Major's protagonist travels from Chicago to Omaha in search for himself (compare 2.2.1); Ellison's protagonist takes on a journey from the countryside to New York City (compare 2.3.1), and McKay's protagonist is a vagabond, currently “bumming” at the docks of Marseilles in France (compare 2.1.1). Even though all of them are “on the road,” the protagonists finally succeed in finding their inner selves when blues music connects them with their historical African-American roots.

In view of compositional techniques, Ellison's novel resembles a blues music song with its theme of the search for identity, and its variations around this topic or riff. Ellison's imaginative soundscape is a rather long-drawn sequence around the protagonist's receptive listening to “Black and Blue” (compare 2.3.1). In contrast, *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* comprises of narrative sequences of music-making, which are of very spontaneous nature, embedded in quick scene changes (compare 2.1.1). Major's forty sections of the novel remind itself of an accumulation of short interpretations around his search for wholeness (compare 2.2.1). In each of them, and mostly in Major's and McKay's novels, there are extended soundscapes with active music-making scenes by the protagonists Man and Banjo, and Invisible Man listens passively to Armstrong's record.

Secondly, the created fictional soundscapes become fields of dialogic interactions between author and readership. McKay, Ellison and Major integrate blues musical elements, and thereby establish a bond of trust by sympathy when the

reader experiences the feelings the writers put into their portrayals of blues music in the novel (see 3.1.3; 3.3.2; 3.2.3). As blues music is a medium for expressing deep emotions such as pain suffered from a lost love or the burden of American racism, blues musical influenced novels offer possibilities for emotionally empathizing and identifying with respective protagonists (compare 2.1.1).

While McKay and Major achieve a reader's integration by sympathizing with their protagonists in extended descriptions of emotional experiences, Ellison motivates a reader's active engagement mainly by identification with Invisible Man's search for identity (see 3.1.3; 3.2.3; 3.3.3).[102] In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot, Leerstellen* occur in an accumulation of the protagonist's random adventures in a formless structure (compare 3.1.2). However, each of the discussed novels has a universal appeal, which is for instance mirrored in the protagonist's names of Man in *Dirty Bird Blues* and Invisible Man in *Invisible Man,* or the cosmopolitan attitude of the protagonist Banjo.

Thirdly, a reader perceives biophilic-related feelings of wellbeing *via* the use of "wild" language of African-American vernacular and structural aspects as well as imaginative participation in transcendent soundscapes (compare 2.3). McKay's as well as Major's novel takes on qualities of an ecosystem resulting from an augmented use of African-American vernacular and "wild" structures (see 3.1.2; 3.2.2). Regarding transcendence in biophilic experiences, McKay's and Major's protagonist receives biophilic healing energies in active music-making in contrast to Ellison's Invisible Man, who passively listens to Louis Armstrong (see 3.1.5; 3.2.5). However, in each of the discussed novels, additional ecological energy is produced by imaginative natural environments and animal symbolism.

Fourth, each of the discussed novels starkly affirms the biophilic hypothesis of the love of life *via* the comic mode of blues music philosophy, proposing a creative approach to life (compare 2.4.1; 2.4.2). An affirmation of life is expressed in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* with the protagonist's extensive music-making (see 3.1.6). Similarly, Major represents his protagonist Man as a role model for his

102Especially McKay, who represents the Harlem Renaissance, expresses his feelings concerning socio-political injustices more openly, than, for example Ellison, a writer from the 1950s, who took on a somewhat contained stance.

overcoming personal pain with the cathartic power of blues music (see 3.2.5). Major's protagonist embraces a “down-to-Earth” attitude to life, i.e. he creatively takes “whatever comes natural” (see 3.2.6). Ellison's main character reaches into his own depths to purify himself in Armstrong's soundscape with the message to creatively affirm diversity in life but not become invisible behind the many choices a human being is exposed to (see 3.3.6). Each of the discussions on life philosophy are accompanied by comic performances from Banjo in McKay's novel, Man in *Dirty Bird Blues*, and side characters such as Peter Wheatstraw in *Invisible Man.*

3.1 *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* – Banjo's Life-affirming Stance

McKay is a cosmopolitan author and invites his readers to identify with Ray, who joins Banjo in his affirmative stance to life while adopting a comic attitude (compare 2.4.1). *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* is a stark portrayal of a life-affirming stance, or the expression of the biophilic meaning, "the love of life" (Fromm, *Heart*). A highly energetic performance of the riff "Shake That Thing" (*BJ*), through which both imaginative musicians and audience experience biophilic-related healing effects (compare 2.3.2), sets the theme of life-affirmation by continuous repetitions. Titled as *A Story Without a Plot*, McKay illustrates Banjo's numerous random adventures in Marseilles with authentic, lively music-making scenes as imaginative soundscapes, combined with word music (compare 2.1) from African-American vernacular. In discussions on the search for identity and significations on negative effects of capitalism, a readership is actively engaged by *Leerstellen* (compare 2.2.1).

3.1.1 Banjo's Orchestra and Early Blues Music

In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* McKay creates an aesthetic authentic, musical atmosphere with elements from early blues music (compare 2.1.1). For McKay, music and its creative transformation into literature was a personal survival technique. Already in his early years in the West Indies, McKay was inspired to transform his rural experience of the very sounds of tropical life and its folklore into poetry by his mentor Walter Jekyll (Ramesh 65-87): "I have nothing to give but my singing. All my life I have been a troubadour wanderer, nourishing myself mainly on the poetry of existence. And all I offer here is the distilled poetry of my experience" (McKay, *Long Way* 354)..[103] Through his creativity, McKay healed his inner psychological

103For instance, McKay did not have to imagine the diasporic Marseilles that he depicts in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* as he lived the life describes himself (Philipson 154). Césaire pointed out that it was the first time African-Americans were described truthfully, without inhibition or prejudice (Cooper, *Rebel Sojourner* 269).

wounds from his discovery of prejudices, alienation, and identity crises in the USA.[104] In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot*, the character Ray functions as McKay's autobiographical medium, through which he sorted out his personal problems connected with race and class inequalities.

In view of explicit references (compare 2.1), blues musicians, instruments, song titles, dance styles, and historical musical settings are mentioned, or blues music is made the topic of discussions. For instance, McKay links Banjo to authentic musicians like Papa Charlie Jackson, who became famous with the banjo and played mostly popular tunes, similar to the novel's main character (Klostermann 97; compare 2.1.1). In addition, the figure Lonesome Blue is constructed after the model of the blues singer Blind Lemon Jefferson (Oakley 114-17). Drummer Malty's report about his "[...] first real voyage to New Orleans" establishes a link between him and the origins of blues music (*BJ* 5). With instruments such as the banjo, the ukulele, the mandolin, the guitar, and the tambourine, or the drums, used in early blues music, McKay hints at important themes from American or African-American music history (compare 2.1.1).

Furthermore, Banjo's band or orchestra improvises on songs such as "Then I'll Be Happy" (*BJ* 35), "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" (*BJ* 7, 14), "Shake That Thing" (*BJ* 47-58), "It Takes a Long Tall Brown Skin (to Make a Preacher)" (*BJ* 185) from the 1920s popular tradition. The theme song, "Shake That Thing" was one of pianist and bandleader Jelly Roll Morton's most famous compositions (Groh 83-99), "[...] the version of the 'Jelly Roll Blues' that Banjo loved and always played" (*BJ* 46). Jelly Roll Morton was present in the blues music scene of New Orleans, Chicago, and New York City during the 1920s, and the author apparently experienced Morton's performance in bordellos and honky tonks of New Orleans (Klostermann 101).[105]

In addition, dance styles, and the topic of the musician as a vagabond are further examples of explicit references to the era of early blues music (compare 2.1.1).

104During the Harlem Renaissance, McKay gained recognition with his publication of "Harlem Dancer," a musically influenced sonnet, in which he suggests that African-Americans were cut off from their African roots and placed by white civilization as outsiders (Ramesh 65-87).

105Jelly Roll Morton was a major talent and innovator as a songwriter, having spent his formative years in New Orleans (Lomax 207-22). However, at the time McKay was writing the novel between 1927 and 1928, he did not know about Jelly Roll Morton's later importance in jazz history (Klostermann 101).

The following description of a dance style is taken from a musician's advertising text in New York City from 1927, two years before the novel's publication: “Have you heard about the twitching, twisting, shaking, shimmying, throbbing, sobbing – sensational new dance, 'Skoodle Um Skoo'?” (qtd. In Klostermann 97). Further dance styles are referred to, for instance the “Black Bottom” (*BJ* 8), or movements are described with “[...] strutting, jigging, shimmying, shuffling, humping, standing, swaying, dogging, doing, shaking that thing. […]” (*BJ* 54). The protagonist himself is described as “a great vagabond” (*BJ* 11), who “[...] had wandered all over America” (*BJ* 11), “[who] was in Canada when the Great War began [...]” (*BJ* 11), in London and Paris and “[t]wice he had been to Genoa and once to Barcelona” (*BJ* 11).

In order to portray an authentic atmosphere, McKay places musicians in typical settings, uses typical slang expressions in dialectal speech. Music scenes are often jam sessions by the vagabonds Banjo, Malty, Goosey, and Taloufa.[106] Banjo is an African-American free spirit from Southern America, whose main instrument is the banjo. The protagonist wishes to form a little band with international “black and brown” men (*BJ* 3-17), who settled at the waterfront of Marseilles in the 1920s. These men are as colorful as their lives: Malty, Ginger, Dengel, Bugsy, Taloufa, and Goosey join Banjo in drinking, dancing, loving, playing and brawling (*BJ* 3-17). Their songs are mostly improvised when the group of musicians jam. Live music scenes are rendered energetically, accompanied by “wild” dancing.[107]

Thick dialect and signifying occurs mainly in direct speeches with deliberate spelling mistakes. Words like “ef” (*BJ* 4) instead of “if,” “nevah” (*BJ* 4) instead of “never,” yestidday” instead of “yesterday” (*BJ* 4) or “pifformers” (*BJ* 7) instead of “performers” portray authentic qualities of the novel. Characteristic for African-American dialect are grammatical structures, which deviate from standard English language, and in doing so contribute to the novel's authenticity. Examples are “'I al-

106In some places, classical music is performed, e.g. two girls singing songs by Geraldine Farrar or Raquel Miller (*BJ* 166-76).

107Furthermore, musical references to blues music appear within dreams, memories, and stories told by characters. For example, “Banjo dreamed constantly of forming an orchestra [...]” (*BJ* 19). Banjo's dream of an orchestra reappears in the theme-setting chapter “'Jelly Roll'”: “His plan of an orchestra filled his imagination now” (*BJ* 47), and “[...] and one afternoon he walked straight into a dream – a cargo boat with a crew of four music-making colored boys, with banjo, ukulele, mandolin, guitar, and horn” (*BJ* 47). After his imagination, Banjo finally succeeds in setting up his orchestra at the Vieux Port in Marseilles.

ways does'" (*BJ* 4), or "'Ain't making a thing [...]'" (*BJ* 4). According to standard English use, it would be "I always do" or "I'm not making a thing […].[108] In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* the protagonist's language is extensively marked by "rich Aframericanisms" (*BJ* 12) of African-American dialect with its typical way of spelling words and using grammatical structures.

Implicit intermedial references are produced in the form of partial reproduction (compare 2.1), e.g. when McKay cites song lyrics from Banjo's improvisations. The novel's theme song, "Shake That Thing," appears repeatedly:

> 'Old Uncle Jack, the jelly-roll king,
> Just got back from shaking that thing!
> He can shake that thing, he can shake that thing
> For he's a jelly-roll king. Oh, shake that thing!' (*BJ* 47)

Further verses of the song are cited, e.g. "'Old Brother Mose is sick in bed. Doctor says he is almost dead [...]'" (*BJ* 49). In the chapter "Banjo's Ace of Spades," the lyrics of the "Hallelujah Jig" are reproduced in the way how it is meant to be performed with inserted breaks and repetitions: "'Jigaway, boy, jig. … jig, jig, jig, jig, jig, jig, jig // Jig, jig, jig, black boy … jig away … jig away … [...]'" (*BJ* 315).

Moreover, formal imitations of blues music occur in the form of word music, e.g. onomatopoeia, neologisms, repetitions, alliterations, assonances, internal rhymes, signifying, and wordplays. By the listing of the word "wine" in three different variations of "[...] red wine, white wine, sweet wine" (*BJ* 46), McKay achieves to speed up the tempo in this scene. Similarly, the description of the performance of "Shake That Thing" receives heightened energy by quick accumulation of descriptive statements without the traditional structure of subject-verb-object order: "Rough rhythm of darkly-carnal life. Strong surging flux of profound currents forced into shallow channels […]. One movement of the thousand movements of the eternal life-flow" (*BJ* 57). Further repetitions, which copy the sound of blues music, take place:

108A further example is "'I gived you a raise [...]'" (*BJ* 4). Here, the protagonist Banjo used the verb "gived" as a past tense form instead of "gave."

“[...] wheeling round and round in his head” (*BJ* 13), or “Oh, [Banjo's] head was a circus where everything went circling round and round” (*BJ* 14), or repeated exclamations of “'Shake That Thing!'” (*BJ* 46, 50, 57), or “Oh, shake that thing!” (*BJ* 53, 54).

Also signifying in the form of loud talking or bragging contributes to the novel's musicality (compare 2.1). For instance, Malty introduces himself as follows: “Ise Malty Avis, the best drummer on the beach” (*BJ* 4). Similarly, Banjo is described as being conceited: “'Cause you was too swell dressed up and strutting fine with that broad to see anybody else'” (*BJ* 4-5). This statement is made up by “the smallest of the group” (*BJ* 5) in a teasing or insulting way. In response, Banjo emits a bragging attitude. When Malty is impressed by the musician's talent, “'Youse as good a musician as a real artist'” (*BJ* 8), the protagonist replies with “'I *is* an artist'” (*BJ* 8; emphasis in the original). Here, the author emphasizes the protagonist's loud talking by placing the verb “is” in italics, accompanied by the repetition of the noun “artist” in praise of his musical talent.

Neologisms or word plays prove Banjo's creative potential. Banjo and his band develop their own vocabulary to refer, for instance, to a street in Marseilles: “Boody Lane was the beach boys' name for the Rue de la Bouterie, the gut of the Ditch” (*BJ* 20). Not only new vocabulary, but also phrases are made up: “'Don't light it afire' was the new catch phrase among the beach boys [...]” (*BJ* 21). Neologisms, word plays, and catch phrases are only used within the group around Banjo to testify and develop group consciousness.[109] Also, McKay mentions the symbol of the bird, which is recurrent in many blues music lyrics: “[...] the best of all was the bird uvva time [...]” (*BJ* 7), which contributes to the novel's authenticity.

Regarding formal imitation, McKay uses the loose structure of early blues music and translates musical characteristics such as improvisation, call-and-response, and multeity-in-unity (compare 2.1) into his fiction. The story of the novel encompasses a season of random adventures by the protagonist Banjo and “his pals.” As the novel consists of stories about random adventures, it can be said that it is structured

109Moreover, McKay makes the text musically dynamic by personifying the noun “days,” e.g. in “[...] the first delirious fever days of Marseilles were rehearsing themselves, wheeling round and round in his head” (*BJ* 13).

along the loose form of a typical early blues song (compare 2.1.1).

Furthermore, an interplay of various character voices leads to the novel's acoustic, imaginative dimensions. Live music scenes introduce main themes in the beginning, which are repeated towards the end. In the middle part of the novel, various discussions appear as solo or variations on the indictment of Western civilization, e.g. the conflict of "black" vagabondage versus "white" civilization, the search for identity, the critique of "black" bourgeoisie, the celebration of African-American values, or the concept of universality from an auctorial point of view. Different perspectives by multiple voices from Ray, Banjo, Malty, Ginger, Taloufa, Dengel, Bugsy, or Goosey lead to the novel's acoustic quality. McKay improvises upon themes such as physical and mental dispersion, alienation and displacement, a return to a place called home, escape, and liberation, migration, or the meaning of community (F. Foster 218-22) with "Shake That Thing" as recurrent *leitmotif*.

All in all, the author of *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* achieves to create an authentic atmosphere by a multitude of explicit references to the era of early blues music. Cognitive or emotional effects are produced when imaginary soundscapes are evocated, in which the main character performs early blues with his "orchestra." In active music-making scenes enriched by implicit musical references, the text receives its acoustics. In regard of word music, McKay makes extended use of African-American vernacular to capture the talk singing in direct speeches by neologisms, repetitions, spelling of words and grammatical structures. In addition, signifying in the form of loud talking and testifying contribute to the novel's musicality. True to the novel's subtitle, "A Story Without a Plot," is structured according to the formless structure of an early blues song, consisting of random adventures, and multiple interacting character voices transform acoustic qualities.

3.1.2 Ecological Random Adventures

The above discussed loose structure of the novel as well as the interaction of a range of characters' voices mirror the dynamics of a text as an ecosystem (compare 2.3.1). The musical novel becomes ecologically powerful when the author combines early blues music elements with explicit references to natural elements (compare 2.3.2). The environment of the waterfront of Marseilles, the author's cumulative use of the word "nature" itself, and plant or animal symbolisms provide *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* with ecological energy. McKay's novel, written in a purely picaresque mode with its formless structure, reminds of a dynamic open system model, in which a constant energy flow is noticeable (compare 2.3.1). According to the principle of multeity-in-unity, each band member points out his/her individual, philosophical approach to life, and thereby contributes to turn Banjo's random stories into ecological adventures.

In addition to the novel's structural analogy of an ecosystem, call-and-response by multiple character voices, African-American direct speeches and portrayals of improvised music-making scenes produce further ecological powerful effects. By the author's use of direct speeches with creative wordplays or loud talking, the novel is turned into a self-regulating system with its own dynamics (compare 2.3.1). When Banjo's band plays "Shake That Thing," ecstatic and wild dancing is triggered. For example, "[it] roused an Arab-black girl from Algeria into a shaking-mad mood. And she jazzed right out into the center of the floor and shook herself in a low-down African shimmying way" (*B J* 47). Meticulously described bodily movements produce the dynamic quality of this text: "[...] Dengel […] approached them rocking rhythmically [...]" (*B J* 32). Consequently, improvised music-making scenes along with dancing scenes mirror the ecological principle that everything is constantly in flux (compare 2.3.1).[110]

Furthermore, descriptions of natural environments contribute to render

110In addition, statements such as "Oh, [Banjo's] head was a circus where everything went circling round and round" (*BJ* 14) contribute ecological dynamics to the text, especially with the use of the phrase "circling round and round."

ecologically powerful effects. The protagonist praises the waterfront of Marseilles by noting that it is the "[...] 'most wonderful bank in the ocean I evah did see'" (*BJ* 3). Likewise, Ray is also "[...] touched by the magic of the Mediterranean, sprayed by its foamy fascination" (*BJ* 66). For Banjo and "his pals," the waterfront is a place for recreation after exhausting performances: "The day following their big musical night, Banjo took Taloufa down to look the breakwater over" (*BJ* 102). Hereby, McKay provides imaginative ecological powers by portrayals of the novel's setting, the waterfront of Marseilles.[111]

In addition, McKay extensively uses the adjectives or adverbs "natural/ly" or the noun "nature," which increase the ecological, dynamic effects of the novel. To underscore Banjo's "natural" way of life, one of his actions is described as follows: "*Instinctively* he drifted to the Ditch, and as *naturally* he found a girl there" (*BJ* 13; emphasis mine). The adverb "naturally" receives additional ecological power by the use of "instinctively." Similarly, Latnah's approach to life is governed by natural occurrences and less by systematic structures: "In the daytime Latnah went off by herself to her business, and sometimes the *nature* of it detained her overnight and she did not get back to her room" (*BJ* 19; emphasis mine).[112] In the end, Latnah is accepted in the beach boy's group when she felt insecure, and she wanted to belong to a group by simply following her "[...] woman's instinct to be under the protection of man" (*BJ* 31).

Moreover, the color green affords the text with ecological energies by imaginative references to nature. For instance, "[...] an oldish man came in wearing *faded green* trousers" (*BJ* 25; emphasis mine). Later on in this chapter, the symbolically "faded green trousers" are enlivened when the persona "[...] jumped down and, twisting his stick and executing some steps, went round with his hat [...]" (*BJ* 25). In contrast, the color white is used as a symbol for lifelessness or

111 Ginger's statement on the sun also contributes ecological power to the novel: "'Oh, Gawd, the sun is sweet!'" (*BJ* 22). In addition, the subtitles "The Ditch" and "The Breakwater" in the first part of the novel underline the author's praise of the natural environment of the sea.

112 In McKay's description of the natural environment of the waterfront of Marseilles, the word "nature" is used times: "[...] everything there seemed to belong and fit *naturally* in place. Bistros and love shops and girls and touts and vagabonds and the troops of dogs and cats – all seemed to contribute so essentially and colorfully to that vague thing called atmosphere" (*BJ* 18, emphasis mine). In this description, McKay explains how an ecosystem functions in which natural dynamics instead of systematic structures reign.

"necrophilia" (compare 2.4.1): "[The white itinerants] never played for fun […]. They played in a hard, unsmiling, funereal way and only for sous" (*BJ* 40).

The novel becomes also ecologically powerful when McKay makes use of animal symbolism (compare 2.3.2). For example, a music-making scene in San Francisco was remembered by Banjo as "[...] the best of all was the *bird* uvva time [...]" (*BJ* 7; emphasis mine). Descriptions of energetic music-making scenes receive additional ecological powers by the use of the adjective "wild": "Banjo played 'Yes, sir, that's my baby.' He said it was one of the pieces that were going *wild* in the States (*BJ* 7-8; emphasis mine). Imaginative references to the natural world in the form of animals, e.g. to birds, in connection with images of "wildness" add necessary ecological energies to a text.

Similarly, some characters are compared with specific animals or plants. For instance, one of the beach boys is called "Ginger" as "a tribute […] to the general impression of his make-up" (*BJ* 5), or his outward impression. Ginger can hint at three different natural occurrences: "Whether you thought of ginger as a tuber in reddish tropical soil, or as a preserved root, or as the Jamaica liquid, it reminded you oddly of him" (*BJ* 5). In analogy, the character Bugsy received his name because of his "small" appearance and his rather aggressive attitude: "The fellows said that he was bughouse and he delighted in the name of Bugsy that they gave him" (*BJ* 6). With such creations of characters' names, McKay produces imaginative ecological energies by referring to natural occurrences like plants or animals.[113]

In sum, *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* is turned into an ecosystem by its dynamics resulting from lively dance and music-making scenes, the interaction of multiple character voices within a formless structure rich with African-American authentic dialect. The accumulated use of the words "nature" or "instinct" and further references to animals or plants within the natural surroundings of the waterfront of Marseilles add further ecological powers to this text.

113In the chapter "Malty Turned Down," McKay connects women's characteristics with phenomena from the animal kingdom. When Latnah slips from her bosom a small dagger, Banjo compares it to a serpent to symbolically underscore women's natural weapons: "It was as if Latnah had produced a serpent from her bosom" (*BJ* 29). In turn, Banjo also praises her sexual way of walking: "Latnah's was gliding like a serpent. [S]he stirred up a powerfully sweet and strange desire in him" (*BJ* 30). In contrast to her, other women are depicted as follows: "[...] their style, the movement of their hips, was like that of fine, vigorous, four-footed animals" (*BJ* 30).

3.1.3 Sympathy with Banjo

Music is the language of emotions, and especially blues music serves to express emotional disturbances (compare 2.1.1). In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* a reader's emotions are mostly engaged with the sympathetic portrayal of the main character Banjo. McKay's authentic style of writing allowed him to openly portray his feelings in the persona Banjo, which in turn produces empathizing and sympathizing effects in a readership. Furthermore, a reader's attention is aroused by Banjo's drinking excesses and deliberately set gaps in the accumulation of "random adventures" (compare 2.2.1).[114]

The musical atmosphere in Banjo's music-making scenes sympathizes with a reader. Banjo's blues music is a particularly effective medium for the depiction of emotions and the production of a reader's affective response. In the first part of the novel, the reader is introduced to the protagonist, who finally becomes one with his beloved musical instrument: "Banjo caressed his instrument. 'I nevah part with this, buddy. It is moh than a gal, moh than a pal; it's mahself" (*BJ* 6). The protagonist's close relationship with his instrument bears sympathizing effects on a reader, which opens him/herself up for imaginatively sharing Banjo's positive emotions in music-making. With the description of feelings, a reader's emotive attention is grasped when, for instance, Banjo and Malty are compared to each other during courting approaches to Latnah: "Malty was more emotional and amorously gentle than Banjo" (*BJ* 27). In music-making scenes, the imaginative audience as well as the performers are described as "[h]andsome, happy brutes" (*B J* 48), with further empathizing effects on readers.[115]

Furthermore, music is portrayed as a language of emotions when Taloufa dances with a girl who does not speak his language: "There was no common

114A reader's attention is grasped by the portrayal of the protagonist's excessive drinking excesses, "[...] which played a big part in their group life [...]" (*BJ* 7). They might contrast with a reader's so-called introjects (see 2.2.2.) because "[Banjo] was a type that was never sober, even when he was not drinking" (*B J* 13). However, "[w]hen they were drunk it was always a sweetly-soft good-natured wine drunk" (*BJ* 23).

115In "Breakwater," a sympathizing aura around Banjo's music making is proved by the audience's reactions: "Customers were attracted by the music, and the girls, too, who were envious [...]" (*BJ* 24).

language between them […]? Taloufa's swelling emotion was eloquent enough [and] made him do the 'beguin' with a royal African strut" (*BJ* 106). Such an example is characteristic for McKay, who emphasizes emotions *via* blues music elements. In addition, so-called *Leerstellen* (compare 2.2.1) grasp a readership's attention in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot*. One of the most obvious gaps occurs when McKay marks it with a dash and dots at several places in the novel: "...-" (*BJ* 20, 24, 49). The novel's formless body structure along with a number of gaps motivate a reader's imaginative play. As the novel does not have a formal ending, a reader is inspired to imagine Banjo's and Ray's continued adventures on the road.

Moreover, surprising and tense places in the novel lead to a reader's active engagement (compare 2.2.2). For instance, the audience of "handsome, happy brutes" (*BJ* 48) are passive witnesses of a murder but do not stop the "wild" dance party: "No graceful sliding and gliding, but strutting, jigging, shimmying, shuffling, humping, standing, swaying, dogging, doing, shaking that thing. […] Blood had crept back up into the face of the woman at the desk ..." (*BJ* 54). This emotionally powerful scene of "wild," ecstatic dancing is set within the background of a murder, resulting in a reader's motivated imagination.

In sum, McKay actively engages his readership by transferred emotions from his own creative healing process from personal psychological pain through writing. Aesthetic unconscious feelings are aroused by tonal semantics or word music, musical explicit references, and a structural interplay of various characters' voices. The formless body structure with accumulated stories on Banjo's random adventures offers *Leerstellen* or fissures to activate a reader's imagination. In imaginative music-making scenes, readers sympathize with the protagonist Banjo. Hereby, elaborate descriptions of feelings open a reader up for emotional musical experiences. An audience is aroused by surprising and tense effects from ecstatic, imaginative soundscapes, which are pervaded by violent behavior.

3.1.4 Cosmopolitan Attitude

Common topics such as the search for a coherent identity or the critique of capitalistic systems with subsequent devastating effects remind of ecologically human-related problems in the 21st century (compare 1.), e. g. fragmented selves or the lost connection to one's inner self. When the author riffs upon themes like physical and mental dispersion, alienation and displacement, a return to a place called home, escape, migration, or the meaning of community (F. Foster 218-22), readers are invited to identify with fictional characters. In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* McKay "calls" his readers by his cosmopolitan attitude. For instance, after identifying with Ray, a reader-response is to follow.

With Ray's story, McKay scores points about the nature of capitalistic systems (Philipson 151-52, 155). Readers might empathize with Ray in times of financial crises: "Those people in the Ditch – they cannot afford to have a heart" (*BJ* 254), or "[...] everybody is so hoggish after the sous they ain't got no imagination left [...]" (*BJ* 20). Hereby, McKay signifies on the loss of imagination of modern human beings who follow the route of capitalism. In the second part of *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* McKay introduces the figure of Ray as a young West Indian writer from Harlem, and offers the possibility to identify with him. Later on, Ray turns his back on Harlem and joins Banjo in traveling Europe (*BJ* 64-65), similar to McKay. In part three of *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* Ray's eventual realization is dramatized: "[...] close association with Banjo had been like participating in a common birthright" (Conroy 15). To enjoy this birthright, Ray decides to join Banjo in perpetual vagabondage. Consequently, a reader is asked to open him/herself up for Ray's philosophical views after an identification with this character.

Furthermore, McKay signifies on the topic of universality and invites his readers to take part in the literal event during the process of reading. For McKay, all people, whether "white men, brown men, black men" (*BJ* 6), are invited to join the imaginative process. At several places in the novel, McKay lists members from several nations: "They went up […] all the Mediterranean peoples, Greek, Jugo-Slav,

Neapolitan, Arab, Corsican, and Armenian, Czech and Russian" (*BJ* 10). The author proposes a universal worldview in contrast to Western dualistic philosophical constructs (Philipson 151). In his opinion, people, regardless of color, should participate es equals in remolding mutual fates (Philipson 151).

A universal approach is also exemplified by Banjo's band from international "black and brown" men. Blues music serves as a *lingua franca,* crossing regions, ethnic groups, genres, and individual musicians (Gray; D. Jones 687). With its inherent hybridity, it is at once a distinct African-American art form as well as a world music (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* xii). For instance, the way of life expressed in the song "Shake That Thing" in chapter five "[...] united the blacks of different nations and continents, [a] life lived by instinct, [and the] ability to abandon oneself to the present moment" (Kaye 168). As a concluding remark, it can be said that *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* reunites characters from different parts of the world on the basis of common life philosophies mirrored in blues music.

Not only does the author propose a cosmopolitan worldview by setting up Banjo's international band, but also by thematizing popular blues singers, e.g. the actress and dancer Josephine Baker, who "[...] conquered Paris in the 1920s" (*BJ* 273). Baker personifies a cosmopolitan identity, by which the author apparently was impressed because "she could evoke Africa, the Caribbean, the United States, and France, by turns or all at once as the occasion required" (Ezra 99). Baker's way of life clearly resembles the protagonist Banjo's cosmopolitan worldview.

In a nutshell, McKay's cosmopolitan attitude to life invites readers to take part in imaginative, fictional soundscapes. Ray as the author's mouthpiece provides philosophical explanations on Banjo's musical improvisations in the novel. On Ray's search for identity or rather his inner self after having experienced the negative effects of capitalism in the USA, a reader from the 21st century might empathize and identify with Ray in times of financial crises and lost ties to nature.

3.1.5 The Love of Life in “Shake That Thing”

Cited song lyrics from “Shake That Thing” express Banjo's life-affirming stance predominantly in the energetic soundscape of the chapter “Jelly Roll” in the first part of the novel, by which a reader is provided with the possibility of experiencing biophilia (compare 2.3.2). This live event sets up the theme of the novel and is mirrored in its word music, explicit musical references and imaginary content analogy to blues music scenes, as well as structural analogies to African-American music. Banjo and his orchestra improvise around the song “Shake That Thing,” which conjures up an ecstatic atmosphere: “Black skin itching, black flesh warm with the wine of life, the music of life, the love and deep meaning of life” (*BJ* 50). This energetic scene with the “loud music of life” (*BJ* 49) represents biophilia as the love of life (compare 2.4.1), and coded emotions are produced, which provide a reader with restorative biophilic life energies.

In imaginary soundscapes, McKay produces ecologically energetic effects by word music, especially accelerated pace through repetitions and grammatically shortened sentences, as well as symbolic analogies to the animal world. By listing the word “wine” in three different variations, “[...] red wine, white wine, sweet wine” (*B J* 46), McKay achieves to speed up the tempo in this scene. Similarly, the description of biophilic experiences during the performance of “Shake That Thing” receives heightened energy by quick accumulations of descriptive statements and neglecting the traditional sentence structure of subject-verb-object: “Rough rhythm of darkly-carnal life. Strong surging flux of profound currents forced into shallow channels […]. One movement of the thousand movements of the eternal life-flow” (*BJ* 57).

Ecological energy is further produced when McKay compares dancers with animals, a leopard or a goat, in descriptions of the characters' dance movements: “Suddenly in the thick joy of it there was a roar and a rush and sheering apart as a Senegalese leaped like a leopard bounding through the jazzers, and, gripping an antagonist, butted him clean on the forehead once, twice, and again, and turned him

loose to fall heavily on the floor like a felled tree" (*BJ* 50). In this scene, the music's ecstasy results in violent fight, which is symbolized in the image and behavior of a leopard in natural environments. In addition, the victim is compared to a "felled tree," another phenomena from our natural environment. Similarly, two dancers are described as "[...] rearing and riding together with the speed and freedom of two wild goats" (*BJ* 53).

Again, accelerated tempo movements and an emphasis on "freedom" or "wild" lead to deepen a reader's experience of biophilia in imaginary performances of "Shake That Thing." McKay "calls" a reader to take part in Banjo's as well as his audience's transcendent experience, in which lost parts of the self are found again and brought together. The reader is invited to share positive biophilic feelings with Banjo, to whom playing the song "Shake That Thing" "[...] had brought a unique feeling of satisfaction" (*BJ* 46). McKay literally prompts his reading audience to take part in the musical event with versions of repeated exclamations of "'Shake That Thing!'" (*B J* 46, 50, 57), or "Oh, shake that thing!" (*B J* 53, 54). The author encourages his readers to join him in "the dance divine of life" (*BJ* 58) by identifying with the imaginary audience in this cosmopolitan atmosphere where "[a]ll shades of Negroes came together [...]" (*B J* 46) "[...] to hear some real music – something ravishing" (*BJ* 57).

In the first part of the novel, "Shake That Thing" with its direct expression of biophilia in "'Jelly Roll'" becomes a *leitmotif* as it is not only repeated over and over again but also the underlying riff of the novel's structure, recurrent in word music and blues musical thematization. Exclamations like "Shake That Thing," the above described animal symbolism or the use of the word "natural" become emotionally connotative in ecological respects. The direct expression of the love of life exemplified in McKay's creative use of African-American vernacular and multiple interacting voices are emotionally stimulating when *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* is turned into an ecosystem. In fictional, imaginative soundscapes, a reader unconsciously experiences natural beauty and truth (compare 3.1.1; 3.1.2).

All in all, *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* shows ways in which affirmative relationships with basic living conditions can be achieved. Banjo and his musicians go back

to near-natural living forms and use music as a revolt against human beings' instrumentation. In music-making scenes, fictional musicians re-connect with their inner selves, which fosters biophilic-related feelings of wellbeing. By developing their musical talents, a human beings's creative nature is set free. For Banjo, improvising in a spontaneous way means being in accordance with the flux of life. In order to vividly portray the affirmation of life, McKay repeats the song "Shake That Thing" over and over again as an appeal to the reader to identify with Banjo and his audience in their imaginative experience of healing biophilia.

3.1.6 Biophilia Versus "Necrophilia"

In *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* biophilia's theoretical assets of the love of life are illustrated by the protagonist Banjo, for whom music-making serves as an ecological survival method according to the comic mode inherent in blues music philosophy (compare 2.4.1). Following in Banjo's footsteps, the intellectual writer Ray offers valuable explanations for Banjo's attitude of praising life itself.

> Shake that thing! In the face of the shadow of Death. Treacherous hand of murderous Death, lurking in sinister alleys, where the shadows of life dance, nevertheless, to their music of life. Death over there! Life over here! Shake down Death and forget his commerce, his purpose, his haunting presence in a great shaking orgy. Dance down the Death […]. (*BJ* 57)

This excerpt taken from the chapter "'Jelly Roll'" sets the *leitmotif* in the novel. McKay clearly depicts the differences between "necrophilia" as the love of death (compare 2.4.1), which apparently lurks in sinister alleys. Nevertheless, biophilia as "the love of life" (Fromm, *Heart*) ultimately wins over self-destroying "necrophilic" human attempts when McKay suggests to "[d]ance down the Death [by] shaking that thing" (*BJ* 57).

With Banjo, McKay symbolically shows how blues music is used as a survival technique with its biophilic healing effects. Malty points to Banjo's

advantage from his instrument, the banjo: "'[...] you ain't broke man,' Malty said, pointing to the banjo [...]" (*BJ* 6). With this statement, Banjo's friend emphasizes the high value of the musical instrument because of its possibility to re-connect to nature. Later on in the novel, biophilic healing effects in relation to Banjo's instrument are portrayed when he "[...] lost his magic companion" (*B J* 229), and "[...] determined to get himself a job" (*BJ* 229) with the result that "[...] Banjo was taken suddenly ill and was dying" (*BJ* 243). After Ray having encouraged Banjo to take on his previous way of life (*B J* 234), biophilia symbolically wins over "necrophilia" in "Shake That Thing Again" in the third part of the novel. The protagonist sings again "*I'm getting sick and tired, but* ... OH, SHAKE THAT THING!" (*BJ* 280).

In the comic mode of blues music, the affirmation of life is expressed through irony: Banjo and his "pals" express the power of the right for a happy and fulfilling life against African-American experiences of pain. Instead of being depressed about certain breakdowns in life, a comic way of life is preferred to drama. The intellectual Ray describes this so-called turning point or the crossroads (compare 2.4.1) in the scene, when a decision for necrophilia or biophilia is to be made, with "[a]ll the world on a stage just wrong enough to be right" (*BJ* 173). Right at this point it is essential to take on a comic mode and not forget to laugh (*BJ* 251).

When Ray enters the novel in the second part, he symbolically brings "intellect to the aid of instinct."[116] Ray provides valuable philosophical as well as ecological advice on how to lead a life in the 21st century. With statements such as "Man loves individuals" (*BJ* 137), or "[...] the most precious thing about human life is difference" (*B J* 208), ecological individuality and diversity are emphasized (compare 2.4.2). In "The 'Blue Cinema,'" McKay also signifies on a missing group consciousness in Western society: "Here in Europe you have more social liberties than Negroes have in America, but you have no *warm* group life" (*BJ* 205; emphasis mine). The dynamics of life are described with "the grand rhythm of life rolled on everlastingly without beginning or end […], but the patterns were ever changing, the

116Banjo, who symbolizes "instinct," turns to Ray as an intellectual counterpart or addition to complement his musical performance with explanations for the reader: "Banjo not finding words to express exactly what he felt, broke off and appealed to Ray" (*BJ* 162).

figures moving on and passing, to be replayed by new ones" (*BJ* 235). The reader is advised to act creatively in harmony with "the grand rhythm of life" in order to "survive" because "[...] life […] does not care a rap about putting a hard fist through a splendid plan" (*BJ* 248).

To sum up, after an identification with Ray, a reader is provided with the possibility to consciously experience biophilic-related feelings in active music-making scenes. Consequently, a reader is motivated to infer meaning out of Banjo's instinctive actions and might follow Ray in his footsteps to follow Banjo's way of "[...] how to take [life] nacheral" (*BJ* 305). In the last chapter, Ray points out that "[...] happiness was the highest good, and difference the greatest charm, of life. The hand of progress was robbing his people of many primitive and beautiful qualities" (*BJ* 325).

3.2 *Dirty Bird Blues* – Man's "Down-to-Earth" Attitude

In *Dirty Bird Blues*, Major creates an authentic, musical atmosphere with elements of country blues music from the 1950s (compare 2.1.1) and thematizes current individual problems such as the search for integrity and wholeness (compare 1.) from a multidimensional perspective (see 3.2.4). By sympathizing, empathizing, and identifying with the protagonist Man, who tries to integrate several identities in one person, a reader is given the possibility to feel Man's "blues" (see 3.2.3) with subsequent unbiophilic-related healing effects of the music (compare 3.2.5).

In the following scene, Major's main concern is exemplified: He praises Billie Holiday not only for her musical achievements but emphasizes her "down-to-earth" attitude, which presents her in an even more attractive way. With Man as a role model, Major advises his readership to take "whatever comes in life" with a "down-to-earth" stance by keeping one's natural inner rhythm.

> She was a solo act then. Man and she were shooting the shit backstage before he went out. She was real nice people, in his opinion, *down to earth.* He fastened the catch at the back of her gown for her. It wasn't any big deal but he was proud of doing that cause he thought she was a great lady and people weren't respecting her like they should […]. (*DBB* 18; emphasis mine)

For Major, reality is a "man-made world," and he constantly asks his readers for active participation in the creation of the literary event (compare 2.2.1; 3.2.4.). With Man as a role model, Major advises his readership to take "whatever comes in life" with a "down-to-earth" stance and to stick to one's natural inner rhythm.

3.2.1 Man and Country Blues Music

Major is known as an experimental writer of the *New Black Aesthetics Movement* (compare 1.), who remembers African-American history by employing traditional, historical folk culture in *Dirty Bird Blues*. Grown up in Chicago (Guzzio, "Clarence Major"), he incorporates his experiences in numerous blues music scenes, and creates an authentic atmosphere with elements from the era of country blues music during the 1950s (compare 2.1.1). In the mode of *telling* (compare 2.1), the guitarist Man is portrayed as an improvising and performing bluesman. In the mode of *showing* (compare 2.1), Man's music-making scenes are described with their emotional effects on his audience. *Dirty Bird Blues* is equipped with numerous cited song lyrics as implicit partial reproductions (compare 2.1), surrounded by formal, linguistic rhythmic patterns, which contribute to the text's musical acoustics (compare 2.1).

In the so-called telling mode, Major makes explicit references to country blues music by using typical blues vernacular and symbols, making blues music the topic of a discussion, mentioning song titles, clubs, dance styles, or musicians, and by placing musicians in typical authentic musical settings. The novel's main topic, a lost love, is rendered with the help of typical blues vocabulary, symbols and motifs as well as African-American dialectal and rhythmic speeches. Vividly as well as meticulously, Major portrays images from the 1950s blues music scene of Chicago and a small town called Omaha. Hereby, he includes authentic musicians, mentions genuine music clubs, cites song titles or newly created lyrics.

From a conversation between Man and Solly, a reader learns that Chicago replaced New Orleans as the center of American blues music in the 1950s: "'[...] this the mecca of the blues. They told me *that* down in N'Orleans. Fact is, that why I come up here. Everybody kept saying Chicago where it happening, go to Chicago, go to Chicago, N'Orleans a thing of the past" (*DBB* 45; emphasis in the original). At another place in the novel, Major describes the development and popularity of the dance style boogie-woogie: "Everybody wanted to boogie […]. Boogie all night every night [...]" (*DBB* 313).

Moreover, Major conjures up an authentic musical atmosphere by praising popular blues musicians, or by mentioning various styles of blues music from the 1950s. For example, Poppa Blake, the owner of a venue, loved to hear "[...] dipper-mouth blues, gutbucket, nasty Lucille Bogan Blues, red-light district blues, cathouse blues, jump-back-in-the-alley blues" (*DBB* 18-19). Later on, the protagonist celebrates Billie Holiday's authentic personality despite fame: "[Billie Holliday] was a solo act then. […] She was a real nice people, in his opinion, down to earth. [S]he was a great lady [...]" (DBB 18). Further figures from the Chicago blues music scene, the narrator celebrates, are Jimmy Reed and Solomon Thigpen.[117]

Major also portrays distinctive blues music topics such as a lost love or a traveling bluesman: Man mourns his lost love Cleo in musical improvisations. The protagonist embodies the stereotypical traveling bluesman when he moves from Chicago to his sister in Omaha by train, which represents another blues motif: "The train was making a kind of music to the land. Whine, baby, whine. Rag, sugar, rag" (DBB 61). Here, the image of the traveling bluesman on the train is intensified with the personification of the train and subsequent repetitions of the words "whine" and "rag" in a line, which might have been taken from a blues song.

In addition, the protagonist Man, a 25-year-old blues music singer, saxophonist and harmonica player (*DBB* 16-17) represents the 1950s Chicago blues music scene in both public and private music-making. For instance, Man "[...] played clubs on Sixty-third mostly, three of them right along the strip [in Chicago]. The Red Tiger. Sixty-Third Street Tavern. […] Ducky Wucky's" (*DBB* 52-53). Song titles such as "Chicago Monkey Man Blues" (*DBB* 2), "Sixty Third Street Blues" (*DBB* 4), or "Feeling Lowdown" (*DBB* 21) are mentioned, and slang words distinct for the use in blues music contribute to the novel's authentic bluesy atmosphere. For example, Major uses typical slang words such as "jelly roll," "mojo" (DBB 1), "diddy wa diddy" (DBB 15), "jiving" (DBB 17), "everywhichaway" (DBB 21).

With "dirty bird" in the novel's title, Old Crow bourbon is referred to as the reason for Man's weakness of not being able to quit drinking, which results in Man

117The protagonist "[...] blew harmonica one night for Jimmy Reed [...]" (*DBB* 124), and sees Solomon Thigpen as the "[...] best blues guitar picker north of the Mason and Dixon Line" (*DBB* 30).

losing both his job and wife. In direct speeches, Man makes extensive use of authentic African-American vernacular with its characteristic grammatical structures. In sentences such as “Shit, buckshots ain't nothing” (DBB 6), “ain't” instead of “aren't” appear in combination with slang words like “shit” or “buckshots.”[118]

In the mode of *showing*, Major produces imaginary content analogy with emotional and cognitive effects (compare 2.1) on his readership in live music scenes. For instance, music-making by Manfred and his best friend Solly makes up a good portion of the novel as a whole. Apart from performances in popular blues music venues in Chicago, Man and Solly improvise at home: “Could practice his singing, play his harmonica, or [...] the sax. […] Maybe [Solly]'d sing one of his own songs, [...] and [he] would pick it out, give it a melody, with his guitar” (*DBB* 16-17). In such descriptions of Man's music-making, Major leaves room for a reader's cognitive imagination as well as the possibility to feel Man's “blues.”[119] Similarly, emotional responses from Man's fictional audience evoke imaginary content analogies to music, for example when the protagonist “[had] gotten to know the moods […] they were loud, tired, and blue, but somehow they […] appreciate what was happening on the stage” (*DBB* 193).

Besides imaginary soundscapes, Major extensively cites song lyrics in full length, which are found in nearly each of the forty chapters. For example, “If I was a fish // And the river was whiskey. // I say, if I was a fish [...]” (*DBB* 3). A few pages later, other verses from Man's blues improvisations are inserted:

> This morning. This morning.
> Gon find me a lucky rabbit foot.
> This morning. This morning.
> Gon find me that rabbit foot.
> I jes got to change my luck, baby.
> Got to get me some love and loot. (*BJ* 8)

118In “'I knows how to write'” (*DBB* 6) Major follows the rules of African-American vernacular by the use of “knows” instead of “know.”

119Examples are “[...] humming now the Leadbelly song [...]” (*DBB* 10) or “[...] He put the reed on the mouthpiece, placing it on the flat side and turning it a little so it was just a tiny bit below the tip [...]” (*DBB* 19).

Here, Man uses the traditional blues form of AAB (compare 2.1.1) with the first two sentences being repeated and the last two sentences being the punch or conclusion of. In an intertextual way, Major cites single improvised song lines as well as complete verses as implicit partial reproduction of a musical piece (compare 2.1).

In view of formal musical imitation (compare 2.1), the novel's formless structure and Major's rhythmic writing lead to the text's musicality.[120] *Dirty Bird Blues* comprises of a special lively, musical atmosphere resulting from an accelerated tempo in dancing or discussion scenes, a rhythmic mode of narrating, sentences with internal rhymes and repetitions, the use of African-American vernacular in direct speeches, loud talking or bragging. In transcendent soundscapes, when Man puts all his feelings into playing the saxophone, the narrating tempo is accelerated:

> [H]e blew his heart out, fingers jumping and dancing everywhichahwere – getting that real nice high tone […]. The sax was saying that he was saying […] he kept saying these words into the sax, making the sax way them. It was real nice. (*DBB* 20-21)

In this excerpt, Major repeats the words "sax," "saying," and "nice," uses the present and past progressive, and melts together the word "everywhichahwere"[121] to achieve a special rhythmic effect.

In addition, loud talking or bragging render the acoustic dimensions of the novel. For example, when it is suggested to make a living from music-making with "You could be a real singer," Man replies proudly with "'I *is* a real singer'" (*DBB* 9; emphasis mine). Frequently, sentences have internal rhythms and resemble a line from a blues song. For instance, "I was just walking down the street – walking down the street with the empty pocket blues, walking my blues away, singing a reel, a hungry, lowdown, made-up, sinful reel" (*DBB* 7). The effect of internal rhythms is main-

120 Major is known to be a vernacular writer. He also published the *Dictionary of Afro-American Slang,* which was updated and expanded to *Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang* (1970) as a guide to African-American verbal expression, a prove of Major's ample etymological information ("Clarence Major," 2014).

121 Similarly, Major creates tension and an accelerated tempo by using active verbs in the present progressive in sequence: "[...] taking all at the same time, drinking fast, spilling liquor, giggling, strutting, sassing and jiving, wooh-wee-ing, waving dim notes, tapping their daisy-beaters [...]" (*DBB* 193).

ly achieved by the repetition of the phrase “walking down the street.”

Comparable to *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* (3.1.1), Major's novel is loosely structured with its forty chapters in a sequence, consisting of smaller stories. Cited blues music lyrics remind of musical unpredictability, interdependence, and improvisational spontaneity. Shifts between Man's dreams and reality mimic polyrhythmic effects of African-American music, i.e. a circularity with feedback loops as changing time processes (compare 2.1): In his dreams, Man heard Mama singing a blues song called “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” (*DBB* 22). Such polyrhythmic occurrences are held together by Major's recurrent insertion of the protagonist's improvised live music sessions.

All in all, *Dirty Bird Blues* comprises of a rather fragmentary structure (B. Bell, “Double Consciousness” 5-9) with rhythmic writing offering literary acoustics within literary limits. Major makes frequent use of tonal semantics in the form of African-American vernacular in direct speeches or internal rhymes. An authentic atmosphere is created by multiple references to the 1950s blues music scene from Chicago and Omaha with live music produced by Man, whose lyrics appear in full length in nearly each chapter.

3.2.2 “Natural” Literary Acoustics

One of Major's main topics is the phenomenon of nature and its purpose in aesthetic terms (“Clarence Major,” *Oxford*). With his experimental approach (Byerman, *Clarence Major* 1-5) as well as his commitment to artistic freedom (“Clarence Major,” *Oxford*), Major turns the novel into a dynamic, fictional ecosystem (compare 2.3.1.).[122] Ecological energy is mainly produced by the formless, but dynamic structure, Major's rhythmic writing, the accumulated use of the word “nature” as well as references to animals or plants. In this process, *Dirty Bird Blues* develops “its own reality” (J. O'Brien, *Interviews* 130), and exists on its own terms in analogy to an

122A disruptively experimental style was explored during the 1960s, and flourished in the 1970s and 1980s. Those writers admire real things for what they are and not as transparent windows to or representations of some pre-existing reality (Klinkowitz, “Innovative Fiction” 57-63).

ecosystem. Major succeeds in creating a literary ecosystem with the novel's formless structure, rhythmic writing and narrative shifts between fantasy and reality. The formless structure of the novel with its forty chapters proves its unpredictability, spontaneity and diversity. The accumulation of direct speeches mirrors the novel's inherent interdependence.

Shifts between Man's dreams and his perception of reality symbolize ecological feedback loops, for example "In his sleep Man heard Mama singing *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms,* then […] she turned into Aunt Ida, still singing that song [...]" (*D B B* 22). This scene shows how Major's recurrent bluesy soundscapes tend to hold the novel together with someone else performing the same song. Along with rhythmic writing, which symbolizes the ups and downs of life, the novel is turned into an ecological network, in which its sum makes up more than its parts, or in other words, the novel's literary acoustics provide the text becomes with a life of its own.

In addition, the author praises nature by an extended use of the word "natural." Hereby, ecological energy is added to the novel's imaginative soundscapes by producing imaginative links to the natural environment. For example, Solly and Man play the song "Whatever Comes *Natural*" (*DBB* 48; emphasis mine), or the protagonist compliments on his friend's "natural" way of playing: "And Solly was a *natural* born straight musician" (*DBB* 16; emphasis mine). Also for Man, it was "[j]ust *natural* […] singing the *natural* story of what happened to him" (*DBB* 8; emphasis mine). The extended use of the word "natural" is mainly found in song titles, descriptions of characters and music-making in order to convey ecological energy.[123]

To deepen ecological reservoirs of the novel, Major also applies strategies of environmental symbolism (compare 2.3.2). Prominently, the "bird" as a common symbol in blues music lyrics appears in the novel's title with the adjective "dirty" as a reference to the alcoholic beverage, Old Crow Bourbon. There are numerous references to the animal world as well. For instance in the first chapter of the novel:

123In addition, Major emphasizes the connection of music with nature by awarding piano keys the characteristic of being "natural": "His fingertips lightly finding the six *natural* keys [...]" (*DBB* 20; emphasis mine).

“If I was a fish // And the river was whiskey. // I say, if I was a fish // And the river was whiskey ...” (*DBB* 3). The animal fish is embedded in its natural environment, the river, which receives negative connotations by use of the word “whiskey” in analogy to the title's phenomenon.[124]

Furthermore, the author compares human beings to animals when he describes the novel's characters. For instance, the protagonist sees himself as “stubborn as a mule” (*DBB* 8). At another place in the novel, two policemen are equated with a lizard and a bullfrog: “[L]izard got out […] strut like he thought he was god's last gift to the earth. Some kind of rooster hell on two legs. Bullfrog stayed in the car” (*DBB* 15). In addition, Man's mother cries, which is compared to animal sounds: “And how many times had he seen his mother weeping, making desperate animal sounds […] feeling as though a circle of rose thorns was embedded in his stomach [...]” (*DBB* 11). This scene is further energetically charged by the use of the image of “rose thorns” for the description of feelings.[125]

In conclusion, the novel *Dirty Bird Blues* becomes an ecosystem or a self-regulating entity *via* strategies such as rhythmic writing, a formless structure, and an inclusion of numerous music-making scenes as well as direct speeches. Consequently, the novel develops a life on its own. With the frequent use of the word “natural” and animal or plant symbolism, the novel evokes imaginary images of the natural environment, which increases its reservoir of ecological energies.

124Further examples are references to a snake, whose movements are compared to human dance movements: “You can wiggle all night like a snake. / Yeah, you can wiggle all night just like a snake” (*DBB* 4).

125In an image of “pollen,” Major deepens the novel's ecological reservoir with “They came alive in and lived in the music like pollen lived in a flower” (*DBB* 48).

3.2.3 Empathy with Man

Major writes about the blues that nourishes and expresses the lives of his characters with contagious affection ("Clarence Major," *Oxford*; "Clarence Major," *Poetry*). In a universal approach, Major invites his readers to share Man's feelings about his lost love and his suffering from a mechanistic, systematic world. In his novels and other writings, Major not only aims at an African-American audience but a universal readership by his preference of the quality of the work to the ideology ("Clarence Major," *Oxford*). The author points out: "We have to get away from this rigid notion that there are certain topics and methods reserved for black writers. […] I'm against coercion from blacks and from whites" (J. O'Brien, *Interviews* 129). In an interview from 1986 he further told a reporter that he writes about the human condition, not necessarily the African-American condition. By transmitting Major's own feelings from his personal experiences, incorporating blues music as a language of deep emotions and extended descriptions of Man's feelings, a reader's sympathizing and identifying process is facilitated (compare 2.2.2).[126]

Even though Major writes about African-Americans, they are human beings first (Carlin 35). This stance is recurrent in *Dirty Bird Blues* with the protagonist's shortened name from Manfred to "Man," which leads to an identification of any reader with the protagonist.[127] Moreover, a frequent use of "everybody" symbolizes the author's universal appeal and at the same time functions as an invitation to empathize and sympathize with Man's human condition.[128] The identification of a postmodern reader in the 21st century with the protagonist follows the thematization of common problems such as the search for a coherent identity, the hardships of

126In this novel, Major deals honestly, uses the energy and excitement of his own reactions to certain events as the substance of his narratives (Klinkowitz, "Innovative Fiction" 57-63).

127This attitude is rendered in *Dirty Bird Blues* when Man watches "white" folks: "White folks, they strutting or jumping to the same rhythm anybody else strutting or jumping to. They must got they blues when it comes to love, like us, dreaming in the moon, like us, high-toned marrying down to common, like us, they die in the arms of peoples who love them, like us, they dream they hearts gon mend and be thinking love gone overcome everything like us, and they too got this way of seeing theyself in the face of the peoples they love instead of the face of they love one, like us. He sighed" (*DBB* 67).

128For example, Major's anti-nationalist attitude is rendered in chapter 34, when "*Everybody* wanted to boogie" (*DBB* 313; emphasis mine).

being a member of the *machine age* or the suffering from an unsuccessful love story. Man feels fragmented, rootless, and often paranoid in the attempt to reconcile the different identities of a father, husband, and the life of a bluesman.[129]

After having been abandoned by his wife Cleo, Man is beginning to embrace "dirty bird," which increases his personal pain as he is "[...] a person with feelings" (*DBB* 53). Finally, Man realizes that he cannot have Cleo, his music and whiskey at the same time, but spends the book deciding what combination to commit to with the ultimate insight that a coherent identity is impossible ("Clarence Major," *Oxford*). Hereby, a reader empathizes with the protagonist because of Major's emphasis on feelings throughout elaborate descriptions of the narrator's inner life and the insertion of blues music as emotional language.[130] In the first chapter, Man compares blues with jazz music: "Jazz was all right but he couldn't feel it like he could him some blues" (*DBB* 4). This statement serves as an introduction to one of Major's main concerns in the novel, namely the neglect of feelings in postmodern times, whereas Man "[u]sed the harmonica or the sax to say what he couldn't find words to say" (*DBB* 19).

Major's emphasis on feelings in the novel is further recurrent in his extended use of the word "feeling" itself, whose effects are intensified through its expression of the narrator or protagonist himself. The novel is told by an unreliable, dramatized narrator, who is an African-American male and at the same time protagonist (B. Bell, "Clarence Major" 5-9). The use of the pronoun "I" in direct speeches intensifies the protagonist's feelings and its empathizing effect on the reader, e.g. in "I was feeling lonely" (*DBB* 13). Major not only provides the possibility for a reader to identify with the protagonist, but also with the audience. A reader might recognize him/herself again in the following scene, in which the "crowd's" mood is described:

> Man was studying the crowd as he sang. He'd gotten to know the moods. Tonight, it was a hard-drinking Friday night crowd and they were loud, tired, and blue, but somehow they seemed to hear and appreciate […]. (*DBB* 193)

129Major also believes that *double consciousness* describes the condition of all Americans in some way (B. Bell, "Double Consciousness" 5-6).

130Merle Rubin (1990) points out that Major writes both effectively and affectively.

It seems as if the author talks to his readers and establishes communication after sympathizing processes in imaginary soundscapes. A reader is asked to take part in the literary event by identification with Man's audience and "appreciate what [is] happening on stage."

In sum, Major invites the reader to share his protagonist's elaborately portrayed blues feelings *via* literary acoustics in *Dirty Bird Blues*. The topics of a lost love and inner fragmentation spur a readership to empathize with Man and identify with his search for identity in postmodern times. Sympathizing effects are enacted by openly showing one of Man's human weaknesses, i.e. drinking "dirty bird."

3.2.4 A Man-Made World

In *Dirty Bird Blues,* Major asks a reader to help create the imaginative work by refusing to integrate clues or leaving out fragments of the unified whole. In Major's view, reality is "a man-made world" and consequently he asks for active engagement of his reading audience. By providing so-called *Leerstellen* and spheres of play, Major activates a reader's imaginative consciousness (compare 2.2.1). Straightforward realism in *Dirty Bird Blues* has a way of wandering off into the labyrinths of literary self-awareness. However, this is not a passive process but reality is a *man-made world,* influenced by our ability to reflect, re-imagine, re-interpret, and reform it (Rubin). Jerome Konkowitz (1994) points out that Major asks the reader for help in the creative process of the novel, making his or her reaction an important part of the story itself (57).

By providing possibilities for a reader to identify with the protagonist Man or his audience (compare 3.2.3), Major calls for an aesthetic production by the reader. An implicit reader can actively take part in the meaning-making process (compare 2.2.1) with Major's set gaps. For instance, a final ending of the novel is lacking and gives the readership necessary space to create their own. Man does not quit drinking with his partner Solly, and consequently he gets fired from his job, ending in a toss-

up whether he will dry out and keep his family together.[131] With his deconstructive technique and fragmentary structure, Major achieves a reader's accompaniment in the act of reading a novel with literary acoustics.

In transcendent soundscapes, imaginative dreams, or crime scenes, Major offers the reader possibilities for developing and modifying his/her self in a continuous process of imaginary boundary crossing (compare 2.2.1). For instance, Major introduces a reader to the novel with the surprising effects from the following crime scene, in which his wife's new lover shoots at Man on Christmas Eve:

> Preacher man shooting at somebody. Musta hit me too. […] Cleo in there and she let that nigger shoot me. Nigger done shot me. […] Snow up-to-the-ass cold, colder than a witch's behind up here, cold as embalmed lovers still locked together, colder than Staggerlee's grin. But he squatted there still trying to force the window, feeling so goddamned sick and drunk and mad at Cleo in there like that, his woman with his kid, in another man's home on Christmas Eve. (*DBB* 1)

The novel begins with this surprising scene and leads the reader into the unknown, which in turn activates his/her mind in the attempt to coherently understand the event. In this excerpt, Major grasps a reader's attention mainly by repeated versions of the words "shooting" or "coldness." The crime scene is dramatized when his wife spends not a usual night but Christmas Eve with her lover as a preacher. Furthermore, Major draws from textures and patterns of myths and dreams as models for the imaginative leaps he desires for his fiction (B. Bell, "Double Consciousness" 5-9).[132]

All in all, Major succeeds in transcending imaginative boundaries with retrospective scenes or dream sections. For instance, in chapter eight he remembers former times when New Orleans was the center of blues music:

131 Major experimental creative approach is mirrored when he breaks down conventional assumptions about character, plot, and narrative voice. His texts tend to be fragmentary, rather than unified in structure (B. Bell, "Double Consciousness" 5-9).

132 Major was particularly inspired and moved by the works of Vincent van Gogh. In him, he found a model for his rebellion because the painter similarly broke rules to transcend (Major, "Afterthoughts" 197-212).

> Took a train from there to New Orleans because people said that was where all the music was in those days. Everybody was talking about New Orleans. Played his harmonica and sang on the streets for handouts. (*DBB* 75)

By retrospective time shifts, Major expands a reader's imagination when s/he identifies with the protagonist and runs Man's thoughts through his/her mind. Dreamed up scenes like "Later that night: *He is flying. It seems so easy and natural. Flying across a night sky* [...]" (*DBB* 99) also serve as an example for activating a reader's imaginative leaps. These examples are proofs of Major's preoccupation with exploring boundaries of imaginative consciousness (B. Bell, "Double Consciousness" 5-9).

Along with transcendent soundscapes, the novel comprises of spheres of play, in which a readership is provided with the possibility of extending him/herself (compare 2.2.1): "Eyes closed, his whole self turned down to the pinpoint of that mouthpiece. […] The sax was saying what he was saying – I may be up to my neck in trouble, hoodooed at the door of my own wake" (*DBB* 20). When Man makes music, his mind wanders off from real time, and he takes on an auctorial stance, mirrored in his lyrics. Hereby, Major aims at shaping and re-shaping perceptions and deepening visions in order to give his readers necessary means to understand themselves with a playful blend of natural images and interior feelings as responses to social reality (Major, *Calling the Wind* xviii). For the author himself, reality is created inside of a book, and it exists mainly in the mind (B. Bell, "Double Consciousness" 5-9).

In retrospect, within dreams, retrospective views, crime scenes, and transcendent soundscapes, Major shows how concretely we live in our imagination – how our lives are shaped by language and how by a simple act of self-awareness we can actually seize control of the world and reshape it to our liking and benefit (Klinkowitz, "Innovative Fiction" 57-63).

3.2.5 Cathartic Power of Blues Music

In *Dirty Bird Blues,* Major touches base with the blues music that nourishes the lives of the people ("Clarence Major," *Poetry,* cf. Klinkowitz, *Life of Fiction*). For the protagonist, only blues music helps him to become whole again after negative experiences. Biophilia provides him with the energy to get on in life and being creative, and spontaneous (compare 2.3.2). By expressing negative feelings in blues music, he comes in contact with the nature of things or in other words, with the absolute truth that brings him back to the natural rhythms of life itself.

Man describes and confronts his inner pain from his break-up with Cleo and troubles with the police in blues musical soundscapes. He orders his mind from a distant point of view, and finds his inner self by the cathartic power of the blues (compare 2.3.2). For Man, "[...] bare truth is healing" (*DBB* 164). The protagonist himself explains the function of the music as healing therapy: "Singing was his way of talking out his furious, crazy thing in him that made him glide, leap, holler and scream as if over treetops without even moving" (*DBB* 15). Man points out that the healing function of blues music helped him to "[...] got sort of relaxed with Cleo gone so much" (*DBB* 17).

For the protagonist, blues music becomes a survival technique, which can be compared to the healing powers in spiritual rituals. When "[...] Man heard his own words in his mind and kept repeating them" (*DBB* 63), they not only served to soothe him but also keep him alive. At another place, the protagonist states that blues music has already saved "[...] as many lives as church songs" (*DBB* 65). Man blows "his heart out" on his saxophone "[...] when he was kind of down […] and needed to liftup" (*DBB* 20-21).

A biophilic experience is also successfully portrayed when Major compares music's healing function with powerful ecological analogies. The fictional narrator vividly describes this effect with "Nothing but the music. They came alive in and lived in the music like pollen lived in a flower" (*DBB* 48). Direct contact with nature in music-making is further shown when Man can hear the sounds of animals:

“Humming, blues as a man can be, so low down I can hear ants sneezing and coughing way down under the snow and the sidewalk” (*DBB* 17). With comparisons to blooming flowers or images of close contact with the animal world, Major conveys biophilic emotions both by connotative lexical presentation and imaginative perspectives.

Not only Man but also his acquaintance Bev, his sister Debbie and a “white” lady from the South receive healing powers through blues music. When Bev mourns her lost love Larry Taylor, she uses music to soothe her emotional pains: “She liked those naughty songs by Memphis Minnie, the hoodoo lady […], she'd put on some of Minnie's old records and sing along with her, songs about real life” (*DBB* 93). Her sister Debbie is laughing and singing along when Man sings “*Ain't It a Crying Shame*” and “*My Brownskin Sugar Plum*” when they are on a car ride, turning the radio off (*DBB* 116). Both Bev and Debbie receive biophilic life-energies by listening to and singing along blues songs, which helps them to overcome daily problems from “real life.”

The healing function of music is further rendered when Man remembers a story about a “white” lady when he used to live in the South. She stopped her car and came up to his house to ask for directions while Man was playing his washtub bass:

> She was standing there looking real mad […]. […] I seed she was looking at my washtub bass. She touched the cord, sorts flipped it with her finger to see it dance. And you shoulda see that woman's face light up with a smile. She was like a changed person. […] Then she axed me to play it for her […] and she started justa smiling […]. (*DBB* 192)

Here, Major shows that blues music has a universal healing function, and it is not only directed at an African-American audience. Also “white” people can receive biophilic feelings of wellbeing, exemplified by the woman, who “looked real mad.” However, she left “smiling” and as a “changed person” after listening to Man's blues improvisations on the washtub bass.

In conclusion, a reader becomes unconsciously aware of nature with the text's formless structure and word music. By empathizing, sympathizing, and identifying

with the protagonist or other characters like Bev, Debbie or the “white” lady, a reader is given the possibility of experiencing biophilia in detailed descriptions of imaginative fictional scenes with lively blues soundscapes.

3.2.6 “Whatever Comes Natural”

The phrase “whatever comes natural” describes Major's concern in *Dirty Bird Blues*: By extending a reader's consciousness, Major advises his readership to take on a life-affirming stance as well as to prefer biophilia to “necrophilia” (compare 2.2.1; 2.4.1). Major shows how to take life in the sense of “whatever comes natural” by the comic mode of blues music philosophy and analogies to ecological principles in Man's “natural” music-making, for instance, keeping the rhythm of life, being spontaneous, and developing an individual style (compare 2.4.2). Major persuades a reader with Man's “down-to-earth” attitude to affirm life and appreciate it even though times are hard. The protagonist's life-affirming stance is mirrored when he never gives up hope that his wife would come back one day. Furthermore, he still believes in himself as a talented musician: “Could make it big if I got the chance, just the right connections, cut a record, get going big. Something got to happen. That's for sho” (*DBB* 151). Man follows the teachings of blues music philosophy by always keep going and never lose hope (compare 2.4.2).

Furthermore, Man's love for life is clearly depicted in his statement “[...] Cleo. Loved that woman as much as life itself [...]” (15). Biophilia is the love for life (Fromm, *Heart*), and Major transmits this life-affirming attitude in his novel. When Man symbolically reaches the so-called crossroads, he points out his idea of living a perfect life: “Just make some bread doing what he loved […]. Then maybe Cleo would ease up, get off his case. Life!” (*DBB* 216; compare 2.4.2). Again, his biophilic instinct, about which he is very conscious, is rendered in the exclamation “Life!” and such a life full of “life” would make a living by playing music and become happy with Cleo. In this endeavor, Major proposes Man to follow his instincts if Man ever wants to reach his set aims in life.

The slogan “A man didn't need to always understand his actions” (*DBB* 168) but be able to listen to him/herself is symbolically portrayed with Man's ability to judge a venue if it was the right place for him to play by the type of music he heard and its surrounding atmosphere.

> The place was all lit up with flashing and blinking lights. People, men and women, were hanging around […] talking and jiving. The jukebox music inside was blasting out some good stuff, Speckled Red hitting hard at *The Dirty Dozens.* Hearing that, Man knew this was the right place for him […]. The jukebox was now playing Billie Holiday. (*DBB* 86)

This venue, with its “talking and jiving” audience and its background music by Speckled Red and Billie Holiday, somehow appealed to the protagonist. Later on, he got offered a job as a singer for the Palace. On the same night, he gave a little performance and the crowd went wild, begging for an encore (*DBB* 88-91). Man proved to be right in following his instincts and he came a little bit closer to realizing his dream of making a living by making music.

To overcome his pains, Man does not tend to fall into tragic depressions. Instead he takes on the comic mode inherent in blues music philosophy. His life-affirming stance is supported in the following scene: “Then he got tired of his own song and went into the first few riffs of *Feeling Lowdown,* hearing in his head Big Billy Broonzy singing it with that little edge of humor to his voice like he could do” (*DBB* 21). The protagonist does not fall into a “hole” at the so-called crossroads but decides to follow a fulfilling life, in which conflicts do seem solvable by humorously putting away negative, destructive thoughts. For example, Man's blue mood vanishes when he is “so low down [he] can hear ants sneezing and coughing” (*DBB* 17). By giving animals human qualities, such as sneezing or coughing, Major shows how the protagonist turns from a depressive “blue” phase to a comical sentiment. This effect is also created when Man is able to laugh about himself while he compares himself with a “stubborn mule” (*DBB* 8). Another example, which supports Man's comic stance is the name “Rice Pudding” (*DBB* 120), which he chooses as the title for his love song to his wife.

In general, the comic mode of the blues stands for "taking whatever comes natural" and developing a creative approach to life. Major succeeds in symbolically portraying the ecological principles of polyrhythms and spontaneity in music-making scenes. Man praises his friend's natural way of playing, "[Solly was a natural born straight musician" (*DBB* 16-17), by which the author hints at leading a life in a "natural way." For example, Man writes his songs spontaneously. He "[...] wrote *Policy Number Blues,* right on the bar napkin, beating out the rhythm on the bar top. But he never wrote down music notes […]. It was just all in his head" (*DBB* 31). The psychological healing effect of spontaneous creativity is further portrayed when Debbie and Man drive to the station to pick up his wife coming back to him. "He got a pen out of Debbie's glove compartment and quickly wrote it all down. It was about how much he loved Cleo, about the birds and trees, flowers and bees, about being poor but serious about his love for her" (*DBB* 120). Here, Major advises the reader to pay attention to one's inherent instincts or in other words, listen to one's inner voice when it has to say something.

In addition, rhythm is very important in the novel. Man shows that it is the way to his spontaneous creativity: "[...] he paid attention to it for a few times, caught the rhythm, and picked it up on his harmonica. […] Open your door, I ain't no stranger honey. Got into the deep blue sea. Did some hoodoo spells" (*DBB* 33). Here, rhythm is the way to Man's naturalness or experience of biophilia. After Man's performance in his sister's town, "[he] was feeling that good. High and mighty. Felt so good just to be breaking new ground. Like sudden freedom" (92). After a call from his wife, he feels like flying. However, he reminds himself to pace down and stick to the natural rhythm: "'*I can take it to the limits. But take it slow. Don't have to take it home. Take it slow. Talk that talk*" (99). Here, the sentences' inner rhythms support Major's concern with rhythms by mirroring the ups and downs in life. In the end, Cleo came back and Man did not lose his inner rhythm. Instead, the two learnt how to move in a common rhythm, "[...] like two people who once knew a song, who once sang a song together, but who were now learning how years later to sing again [...]" (*DBB* 129).

To sum up, Major invites his readership to join him in becoming explorers of interior

landscapes and philosophies of life (B. Bell, "Double Consciousness" 5-9). In his approach to life, Man becomes a role model for his readership by "taking whatever comes natural," listening to his instincts and reacting spontaneously to them. Major frequently indicates the importance of "keeping the rhythm" in life. He shows the positive long-term effects of a "down-to-earth" attitude because "Time. All it takes time. […] Things be changing all the time. Never can tell what gon come round the corner [...]" (*DBB* 349). With everything being in constant flux and dynamics, Man proposes to take on a life-affirming stance.

3.3 *Invisible Man* – Invisible Man's Biophilic Experience

For Ellison, Armstrong was a role model with whom to identify. He developed the discipline and guile to escape poverty, and sometimes necessarily, bear the full burden of racial discrimination (Porter 42). Armstrong delighted Ellison with his sublety and doubleness – qualities he termed invisibility (O'Meally, *Jazz Writings* xv).[133] In *Invisible Man,* the protagonist tells a story about himself as an idealistic young African-American, disillusioned from the frustrating, humiliating, and often shocking experiences around the 1940s in the South of the United States as well as in Harlem, New York City. Hurt and bewildered, Invisible Man retreats into invisibility, holding himself up in an unused Harlem basement and hibernating there until, he hopes, he is able to re-emerge into society with an alternative view of his identity.

In the dark of his underground basement, there are no colors, and to fill the space with light, he burns 1,369 bulbs. Finally, he is ready to re-enter the world and recite the catastrophic events of his life (Bone 200) in *Invisible Man.* In the novel, Louis Armstrong's "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue" functions as a chorus or repeated riff. On the whole, *Invisible Man* is structured according to a blues song with solo improvisations by Jim Trueblood, Mary Rambo, Peter Wheatstraw, and Rinehart (compare 2.2.1; 2.1.1; see 3.3.1). An ecological atmosphere is created not only by the novel's underlying structure, but also with the use of animal symbolism, such as references to a bear or bird, together with images of natural environments, e.g. "blue" skies or a symbolical descent into the Earth itself (compare 2.3.1; see 3.3.2).

In ecological respects, the novel speaks to the reader "on the lower frequencies," and shows how to re-learn the ability to perceive biophilic feelings of wellbeing through the character Invisible Man as role model (see 3.3.3). In the prologue, the protagonist symbolically enters the soundscape of "Black and Blue," in which he

133 Ellison introduces the figure of invisibility on the first page of the novel to mark certain characteristics of the US racial regime during the first half of the twentieth century: "The maintenance of white supremacy through systematic legal segregation in the South, racially exclusive institutions, and racism nationwide had an inestimable economic and psychological impact upon dominated racial groups as well as 'white' majority" (P. Anderson, "Music Lessons" 85).

encounters his ancestors with their important messages to the living (see 3.3.6). By identification with the protagonist on common grounds of the search for a coherent identity, a reader takes part in Invisible Man's metamorphosis (see 3.3.5). In addition, comic performances by the folk characters Peter Wheatstraw or Tod Clifton and his Sambo doll offer spheres of play, in which a reader might develop and modify his/her self-image through imaginative boundary-crossing with the result of a creative and life-affirming approach (compare 2.4.2).

3.3.1 Invisible Man and Urban Blues Music

Ellison believes that his instinctive approach to writing is through sound (Simawe xxi). The author was a blues musician himself and created his own music philosophy in *Shadow and Act* (1964). Meetings with Duke Ellington intensified his yearnings to attend college in order to become a composer of symphonies. But Ellison never put his planned musical symphony into practice. Instead, he created a literary masterpiece, *Invisible Man,* in which he transformed his formal and musical experiences (O'Meally, *Craft* 76-77). In this way, blues and jazz music became the aesthetic mainsprings of his writings. Although *Invisible Man* is a novel from the 1950s, the music Ellison venerated to create an authentic, musical atmosphere, is classic or urban blues from the 1930s (compare 2.1.1), when Ellison was in his twenties (Yaffe 90).

In the mode of *telling*, Ellison authentically depicts a blues musical environment by using symbols and motifs, folk figures, the theme of the traveling bluesman, references to song titles, musicians as well as dance styles, or thematizing the comic aspect inherent in blues music. Phrases such as “blue-gray smoke” (*IM* 25), “blue design of the carpet” (*IM* 27), or “pale blue smoke” contribute to the novel's bluesy atmosphere. In addition, performances by the folk character Peter Wheatstraw or Tod Clifton and his dancing Sambo paper doll render the comic aspect inherent in blues music. For instance, the comic character Wheatstraw infects with laughter: “Pulling the seat of his Charlie Chaplin pants to the side, he broke into deep laughter” (*IM*

174). Tod Clifton's spiel with the paper doll Sambo also renders a comic, blissful atmosphere in the portrayal of imaginative dance movements: "*Tears from laughing […] For he's Sambo, the dancing […] Sambo Boogie Woogie paper doll*" (*IM* 432).

Furthermore, the topic of the traveling bluesman (compare 2.1.1) is alluded to when Invisible Man journeys to New York City after being booted out of college. He tramps snappily from trustee to trustee, and believes in their benevolence (*IM* 162-71). On his search, Invisible Man encounters the folkloric character Peter Wheatstraw, who is singing the "Boogie Woogie Blues" by Count Basie and Jimmy Rushing as he pushes a cart full of discarded blueprints (*IM* 173; O'Meally, *Craft* 87).[134] Later on, Invisible Man discovers P.B. Rinehart's existence, an archetypal trickster, who provides the protagonist with an escape from his pursuers (Leach 1123-25). Rinehart takes advantage of the people in Harlem in his various roles as a bookie, a gambler, a lover, and a preacher. He takes his name from various sources, including the "Harvard Blues" by Jimmy Rushing (O'Meally 90-91).

When Invisible Man emerges from his underground hibernation, he listens to Armstrong's rendition of Jelly Roll Morton's "Buddy Bolden Blues" (*I M* 581; O'Meally, *Craft* 84-85, 92). With Wheatstraw's question about the "dog" (*IM* 173), references to the "Yellow Dog Rag" can be drawn (Huke 157). In Bledsoe's performance, the song "Pick Poor Robin Clean" is based on an old folk myth: "*O well they picked poor Robin clean // O well they picked poor Robin clean // Well they tied poor Robin to a stump // Lawd, they picked all the feathers round // from Robin's rump // Well they picked poor Robin clean*" (*IM* 193). Here, Invisible Man is compared to a bird called "Poor Robin." Further references to song titles are "Back Water Blues" by Bessie Smith (*IM* 297), "Jelly Roll Blues" by Jelly Roll Morton (*IM* 486), and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" (*IM* 143).

In the mode of *showing* (compare 2.1), Ellison promotes literary acoustics mainly by using the technique of structuring *Invisible Man* according to a blues song with Invisible Man's search for his identity as the chorus and improvisations from,

134The real-life Peter Wheatstraw, on which the novel's character is built, is known to be highly creative and rooted deeply in African-American folklore. William Bunch (1902-1941), nicknamed Peetie Wheatstraw, sings about several kinds of setbacks and pain, but still surfaces up with a careless jaunt to his stride, snapping his fingers at the fates (Oakley 173).

for example, Mary Rambo, Jim Trueblood, Peter Wheatstraw, and Rinehart. Each of these variations on the novel's chorus contains imaginative blues soundscapes with references to elements from the blues music scene from the 1930s. Evocation or imaginary content analogy (compare 2.1) takes place in descriptions such as "[...] in the smoky-blue atmosphere like drunken dancers weaving to the rapid drum like thuds of blows" (*IM* 23).

However, most striking are cognitive and emotive descriptions of Invisible Man's entering the soundscape of Louis Armstrong's "Black and Blue": *For one thing, the trumpet was blaring and the rhythm was too hectic. A tom-tom beating like heart-thuds began drowining out the trumpet, filling my ears*" (*IM* 12). Invisible Man not only enters Armstrong's music imaginatively but descends into his own depths, which is described in detail: "[T]here was a slower tempo and a cave and I entered it and looked around and heard an old woman singing a spiritual as full of Weltschmerz as flamenco [...]" (*IM* 9).[135]

Portrayals of transcendent moments, in which Invisible Man undergoes a metamorphosis, a reader is provided with the possibility to feel and imagine the sound of the music. Other examples are descriptions of Mary's or Trueblood's created soundscapes, for example "Mary was singing something sad and serene […], and still singing as I opened the door and stepped outside" (*IM* 327). After Trueblood's accidental incestuous encounter with his daughter, he tells his incest story over and over until he nearly sings it like a blues: "All I know is I ends up singin' the blues. I sings me some blues that night ain't never been sang before [...]" (*IM* 66).

Furthermore, the melody of a song may be triggered in a reader's inner ear when Ellison cites song lyrics in an intertextual way. After leaving the factory hospital in a daze, Invisible Man stays with Mary Rambo, who runs a rooming house in Harlem. She greets the protagonist with an improvised blues song: "[...] *If I don't think I'm sinking, look what a hole I'm in* [...]" (*IM* 253; O'Meally, *Craft* 88-89).[136] In

135Ellison illustrates the relationship between spiritual-gospel and blues-jazz music. In the 1950s, spirituals became mixed up with the blues when forces of African-American life on the streets pull them into the world of secular music, and they carry their church sound and feeling, and sometimes even the church moralities, into the blues (Labrie 72).

136Mary's identification with African-American folk heritage is indicated by her first name. Mary's name not only refers to the biblical Mary but also to the persona Mary in Lonnie Johnson's blues song, "She's My Mary" (O'Meally *Craft,* 88).

Armstrong's soundscape, there is a preacher, who delivers his sermon – an explication of the "blackness of blackness" (*IM* 9) in the form of call-and-response, which is evident in Armstrong's music. For instance, "*Brothers and sisters, my text this morning is the 'Blackness of Blackness'"* is followed with the response of the congregation "'*That blackness is most black, brother, most black ...*'" (*IM* 9). Further intertextual references are Wheatstraw's song lyrics in chapter nine "'*She's got feet like a monkey // Legs like a frog – Lawd, Lawd!* [...]'" (*IM* 173).

A foregrounding of acoustic dimensions of verbal signifiers reminiscent of musical sound (compare 2.1) takes place in marking, loud talking, word plays, or repetitions. Peter Wheatstraw introduces himself in a bragging and rhythmically way with "'[...] My name is Peter Wheatstraw, I'm the Devil's only son-in-law, so roll 'em!" (*IM* 176). As if in anticipation of the trouble Invisible Man will encounter at the bar in trying out his disguise on his comrade Rinehart, and in anticipation of the mad confusion of the incipient riot, the juke joint shouts: "*Jelly, Jelly I Jelly, I All night long*" (*IM* 486). Similarly, the preacher from the prologue elaborates on his text with short exclamations, and his congregation answers him similar to the way the different instruments in Armstrong's band respond to each other (*IM* 9).

The preacher's repetition of similar syntactical patterns creates a rhythm comparable to repeated riffs in music: "*Black will git you ...an' black won't...It do...an' it don't...Black will make you...or black will unmake you*" (*IM* 9-10; Marvin 601). Leading a life like Rinhart, who lives out the "extremes of the scale" with his various disguises, leads to the loss of one's own "heart," which is symbolically expressed in the wordplay, "Rinehart" (Jimoh 148-49). The character has lost his inner self, his heart, which went from "heart" to "hart" with the meaning of being hard.

Next to word music, *Invisible Man* is characterized by structural analogies to blues music with the prologue as well as the epilogue based on Louis Armstrong's "Black and Blue"[137] as repeated riff. Louis Armstrong's song "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue" functions as the chorus with solo improvisations. On the protago-

137"Black and Blue" is regarded as a kind of "kitschy" song. Contrary to what is widely believed, the song was not written as a dirge about the general condition of African-Americans, but as the plaint of a woman who cannot get a man because her skin is too dark. Andy Razaf wrote the song to be added to the successful review *Hot Chocolates* on Broadway in 1929. It was Armstrong who turned the song into the "black" man's lament (J. Collier, *Louis Armstrong* 241).

nist's journey to himself, Ellison allows characters such as Jim Trublood, Peter Wheatstraw, Mary Rambo, and Rinehart to sing variations on the topic of invisibility (Porter 74-75).[138]

The novel is a composition in the blues tradition, set up like a song with various riffs on the main theme, invisibility, or the protagonist's search for his identity (Butler; Harris 7, compare 2.1.1). Invisible Man is playing a record by Louis Armstrong, the refrain of which runs: "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue." This refrain becomes the chorus of the novel, and the musical sequence is a constant interrogation in the form of call-and-response until the chorus reappears in the epilogue "[...] as if to underline the circular aspect and unity of the work" (Romanet 105). The novel ends as it had begun, just as the last verse of a blues song in the form of AABA is often the same one as the first (Margolies 133).

With its multiple voices in a symbolically common rhythm, namely the common search for wholeness, the novel is being interconnected by the song "Black and Blue," in which Mary Rambo's performance can be regarded as temporal feedback loop by commenting on Invisible Man's fragmentary state, reminding him of his folk roots. Similarly, temporal flashbacks occur when Invisible Man meets Peter Wheatstraw singing the blues: "[...] I walked along behind him remembering the times that I had heard such singing at home. It seemed that here some memories slipped around my life at the campus [...]" (*IM* 173). In analogy, Invisible Man's absurd dream in the hospital (*IM* 232) conjures up several flashback scenes to stages in the protagonist's earlier life.

All in all, Ellison provides his text with literary acoustics by evoking imaginary content analogies to classic blues music in elaborate descriptions of Invisible Man's metamorphosis during Armstrong's song "Black and Blue." Partial reproduction in the form of the preacher's sermonizing with word musical elements and structural analogies to blues music with the riff "Black and Blue" contribute to make the text musical within an authentic atmosphere created by explicit references to urban blues music.

138The novel focuses on the improvising character of African-American music. In the novel's introduction, Ellison points out that "[...] I would have to improvise upon my materials […] putting a musical theme through a wild starburst of metamorphosis" (*IM* xxiii).

3.3.2 An Ecological Blues Atmosphere

In this chapter, I will depict the ways in which Ellison creates a literary dynamic ecosystem within a bluesy atmosphere by using musical structures, as well as call-and-response patterns between the protagonist and his encounters (compare 2.3.1). Images from the natural environment deepen the ecological experience, for example, when Invisible Man descends into the depths of a cave in the prologue, or when music-making scenes take place in the outside, along with the use of animal symbolisms (compare 2.3.2). The refrain “What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue” functions as constant interrogation and underlines the circular aspect of the novel (Romanet 105).

Symbolically, the novel's underlying structure mirrors the structure of an ecosystem when voices from, for example Peter Wheatstraw or Rinehart function as improvisations around Invisible Man's search for identity, and at the same time contribute to the circularity of the novel. Mary Rambo's performance can be regarded as an ecological feedback loop with her comments on Invisible Man's fragmentary state, reminding him of his folk roots (compare 3.3.1). With its multiple voices in a symbolically common rhythm, namely the common search for wholeness, the novel becomes more than the sum of its parts. In addition, the recurrent soundscape with the song “Black and Blue” as well as recurrent images of the color blue or the African-American folkloric symbol of the bear contribute to an ecological blues atmosphere.

In Armstrong's soundscape, there is a preacher, who delivers his sermon – an explication of the “blackness of blackness” (*IM* 9) in the structure of the call-and-response, which is evident in Armstrong's music. The preacher explores the essential qualities of “blackness” in much the same way as the narrator ponders his invisibility, and the lyrics of the song ask “What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue?” The preacher elaborates on his text with short exclamations, and his congregation answers similar to the way the different instruments in Armstrong's band respond to each other (*I M* 9). Ecological energy is further provided when Invisible Man

compares his habit of going underground to a bear's hibernation in winter. The symbolic analogy of the protagonist with an animal replaces interactions with living counterparts: “The point now is that I found a home – or a hole in the ground […] Mine is a warm hole. [A] bear retires to his hole for the winter and lives until spring; then he comes strolling out like the Easter chick breaking from its shell” (*IM* 6). For the protagonist, the retreat into his “hole” in the basement is like a search to to find his own self. Similar to a bear in hibernation, he disappears in order to crawl deeper into his self, and after having gone through a metamorphosis, he will come back with regained biophilic life-energies.

Invisible Man not only enters Armstrong's music but also descends into an Earthen cave with three levels inside: “[T]here was a slower tempo and a cave and I entered it and looked around and heard an old woman singing a spiritual as full of Weltschmerz as flamenco [...]” (*I M* 9).[139] An image of loud and wild music accompanies the protagonist's rebirth in the symbolic uterus of the cave. The metaphor of the cave, which resembles the Earth itself, and its surrounding images of the “ivory” girl with a clear voice and a “naked” body, produces imaginary references to nature in a reader's mind, which provides him/her with unconscious biophilic energies (compare 2.3.2): “[...] beneath that lay a still lower level on which I saw a beautiful girl the color of ivory pleading in a voice like my mother's and as she stood before a group of slaveowners who bid for her naked body [...]” *(IM* 9; compare 2.3.2).

Apart from the prominent image of a fictional soundscape in the natural environment of a cave, further examples of intensifying biophilic experiences in the form of natural environments are provided. For example, the protagonist hears “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” by “[a] mockingbird [which] trilled a note from where it perched upon the hand of the moonlit Founder [...]” (*I M* 134). The protagonist perceives songs like “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” with the accompaniment of a mocking bird trilling a note, which could be the bird singing the song, or a human being with the accompaniment of a bird's sounds in the protagonist's imagination.

139Ellison illustrates the relationship between spiritual-gospel and blues-jazz music. In the 1950s, spirituals became mixed up with the blues when forces of African-American life on the streets pull them into the world of secular music, and they carry their church sound and feeling, and sometimes even the church moralities, into the blues (Labrie 72).

With the description of a soundscape with the symbol of air, Ellison creates a "blue" atmosphere for a reader to enter imaginatively: "The *vox humana* […]. Green hedges, dazzling with red wild roses appeared behind my eyes, stretching with a gentle curving to an infinity empty of objects, a limpid blue space" (*IM* 234). This scene comprises particular ecological energy by placing the human voice in a natural landscape of "green hedges," "wild roses" with a "blue space" in the background and an emphasis on "infinity" as ecological principle.[140]

On the whole, Ellison provides a reader with the possibilities of unconscious perceptions of biophilic life-energies by structurally adjusting the novel *Invisible Man* to the form of an ecosystem. The author adds ecological powers with the use of animal symbolism, such as a mockingbird, or a bear, and embeds Invisible Man's experiences within the surroundings of a natural environment of a cave or the background of a blue sky.

3.3.3 "On the Lower Frequencies, I Speak for you"

The recurring blues lyrics from "Black and Blue" describe Invisible Man's existential condition throughout the novel, similar to "an autobiographical chronicle of [Invisible Man's] personal catastrophe" (Harris 7). With such an emphasis on feelings, for example with "HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE FREE OF ILLUSION ..." (*IM* 569), or the expression of African-American pain in soundscapes when "[...] the people came to sing the old songs and to express their unspeakable sorrow" (*IM* 131), the author arouses a reader's feelings with the result of sympathizing and empathizing effects (compare 2.2.2).

Ellison arouses a reader's feelings until s/he identifies with the protagonist by showing that the theme of the human search for identity is universal. Maria Diedrich

140Similarly, Ellison creates an atmosphere of "blue air" as background for the scene of Tod Clifton's funeral: "Over the park the silence spread from the slow muffled rolling of drums, […] an old, plaintive, masculine voice arose in a song, wavering, stumbling in the silence at first alone, until in the band a euphonium horn fumbled for the key and the other pursuing, two black pigeons risking above a skull-white barn to tumble and rise through still, blue air" (*IM* 452). Biophilic experiences are intensified by the image of pigeons.

(2004) points out that Ellison affirms not a specifically ethnic but an American and even universal self-esteem (430-31): “Being invisible and without substance, a disembodied voice, as it were, what else could I do? What else but try to tell you what was really happening when your eyes were looking through?” (*IM* 581). In *Invisible Man,* the protagonist not only tells his story about his search for identity but he also intends to give his readers a lesson about the deep truths of human existence: “And it is this which frightens me: Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?” *(IM* 581). He compares his invisibility, his life lived unseen filled with suffering and hardships, to the invisibility of a postmodern human being in a world with increasing anonymity. With his use of Herman Melville's whale and blackness metaphor in the prologue, he represents the deepest and most unexplored parts of the dominant psychological mindset of a capitalist society (Jimoh, *Spiritual, Blues* 132-33).[141]

A reader in our current times of ecological upheavals in the 21st century might share Invisble Man's emotional as well as psychological constitution: “If only all the contradictory voices shouting inside my head would calm down and sing a song in unison, whatever it was I wouldn't care as long as they sang without dissonance [...]” (*IM* 259). Leading a life like Rinehart, who lives out the “extremes of the scale” with his various disguises, leads to a loss of one's own “heart,” which is symbolically expressed in “Rinehart” (Jimoh 148-49). The character has lost his inner self, his heart, which went from “heart” to “hart” with the meaning of being hard. A postmodern human being is exposed to the challenge of not being “too much under 'self-control'” and combine various identities in harmony with resulting inner peace.

Furthermore, Ellison signifies on the theme of the search for a coherent identity in symbolic images, e.g. “The slate was filled with meaningless names” (*IM* 241), or questions such as “WHAT … IS … YOUR … NAME?” and “WHO … ARE … YOU?” (*IM* 240). Hereby, he directly speaks to a readership with a fragmentary state of mind and motivates him/her to consciously ask personal questions about identity. With the parable of the slate of “meaningless names,” Ellison vividly

141An African-American body is deeply hidden within the great whale, the United States. True “blackness” or more generally, humanity, is underground and unseen (Jimoh, *Spirtiual, Blues* 132-33).

portrays how humanity itself has been devalued and drowned in a sea, in which human beings tend to exist only invisible, behind a veil of virtual reality of, for example, “Facebook.”

In addition, Invisible Man's absurd dream in the hospital refers to the machine age of the postmodern world, which is characterized by complexity, diversity, and swiftness (Oja 59-70): “I was pounded between crushing electrical pressures; pumped between live electrodes like an accordion between a player's hands” (*IM* 232). After his experience in the hospital, Invisible Man seemed to have found his true self: “[...] *Now, I'll know. Now*” (*IM* 245). Comparable to the protagonist, we are exposed to many influences in our day-to-day lives, and our task is to find equilibrium between both our individuality and the common rhythm of society (compare 1.). However, the road to our inner selves often seems to be accompanied with pain.

In general, Ellison's emphasis on feelings through the use of blues music serves to awaken a reader's attention. Similar to Invisible Man's shock therapy in the hospital, a reader is prompted to ask questions about his/her identity in the postmodern, synthetic world. With the use of myriad possibilities, Ellison portrays the loss of one's inner self with consequences of human “blindness” for a deeper meaning in life, or “the lower frequencies” of existence (*IM* 581).

3.3.4 Comic Performances

I n *Invisible Man*, the comic mode inherent in blues music philosophy serves to induce a life-affirming stance in contrast to letting oneself drown in life's tragedies. A reader's attention is grasped with the result that s/he activates his/her consciousness (compare 2.4.1) in for example Bledsoe's performance, the song “Pick Poor Robin Clean, the protagonist's encounter with blues singer Peter Wheatstraw, or Tod Clifton's *spiel* with the doll named Sambo. For instance, gaps are produced in the following scene: Invisible Man is still made to act like “Sambo” by Bledsoe, the college dean. In a mock fashion, the students are to pick up coins from an electrified rug. Ambiguities such as “laughing in fear and embarrassment,” or “the men roared

above us as we struggled" (*IM* 27), produce tensions in the unconsciousness of a reader. When participants are compared to animals, a tragic-comic situation emerges, for example "[...] someone called like a bass-voiced parrot," or "[...] a boy lifted into the air, glistening with sweat like a circus seal [...]" as well as "[...] twitching like the flesh of a horse stung by many flies" (*IM* 27). The comic effect is then highlighted when Invisible Man comments on his college days with the song "Pick Poor Robin Clean" in chapter nine (*IM* 193).

With appearances from Tod Clifton and Peter Wheatstraw, Ellison offers *spheres of play*, in which a reader's self-image can be developed and modified in a continual process of boundary-crossing (compare 2.2.1). Wheatstraw appears in chapter nine with the following song, which evokes comic effects when a woman's feet are compared to a monkey's or a bulldog's legs:

She's got feet like a monkeeee
Legs
Legs, Legs like a maaad
Bulldog ... (*IM* 176-77)

Later on, Invisible Man is startled by Wheatstraw's question "'[...] is you got the *dog*?'" (*IM* 173) and he replies with "'Dog, What dog?'" Wheatstraw continues his *spiel* with Invisible Man: "'[...] you lucky it's just a dog – 'cause, man, I tell you I believe it's a bear that's got holt to me ...'" (*IM* 174). With Wheatstraw's emphasis on a monkey, a bulldog, a dog or a bear, Ellison produces fluctuations in the protagonist's identity. A reader is emotionally stimulated by sympathy with the comic character Wheatstraw, who infects with laughter: "Pulling the seat of his Charlie Chaplin pants to the side, he broke into deep laughter" (*IM* 174).

Moreover, the protagonist is shown his invisibility by Tod Clifton, an enthusiastic and charismatic young activist in Harlem district, who pitches a paper Sambo doll that dances: "[...] *Symbo, this jambo, this high-stepping joy boy*?" This performance is a *spiel* that provides an ironic commentary on Invisible Man, showing him that he has to become aware of his invisibility if he ever wants to stop his

powerlessness as a marionette dancing under the string of "white" men (Blake 128-29). Again, a *Leerstelle* is provided for the reader to develop his self-image by identification with the protagonist.

As a concluding remark, Ellison achieves to produce fluctuations in a reader's identity by his/her total engagement in imaginary scenes with the song "Pick Poor Robin Clean," or Wheatstraw's and Clifton's performances. Such playfulness with comic effects leads to a reader's creativity in imaginative realms and serves to mold the structure of a reader's self (compare 2.2.1).

3.3.5 Biophilic Experience in "Black and Blue"

I n *Invisible Man,* Ellison illustrates how the protagonist learns how to perceive biophilic experiences as well as how to become conscious of his inner self: "[I]t is a tale that tells of growth of an individual consciousness and the growth of perception. It is a tale, which is in itself an assertion of the irrepressibly human over-all-circumstance" (Olderman 143). In the prologue, Invisible Man encounters his humanity by imaginatively entering the soundscape of Louis Armstrong's blues "Black and Blue." He goes deeper and deeper into himself, which is symbolized by the descent into a cave with three levels (compare 3.3.2).[142] In "Louis' music," "[t]he unheard sounds came through [...]" (*IM* 8-9). The multi-vocal music of Armstrong takes the narrator on a journey to his very own self, to the African-American past, conjuring up the souls of departed ancestors who have important, yet so far unheard messages for him.[143]

Directly in and below Armstrong's blues song, there is an old woman singing spirituals on a first level. The old woman has very limited ideas about freedom and her spiritual has lost the "black" that "does," the "black" that is defined by the lessons of one's own life, not by social policy (*IM* 10). Now that there are no longer

142Invisible Man describes his descent into the music as follows: "I not only entered the music but descended, like Dante, into its depths" (*IM* 9).

143Joachim-Ernst Berendt praises Armstrong's warm and human way of playing: "When Armstrong solos, his instrumental phrasings grow from the way he sings and comprises warm, human overtones" (*Jazzbuch* 65-75).

laws that legally enslave the old woman, the meaning of freedom confuses her and causes a fever in her brain, not being able to feel herself, acknowledge her humanity, and free her mind from mental slavery (Jimoh, *Spiritual, Blues* 134-35). In the dialogue between Invisible Man and the old woman, the conclusion is reached that freedom lies in the process of loving (*IM* 11) both the life in ones's self as well as in others (compare 2.4.1).

During his experience in the cave, Invisible Man encounters a naked girl on the second level, who is being sold to a group of enslavers at a slave auction. The slave's voice resembles his mother's and reinforces a connection between the narrator and the long history of sexual exploitation of African-American women. Thomas Marvin (1996) sees the woman not merely as the archetypal slave at an auction but as an ancestor whose voice has been inherited by the narrator's mother but has yet been unheard (600). Invisible Man must first accept the folk legacy of his people to acknowledge his own existence as a human being (Bluestein, *Voice of the Folk* 604) before he is able to feel himself.

Even further down there is a preacher who delivers a sermon (*IM* 9), while exploring the essential qualities of "blackness" in much the same way as the narrator ponders his invisibility, and Armstrong's lyrics ask "'What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue?'" (*IM* 8). With a fragmented structure in the call-and-response pattern, the whale metaphor illustrates a life lived in paradox, or in an "unseen" body after having signified on "the very beginnings" (*I M* 9). The transcendent moment of Invisible Man's imaginative metamorphosis occurs when "*[...] the trumpet was blaring and the rhythm was too hectic. A tom-tom beating like heart-thuds began drowning out the trumpet, filling my ears"* (*IM* 12). In this transcendent scene, the protagonist receives restorative biophilic life energies and the protagonist has "[...] illuminated the blackness of [his] invisibility [...]" (*IM* 13). Finally, he has realized "that I am nobody but myself" (*IM* 15), and "[...] to be unaware of one's form is to live a death" (*IM* 7).

By expressing sorrows and pains in music, Invisible Man's soul is healed and he gathers renewed hope and strength. In the epilogue, the protagonist is finally able to answer his questions (Huke 150) and leaves the cave in order to bring form into his

life. Now he is able to commune with the spirits of his ancestors and to pass their messages to the living. Comparable to Invisible Man's metamorphosis, a reader is advised to learn how to "feel [his] vital aliveness" (*IM* 7) and to step out of his/her invisibility. In other words, human beings are responsible to take on a life-affirming stance, and to acknowledge visibility: "Responsibility rests upon recognition, and recognition is a form of agreement" (*IM* 14). Responsibility means recognizing one's own self and affirming one's humanity in agreement.

3.3.6 Lessons from the Epilogue

Ellison shows the healing creative potentials of the African-American experience (compare 2.4.1).[144] His blues music philosophy gives his readership advice on how to survive in the complex world in the 21st century, and thereby discourages invisibility. In the epilogue, Ellison summarizes the lessons which Invisible Man has learnt after his improvisations on identity.

> In going underground, I whipped it all except the mind, the *mind*. And the mind that has conceived a plan of living must never lose sight of the chaos against which that pattern was conceived. That goes for societies as well as for individuals. Thus, having tried to give pattern to the chaos which lives within the pattern of your certainties, I must come out, I must emerge. And there's till a conflict within me. (*IM* 580-81)

In this excerpt, Ellison explains the human way of making plans and deliberately trying to stick to them. However, such a strategy does not successfully go hand in hand with ecological principles as everything is in constant flux and dynamics, in other words, everything is changeable (compare 2.4). Therefore, it is important to take on a creative life approach in order to be able to react spontaneously when chaos emerges.

144 In *Shadow and Act* (1956), Ellison sees the American Negro experience as a source of creative strength. In the prologue, the narrator praises Armstrong for creating "[...] poetry out of being invisible" (*IM* 8; Marvin 603).

The ideas of versatility and possibility, which Ellison was exploring in his early life, nourish the style of *Invisible Man* (Tanner 50). Ellison's use of blues music expresses "[...] his complex and arguably existential ideas on the myriad possibilities available through human potential" (Jimoh, *Spiritual, Blues* 131). In the epilogue, Invisible Man "[now knows that] men are different and that all life is divided and that only in division is […] true health" (*IM* 576). Hereby, the protagonist confirms the ecological principle of diversity, and advises the reader to symbolically open the window to life's myriad possibilities: "The hibernation is over. I must shake off the old skin and come up for breath. There's a stench in the air, which […] might be the smell either of death or spring – I hope of spring. But don't let me trick you [...]" (*IM* 580).

Besides Ellison's diction of embracing possibilities in life, he suggests a life-affirming stance and a call to action. Invisible Man becomes a role model when he decides that "hibernation is over." When he ponders over death and spring, he decides for hope and against "necrophilia" in analogy to the comic mode of blues music philosophy.[145] Nevertheless, Ellison warns his readership of "death" lurking in alleys and advises a "down-to-Earth" attitude similar to Major in *Dirty Bird Blues* (compare 3.2.6). Referring back to images such as the high number of light bulbs in Invisible Man's basement, or the plentitude of Wheatstraw's blueprints, the protagonist points out: "Without the possibility of action, all knowledge comes to one labeled 'file and forget,' and I can neither file nor fret. […] Why should I be dedicated and set aside – yes, if not to at least *tell* a few people about [his lesson]?" (*IM* 579)

In the epilogue, Invisible Man shows his readers the uselessness of making several plans in life but not transforming them into reality. With the author's voice, the protagonist shows him/herself as an example of having transformed his lessons into the symphony of this novel in order to share his gained wisdom with his readership. A general life-affirming attitude is further suggested when Invisible Man remembers his grandfather favoring the concept of biophilia as the love of life

145The author's preference for hope or a comic stance to a tragic one is further emphasized when a girl skips down stairs, singing in a "sweet, hopeful voice" (*IM* 105) when Invisible Man goes to college. Upon hearing the hopeful voice, he still resides mentally in hibernation and disappears into his dorm (*IM* 105).

(compare 4.2.1):

> And I defend because in spite of all I find that I love. In order to get some of it down I *have* to love. […] I'm a desperate man – but too much of your life will be lost, its meaning lost, unless you approach it as much through love as through hate. (*IM* 580)

Only by loving, Invisible Man's grandfather can feel himself, which makes him defend what he loves. The author warns fragmented or rootless human beings of the postmodern age not to forget the ability to love as it means losing life's meaning and value.[146]

As a concluding remark, in order to be able to sing his own song, Invisible Man has to descend into the depths of Armstrong's music where he meets his ancestors and the freedom of his own true self. With this experience, the author advises his readership to take on a creative approach to life, to open their eyes to a life of myriad possibilities, enjoy the beauty of diversity, and take on a life-affirming stance within a network of loving relationships towards oneself as well as others.

146Ellison signifies on human beings who stay "in hibernation" and neglect to take on their socially responsible role in society: "I'm shaking off the old skin and I'll leave it here in the hole. I'm coming out, no less invisible without it, but coming out nevertheless. And I suppose it's damn well time. Even hibernation can be overdone, come to think of it. Perhaps that's my greatest social crime, I've overstayed my hibernation, since there's a possibility that even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play" (*IM* 581).

4. Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Jazz Music in *Jazz, Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing,* "Solo on the Drums," and "The Screamers"

In the following analyses, it is shown how each of the analyzed works of prose fiction evokes intense emotions by the use of elements from various styles of jazz music, which leads to a readership's experience of healing, biophilic-related feelings. While a reader empathizes with the protagonists in *Jazz, Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing,* and "Solo on the Drums" in imaginative musical healing processes, a reader's attention is grasped by Baraka's screamed riffs in "The Screamers" (compare 4.2.2; 4.3.2; 4.4.2).[147] In addition, the technique of staging increases a reader's active participation. For example, live performances by the protagonist Carla in *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing,* by Lynn Hope in "The Screamers," or Kid Jones in "Solo on the Drums" create musical atmospheres with descriptions of an imaginative audience, with which a reader can identify. An implicit reader's attention is grasped by surprising scenes, such as the death of Dorcas in *Jazz,* Kid Jones's painful overcoming of his heartache in "Solo on the Drums," and an ensuing riot in "The Screamers."

Furthermore, a reader's active participation takes place by identification with fictional characters on their search for their true selves. For instance, the search for wholeness by the Traces, as the couple's name already indicates, is portrayed in *Jazz* (see 4.1.3). In Crouch's novel, Carla is seeking for her inner self by following her inner voice, which tells her to find herself again in music. The short story "Solo on the Drums" shows Kid Jones's emotional fragmentary state after his wife's leave (see 4.3.2). Also Baraka illustrates the protagonist's unconscious demand for biophilic life experiences. All in all, each of the protagonists shares a fragmentary states of his/her inner life, to which a reader in the 21st century can relate.

147In Morrison's, Crouch's, and Petry's fictional works, a reader sympathizes with respective protagonists on their suffering from failed relationships. In *Jazz,* Mister Trace left his wife for Dorcas. Crouch depicts Carla's suffering from her relationship with Maxwell because of different skin colors. In "Solo on the Drums," Kid Jones was left by his wife for his pianist.

Transcendence in terms of biophilic experiences takes place either in imaginative soundscapes or structural affinities to an ecosystem. The intermedial use of structural analogies to jazz music turn a novel or short story into an ecosystem.[148] Fictional intermedial works are composed along a jazz song with improvisational structures and multi-vocality, by which a novel or short story is transformed into an ecosystem (compare 2.3.1). For instance, Morrison achieves this ecological energetic effect by multi-vocality and time shifts (see 4.1.4). However, the inherent structure in Crouch's novel resembles less the composition of a jazz song but nevertheless contains elements of temporal flashbacks. Ideal examples for a structural analogy of a jazz composition are the short stories by Petry and Baraka (see 4.3.3; 4.4.3).

Readers are invited to join a character's transcendent biophilic experience by empathizing, sympathizing, and identifying with him/her in created live music soundscapes. While Morrison achieves a reader's biophilic participation in the experience mainly by circular storytelling around the Traces's healing process, Crouch, Petry, and Baraka provide experiences of biophilia in extended live music scenes (see 4.1.4; 4.2.3; 4.3.4; 4.4.4). For example, Carla discovers for herself a place in swing music, in which she expresses her feelings of loneliness and heartache in a number of fictional live performances (see 4.2.2). Similarly, a reader experiences biophilic-related healing process in an elaborate soundscape with the drummer Kid Jones in “Solo on the Drums” (see 4.3.4). In “The Screamers,” a reader might rather identify with the narrator as part of the audience during Lynn Hope's dramatic, ecstatic performance (see 4.4.4).[149]

In addition, animal symbolism, weather conditions, and the setting of natural

148Regarding novels and short stories with jazz music elements, authors also duplicate or suggest the sounds of jazz music by using the full arsenal of poetic, rhythmic, and metaphoric language at their disposal (Breton 8).

149On the quest to inner wholeness, Crouch's protagonist Carla and Kid Jones from “Solo on the Drums” are comparable to Orpheus. The term *Black Orpheus* highlights an essential human urge of self-realization which finds its full expression in the medium of music and poetry (Simawe xix): “And I shall name this poetry 'orphic' because this untiring descent of the Negro into himself causes me to think of Orpheus going to reclaim Eurycide from Pluto” (Sartre 21-22). Sartre links the orphic urge with the basic human search for identity and freedom, what could be understood in ecological terms as subjective wholeness. Orpheus signifies an eternal urge for refusal to accept separation from the subject, aiming at a reunion of what has become separated. Thus, the orphic represents a basic human urge for the quest for a natural self and a refusal of separation as well as fragmentation (Simawe xx).

surroundings contribute to provide African-American prose fiction with ecological energy. Morrison makes use of the symbol of the bird in *Jazz,* and portrays the natural surroundings of a forest, in which Mister Trace searches for his inner nature or in other words, his mother (see 4.1.3). Also Crouch uses the symbol of the bird in *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* with a focus on the ability to fly (see 4.2.3). While sunshine and thunder accompany Kid Jones's emotional healing process in "Solo on the Drums," Lynn Hope's process of ecological transformation is accompanied by recurrent references to the color green in "The Screamers."

Furthermore, each of the analyzed literary works with jazz music elements from the 1920s, swing, bebop, and free jazz era, represents an improvisational quality that stands for a life-affirming and creative approach to life. Meaning as a secondary product of biophilic effects in the discussed literary artworks with jazz music elements lies mostly in the depiction of imaginary spaces for the freedom of thoughts as well as possibilities in life. Especially Petry illustrates an improvisational approach to overcome personal problems with Kid Jones's individual healing process in music (see 4.3.5). Such an individual improvisational approach to life is connected to the principle of harmony in diversity, exemplified with Carla's and Maxwell's relationship in *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome? A Novel in Blues and Swing* (see 4.2.4).

Despite the freedom of possibilities, Morrison and Petry advise their readership to always make sure to keep in rhythm (see 4.1.5; 4.3.5). With her multi-vocal structure, Morrison illustrates various possibilities in life, and consequently negates "necrophilia" (see 4.1.1). With the protagonist Carla, Crouch symbolically portrays a "wide-open room" (*D L* 226), in which she encounters multiple possibilities for herself, similar to the main character Kid Jones in "Solo on the Drums" (see 4.2.2; 4.3.4). In contrast, Baraka literally wakes up his readership by life-affirming, shouting riffs (see 4.4.2).

4.1 *Jazz* – A Harmonious Composition

In *Jazz,* Morrison creates jazz musical acoustics by mirroring an atmosphere of lively dance and music-making scenes from the 1920s Jazz Age in New York City (compare 2.1.2).[150] The novel receives its musicality mainly by its harmoniously composed structure, e.g. when characters' voices and time shifts resemble the call-and-response pattern inherent in jazz music with its characteristic improvisational free play (compare 2.2.2).[151] Apart from empathizing effects within the universal theme of love, a postmodern reader might also identify with characters such as the Traces as both suffer from mental fragmentation (see 4.1.3).[152]

Biophilic life energies are provided by the novel's structure resembling an ecosystem, portrayals of wild ecstatic dance scenes, animal symbolism in the image of a recurrent bird and natural surroundings of, for example a forest near New York City (see 4.1.4). After a reader's biophilic experience, Morrison's concern is to refer to the importance of individual biorhythms in postmodern times, which is symbolized in her achievement of harmoniously combining various polyrhythms in *Jazz* (compare 2.4.2; see 4.1.5). Similar to a musician in a band finding the right key, human beings need to find the right key of their "inner music." You need to listen to yourself and form a harmony with your environment: "[...] you got the right key baby but the wrong keyhole you got to get it [...] put it right [...]" (*J* 77).

150For writing this novel, Morrison was inspired by *The Harlem Book of the Dead,* a work of photographs of dead Harlem residents, for which she wrote an introduction. One of its pictures shows a young girl who had been shot at a Harlem dance in 1925. The events Morrison invented lead up to and follow her death, based on this tragic event (Alsen 341).

151Stories include accounts of Violet's grandmother, True Belle, taking care of a rich white lady and her mulatto son, Golden Gray. Golden Gray in turn is saving Joe Trace's mother's life when she is a young girl. Also stories about Dorcas's parents are included, e.g. when they were killed during St. Louis race riots (Alsen 341-42). In October 1925, the fifty-two-year old Joe Trace begins an affair with eighteen-year-old high school girl Dorcas Manfred. Some months later, Dorcas takes a younger lover whereupon Joe shoots her in the shoulder at a dance. Joe's wife Violet attends Dorcas's funeral and tries to slash the girl's face with a knife. While Joe grieves for Dorcas for three months, Violet befriends Dorcas's aunt to find out what it was about the girl that her husband loved. By revealing to Joe and Violet what a superficial and materialistic person Dorcas was, Dorcas's best friend Felice heals Joe's and Violet's marriage (Alsen 341).

152Recurring themes in Morrison's prose fiction are the failure of love, the quest for an authentic identity, abandonment, betrayal, murder, the clash between material and spiritual values, especially the belief that beyond the physical world there exists a spiritual world (Alsen 331-33; Strouse 57).

4.1.1 The Traces and the Jazz Age

In direct contrast to the strictures of bourgeois detractors of jazz decadence during the Harlem Renaissance, Morrison exults in the vernacular's culture with the energy of the 1920s. In *Jazz,*[153] she creates a jazzy style as a recent mode in the tradition of African-American prose fiction that stretches back to the Jazz Age itself (A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 116). Edna O'Brien gave Morrison credit for conjuring up this era with "complete authority" (29). Morrison explains: "If my work is faithfully to reflect the aesthetic tradition of African-American culture, it must make conscious use of the characteristics of its art forms and translate them into print; antiphony, the group nature of its art, its functionality, its improvisational nature, its relationship to audience performance (qtd. In A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 113).

In authentic dance and music-making scenes with the Traces as protagonists, Morrison explicitly refers to the Jazz Age in a *telling* mode (compare 2.1) by mentioning genuine instruments, musicians, by placing characters in typical historical settings, and by integrating African-American musical symbols or motifs, e.g. the bird. In the beginning of the novel, the author mentions Slim Bate's Ebony Keys with an evaluation in brackets: "[...] (Slim Bates' Ebony Keys which is pretty good except for his vocalist who must be his woman since why else would he let her insult his band" (*J* 14). Adding the then prevailing opinion about the band contributes to the novel's authenticity. In addition, Morrison included passages in which she vividly describes the development of jazz music (E. O'Brien 1, 29-30): "That the way the young men on brass sounded that day. Sure of themselves […] they had beat the clarinets out […] lifted those home straight up [...]" (*J* 229). This scene clearly describes a so-called *cutting contest* between single musicians, which was popular in the 1920s (compare 2.1.2).

Furthermore, musical instruments are often portrayed with the phenomenon of taking on human qualities. For instance, the clarinet becomes alive as if it was an extended bodily part of a musician: "[...] a clarinet coughs and clears its throat wait-

153Even though the word "jazz" itself occurs only once in the title (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* 308), the novel convinces with its stark portrayal of the jazz atmosphere in New York City in the 1920s.

ing for the woman to decide on the key" (*J* 82).[154] Jazz musical characteristics such as the call-and-response pattern or group consciousness are noticeable when the clarinet is in direct contact or communicates with the singer. In addition, records act as symbols for a music style of a certain era, a leftover containing memories. The record repeats itself over and over again and thereby provides historical lessons. For example, the first encounter of Dorcas and Violet takes place when both examine an Okeh record with the title "The Trombone Blues": "[...] Violet saw, coming into the building with an Okeh record under her arm […]. Violet invited her in to examine the record and that's how the scandalizing threesome on Lennox Avenue began" (*J* 15).[155] Consequently, the record symbolizes a record of historical events.

Aesthetic elements which mirror the Jazz Age of the 1920s are included in the form of references to bands, musical instruments, or descriptions of music scenes at New York nightclubs or private rent parties (Alsen 1), which lead to evocation or imaginary content analogy (compare 2.1). *Jazz*'s point of departure is Lenox Avenue (*J* 11), which was the heart of Harlem's jazz music scene in the 1920s. The narrator adds meditations on the music, which reflect the energetic atmosphere during the Harlem Renaissance (Alsen 342). Receptive cognitive or emotional effects are evoked when Morrison describes a private rent party in New York City: "[...] the one managing the record player chooses fast music suitable for the brightly lit room, where obstructing furniture has been shoved against walls, pushed into the hallway, and bedrooms piled high with coats" (*J* 83). With Alice's voice, a reader learns about jazz music's wild and obscene character in the 1920s: "It was the music. The dirty, get-on-down music the women sang and the men played and both danced to, close and shameless or apart and wild" (*J* 74).

In general, Morrison integrates musical elements into the novel with the intention of "[...] combining those two aspects so that the stories can be read in silence […] but one should be able to hear them as well" (qtd. In T. Harris 1). She trans-

154Morrison praises the sweetness of the clarinet's sound by comparison with a licorice stick: "It was the best thing, if you were young had just got to the City. That and the clarinets and even they were called licorice sticks" (*J* 145).

155 The title of the record is "The Trombone Blues" (*J* 33), symbolizing fate. Both Dorcas and Violet were awaiting pain. Okeh records were one of the first influential American independent labels, which released the first record in 1918 ("Okeh Records").

forms historical folk materials by not allowing any dichotomy between form and substance, theme and character.[156] In her work, one may feel that a word, a phrase, a rhythm is so right that its employment illuminates the entire composition (T. Harris 10-11, 132).[157]

Regarding word music (compare 2.1), Morrison transforms elements of jazz music by her use of onomatopoeia, repetition, punctuation, multi-vocality so that certain passages enact the sounds of jazz music.[158] For example, the voices of the narrator and a singer mingle in the following scene: "Dorcas lay on a chenille bedspread […] while a knowing woman sang ain't nobody going to keep me down you got the right key baby but the wrong keyhole you got to get it bring it [...]" (*J* 60). Poly-vocality in mixing up Dorcas' thoughts with her perception of a woman singing the above cited lyrics lead to the musicality of *Jazz* (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* 303; Tally 107).

In addition, non-use of punctuation in the citation of the lyrics creates a breathless, clipped style, illustrating a fast-moving, noisy nature of the city experience during the Harlem Renaissance (A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 115). Moreover, repetitions of, for example the word "thigh," render the sound in an onomatopoetic way. For instance, Dorcas taps her hand when she wants Joe to take her to high-class clubs, where she can put her hand "under the table drumming out the rhythm on the inside of his thigh, his thigh, thigh, thigh" (*J* 95). With a similar effect, introjects

156Morrison senses a change in priorities in the postmodern era and articulated this in the early 1980s when she talked about the need for African-American novelists to take over the vanguard position from musicians: "There has to be made a mode for what the music did for blacks, what we used to be able to do with each other in private and that civilization that existed underneath the white civilization […]. This music kept us alive, but it's not enough anymore. My people are being devoured" (qtd. In A. Rice, "Finger Snapping" 113). Morrison favors an adaptation of music to a novelistic form attuned to a modern African-American sensibility. In her fictional works, she continually uses African-American musical forms as conscious similes, metaphors, and structuring devices (A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 113).

157Morrison points out: "The point in black art is to make it look as a jazz musician does, unthought out, unintellectual as it were. So the work doesn't show, to be able to do it on the spot. And that's a double-edged sword because of a black person does something extremely well white people say, 'Well, it's natural,' or 'It's magic,' or something ridiculous like that. Because black people are very interested in making it look as though no thought went into it. The jazz musician's the classic person. I mean all those hours and hours of work so that you can be so involved in it, you can actually stand on the stage and make it up" (qtd. In A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 114).

158Edna O'Brien (1992) lauded Morrison's use of jazz language, which makes us see "[...] the sidewalks, the curbstones, Egyptian beads, Kansas fried chicken, doors ajar to speakeasies, an invitation to the low-down hellfire induction to music and sex" (29).

such as “Hep” (*J* 15) contribute to a lively jazz musical atmosphere of the novel, in combination with onomatopoetic words like “rocking” to describe the movements of steel in the city.

Regarding formal structural analogies to jazz music, Morrison uses devices of a jazzy prose style with a structure parallel to the one of a jazz song to approximate a jazz performance (Berret 113; A. Rice, “Finger-Snapping” 114). The text resembles the form of a jazz song with its first paragraph as novel's basic theme: Violet mutilates the face of a dead eighteen-year-old girl who had been shot by Violet's husband in a desperate act of misguided love. On this melody, the disembodied first-person narrative voice improvises on several stories, constantly adding, revising, inventing, shifting back and forth among various characters, and going back in time as far as antebellum Virginia. These multiple stories reflect a jazz music performance, which is open to change while the other musicians respond quickly to that change in the disguise of other characters (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* 304; compare 2.1).

The form which Morrison uses often mimics the African-American call-and-response pattern. A chapter with a call is followed by another one, which contains the answer to that call (Speller 38). Numerous voices sound against each other in the same way individual musicians play against each other and establish their own unique sound in a jazz ensemble (A. Rice, “Finger-Snapping” 115). For instance, the call at the end of the first chapter reads: “He was married to a woman who speaks mainly to her birds. One of whom answers back: I love you.” At the beginning of the next section the response to that former call follows with “Or used to” (*J* 24, 27). Like non-stop sequences during a jam session, call and responses keep moving restlessly on and give the text a jazzy feel.

The novel provides each of its characters the opportunity to tell his/her story similar to improvisations in a jazz number while the narrator or the narrative voice is quite possibly jazz music itself (Lesoinne 152, 159).[159] Characters are set in motion

159For example, distortions of Violet's self are a direct expression of distorted harmonies characteristic in jazz music. These distortions are followed by a more melodic section, which helps to smooth over. The smoothing effect takes place through Violet's continued interaction with Alice, her husband's dead lover's aunt.

by calls and respond automatically and reluctantly while the omniscient narrator retreats into the background. Such a narrative discourse changes its form into indirect free style. Stories, words, and phrases mirror each other and join in a chorus (Lehmann 200-02). The novel brings us back and forth in time, linking the past and the present. With the structure of the novel, Morrison symbolically shows how time repeats itself by referring back and forth to events in the past time of the novel and the present narrative time. Time passes from the past to the future, but certain events always stay the same, repeating themselves in always changing patterns like in nature or music: "[...] The past was an abused record with no choice but to repeat itself at the crack and no power on earth could lift the arm that held the needle" (*J* 253).

Through a series of overlapping stories that link the family histories of Violet and Joe, Morrison has created a fluid novel whose backdrop – post World War I and the Harlem Renaissance – helps to produce a musical text (Speller 36). In combination with an authentic representation of jazzy soundscapes and word music, the novel becomes musical acoustic with cognitive and emotional effects on the readership.

4.1.2 Hope and Fear of Love

For the author, music is the language of emotions, by which hope or fear in love matters can be expressed. The two sections of the novel's plot have the theme of the failure of love in common (Alsen 341). Mendelsohn praised the novel as a sophisticated love story, which explores the possibilities of a romance as both a natural phenomenon and a literary form (Mendelsohn 25). Morrison carefully integrates emotions into the novel and illustrates how emotions can be expressed through the jazz music of the Harlem Renaissance (Berret 114). The narrator is able to express what cannot be expressed in language but with musical images: "[...] what they meant to say but did not trust themselves to say the drums said for them [...]" (*J* 70).

A clear example for music as the language of emotions is when Joe's and Violet's relationship breaks down and feelings fill the empty space. "Twenty years

after Joe and Violet train-danced […] they were still a couple but barely speaking to each other […] or acting like the ground was a dance-hall floor" (*J* 50). Music replaces words because words can lie but music cannot trick you: "[...] he didn't need words or even want them because he knew how they could lie [...]" (*J* 51). The fact that music has enormous power to convey feelings, which language is not able to do, is furhter shown when the character understands what the musician tries to tell without words. "A woman is singing […]. The music is faint but I know the words by heart" (*J* 225). The chapter ends with "I don't know who is that woman singing but I know the words by heart" (*J* 226). The characters have never met before but they are bound together by common feelings so that the character can identify with the singer.[160]

Contrasting emotions such as hope and fear are repetitiously expressed in musical images. For example, the golden brass instruments express clean, bright, and uplifting emotions of joy and freedom while the clarinets, which are black and called "licorice sticks," express dark and low-down emotions of grief or uncontrollable passion (A. Rice, "Finger-Snapping" 115). Besides, the atmosphere in the street is described as "[...] Below is shadow where any blasé thing takes place: clarinets and lovemaking, fists and the voices of sorrowful women" (*J* 15). Opposing emotions of sorrow and joy are connected with musical instruments such as the clarinets or golden brass instruments.

Dorcas's pain as the undercurrent of the novel is the catalyst that causes the blues of the other characters to manifest themselves. Dorcas is an orphan of the 1917 East St. Louis riot where she lost her parents. She feels the need to find herself after her boyfriend Acton's unattainability. Dorcas's deep hurt and anger from failed love affairs cannot simply be controlled but are instead projected into wild and sexy music (Berret 116). By choosing to die against the backdrop of jazz music, Dorcas releases herself from her pain as she experiences the healing power of music (Speller 45; compare 2.3.2). After the riot, the loss of loved ones or family members is overcome by transforming pain into music. In the following scene, in music expressed

160The connective function of music as a language of emotions is portrayed. Shared feelings in music-making scenes are also expressed in wild dancing scenes at Harlem rent parties or during the Fifth Avenue march: "[...] Then suddenly, like a rope cast for rescue, the drums spanned the distance, gathering them all up and connected them" (*J* 74-75).

emotions hold the character back from being physically expressive:

> [M]usic. It made her hold her hand in the pocket of her apron to keep from smashing it through the glass pane to snatch the world in her fist and squeeze the life out of it for doing what it did and did and did to her and everybody else she knew or knew about […]. (*J* 76)

Even though the world has done her wrong, she turns her repeatedly expressed hateful feelings back and lets loose of them in music. Morrison encourages and explains how emotions of pain are transformed into singing: "[Pain] will take its own shape, grow its own muscle and bone" (*J* 188). The purpose of music is healing, for example through loud singing: "[...] its blood will pump from the loud singing that has found the purpose of its serenade. Amen" (*J* 189). What cannot be expressed in words can be voiced in music and pain will be mended.[161] Past pain is not forgotten but kept symbolically in the form of a record. One cannot forget bad experiences but must relive them in distance to heal them.

All in all, *Jazz* is symbolically a record of historical memories. With the music transmitted in the novel, certain experiences come back. Morrison deliberately tries to make the reader stand up and feel something profoundly in order to change or modify. In her view, it is the affective and participatory relationship between an artist or a speaker and an audience that is of primary importance (T. Harris 1991).

4.1.3 Tracing Lost Parts of the Self

A recurring theme in Morrison's fiction is the quest for authentic identity (Alsen 331-33; Strouse 57). Intimating the risk that accompanies any real confrontation with an experience of the self, Morrison's narrator re-voices a recurring postmodernist theme when she describes the private cracks in the foundation of Violet and Joe Traces' interior worlds. In an urban world, people like Violet respond to an experience of

161 Jane Mendelsohn pointed out that *Jazz* "[...] can […] be disjointed, unconvincing, even irritatingly repetitive" (26). Apparently she did not notice the fact that it was constructed this way to transit the emotional trauma.

mental pain by “drowning in it, deep-dreaming” (*J* 108). However, Morrison insists on an ongoing dialogue between interior and exterior worlds, a dialogue that creates, enforces and subverts the terms of divisions that define human discourse (Craig, “Morrison” 90-91).

Violet is a fifty-year-old unlicensed hairdresser, who was orphaned during her adolescence. Raised by her grandmother True Belle, Violet grew up convinced that she does not want children, but years later, after suffering several miscarriages, Violet begins to be haunted by her adolescent decision (*J* 108). Following the above described face-cutting incident, a reader begins to get an idea of the depths of Violet's lost self. On one level, Violet sees herself as two separate individuals (Rodrigues 745), and on another level, Violet sees herself as a failure because of her failed attempts at having a child. On a deeper level, Violet, whose mother committed suicide, feels abandoned by someone she loves.

Joe Trace, the fifty-year-old Cleopatra beauty products salesman in his midlife crisis has many selves. Like his wife, he was abandoned by his mother Wild, and he has never met his father. Since then, Joe improvises on his identity by changing himself to fit the circumstances (Speller 43). “He has double eyes. Each one a different color. A sad one that lets you look inside him, and a clear one that looks inside you” (*J* 206). The eyes represent two separate halves of the character and blend in his search for his mother and the search for himself. Joe's surname Trace already indicates his search for traces of himself. Joe's final change comes during The Red Summer of 1919: “I changed once too often. Made myself new one time too many” (*J* 129).[162] Finally, Joe is able to face his pain and leave a trail for jazz to follow and find him to make him whole (Speller 43-44). Throughout the novel, jazz music speaks to the individual halves of all the characters, and eventually unites their conflicting halves.

162Joe changes himself a total of seven times: First, when he named himself on the first day of school: “The first day I got to school I had to have two names. I told the teacher Joseph Trace” (*J* 124). Joe's subsequent changes happen at other points in life: “The second change came when I was picked out and trained to be a man” (*J* 125). Hunter's Hunter, who we later meet as Henry LesTory, the father of Golden Gray, conducts his training. Ironically, Joe is taught how to hunt. Joe's remaining changes occur in 1893, when the town of Vienna burnt to the ground, in 1906 when he and Violet board the train for the North, when he and Violet move uptown and in 1917 during the East St. Louis riot (Speller 43-44).

Yet another character named Alice is quite possibly afraid of what jazz music will reveal about her. She refuses to acknowledge African-American music as a repository of strength. Despite her attitude, she is nevertheless healed by the music in an indirect way. Through her almost daily conversations or lessons with Violet, she learns to listen to her own voice (Mbalia, “Wild” 633). Listening to her own sorrows and relenting to the soothing embrace of Violet's words brings about healing for her as well (Speller 43).

In sum, a reader might identify with the characters Alice, Joe and Violet Trace on common grounds of lost selves (compare 2.2.1). While a postmodern human being suffers from a mental state of fragmentation in a time marked by an ecological crisis (compare 1.), the fictive characters are mentally broken from African-American historical events such as the riot in 1919. However, both readership and imaginative characters find themselves on the search for a coherent identity, in which the lost parts of the self are re-integrated into one.

4.1.4 “Wildness” and Biophilic Experiences

After an identification with the characters Alice, Joe and Violet Trace, a reader's sympathy and empathy are aroused *via* fictive expression of love. Thereupon, biophilic experiences are provided with the novel's structure resembling an ecosystem, energetic and wild dancing scenes, animal symbolisms in the form of a bird, and the natural surroundings. By the novel's inherent call-and-response pattern, a continual dynamic flow is perceived throughout the text (compare 2.3.1). However, jazz music itself works more in the background as a metaphorical image with the novel's jazzy structure, repetitions, variations and solo displays. In general, Morrison transforms folklore “in process” rather than as static force. The perception of Morrison's composition comes then as a kind of *gestalt* (T. Harris 10-11, 132), in which the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts (compare 2.3.1). As symbolic ecosystem, the novel comprises of biophilic energies, which are transmitted in a rather unconscious way.

Additionally, “wild” dance scenes in imaginative, energetic soundscapes create ecological effects.[163] Morrison vividly portrays transcendent moments during dance parties, which make people forget their day-to-day lives and break rules: “It was the music. The dirty, get-on-down music the women sang and the men played and both danced to, close and shameless or apart and wild. […] Just hearing it was like violating the law” (*J* 74).[164] Jazz music's spontaneity with unexpected changes between fast and slow rhythms is transmitted in the following scene: “Music soars to the ceiling […] Immediately both girls are snatched by male hands and spun into the dancing center of the room. [T]ime for lights-out music is approaching […] the culmination of the fast-dancing segment of the party [...]” (*J* 84-86). A mixture of fast tempos with slower ones drives people “crazy,” and in their frenzy, they are led into living out their unconscious instincts (compare 2.3.2). A special transcendent effect is produced when jazz music and a character become one and the music tricks the dancers into losing themselves: “[T]hey believe they know before the music does what their hands, their feet are to do, but that illusion is the music's secret drive: the control it tricks them into believing is theirs [...]” (*J* 83).

What's more, the recurrent image of the bird contributes to deepen ecologically powerful effects in transcendent soundscapes. Towards the end of the novel, Violet and Joe have healed their pain with regaining inner balance. The Traces appreciate the healing power of the music and buy a record player to play over reminders of their lives.

> Somebody in the house across the alley put a record on and the music floated in […] through the open window. Mr. Trace moved his head to the rhythm and his wife snapped her fingers in time. She did a little step in front of him and he smiled. By and by they were dancing […]. 'This place needs birds.' 'And a Victrola.' 'If you get one, I'll bring some records […].' (*J* 249-50)

163In the 1920s, jazz was popular music: it had a good beat and was easy to dance to. Group improvisation is what makes 1920s jazz music seem so free and chaotic (Eisenberg, *Recording Angel* 153).

164Alice Manfred recognizes the compulsive and harmful aspect of jazz music. She fears the new music because it appeals to her baser instincts (Berret 115): “Songs that used to start in the head and fill the heart had dropped on down, down to places below the sash and the buckled belts” (*J* 56).

The couple has become conscious that "[...] nothing was left to love or to need but music" (*J* 258). Joe and Violet start dancing again and put the bird on the roof. Slowly they get back life-energy and are able to re-connect with their inner selves, symbolized in the process of freeing a bird (compare 2.3.2).

Furthermore, Morrison awards the text with biophilic power in a scene when Joe traces his mother in the natural environment of a forest. Ecological powers are transmitted by his mother's name Wild and the place of her home in the wildness of a forest (Alsen 341-42). When Joe tracks down his mother, he finds a cave but the person living there has apparently just left. Joe comes out of the cave and senses that someone is hiding nearby. "Is it you? Just say it. Say anything" (*J* 178). In his symbolical search for his true self, he has difficulty to find his mother because he has already gotten so far away from her. In this scene, transcendence occurs when Joe hears a woman singing, with her voice blending with the sound of breaking twigs:

> The music the world makes, familiar to fishermen and shepherds, woodsmen have also heard. It hypnotizes mammals. Bucks raise their heads and gophers freeze […]. Knowing the music the world makes has no words, he [Joe] stood rock still and scanned his surroundings […]. The scrap of a song came from a woman's throat […]. The song stopped, and a snap like the breaking of twigs took its place. (*J* 208-09)

The sound of the woman merges with natural acoustics, symbolically expressing the transcendent moment of experiencing nature as biophilia. Additional ecological energy is added when Morrison indicates infinity, timelessness and universality in references to musical perceptions by fishermen and shepherds.[165]

In conclusion, Morrison provides the reader with experiences of biophilia *via* the text's "wild" structure in the form of a jazz song, which resembles an ecosystem. The portrayal of dance scenes transfers the "wild" atmosphere of the 1920s when jazz music was played at rent parties. Further ecological energy is transferred to a reader *via* the image of the animal bird or environments, e.g. the forest outside of New York City.

165Furthermore, Morrison provides ecological power to music when she associates groove with weather: "[...] grooves of a record can change the weather. From freezing to hot to cool" (*J* 67).

4.1.5 Rhythms of Life

For Morrison, the drums reflect the rhythms analogous to the ones in life (compare 2.3.2). Morrison philosophizes about the rhythm and the order of seven days in a period of a week: “Perhaps it's the artificial rhythm of the week […] the body pays no attention to it, preferring triplets, duets, quartets [...]” (*J* 66). With the adjective “artificial,” the order of Western society is referred to. However, Morrison claims in the novel that our bodies also need to listen to themselves in order to act accordingly to the natural rhythm of our inner music (compare 2.4.2).

Symbolically, rhythms are a rope that help control oneself and to hold one's life together, as well as a call to life itself (Berret 116). In Dorcas's eyes, the drums symbolize a command, or “[...] a start of something she looked to complete [...]” (*J* 78). The drums call her and she responds. Symbolically, they connect Dorcas to her inner self. Hereby, Morrison invites her readership to appreciate life and live it: “The music bends, falls to its knees to embrace them all, encourage them to live a little, why don't you?” (*J* 220). The reader is shown that the most important thing in life is life itself, which is to appreciate in order to become happy: “[...] since this is the it you've been looking for [...]” (*J* 220). Similar to Dorcas, a reader is advised to “wake up,” embrace life's rhythms and live in accordance to them (compare 2.4.2).

Morrison also calls a reader to develop a certain trust in life. For Dorcas, the drums provide her with necessary security: “[...] the glow would never leave her […] it would be waiting for and with her whenever she wanted to be touched by it [...]” (*J* 78).[166] And if there is a moment of doubt, you can always rely on music: “And if the dancers hesitate, have a moment of doubt, the music will solve and dissolve any question” (*J* 220). With the image of the drums, Dorcas symbolically shows that life itself is eternal and ready to be embraced emotionally, i.e. in biophilic-related terms. Morrison advises to relax when problems arise that cannot be solved on the point. In

166Also for Joe Trace, the rhythms have the effect of providing him with safety and security. When Joe comes to New York with his wife, he is nervous and scared until he feels the rhythm of the train under him. It causes him to stand up in the aisle and tap back at the tracks, joining the train and Violet in a dance of hospitality and acceptance (Berret 114). Finally, the city dances with both of them, “proving already how much it love[s] them” (*J* 32).

this case, trust the laws of ecological dynamics (compare 2.4.2).

In analogy, the author compares a life's path with the needle of a record player. You cannot just decide which way you go because your inner voice, which is similar to a record player's needle, will always lead your way. It is a prerequisite to let it happen and balance your inner nature with the strictures in which you live, for example a city: “It pulls him like a needle through the groove of a Bluebird record. Round and round about the town. That's the way the City spins you […] You can't get off the track a City lays for you” (*J* 145). Here, the city becomes the record itself, which has already laid out certain tracks for the musical event or the city's experiences. A record's moving round and round symbolizes again repetitious rhythms of life itself.

Even though a return back to human's nature is in demand, Morrison warns the reader not to delve into Freud's unconscious drives but keep a balance in one's self. “[T]he blind twins were playing guitar in the shop, and it's just like you said – only one of them's blind; the other one is just going along with the program. Probably not even brothers, let alone twins [...]” (*J* 156-57). In ecological terms, one part should stick to the rules set by society, and the other part is to listen to nature or one's inner voice.

On the whole, Morrison gives her readers lessons on the importance of keeping one's rhythm. Firstly, she illustrates the fact that rhythms serve to keep life in dynamics with Dorcas's impression of the drums calling her to life. Secondly, the author advises to develop a certain trust in life as the common rhythm of life offers security. Thirdly, with the symbol of the record, the author wants her reader to learn how to listen to one's inner voice as well as one's individual biorhythm. Fourth, it is essential for human beings to keep a balance between societal structures and individual needs, or in other words, to harmoniously combine the rhythms of society and of individual beings.

4.2 *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* – Swinging Harmony

In *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing,* Crouch motivates his readership to get out into life and discover what Ornette Coleman calls "the human reason" (DTM).[167] From Carla's perspective, the author depicts a journey to the jazz world of swing in New York City (see 4.4.1; compare 2.1.2). Carla's relationship with Maxwell has reached a turning point, in which she discovers a space for herself in swing music to express her feelings of loneliness and heartache (see 4.2.2; compare 2.2.2). With Crouch's stark portrayal of emotions and an authentic, musical atmosphere, a reader is given the opportunity to sympathize and empathize with Carla, a blonde upcoming singer in a "black" community (see 4.2.4). By crossing boundaries of race and sex, Crouch's universal appeal invites his readership to identify with the protagonist and learn about "the human reason," or in other words, experience biophilia in the "swinging" moments of imaginative live soundscapes (see 4.2.4). Hereby, Crouch emphasizes the communal aspect of swing music and shows that harmony is only possible by acknowledging diversity (compare 2.4.2).

167In Crouch's personal aesthetic, he wants to take his readers on a journey to feelings of joys, sorrows, expectations, and disillusionment, which are basic to jazz music. For him, art has to be about birth, death, love, hate, peace, war, and all the major subjects of human experience (DTM 2004). Crouch demonstrates in this novel that our current generation is suffering from missing emphasis on emotions and alienation from our inner natural selves, which is to be solved in the 21st century: "Each generation is like a baby […]. No matter how sweet and pretty the baby is […] you have to change its diapers and the diapers are always full of the same thing [...]" (*DL* 506).

4.2.1 Carla and Swing Music

The poet, novelist, jazz critic, and columnist Crouch is very well connected to jazz music circles in New York City. In the 1970s, he himself was active as a drummer for David Murray in the local "loft scene" and conducted the booking for an avant-garde jazz series at the East Village Tin Palace club. In music circles, he is well respected for parsing jazz music: "[...] he would lay down [his] life for jazz" (DTM 2007). *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* is a richly descriptive view of the world of swing music through Carla's eyes (Maita).[168] The protagonist, Carla Hamsun, is a professional singer, trained at a conservatory in Chicago, has been on many bandstands, leads her own bands in New York City, and writes arrangements. She is married to Maxwell Davis, a "black" tenor saxophonist, who is at the forefront of New York City's jazz music scene, to which Carla is coming up to (J. Campbell).

Through her musical eyes, an authentic jazzy atmosphere is created with discussions on swing music itself, references to song titles and popular musicians as well as imaginative, jazzy soundscapes (compare 2.1.2). Jazz musicians from the era of swing are praised in various discussions, for example Duke Ellington is brought together with Shakespeare because his suite of jazz music pieces is inspired by the writer's work (*DL* 224). Another mentioned jazz musician is "[t]he New Orleans trumpeter [Toots Celestine, who] was the king of New York jazz at the moment and Maxwell's biggest rival [...]" (*DL* 235).[169]

Furthermore, the image of Lous Armstrong is brought to life when "[...] they were swinging […] in [a] place […] filled with awards, paintings, and portraits of Louis Armstrong [and] Armstrong's face as the King of the Zulus at Mardi Gras was in the middle" (*DL* 236). Louis Armstrong influenced Maxwell in the creation of his melodic lines to a great extent (*DL* 240). Further musicians whom Maxwell idolizes are described with words like "magic" or "high style": Coleman Hawkins, Ben

168Although the story is told in the third person, Carla is the focus of consciousness (J. Campbell).

169The novel also opens with the following phrase by Duke Ellington: "[...] the world's greatest duet, a man and a woman going steady" (*DL* 555).

Webster, Don Byas, Lester Young, Lockjaw Davis, Lucky Thompson, Paul Gonsalves, Johnny Griffin, Charlie Rouse, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, Clifford Jordan (*DL* 367).

In the mode of *telling* (compare 2.1), Crouch's well versed knowledge of jazz music is proven when he mentions the tunes Carla sings: “Please Don't Talk About me When I'm Gone,” “I'll be Seeing you,” “Mean to Me,” “I Remember you,” “You can have him,” “Remember,” “Body and Soul,” “You and the Night and the Music,” “Ill Wind,” “Ghost of a Chance,” “There'll Never be Another you,” “This Time the Dream's on me,” and “I Cried for you” (*D L* 295-96). While there are plenty of explicit references to song titles, implicit references in the form of partial reproduction in an intertextual way only takes place in selected chapters, e.g. in “The Blues Three Different Ways” (*DL* 220-47).

The song titles mentioned above are performed by Carla and evoke cognitive or emotional effects in the readership. For instance, in “You Turned the Table,” Crouch describes Carla's approach to her singing performance and her feelings during the act: “She started as she did all of her songs, always singing the verse, which […] was delivered a cappella and out of tempo or accompanied in time only by piano or bass [...]” (*D L* 423). Here, Crouch meticulously portrays the singer's way of performing, which forms an imaginary content analogy (compare 2.1). A few lines later, the author depicts Carla's inner world: “As she sang, [...] stretching her heart out on ballads, Carla felt herself maturing right inside the music [...]” (*DL* 423). Here, a reader is given the opportunity to empathize with her emotional inner world.

Regarding formal imitation (compare 2.1), jazz music determines the structure of the novel (J. Campbell 2000). Crouch encourages us to think of his works as musical improvisations (Eakin) with variations on Carla's development. *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* comprises of two parts with each one containing twelve chapters, including time and narrator shifts, complex and spontaneous discussions. With the improvisational, fictional structure in the form of a jazz song, the novel receives its implicit musicality. From the first to the last chapter, spontaneous variations are made on the theme of Carla's development and transformation of her soul.

In an interview, Crouch states that he improvised spontaneously during the writing process and he "himself got out of the way" (DTM). Similar to an improvising jazz musician, Crouch had to make many decisions at such high velocity, if he had had to think them through he would not have been able to move with so much fluidity. He himself stepped aside as part of the process in employing improvisational resources of jazz music (DTM). So, the author experiments with style and form recurrent in the subdivision of the novel's chapters. The novel comprises of two parts: "The You and Me That Ought to Be" and "Back in the Apple." This structure alludes to a twelve-bar form with twelve chapters in each part. Besides, each part contains an extra section, 11A in part one, and a shout chorus in the second half.

The novel is largely a set of duets and trios analogous to musical forms (*DL* 555). An improvisational creative approach is further apparent in changing narrator perspectives and temporal flashbacks. Sometimes, it is a straight narrative, at other times, it starts with the first person and goes into the third person (DTM). Hereby, Crouch develops his themes through improvisation in the form of flashbacks and streams of consciousness, working one recollection into another as a way of deepening the texture of the story, when one memory melts into further memory (J. Campbell 2000).

In view of word music (compare 2.1), Crouch intended the language of the novel – the spoken and narrative voices – to have a kind of freedom similar to a jazz musician like Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, or John Coltrane. The author tried to change the tone of the narrative to fit the characters so that sometimes the speaking sound affects the sound of the narrative. The novel is also built around dialogues full of complex discussions in which the tone can become spontaneously provocative. For instance, Crouch characterizes Maxwell's homosexual brother Aaron in the environment of a traditional church (DTM). However, the author rarely uses onomatopoetic effects to create a jazzy feel. Rare examples are "[...] knock, knock, knocking on the door of the mind" (*DL* 221) when Carla's argument with Maxwell nags on her mind, or the description of the moving train with "[...] that unplanned rattle, those shakes, the metal wheels rolling on the metal tracks [...]" (*DL* 449).

All in all, Crouch achieves to create an authentic atmosphere of swing jazz music by depicting musical environments from Carla's perspective as a singer. The text receives its jazzy acoustics mainly by an inherent improvisational structure of and by implicit imaginary content analogies in Carla's music-making approaches. Literary musicality is created in imaginative soundscapes with ensuing sympathizing effects on the reader.

4.2.2 *Gefuehlsraum* for Carla[170]

Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing has an empathizing effect on a reader with Crouch's emphasis on emotions. He portrays jazz music as a language of emotions, in which a human being can find a place for the release of negative feelings. In her platonic relationship with Jed, Carla is able to express feelings, which she cannot transform into words but in music. Furthermore, Crouch praises certain jazz musicians such as Charlie Parker for their ability to create pure sound by transforming various kinds of emotions into a musical performance.

The author directly shows the way jazz musicians put emphasis on emotionality in their music when he points out that they do not rely on statistic facts but simply on human experience: "Jazz musicians […] didn't read books or know much about things outside of their personal experience" (*D L* 522).[171] In a conversation with Carla, Maxwell describes how it feels when he has his best moments in playing: "[...] *Suddenly, Carla, I'm telling you, I start playing like a motherfucker. Notes start coming from everywhere. The tenor opens all the way up. So* ***much*** *emotion*" (*DL* 50; emphasis in the original). Maxwell excels in improvising jazz music when his emotions are set free.[172]

170Jazz music becomes a symbolical temple, a shelter place or a private traveling place (*DL* 291-92).

171For Maxwell, "old guys" have outrageous jazz music skills because they play with "immeasurable soul" (*DL* 367).

172In music as language of emotions, Maxwell expresses the feeling of love: "'Yeah. I'm going to play strong and sweet for people. That'll be my way of telling them I love you. I love *you.* I'm with you'" (*DL* 515; emphasis in the original). By playing with strong emotions, Maxwell submits the feeling of love and the common emotional room, in which feelings are shared between musician and audience.

Similarly, Charlie Parker is idolized for getting a sound of pure submission only by releasing his emotional pain in jazz music: "Bob wondered how much suffering Parker had gone through and how he felt, from one sunrise to the next, about the balance of that pain on the scale of beauty that came out of his saxophone" (*DL* 536). Parker freed himself from his emotional pain by enslaving his Stanhope saxophone, telling his story, which the listener is able to grasp by close attention to the sound of emotions (*DL* 536-37).[173] Furthermore, Crouch explains that there exists an individual space for Carla's emotions in music: "[Carla] tells her to keep it silent and be patient. Even though she […] was desperate for an emotional breather, a little space, some fresh breeze in the unventilated room [...]" (*D L* 297), she stopped spending most of her time moaning about it, and tried to keep her mind off Maxwell. Instead, she saw the bandstand as her emotional refuge. Carla is getting rid of her personal sufferings from her relationship's failure in "her room" or soundscape in jazz music.

While being located in her personal space, Carla gives each of her various kinds of emotions a certain note: "Carla sang scales by assigning to each note one of the many sounds a great singer had at her disposal when manipulating feeling and color into a specific pitch [...]" (*DL* 301). Hereby, the protagonist practices individual expression and direction in singing. With Jed, a great keyboard and bass player, music as language and communication tool is emphasized. When Carla cannot explain what she is seeing with her eyes, she can sing it to Jed (*DL* 389): "[T]hey could have dialogues in timbre as well as melody, harmony, and rhythm. […] Jed had a sense of her, a *real* sense of her. He could feel her, on and off the bandstand" (*D L* 307; emphasis in the original). In this scene, the function of music as a successful emotive communication tool between human beings is illustrated.

A reader might identify with Carla in the pursuit of her authentic identity amid the complexities at the turn of the 21st century. Carla herself lacks in self-confidence and suffers from her relationship with Maxwell. She is afraid to be dumped by her African-American lover because of one thing she can never become, namely "black" (Thelwell 172). By crossing boundaries of race, sex, and class, *Don't*

173Character Jed took Ellington's and Monk's abilities for bringing color to the individual notes and the startling hues to heart when he played the bass guitar (*DL* 306-07).

the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing, Crouch intends to speak to a universal audience (compare 2.2). Carla lacks in self-confidence as a "white" singer in a "black" community. Even though she "[...] had worked through so many songs and gone to so many jam sessions [...]" (*DL* 222), she "[...] felt so bad so often" (*DL* 222). In contrast, her partner Maxwell is asked by Celestine to tour the world as a guest in her band (*DL* 245). Even though she feels "small" next to her husband, Carla does not give up her dream of becoming a singer. Gradually, "[her] self-assurance [keeps] stepping up [...]" (*DL* 301). Here, Crouch employs a universal theme by negating the issue of personal insecurity, showing that such an issue can be a limitation on the pathway to personal growth, depending on how a person reacts to it (Maita). Even though Carla is talented, she lacks in self-confidence and imposes limitations on herself that do *not* exist in real life (Maita).

Apart from a reader's identification with Carla, Crouch offers his readers the possibility of sharing the protagonist's suffering from her relationship with Maxwell. At a jazz club, an African-American woman takes a gold handkerchief from her husband's breast pocket one night, wiped her face, and then returned it with "'You brothers need to come home.'" Maxwell appears affected and Carla is duly mortified. In the novel's terms, her song has ceased to be "Easy to Love" and has turned into "You've Changed" (J. Campbell 2000): "Over the last ten or twelve months, the supreme closeness of their love was suffering, their home invaded by emotional disorder" (*DL* 3). Finally, Carla feels an unbearable loneliness in her relationship, which not only results from her worsening relationship but also from not being fully accepted in the "black" community.

Besides an emotional identification with Carla, Crouch employs the technique of boundary-crossing. He creates *Leerstellen* for a reader's active participation (compare 2.2.1). Carla is Midwestern, Scandinavian and blonde, and grows into a jazz singer while appreciating the true history of jazz music (Thelwell 172). Maxwell, however, does not like to delve into the history of his people and is not impressed by going back to his African roots like Coltrane did: "Coltrane went back further, traveling through time to the field-hollering era of slavery […] imagined the primitive majesty of Africa. That wasn't for Maxwell" (*DL* 367). In the end, Carla

seems to be more inherently “black” than her partner. When she has learned to stop hiding herself and to express her deepest feelings of her soul (*DL* 560), she excels in her performances. Crouch shows that musical talent is not only reserved for African-Americans or for male musicians: “If you have a feeling for it, or if you develop a feeling for it, wherever you are from, you can play” (Maita).

In sum, Crouch achieves empathizing effects on a readership by emphasizing jazz music as language of emotions. The protagonist Carla finds her personal room for the release of pain in swing music. In her space, she is able to communicate her feelings in musical conversations with Jed. Furthermore, a reader might identify with Carla on common terms of lacking self-confidence or painful, emotional disorders resulting from her relationship with her husband Maxwell. *Leerstellen* are created when Crouch grasps a reader's attention in the boundary crossing of race and sex.

4.2.3 Biophilic Discovery

The author provides a reader with the possibility of experiencing biophilia *via* the structure of the novel, which resembles an ecosystem, or in imaginative soundscapes, in which Carla herself receives biophilic life energies (compare 2.3). Experiences of biophilia are heightened by animal symbolisms or other references to the natural environment. After having gone through various kinds of emotional pain, Carla symbolically enters a new “wide-open room in the meaning of home” (*DL* 226), in which she encounters her own natural self and in this process receives biophilic energy. Crouch intends to show that it is not the process of remembering which heals Carla's emotional pain but it is “[...] improvising for expression and form [...]” (*DL* 226) that has lead her to “[...] achieving the full emotion of pure existence while in cooperative dialogue with time” (*DL* 226).

In a transcendent moment, Carla liberates herself while the sound of swing is born inside her.[174] In an interview, Crouch explains that swing is energy. He points

174Crouch shows Carla's first experience of Swing music in the following sentence: “Her dream became a sound each note that she picked out of the chords going by in her head was coming out of her body and falling into place with actual *swing,* swing for the very first time” (*DL* 222).

out that if you "swing harder," you raise the intensity and go deeper into the groove (DTM). In this process, Carla receives biophilic life-energies: "Something new happened to her body: the rhythm of swing was inside her right leg […] The sigh and howl of life were bursting inside the purr of her soul and freedom was everywhere" (*DL* 295-96). Carla's whole body is intoxicated with the music that frees her.[175] Now she is just herself after having experienced her inner nature. Following her performance, Carla "[...] got goose bumps just remembering what had happened up on that bandstand" (*DL* 309) and felt "[...] as free and as independent as she ever had [...]" (*DL* 310). In transcendent soundscapes, Crouch refers to natural images, which deepen the ecological experience. For example, Carla compares herself with "[...] the wind stalking through the music" (*DL* 295-96), or Bobo "[...] could net rhythms out of the wind [...]" (*DL* 420).[176] In such re-creative moments, Crouch symbolically emphasizes the connection with nature by inserting images like the wind or the bird.[177]

Transcendent states in music-making are also compared with the divine, for example, Mickey calls her "a sweet angel in heaven" (*DL* 298) shortly after Carla's performance. Symbolically, Carla becomes an angel, who is able to fly when she literally feels each note and lives each interval as "[...] *another pure reiteration of her unstated belief that the impersonal beauty in nature could only be equated by the aesthetic forms given to the human heart*" (*DL* 460). During her biophilic experience, Carla perceives the beauty of natural aesthetics. This feeling brings her back to life and provides her with necessary life-energies (compare 2.3.2). For Maxwell, the

175For Bobo, swing means "sweet groove." He explains this phenomenon to both the character Carla and the readership: "'All that power in your body is firing hard with your blood and all the muscles and nerves and all the organs. The power of *you* is going on all the time. […] The first plane is me, the second is you, the third one is *us*. […] The *entire* me comes out then […]. Then I get chills. […] When I feel that, I know I'm in the sweet groove'" (*DL* 163). Being in the so-called sweet groove also encompasses the African-American music principle of group consciousness, which will be explained in the following subchapter.

176Similarly, Clara's biophilic recreation is described with the motif of flying: "[...] it felt like […] take off into the sky of jazz imagination, or what a miracle of freedom you experienced on the bandstand when the swing lifted up and made the inside of your heart flap as if possessed of endless wings" (*DL* 11). Here, the biophilic experience receives additional energy by the image of a flying heart with "endless" wings, standing for numerous possibilities in life.

177Further references to natural elements appear in the title when the moon is described as being lonely in a rhetoric question or in statements such as "[...] *South Dakota had its full sky of blues, too*" (*DL* 444; emphasis in the original). At another place, music-making is compared with "[...] mountain climbing or taking a canoe across a big river or sloughing through sand or being in the cold or burning up in the sun [...]" (*DL* 370).

invisible sound could free himself and transcend to "[...] something that is far more substantially outside the world of sight: 'It's the invisible *inside* the invisible that means the most. That's always a warm room […] I'm lost if I miss that room.'" (*DL* 537-38). Here, Maxwell talks about the truth of nature, which can be perceived in music and represents a biophilic survival technique. Again, his transcendent experience is deepened by Crouch's flying motif, i.e. when the room seems to take on its own wings: "'Besides, that room travels on its own'" (*DL* 38)[178]

Transcendent biophilic experiences in imaginative soundscapes are embedded in a text, which resembles an ecosystem with the theme of Carla's search for identity. With its complex and spontaneous discussions, in which various characters respond to and call each other, the text itself resembles a jazz music performance. Here, band members become emotionally conscious of each other. In addition, changing narrator perspectives and temporal flashbacks contribute to the "wildness" of the text. The novel comprises of aesthetic ecological energy with ensuing possible biophilic unconscious effects on a reader.

All in all, a reader perceives biophilic life-energies after sympathizing with the novel's jazzy atmosphere, which resembles an ecosystem. Re-creative ecological energies are transmitted in live soundscapes, with Carla experiencing the birth of swing inside of her. Natural images such as the wind or a bird serve to deepen a reader's ecological imagination.

178Maxwell also praises his idolized musicians and gives them a divine quality, for example he imagines Charlie Parker in heaven, "[...] playing his ass off around a corner somewhere" (*DL* 305), and hyperbolizes with "[...] it's God *imitating* Charlie Parker" (*DL* 305; emphasis in the original).

4.2.4 Swinging in Harmony

> [Bobo's] uncluttered ambition was to always step up on the most swinging part of the beat […] the best kind of jazz bass line, delivered almost exclusively in swinging quarter notes, was a new horizon in counterpoint, because, chorus after chorus, it was a subtle, melodic way of delivering and interpreting the harmony of every chord while responding to the piano, the drums, and the horizontal invention of the featured player or singer. (*DL* 304)

In Bobo's description of his ambitions in music-making, Crouch's music philosophical ideas in *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* are recurrent. Similar to Bobo's way of playing, a human being is advised to develop a personal style in real life, according to the principle of individuality in African-American music (compare 2.4.2). However, individual improvisation also means respecting the individuality of other members in a band, or in society in general, and find a common rhythm, or "swing" in harmony. Crouch states that his intellectual development regarding jazz music stems from its possibility of discovery (Maita; compare 2.5.2). In the novel, he clearly points out that "[i]mitation wasn't the idea at all […] the job was making it purely personal" (*DL* 301). In this sense, he advises his readership to creatively discover one's identity by improvising on it. instead of following already laid-out stereotypes.

Particularly musical descriptions of swing exemplify how to listen to one's voice and when to take the right action in harmony with one's biorhythm (compare 2.4.2). Listening to one's own voice includes being in harmony with external rhythms of existence: "You better know that time past and time future and time present and all motion in the eternal rhythm of existence begins and ends inside the mind of God, which is the infinite storehouse of light" (*DL* 209). Here, Crouch focuses on eternal time, which he connects with the divine. With the image of the devil, he warns of the dangers of getting out of the natural rhythm, which could end in personal disaster: "Make sure you don't find yourself outside of time in the coal mine of the devil digging for lumps of darkness. Watch yourself. It could happen to you" (*DL* 209).

Time, as it functions in jazz music, is analyzed by improvising on the lyrics of "How Long has this Been Going on?" in the twelfth chapter. Similar to life itself,

“the rhythm section runs the whole length of the tune” (*DL* 224). The protagonist has “'[...] to know how to wait and you got to know when to wait and you damn sure to know who to wait for. Isn't that, baby low, what they call the learning process?” (*DL* 224).

For Crouch, the feeling of community, which exists between the musicians and the band, as well as between the band and the audience, are the kind of community, which is basic and important to human existence (DTM; compare 2.4.2). Crouch states that there is always some inherent democracy on the bandstand, and all the energies are important (DTM). In his view, the development of individuality and finding one's own rhythms is to take place in harmony with other members of a democratic community. Maxwell suggests to reduce the ego in order to reach the feeling of full spiritual transcendence, which achieves its highest meaning in inter-subjective communications with others:

> [H]e […] told his musicians that you always had to play as if every other instrument was part of your instrument in order to create the feeling of a group giving spiritual order and fire to the moment […] the art of it would actually be the outcome of improvising beyond your individual ego into the collective soul of music […]. It's about listening and responding and creating on the run […]. (*DL* 14)

The musical artwork as the outcome of inter-subjective creation becomes more than its single parts when individuals listen and respond to each other. In a wider sense, members of society could reach higher levels of individual satisfaction by providing necessary freedom for the development of talents. For Crouch, it is the friction caused by various elements rubbing against each other that create a special rhythm (J. Campbell). With the relationship of Carla and Maxwell, the author symbolically illustrates individualization and diversity within a group or a couple to make the sum more than its parts. The couple is made up of two different types of people whose union symbolizes diversity in harmony. The relationship itself demands that each person accepts differences in the other person. Crouch portrays the male and female character in the relationship, in particular what they learn from each other and how they develop and strengthen each other (DTM).

Finally, music receives the function of reuniting people all over the world. Carla compares the interconnectedness of all being with the spiritual sound in jazz music:

> [T]he ancient opening a timeless door reached back to Africa, to Asia, to Europe, to every place in the world where sound was used to state an attitude of spirit and to create a communion that was complete in its allegiance to all things good and cosmic and in its admonitions about all things internal and external that one had to gird oneself against. (*DL* 184)

In transcendent moments of timelessness, jazz music provides biophilic life-energies in inter-subjective communion, which can be seen externally, e.g. when swing music connects people from Africa, Asia, and Europe. The democratic process in swing music is symbolically depicted with the imaginative audience's reactions: "The audience […] mixed to almost a United Nations condition, […] were with her, clapping at the right places […] and rocking with – not against – the beat" (*DL* 195-96).

To conclude, Crouch speaks for individuality and the importance of finding one's own rhythm in life, which is only possible through harmonious exchange with other members of a community. Human beings develop individuality by acknowledging diversity. The author speaks for universality (DTM 2007) and portrays with the symbolic help of inherent musical principles that incredible creativity may be the result when people of different cultures come together (Maita).

4.3 “Solo on the Drums” - Kid Jones's Healing Process

In “Solo on the Drums,” an authentic atmosphere around an imaginative performance of bebop jazz music is created with the background of New York City in the 1940s. With an elaborate portrayal of the protagonist Kid Jones's emotional healing process after being left by his woman, Petry engages her audience in the event of reading by empathy and sympathy for the drummer (compare 2.2.2). These emotional experiences are interwoven in a fictional composition of an improvisational, imaginative soundscape, which emits life-sustaining biophilic energies (compare 2.3.1). In addition, Petry's staging technique facilitates a reader's participation in the drummer's biophilic healing process (compare 2.2.2; 2.3.2). With the focus on the drums's traditional function as messengers, Petry teaches her audience how to overcome individual problems by an improvised approach to life (compare 2.3.2; 2.4).

4.3.1 Kid Jones and Bebop Jazz

Petry was an African-American novelist, journalist, and biographer, whose works offered a unique perspective on African-American life in New York City. In 1938, she moved there to become a writer (Poirier 27-33), and the local jazz music scene inevitably made an impression on her. In “Solo on the Drums,” Petry portrays an authentic atmosphere of bebop music in New York City of the 1940s and provides the short story with literary acoustics by Kid Jones's imaginative solo improvisations and the drums as the essential instrument in a bebop jazz (compare 2.1.2).[179]

Authenticity is mainly achieved by thematic references (compare 2.1) to jazz music from the 1940s, e.g. Kid Jones's orchestra with instruments and musicians.[180] The protagonist's name, Kid Jones, alludes to two famous drummers in jazz music history: Elvin Jones, a bebop music drummer, and Jo Jones from the famous Count

179See the title “Solo on the Drums.”

180Petry's authentic portrayals have been praised by critics such as Mary H. Washington (1987), who writes “Petry's world is a world inhabited by real people […] coping with real problems and enjoying real pleasures” (297).

Basie Band (E. Müller 219). Moreover, the setting of the Randlert Theater on Broadway, Forty-second Street, conveys the atmosphere of a typical evening performance at that time. A direct reference to jazz music also appears in the title, "Solo on the Drums." Here, she reminds readers of the African-American musical characteristic, individuality. On the one hand, Kid Jones is picked out in the orchestra for a solo performance. His name appears separately below the orchestra's name: "Kid Jones. The name – his name – up there in lights [...]" (SD 53). On the other hand, the drums are focused on. The drummer is highly important for the band as a catalyst to move the music ahead, keep it swinging, and and at the same time he interacts with various lead soloists, spurring them on to new creative highs (G. Collier 61-65).[181]

The short story describes meticulously in one whole soundscape protagonist Kid Jones's musical performance with its inherent principles of call-and-response, individualization, and the development of a group consciousness with cognitive and emotional effects on a reader within the realm of implicit intermedial references (compare 2.1). The percussionist uses his instrument as a lyrical mouthpiece (Breton 3), through which he tells the story of his wife having left him on the same morning for the piano player, Marquis of Brund. Such solos are stories and in turn, performances become musical conversations (Grandt, *Kinds of Blue* xi), providing literary acoustics. In the interplay of various instruments, the highly democratic principle of the jazz form becomes apparent. Every musician has a certain space for individuality but is equally forced to join in the group to fulfill his or her part in an overall performance (Schwarz 46).

At one time, the drums respond to Kid Jones with a whisper, at another place, they talk to the piano or the horn. Kid Jones builds a personal relationship with the drums: "He caressed the drums with the brushes in his hands. They responded with a whisper of sound" (SD 55). The drummer keeps in perfect harmony with the other players during the trumpet's solo. He does not communicate with the trumpet, though, but only participates in the solo. After Kid Jones is being made aware of his

181 Utilizing his bass drum pedal, he can emphasize the beat, but he can also embellish it with accents. Using an array of drums, cymbals, and accessories, he fills in with accents, cymbal crashes, and rhythmic combinations (G. Collier 61-65).

lost love by the trumpet's sound, the drummer is forced to enter a dialogue with the piano. The opponents in life outside the jazz band become counterparts within the orchestra. Finally, “[t]he drums slowly dominated the piano” (SD 56).

Regarding structural analogy (compare 2.1), a long and uneasy break follows (Schwarz) the scene when Kid Jone loses track with reality and enters a dialogue with his own past, in which he recalls various situations of loss, death, pain, and war (compare 2.1). After the first solo, the musicians find themselves again and speak “the same rhythm” (SD 55). Kid Jones returns to his role and enters a short dialogue with the horn: “The horn played a phrase. Soft and short. The drums answered” (SD 57).

In “Solo on the Drums,” Petry invites her readers to enter an imaginative soundscape of Kid Jones's musical performance at the New York Randlert Theater in the 1940s when solos became more important in bebop music (compare 2.1.2). Within this energetic atmosphere, Kid Jones enters a dialogue not only with his instrument, the drums, but also with the piano, the horn and the trumpet, and a readership is led through this musical piece. Petry provides the short story with musical qualities mainly by imaginary content analogy during Kid Jones's performance, which is structurally mirrored in the text's inherent time shifts.

4.3.2 Emotive Dialogue

It's all there in the trumpet – pain and hate and trouble and peace and quiet and love. (SD 55)

In “Solo on the Drums,” the music becomes very emotional when Petry illustrates how all pain can be expressed through music. The trumpet evokes the whole spectrum of Kid Jones's feelings of pain, hate, trouble, peace and quiet, and love (Schwarz 39). Petry's work has often been lauded for her sympathetic characterizations from the point of male view (Jimoh, “Miss Muriel”), which is

recurrent in the short story with Kid Jones's soft way of playing the drums. A sympathizing and empathizing effect is achieved by her elaborate portrayal of the protagonist's emotions, which spurs a reader's identification with the drummer's loneliness.[182]

With improvisation as central element, it is the very character of jazz music to communicate and evoke personal feelings. Kid Jones's emotions are both formed and performed during the event (Schwarz 39-47). In improvising, topics from the inner horizon of perception are revealed and re-modeled into a musical figure. Emotions, which cannot be expressed with words, can be communicated in music (W. Schroeder 24) and in the communication his emotions, the sound of the drums becomes Kid Jones's voice (Schwarz 41). Petry obviously makes music a language of emotions: Characters communicate their feelings or emotions through their instruments.

The dialogue with Kid Jones's own feelings during the performance develops in various steps: he becomes aware of his emotions, acknowledges them, realizes them, expresses them, and finally overcomes them (Schwarz 42). He puts all his negative emotions into his drumming to express his inner emotional conflict. His "[...] drums were an outlet for his pent-up emotions as they echo the myriad disillusionments of his life" (Ervin and Holladay 10). The drums help him act out his inner struggle and in this very act a reader identifies with him on common grounds of disillusionment. The fictional emotional experience reaches a summit when the lights move to Kid Jones, who enters a short dialogue with the piano, and starts a musical fight with the Marquis of Brund (Schwarz 39).[183] Kid Jones expresses his inner conflict, which is described in the following passage:

182The short story's title can be read in two ways – Kid Jones's private and his professional life (Schwarz 47). Outside the orchestra, Kid Jones takes on the role of being solo in his private life after his wife has left him. Hence, the word "solo" in the title also hints at the drummer's loneliness.

183It is pleasant and at the same time painful to create a dialogue in the form of music with alarming and so far unknown parts of one's personality. Feelings can be symbolically experienced in the musical dialogue. It offers the possibility of leaving the known and protective realm of language to express one's feelings with the help of instruments, sounds, melodies, or rhythms (W. Schroeder 30).

> When he hit the drums again it was with the thought that he was fighting with the piano player. He was choking the Marquis of Brund. He was putting a knife in between his ribs. He was slitting his throat with a long straight blade. Take my woman. Take your life. The drums leaped with the fury that was in him. (SD 56)

This energetic scene, in which the drummer thinks about choking the piano player and putting a knife into his ribs has shocking effect on a reader. The ego is set apart and s/he opens him/herself up for a subsequent ecological experience (compare 2.2). Even though the plot is told from a third-person perspective, a reader is closely attached to Kid Jones's emotions throughout the story (Schwarz 41-42). With an extensive emotional fight in imaginative soundscapes, thus created *Leerstellen* lead to an identification with the protagonist, in which a reader perceives biophilic feelings.

4.3.3 Fictional Structure of a Jazz Song

Beyond representing subject matter for thematic exploration of possibility (Cataliotti 99-100), bebop music provided Petry with the possibility of improvising in form and technique, having influenced both her compositional approaches and narrative structures in this short story. Petry improvises around the theme “I'm leaving” until Kid Jones is freed from emotional pain. An interplay of multiple voices is expressed through musical instruments. Petry's play with rhythm and pace contribute to the story's liveliness. With this composition in the form of a bebop jazz song, the short story takes on qualities of a fictional ecosystem.

The notated jazz music critic Leonard Feather wrote that drummer Elvin Jones's main achievement was the creation of a circle of sound (Breton 3). In “Solo on the Drums,” Petry transformed this compositional approach in the creation of this short story, in which Kid Jones's musical storytelling circles around the theme: “'I'm leaving I'm leaving I'm leaving'” (SD 57). This fictional circularity mirrors ecological feedback loops and leads in turn to a reader's unconscious ecological experience (compare 2.3.1).

In addition, interacting voices represent the ecological principle of interconnectedness (compare 2.3.1) during the imaginative live performance. The drums speak for Kid Jones, the trumpet embodies the protagonist's wife, and the piano stands for the Marquis of Brunds (Schwarz 43-44). Hereby, the sound of the trumpet brings forward and reminds the drummer of what has happened in the morning: “He wanted to cover his ears with his hands because he kept hearing a voice that whispered the same thing over and over again. The voice was trapped somewhere under the roof – caught and held there by the trumpet” (SD 54-55).

The inherent call-and-response pattern between the performing musicians represents a constant energy flow throughout the short story and keeps it in dynamics. Especially Petry's play with pace and rhythms contributes to the text's dynamics. She starts very slow and the rhythms become then faster and faster. Kid Jones begins with light, regular, soft background rhythms: “He hit the drums lightly. Regularly. A soft, barely discernible rhythm. A background” (SD 54). Petry's use of rather short sentences enhances the dynamics in this soundscape, which culminates in Kind Jones's transcendent energetic moment.

In addition, rhythmic drumming is onomatopoetically rendered with Petry's use of parallelisms, repetitions, alliterations and fragmentary sentences. For example, “Rain in the street. Heat gone. Food gone” (SD 55), or “The drums took him away from them, took him back, and back, and back, in time and space” (SD 57). Petry repeatedly uses the connector “and” in its additive function (Kamarah 15) similar to a drummer counting “one, two, three, four.” As a consequence, Kid Jones's rhythmic drumming can be heard in a reader's ears. The conscious use of additive patterns, repetitions, non-standard punctuation, and parallelism serves to create dramatic effects in analogy to the sound of bebop music from the 1940s.

On the whole, Petry's compositional technique of turning the short story into a circular form, the various interacting voices in the soundscape of the orchestra's live performance, and the dynamic use of parallelisms, rhythms and repetitions in language mirror ecological principles, which make the text more than its parts and offer a reader an unconscious ecological experience.

4.3.4 Dramatic Staging

By staging Kid Jones's transcendent moment during his performance, biophilic life-energies are created. With the technique of dramatic staging, the author establishes an intimate situation which captures not only the audience at the Randlert Theater but also Petry's readership. An ecological experience is further increased with references to natural phenomena such as sunlight or the surroundings of a forest. In "Solo on the Drums," staging has dramatic effects (Schwarz 46). For instance, the power of the music is revealed when the curtain of the stage opens itself: "And then they were open. Silently. Almost like magic" (SD 54). With the words "magic" and "silence," a tense atmosphere is induced. *Via* staging, Petry hints at the intimacy of prose and operates on the assumption that the audience is at one with the storyteller, ensuring participation in the process (Kamarah 14).

During his performance, Kid Jones becomes one with his drums as well (Schwarz 41): "He began to feel as though he were the drums and the drums were he" (SD 56). Exactly in this moment, Kid Jones "[...] forgot everything" (SD 58). The energy increases when "[...] the drums leaped with fury that was in him" (SD 56). In this transcendent moment, he frees himself and experiences purification: "[T]he sound seemed to come not from the drums but from deep inside himself; it was the sound that was being wrenched out of him – a violent, raging, roaring sound" (SD 58).

By accepting his inner self and listening to his inner voice, Kid Jones experiences biophilia: "As it issued from him he thought, this is the story of my love, this is the story of my hate, this is all there is left of me" (SD 58). Human beings can delve into music and escape a rationally dominated world with emotions being controlled and conserved as tensions in the real world. The representation of present emotions in music serves to purge them (Milton 80-81). By living out negative emotions in music, tensions are freed and catharsis follows (Hesse 176; compare 2.3.2).

Not only Kid Jones becomes one with his drums, but also the past and present

merge during this performance. On stage, the drummer remembers instances from his past during the fight with the piano player (Schwarz 41): “The drums took him away from them, took him back, and back, and back, in time and space. He built up an illusion” (SD 57). Past experiences like the death of his grandmother (SD 57) are brought back alive. By reliving tragic moments, Kid Jones transfers his negative feelings, expresses them in drumming, and experiences them again. He is healed through remembering. Thus, the musical performance has a therapeutic function (Schwarz 43).

Coming back to the present moment, Kid Jones realizes that he's “[...] still himself. Kid Jones. Master of the drums” (SD 58). The musician has freed himself from inner pain and “[W]hen he finally stopped playing, he was trembling: his body was wet with sweat” (SD 58), and his performance has even “[...] topped all his other performances” (SD 58).[184] After an ecological regeneration, he is able to face the pianist: “He stared at the Marquis of Brunds for a long moment” (SD 59). Similar to Kid Jones and his fictional audience, a readership perceive biophilic feelings. Petry describes the audience's reaction as follows: In the beginning, they are “all shadow,” but then turn into meaningless faces, “[f]aces slowly emerged out of […] disembodied heads and shoulders that slanted up and back” (SD 54). Similar to Kid Jones, members of the audience are “disembodied” or lifeless before the transcendent moment, when “[t]he theater throbbed with the excitement of the drums” (SD 56).

During the musical performance, individual listeners are at the center. The imaginative audience is embedded in the overall setting of the event. The sight moves from a mass of people to a few individuals and back to the crowd (Schwarz 40-41).[185] For example, “A man […] shivered and his head jerked to the rhythm” (SD 56), or “[a] sailor put his arm around the girl [u]ntil their faces seemed to melt together” (SD 56). Similar to Kid Jones's bodily reactions, a man gets shivers and parallel to the drummer's melting together with his instrument, a couple in love become one. After the performance, the audience turns into an applauding mass. Furthermore, Petry provides the novel with additional ecological powers by

184 Kid Jones's outstanding performance with highly emotive sound mirrors the inherent quality of bebop music.

185 Again, Petry's fictional composition technique of a circle is recurrent.

references to natural images. In the beginning of the novel, Kid Jones's name "[...] danced and winked in the brassy sunlight" (SD 33). The shine of brass instruments is connected with natural sunlight, thereby providing bebop music with ecological power.

The transcendent biophilic moment is also intensified when Petry mentions natural phenomena like thunder in order to increase the story's ecological energy: "The sound filled the theater with a sound like thunder" (SD 58). Similarly, Kid Jones's feelings of pain are analogous to the image of rain. When the drummer descends into the depths of his own self, he symbolically wanders in a forest in the cold: "It is cool in the deep track in the forest. Cool and quiet. The trees talk softly" (SD 57).[186]

In a nutshell, Kid Jones's biophilic experience takes place during his public performance. With dramatic staging, a reader's anticipation in the protagonist's healing process is facilitated. Similar to Kid Jones's process of becoming one with his drums in the transcendent experience, a reader's imagination merges with the short story's proceedings, and the reading of the text takes on a therapeutic function by providing the audience with biophilic-related life-energies.

4.3.5 Message of the Drums

Petry makes her protagonist a drummer and throughout the story, the communicative power of the drums is alluded to, particularly in the interplay of various musical instruments during the performance (compare 2.3.2). The drums convey messages about personal transcendence in improvisational and inter-subjective, democratic processes, which are transferred to a reader's consciousness. With Kid Jones's improvisations in his solo, Petry vividly portrays how the protagonist transcends himself. The drummer improvises on the theme "I'm leaving" and frees himself from his pain. Hereby, he symbolically transcends the psychological limitations in his life

186 The morning when the protagonist's wife left him with painful feelings is repeated in the live performance imaginatively with "The sound took him straight back to the rain, the rain that had come with the morning" (SD 54).

by jazz music's myriad improvisational variations on his personal pain. When a reader identifies with with Kid Jones, s/he might take part in the drummer's process of imaginative boundary crossing. The imaginative play on the instrument spurs a readership's creative mode of thinking.

With a reader's mental or physical identification with Kid Jones, Petry unconsciously activates a reader's id, which supposedly has been neglected in postmodern times. Petry demonstrates that biophilic healing is only possible in inter-subjective communication. It is during the dialogue between the piano and the trumpet player when Kid Jones is able to improvise on his hurt feelings. By playing with the members of the orchestra, he is able to purify himself. Similar to Kid Jones, a human being can only perceive biophilic feelings in relationship with other human beings. In the interplay of various instruments and the musical dialogues in jazz music, call-and-response, the highly democratic principle, becomes apparent. Every musician is provided with a certain space to utter his or her personal feelings but is equally forced to join the group and fulfill his or her part in the overall performance (Schwarz 46).

With Petry's emphasis on antithesis, she mirrors the ecological principle, which contends that systems break down when their intensities increase more and more.[187] By lighting images, opposition is illustrated (Schwarz 44-45): "The drummer and the pianist were silhouetted in two separate brilliant shafts of light" (SD 56). However, the outcome of a collapse leads to new creations, which can be seen in Kid Jones's extraordinary performance. Petry advises a reader to accept setbacks in life, as there is a new creation to follow.

In sum, Petry hints at a reader's active engagement in life symbolized with Kid Jones's intensive soloing in the short story. A creative approach to life is in demand when certain patterns break down, such as the break-up in Kid Jones's relationship. In the act of improvising, new creative highs can be reached with biophilic life-energies. Active engagement in life means being open for an ecological experience of biophilia, which is only possible in inter-subjective communications.

187As Petry also puts focus on rhythms, this phenomenon can also be interpreted from another perspective: If human beings don't follow a certain rhythm in life, they will lose themselves in their improvisations and then break down.

4.4 “The Screamers” - Lynn Hope's Jam Session

Baraka's “The Screamers” renders an authentic atmosphere of the event of a free jazz jam session from the 1960s in New York City (compare 2.1.2). With the characters' expressive screams, Baraka not only creates literary acoustics but also aims at his readers' active participation in the process of reading (compare 2.2.1). While the short story is composed analogous to the structure of a free jazz song, it comprises stored ecological energy with the aforementioned screamed riff as repeated theme throughout the short story (compare 2.3.1). Free jazz musicians act as “priests of the unconscious” in re-connecting both imaginative audience and readership to nature accompanied by the perception of biophilic life-energies (compare 2.3.2). Finally, Baraka a “sweet revolution” in mind, in which the sound of free jazz becomes a basis for thoughts about the negative effects of capitalism (compare 2.4).

4.4.1 Lynn Hope and Free Jazz

Baraka came in contact with jazz music in the late 1950s when he settled in New York City's Greenwich Village. There, he was a central figure to the local bohemian scene (Liukkonen). He played the piano, the trumpet and the drums in his youth but found out that poetry and fiction were more suitable forms for expressing his thoughts and feelings. In “The Screamers,” he processes his musical experiences with direct references to musicians and song titles from free jazz of the 1960s. He recreates such a musical mood in this short story with the focus on protagonist Lynn Hope's jam session in The Graham, a “black” jazz music club in Newark.

Baraka's cast of characters are jazz musicians. Before Lynn Hope and his band perform, “Teddy, Sonny Boy, Kenny & Calvin, Scram and a few of Nat's boys [are] jamming” (S 260) on popular songs such as “'The Cross-Over'” (S 260) and “'Night Train'” (S 262), which the free jazz musicians despise.[188] The author praises musicians from the free jazz music scene with “[...] Illinois, Gator, Big Jay, Jug, the

188The narrator points out that “[w]e hated the popular song […] (S 264).

great sounds of our day" (S 264), and meticulously describes their performing movements in recollecting authentic live performances which Baraka himself probably attended.[189]

For the author, the musicians of the new jazz style developed it for the poor while "[...] Bird and Dizzy proposed it for the middle class" (S 265). In the mode of *showing*, Baraka evokes imaginary content analogy by describing the new jazz style with "[...] they were only playing that one scary note" (S 266), "[t]he length of the music was the only form" (S 264). The saxophone or "the honk" gains importance as instruments in free jazz. Finally, the short story reaches its climax when "Lynn Hope got his riff" (S 266) and his band joined him in "Harlem Nocturne" (S 263), which was "[...] slow and heavy [...]" (S 263).

Furthermore, Baraka not only illustrates the movements of the musicians but also describes the way the audience reacts to Lynn Hope's jam sessions with certain dance styles such as "The Grind, The Rub, The Slow Drag" (S 262). When Lynn Hope performs, the "[...] the serious dancers loosened their ties" (263-64). Baraka describes the new dance movements as follows: "[...] the idea was to press against each other hard, to rub, to shove the hips tight, and gasp at whatever passion" (S 264). In this scene, the metaphorical meaning of free jazz is transmitted with cognitive and emotional effects on a readership.

In view of formal imitation (compare 2.1), Baraka's experimental prose style reminds of structural analogies to free jazz (G. Jones, "Freeing" 1). The improvisational quality of free jazz is rendered in the short story's outer form, e.g. when the author starts a new paragraph right-aligned instead of left-aligned and indented with the citation of the song title "'The Cross-Over'" (S 260). Structural improvisations in "The Screamers" are held together by Lynn Hope's repeated riffs. In addition, jazz music's inherent call-and-response technique is applied in the form of constant interrogations between musicians and listeners. For instance, the narrator comments on the previously performing band and their song repertoire with: "We hated the popular song [...]" (S 264).

189An example for Baraka's extended description of the performing musicians is "Gator would strut up and down the stage, dancing for emphasis, shaking his long gassed hair in his face and coolly mopping it back" (S 264-65).

As the title “The Screamers” already suggests, expressive screams are prevalently rendered in the mode of *showing* (compare 2.1), and contributes to word music. Especially towards the end of the short story, a culmination of screaming soundscapes emerges with rhythmic, repeated figures: “(OPPRESSORS!)” (S 260) or “'Yeah, Uhh, Yeh, Uhh'” (S 267). Furthermore, melodies like “A-boomp bahba, A-boomp bahba bahba [...]” (S 261) mirror the live performance in an onomatopoetic way. Also shortened sentences with only one constituent render the sound of free jazz music, e.g. “Dots” or “Lights” (S 260), providing the short story with a special rhythmic effect.

All in all, Baraka authentically portrays the advent of free jazz music during the 1960s in New York City in a *telling* way. He represents jamming musicians with the saxophone in the forefront, cites song titles and mentions the names of popular free jazz musicians, along with musicological descriptions of the new jazz music style. “The Screamers” receives its musicality mainly by its improvisational structure and screamed riffs as word music.

4.4.2 Expressive Screams

With his rejection of an association with the writers from the Beat Movement and a shift to Black Arts nationalism, Baraka's writing exhibits an attack on Western literary forms that emulates the musical “murder” he admires in John Coltrane's musical improvisations. In Baraka's eyes, Coltrane's musical experiences and creative achievements were milestones and sources of revolutionary inspiration in the movement from racial oppression to freedom (Cataliotti xi, 101). Baraka uses jazz as a metaphor and model for narrative and dramatic strategies in “The Screamers” (G. Jones, “Freeing” 111-22), and hereby activates his readership.[190] Dramatic scenes are created by tensions inside as well as outside the music venue, which in turn leads to tensions in the unconsciousness of a reader. For example, the

190Baraka sought dramatic forms for expressing the consciousness of those alienated from the psychological, economic, and racial mainstream American society throughout his career (Simawe xxii).

musicians challenge each other inside the club when “Deen laugh[s] at us all” (S 260). Lynn Hope gets the riff and subsequently the crowd pushes him until he leaves the hall, marches at the head of the crowd into Belmont Avenue and gathers an even larger crowd as he proceeds. The march is peaceful until the police arrive with paddy wagons and fire hoses. By competition among the jamming jazz musicians and an increasing push for energetic playing by the audience, Baraka creates immense tensions with total engagement of a reader.

In the beginning, imaginative soundscapes rather take place in the background to support Baraka's political statements. Only on the second page, Lynn Hope and his band start to play: “He stomped his foot, and waved one hand. The other hung loosely on his horn” (S 261). Towards the end, a culmination of screaming soundscapes emerges and “[f]ast dancers fanned themselves” (S 263). Again, an increase of dramatic tension is recurrent when the screams by Lynn Hope become louder and louder; the audience joining him in screaming and the heat becomes unbearable. Repressed feelings are stored to be released at the end of the story. The screams throughout the short story are an intense expression of emotions (Tracy, “Jazz” 853), which effect both Lynn Hope's audience and Baraka's readership.[191]

In rhythmic, repeated figures, emotions of hatred, frustration, secrecy and despair are insistently expressed by oppressed and impoverished African-Americans (S 264).[192] Screams like “(OPPRESSORS!)” (S 260) or “'Yeah, Uhh, Yeh, Uhh'” (S 267) contribute to the dynamic quality of the text. Baraka celebrated this originality of speech indigenous to “black” culture as “the black cults of emotion” (Breton 5-6). These screams remind of pre-civilized outcries and have strong emotional effects on the reader with their surprising expressive character.

Baraka's portrayal of the unexpected within the parameters of the anticipated creates a further gap for a reader's active participation in the story's proceedings.

191 Hatred, frustration, and despair are expressed by the use of repeated rhythmic figures and screamed riffs (G. Jones, “Amiri Baraka”).

192 When Baraka describes free jazz music of the 1960s, he points out that this music was sensual and full of emotions: “And the idea was “[...] gasp at whatever passion” (S 264). The characters' direct expression of their feelings represents that time and its energetic atmosphere: “All extremes were popular with the crowd. The singers shouted, the musicians stomped and howled. The dancers ground each other passion or moved so fast [...]” (S 264).

Screams or exclamations such as “(OPPRESSORS!)” or “'Yeah, Uhh, Yeah, Uhh'” appear in unforeseen places, disrupting the narrative flow of the text. Another surprising moment is portrayed in the description of the musicians' movements when suddenly “[McNeeley] fell backwards, flat on his back, with both feet stuck up high in the air [...]” (S 265). Also when the riot seems to end in a disaster, it ends abruptly with Lynn's band “[breaking] different ways, to save whatever it was each of us thought we loved” (S 268).

As a concluding remark, Baraka calls the reader to actively take part in the event of “The Screamers.” Baraka's *Leerstellen* serve as possibilities for a reader's emotional and cognitive participation in the short story. Dramatic scenes such as the ensuing riot and its abrupt ending contribute to the short story's tension. Screamed riffs are an intense expression of emotions, which also lead to a reader's engagement.

4.4.3 Stored Ecological Energy

In the 1960s, Baraka and other African-American writers were trying to merge art with politics, fusing radical views with experimental prose styles (Simawe xxii). Such a creative approach is apparent in “The Screamers,” which is modeled after an experimental free jazz composition (G. Jones, “Freeing” 1). With its integral principle of circularity and rhythms as well as an imitation of sounds through imaginative screams, this short story receives dynamic ecological energy. References to weather conditions, and the augmented use of the word “green,” award this short story with additional ecological powers until it is finally turned into an ecosystem. Baraka explores the relationship between a group and its individual voices and thereby creates a dynamic of call-and-response (G. Jones, “Freeing” 1).

Firstly, Baraka describes the interrelationship between Lynn Hope and the imaginative audience with “Lynn's screams erased them all [...]” (S 263). There is a constant interrogation between musicians and listeners' responses with energetic dance movements and their joining in Lynn's screaming towards the end. Secondly, individual impressions are blended with descriptions of the community. The

narrator's thoughts are unfolded during the performance and he lets the readership know about his reaction to the music with "[...] even I did the one step I knew, safe at the back of the hall" (S 266). Alternatively, voices from the group as a whole are pointed out with "'Okay, baby,' we all thought" (S 266). Call-and-response not only takes place between musicians and listeners but also between the narrator and the audience as a whole, ensuring interdependence of various voices. This phenomenon clearly represents ecological processes with non-linear and multiple feedback loops. With its structure in accordance to a free jazz music tune from the 1960s, the scream "'Yeah, Uhh, Yeh, Uhh'" (S 267) reappears with increasing volume during the imaginative jam session. The image of the honk as a "repeated rhythmic figure" (S 264) can be regarded as a structuring device.

Shortened sentences, screams, or sung lines contribute to ecological dynamics of "The Screamers." Screams in the form of written words like "(OPPRESSORS!)" (S 260), or "'Yeah, Uhh, Yeh, Uhh'" (S 267) contribute to the dynamics of the text. These screams remind of pre-civilized outcries, which are celebrated by Baraka as "the black cults of emotion" (Breton 5-6) and provide the text with ecological dynamic energy. In addition, jazz music is connected to natural phenomena in phrases like "Suede heaven raining" or "cool summer air" (S 260), which spur a reader's environmental consciousness. Moreover, the color green appears several times, for example when "Lynn's […] stuck with green stone […] green sparkling cubes" (S 261). Lynn's men even wear clothes in green: "White and green plaid jackets his men wear [...]" (S 260). With natural phenomena in the background, the energy of this short story is increased, especially when the color green intensifies and turns neon towards the end (S 266).

All in all, a reader unconsciously experiences biophilia when Baraka uses compositional strategies of free jazz music, screamed riffs, and an augmented use of the color green. With the internal call-and-response pattern and repeated rhythmic riffs, the short story is turned into a fictional ecosystem. The imitation of these screamed riffs in sentence structures or screams as direct exclamations enhance the story's ecological dynamics. Likewise, imaginative references to the color green intensify a reader's unconscious ecological experience.

4.4.4 “Priests of the Unconscious”

Baraka celebrates saxophone players of free jazz music by comparing them with ethnic historians, actors, and “priests of the unconscious.” Hereby, he gives them shamanic-like power because of their sense of music's affinity to natural phenomena, and appreciating music's unconscious healing functions: “Ethnic historians, actors, priests of the unconscious” (S 264). Here, music acts not for the purpose of entertainment but as a medium for contacting metaphysical powers in order to change or heal (Jacobs 9).[193]

Following from this, the transcendent moment in “The Screamers” has a collective purifying function (Diedrich 432). Free jazz music is used in a ritualistic way. A culmination of screams energetically intensifies the fictive soundscape with “'Yeah, Uhh, Yeah, Uhh'” (S 267) with the audience joining: “We screamed and screamed at the clear image of ourselves […]. Ecstatic, completed [...]” (S 267). In this transcendent, ecstatic moment, both the audience and the musicians experience biophilia. The characters see their pure image of themselves and perceive themselves as whole human beings.[194]

The imaginative dramatic scene is supported by extensive bodily movements, which are an expression of the active perception of biophilia and its regenerative effects.

> Illinois would leap and twist his head, scream when he wasn't playing. Gator would strut up and down the stage, dancing for emphasis, shaking his long gassed hair in his face and coolly mopping it back. Jug, the beautiful horn, would wave back and forth so high we all envied him his *connection*, or he'd stomp softly to the edge of the stage whispering those raucous threats […]. (S 264-65; emphasis mine)

Bodily movements from Illinois, Gator and Jug mirror transcendence while they are

193In traditional Africa, practicing religion is connected with the ritual function of singing and dancing (Jacobs 9).

194For Baraka, jazz music has been the only consistent exhibitor of Negritude in formal American culture next to blues music because the bearers of its tradition maintained their essential identities as “negroes”; in no other art has this been possible (H. Baker, “Recent Criticism” 5).

freed from frustrations and anger by receiving biophilic life-energies. Jug, the horn player, has apparently a special "connection," and perceives the transcendent moment very intensely. The following description of fast dancing with increasing tempo through parallelism leads to a dramatic rendition with captivating effects on a reader. The dramatic transcendent moment is energetically increased by the creation of an eery atmosphere in a darkening dance hall, in which screams and riffs are continuously repeated:

> The fast dancers and practicers making the whole hall dangerous […] and darkness raced around the hall […]. Then Lynn got his riff, that rhythmic figure we knew he would repeat […]. And he screamed it so the veins in his face stood out like neon: 'Uhh, yeah, Uhh, yeh, Uhh, yeh,' […]. (S 266)

The alarming image of a "dangerous," "darkening" hall, and Lynn Hope's veins turning "neon" infects the audience as well as Baraka's readership. Both of them receive of biophilic-related feelings.[195] The saxophonist touches his listeners and the readers with enormous emotional power *via* his music: "And Lynn could be a common hero, from whatever side we saw him. Knowing that energy, and its response" (S 261).

In addition, Baraka's description of the audience's reactions affects the reader in an electrifying way, especially when audience and musicians fuse into one single soundscape: "Ecstatic, completed, involved in a secret *communal* expression" (S 267; emphasis mine). In "The Screamers," music receives a special connective function: "'It's too crowded. It's too many people on the line!'" (S 267). Too many people are eager to experience biophilia and follow subconsciously Lynn Hope's infectious music. Lynn Hope and his accompanying jazz musicians are truly "priests of the unconscious" by not only purifying themselves but also their audience as well as its readership in transcendent, energetic soundscapes. The intensive screaming riffs in the eery atmosphere and the fast bodily movements lead to a reader's participation in the overall ritual of biophilic regeneration.

195In *Dutchman,* Baraka pointed out that African-American musicians would have to murder if they did not play (Simawe xxii).

4.4.5 "The Sound as a Basis for Thought"

The stance spread like fire thru the cabarets and joints of the black cities, so that the sound became a basis for thought […]. (S 264)

Baraka's works are not only about ritual biophilic healing processes but also have a didactic function (Diedrich 432). The author's intention is to shock people out of their Euro-conventional, and move them to re-think their notions of what art, society, and life are. In "The Screamers," Baraka's opinions about capitalism and racism are statements which cannot be expressed in words, but openly uttered in music in encoded form.[196] Especially free jazz music reflects the discontentment of the then younger generations and was one of the areas, in which a thorough revolt against the establishment and its norms manifested itself.[197]

Baraka's literary works are deeply connected with his fight for freedom (Liukkonen). Firstly, Baraka signifies on class divisions and criticizes Americans who follow mainstream standards. He illustrates how human beings have forgotten to feel themselves, and encourages them to express their individuality. When the narrator and other patrons wait for Lynn Hope and his musicians to play, he divides the crowd into two groups: "Those niggers. Laundromat workers, beauticians, pregnant short-haired jail bait separated all ways from 'us' [...]" (S 261). For the narrator, this group of people listened only to commercialized pop tunes and "[...] rivaled pure emotion with wind-up record players that pumped Jo Stafford into Home Economics rooms" (S 262).

Besides "mute bass players," "his group" (S 260) "watch [Lynn Hope] grinning, quietly, or high with wine blotches on four-dollar shirts" (S 260). Even

196Following Baraka, Addison Gayle, Jr., formalized the idea of the Black Aesthetic and renewed Baraka's oppositional stance: "The serious black artist of today is at war with the American society as few have been throughout American history" (Norment 299).

197Free jazz became a manifesto, in which ideas and thoughts could be expressed as an act of cultural resistance. The musical motifs were connected to the social upheavals at the end of the 1950s: the increasing emancipation movement of the African-American population in the USA, the dwindling illusions of the American dream, and the psychological effects of wars (Jacobs 281-84; Jost, "Free Jazz" 175-89).

though Lynn Hope and his musicians are poor, they keep their individuality and their ability to laugh in contrast to those "depressed economic groups" (S 262).[198] Baraka portrays that "[...] only the wild or the very poor thrived in Graham's or could be roused by Lynn's histories and rhythms" (S 262). The author clearly shows how mainstream America or the middle classes have forgotten how to perceive biophilic feelings as restorative life-energies.

Secondly, the image of Lynn Hope's extensive screaming aims at transcendence of the present capitalist and racist American society: "Lynn's screams erased them all " (S 263). Finally, the short story's transcendent soundscape ends up in a revolution. Marcela Breton points out that the cacophonous sound and the weaving disruption of the traffic is pre-figurement of the social revolution Baraka had in mind when writing the story (5). The honking saxophonist leads the trail of nightclub patrons into the streets. The spilling into the streets by African-American musicians and their audience is meant to signify a symbolic re-capture of the city by its oppressed minority.

With the protagonist's surname "Hope," Baraka's conviction of a possible transformation of society, in which human values gain importance over pure capitalistic aims, is recognizable.[199] Baraka intends a peaceful or "sweet" revolution without violence but with the intention to make people think: "It would be the form of the sweetest revolution, to hucklebuck into the fallen capital and let the oppressors lindy hop out" (S 267).[200] Hope Lynn and his musicians are met by the "Biggers," who are ready for a violent confrontation with the musicians, the narrator and others in the crowd who are not ready for this action.[201] Before "[...] the war had reached its peak, Lynn and his musicians [...]" (S 268) decided to "[...] save [what they] loved"

198 Baraka criticizes the "[...] celebrity fags with radio programs, mute bass players [...]" (S 263). With "mute bass players," the author signifies on the fact that these followers of capitalism have lost their live energies and, in a wider sense, themselves.

199 With a "[...] white girl who learned calypso in vocational school [...]" (S 261) but her "[...] humanity [is] as paltry as her cotton dress" (S 261), Baraka illustrates lost human values in American society.

200 The revolutionary uprising shows similarities to a planned mass boycott in the 1960s. Amid those currents, pianist Cecil Taylor urged African-American musicians to dissociate themselves from the predominantly "white" music industry, calling for a mass boycott of jazz music clubs, record companies, trade papers, and federated unions (Borshuk, "Jazz" 848).

201 Baraka used the name Biggers apparently in analogy to the central character Bigger Thomas of Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) (Watts).

(S 268). However, Lynn Hope succeeded in spreading […] his personal evaluation of the world" (S 266) because "[his] stance spread like fire thru the cabarets and joints of the black cities [...]" (S 264).

Thirdly, Lynn Hope and his musicians keep a constant rhythm through this revolutionary scene. Hereby, Baraka signifies on "America's responsible immigrants" (S 267), who symbolically lost their rhythm when their "[...] knives came out, the razors [...]" (S 267), and "counterattacked" (S 267) Lynn Hope's transcendent music. In contrast, Lynn Hope's band "[...] went out into the lobby and in perfect rhythm down the marble steps" (S 267). When the musicians march out into the middle of the street, they literally shout to the bus driver: "Hey, baby, honk that horn in time or shut it off!" (S 267). Here, Baraka teaches a lesson about the ecological principle of being in time with universal rhythms: Everything happens "[...] in perfect rhythm" (S 267). In order to survive in life as well as in a band, you always need to stick to the rhythm.

In conclusion, the sound of free jazz arguably becomes a basis for thought in "The Screamers." Baraka signifies intensely on the deadening effects of capitalistic societies and plans a "sweet revolution" in order to save humanity from loosing its ties to nature. The author alerts his readership not to become "mute bass players," who forget how to perceive vitally important biophilic feelings or get out of their natural rhythms.

5. Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Rap Music in *Philadelphia Fire, The Plot Against Hip Hop,* and *The Haunting of Hip Hop*

In the following chapter, "Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Rap Music in *Philadelphia Fire, The Plot Against Hip Hop,* and *The Haunting of Hip Hop*," I will portray ways in which Wideman, George, and Berry created authentic atmospheres with rap music and the possibility of a reader's identification with the music's topic of urban failures in *Philadelphia Fire, The Plot Against Hip Hop,* and *The Haunting of Hip Hop* (see 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; compare 2.1.3). Because of a recent loss of truth in rap music itself, transcendent soundscapes are less elaborate in selected novels with rap music elements than in prose fictional works with jazz or blues music elements (compare 3.; 4.). Nevertheless, Wideman, George, and Berry convey important messages concerning "necrophilia."

Regarding the artistic production, Wideman, George, and Berry create authentic atmospheres of hip-hop music by using a variety of intermedial strategies. It is to note that all three authors make the missing truth in nowadays hip-hop music the topic of discussion and elaborately portray urban failures. Furthermore, the African-American characteristics of storytelling and drumbeats are emphasized in each of the discussed novels. While *Philadelphia Fire* and *The Plot Against Hip Hop* transmit a rather grim atmosphere with for instance, the MOVE bombing in 1985 or the murder of acclaimed music critic Robinson along with numerous references to real events in hip-hop music history, *The Haunting of Hip Hop* conveys a slightly more positive attitude by depicting mostly imaginative scenes and characters, e.g. the sympathetic hip-hop music producer Freedom in a call-and-response-like communication with ancestral spirits (see 5.1.1; 5.2.1; 5.3.1).

Concerning storytelling elements in novels influenced by hip-hop music, each of the three authors gives voice to a variety of characters in African-American vernacular speeches or provides spaces for active music-making and cited rap lyrics.

I n *Philadelphia Fire,* a multiplicity of voices comments on the incident of the MOVE bombing with the KKK rapping on it (see 5.1.1). In George's novel, imaginative and real-life figures from hip-hop take part in the search for Robinson's true murderer, surrounded by imaginative hip-hop music from the golden age, gangster rap, and from the era marked by business (see 5.2.1). In Berry's novel, a cast of characters and ancient spirits tell their stories to heal themselves while Freedom expresses his personal pain in active rapping scenes (see 5.3.1).

Rhythmic effects or the sound of drumming is captured in the language as well as in structural respects. In *Philadelphia Fire,* mostly rap music lyrics or rapping speech elements as well as transcendent drum patterns in imaginative soundscapes convey rhythmic effects of hip-hop music (see 5.1.1). Both George and Berry construct their novels by subdividing chapters with each chapter heading conveying a message, which contributes to an overall rhythmic effect.

Each of the discussed works enables a reader's active engagement in the fictional event mainly by an identification with characters on the search for wholeness in transcendent, postmodern times. During this process, authors provide *Leerstellen* in the form of silent breaks, the imaginative unknown or disorienting structures. The search motif creates suspense during the reading process, which contributes to a reader's participation in the aesthetic event. A reader is invited to identify with Cudjoe in *Philadelphia Fire,* whose inner life is fragmented as a result from postmodern urban failures (see 5.1.2). In *The Plot Against Hip Hop*, George depicts D Hunter in a sympathetic way, fighting for truth in business-ridden times (see 5.2.2). Berry achieves identification with the overall topic of the loss of one's inner self and offers space to sympathize with characters such as Freedom or Ava (see 5.3.2).

Regarding so-called *Leerstellen,* Wideman places breaks of silence into the course of the novel, which result from traumatic experiences. In turn, such fissures offer implicit readers possibilities for creative imagination (see 5.1.2). In *The Plot Against Hip Hop,* George provides gaps in the form of hints of who could be the true murderer, which are negated in the further course of the novel (see 5.2.2). In Berry's novel, a constant call-and-response pattern between an imaginative real world and an

ancestral world leads to disorienting effects during the reading process (see 5.3.2).

Suspense resulting from the search motif and the topic of the unknown activate a reader's emotional participation. In *Philadelphia Fire,* Simba Muntu is lost, whom Cudjoe searches throughout the novel. In *The Plot Against Hip Hop,* D Hunter takes on the role of a private detective on the quest for Robinson's murderer. In Berry's novel, the unknown in the image of a haunted house takes a central role in producing a reader's feelings of tensions. In each of the discussed novels, the search motif and the unknown are interpreted as the quest for one's self in the 21st century.

Regarding an unconscious biophilic experience on behalf of a reader, texts are turned into an ecosystem *via* polyphonic structures as well as time shifts from ancestral times to narrated times, which in turn mirrors ecological principles. A reader's biophilic experience also takes place in imaginary soundscapes. In addition, biophilic experiences are deepened with references to natural surroundings and images. Most clearly, Wideman applies the concept of great time in his triple-voiced structure and provides several perspectives on the disaster of the MOVE bombing (see 5.1.3). George concentrates on fabricating *The Plot Against Hip Hop* according to a remix-like structure consisting of various references to hip-hop music history from the last forty years (see 5.2.3). Berry achieves a transcendent effect mainly by call-and-response patterns between ancestral voices and the novel's real-time character voices (see 5.3.3).

While Wideman provides biophilic experiences in the form of imaginative references to fire and the natural environments of a park in Philadelphia or the sea bordering the Greek island of Mykonos, neither Berry nor George make environmental allusions prominent in their novels (see 5.1.3). Instead, a biophilic experience is offered in the form of transcendent soundscapes. Even though transcendent soundscapes are rare in *The Plot Against Hip Hop*, imaginative reminders of the golden age of hip-hop music offer D Hunter or Jay Z biophilic experiences (see 5.2.4). In contrast, Berry makes room for a transcendent soundscape in the form of a hip-hop music party in the haunted house (see 5.3.4).

Even though hip-hop music influenced novels depict a rather gray atmosphere of urban failures and the loss of one's self in postmodern, fragmentary times, authors

encourage their readers to keep a positive attitude to life and listen to one's self. Especially Wideman's self-reflexive attitude calls the reader to become conscious and take the creative KKK as role models (see 5.1.5). A life-affirming stance is conveyed by rhythmic continuous motions despite ruptures in line, which is illustrated in *Philadelphia Fire via* the the tree of life. George explicitly portrays a "necrophilic" attitude to life in *The Plot Against Hip Hop,* but nevertheless promotes the love of life with the image of D Hunter's continuous search for his self despite deadly ruptures (see 5.2.2). A rhythmic continuous motion is most clearly depicted in Berry's *The Haunting of Hip Hop'*s polyrhythmic structure and messages of the drums in regular intervals (see 5.3.3).

African-American writers portray the transformation of traditional storytelling elements into rap music. Hip-hop music in African-American novels transmits biophilic life-energies in imaginative soundscapes, storytelling elements as well as rhythmic effects. The power of a rapper's voice and his/her role as a storyteller could fix a crowd's attention with impressive verbal dexterity and performance skills (George, *Hip Hop America* xiv; T. Rose, *Black Noise* 193-205). This expressive quality inherent in rap music is combined with rhythmic powers, which remind a listener or reader of natural rhythms.

In sum, African-American novels create authentic atmospheres of hip-hop music by signifying on urban failures. A reader's emotional participation is mainly activated by identification with characters on the search for their lost selves. A fragmentary structure provides *Leerstellen* for a reader's creative imagination. Hereby, a reader opens him/herself up for the perception of biophilic feelings through a polyphonic structure, which resembles an ecosystem, or hip-hop soundscapes. In a self-reflexive process, authors advise their readers not to give up hope in times of inner and outer fragmentation.

5.1 *Philadelphia Fire* – Healing Storytelling

In the following analysis, I will show how a reader is provided the possibility of experiencing biophilia through the art of storytelling in *Philadelphia Fire.* Wideman makes the novel musical by using elements from gangster rap music. His topics are the actual event of the MOVE bombing in Philadelphia and urban failures of postmodern society (compare 2.1.3). Dramatic effects create structural breaks of silence in the novel, and thereby provide *Leerstellen* for a reader's participation in the novel's search motif (compare 2.2.1). The characters' fragmentary inner lives are mirrored in the polyphonic composition of the novel, which tends to resemble an ecosystem with transcendent effects. Also time shifts between ancestral and narrated time contribute to provide the novel with biophilic life-energies (compare 2.3.1). Numerous versions or stories told by characters in analogy to storytelling in rap music lead to biophilic regeneration (compare 2.3.2). With Wideman's concept of self-reflexivity, he motivates a reader to become conscious that we are all part of the so-called tree of life (compare 2.4).

5.1.1 MOVE Bombing

Wideman believes that both in African-American prose fiction as well as in his own writing, music is a powerful means of expression and survival (Guzzio, *Trauma* 28-29).[202] The idea of survival with the help of cultural activities such as hip-hop music with its characteristic storytelling is inherent in *Philadelphia Fire.* For the author, the culture that slaves developed in their new environment in America helped them survive the brutal oppression, to which they were subjected. Music is a repository for preserving history, values, dignity, and a sense of self (Eschborn 34). Wideman realizes that the exchange of music-like stories find acceptance and even joy as well as humor in suffering. With music, his family and his race have always survived the

202Shared stories with remembering the past and addressing its wounds have subjective healing power (Guzzio, *Trauma* 190-91; TuSmith, "Introduction" viii). Wideman describes storytelling as one of the cultural elements that contribute to individual and collective survival (Eschborn 45).

somewhat traumatic conditions in America (Guzzio, *Trauma* 8). By incorporating African-American music in literature, Wideman demonstrates his conviction that musical-literary intermediality represents a rich African-American cultural tradition, which has been used to resist and survive oppression over centuries (Eschborn 48).[203]

Philadelphia Fire receives its authenticity with the thematization of an actual event, the MOVE bombing, and explicit references to the environment of gangster rap music as well as the beginning of hip-hop music in parks (compare 2.1.3). *Philadelphia Fire*'s point of departure is an actual urban crisis that took place in Philadelphia in 1985, the confrontation between MOVE, a predominantly African-American back-to-nature cult, and the city administration, which culminated in a police bombing.[204] Constant conflicts with the police and neighbors led to a showdown on May 13, 1985, when the members of MOVE were evicted after the black mayor had commissioned a police action (Eschborn 128). When shots were fired from the MOVE house, a police helicopter finally dropped an incendiary device on the house with the consequence of two residential blocks being burnt down and eleven members, including Africa, dying in the fire (Bazelon).

This particular disaster is presented as part of a larger upheaval in economic, political, and social order brought about by a number of interlocking structural transformations that have occurred in American cities since the 1970s (Dubey 579). Although gangster rap music, which confronted the dire need for attention to the problems of drug abuse and police violence against ethnic minorities, was often

203 Wideman has never been a musician himself. Instead, he traded his dream of becoming a basketball star for that of becoming a writer. While growing up in the African-American community of Homewood in Pittsburgh (Eschborn 8-10), his relatives transmitted a rich storytelling tradition in which he had a creative and imaginative world around him, from which he drew in writing *Philadelphia Fire* (Rowell, "Interview" 47).

204 It is important to note that this novel does not primarily portray the actual historical event but the different reactions triggered by it (Eschborn 12). The ascetic, back-to-nature cult called MOVE, an abbreviation for movement (Dubey 580), was an African-American militant group founded by John Africa in the early 1970s. Its social and philosophical beliefs were contained in the *Book of Guidelines,* commonly referred to as *The Book*, saying that the MOVE valorized life and made the principle of freedom against man's law that has created industry that is polluting air, poisoning water and soil. MOVE perceived the modern city as a concentrated manifestation of the evils of a man-made system built by technology and geared around consumption (Assefa and Wahrhaftig 10-11). Disenchanted with capitalism's failure to fulfill the needs it induces, MOVE sought to opt out this system by reducing and tailoring consumption to satisfy only the natural demands of survival (Dubey 582). The sect members neither used modern technology nor subscribed to laws, believing that society wants people to be unhealthy in order to control and exploit them (Eschborn 128).

condemned by dominant power structures, it took an overwhelming presence in popular culture and mainstream American music (S. Berry). Protest through music is connected to the Kid Krusade, for example when Timbo says, "of course that rapping music's in it. And the stuff on the walls part of it too" (*PF* 90).[205] Hip-hop culture was also connected to graffiti (compare 2.1.3). Cudjoe makes this connection when he remarks, "vandalism or tribal art or handwriting on the wall. Whatever the signs meant, they were a transforming process" (*PF* 88).

Wideman addresses issues through references to rap music in order to express feelings, which cannot be put in words. Imaginary content analogy in fictional soundscapes takes place in part three with the performance of the KKK's rapping on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Cudjoe's transcendent moment during the drumming ceremony: "[J.B.] thinks of young black boys shotgunning other black boys, black girl babies raising black girl babies and the streets thick with love and honor and duty and angry songs running along broken curbs [...]" (*PF* 158). Here, the KKK signifies on urban failures in rap music.

Cognitive as well as emotional effects on a readership are further evoked when "Music trails [Cudjoe]. Music tars and feathers his unguarded back. He can't help feeling naked. Known. The burden of returning is remembering he has no secrets" (*PF* 193). Wideman captures the sound of drumming in examples such as "[Cudjoe] listens across thirty yards for the thud of heels registering like drumbeats upon whatever it is that covers the floor of her apartment" (*PF* 72). The protagonist's imaginative connection of the sound of heels and drumbeats prepares a reader for the transcendent soundscape towards the end of the novel when "[t]wo black men, chests bare, dreadlocks to their shoulders, drum their way into the ceremony" (*PF* 196).

In part one, rap music not only appears in the car stereo music but is also heard from the side of the park basketball court: "Music reigns supreme and there is nothing not listening […] behind it shine like silver, shine like gold. […] Hushed for a moment but now a river of noise again [...]" (*PF* 43). Cudjoe has been out of the

205Cudjoe sees the sign of Simba's gang in the form of KK (Kid's Krusade) or KKK (Kaliban's Kiddie Korps), painted throughout the city. The latter sign either signifies on *The Tempest*'s character Caliban or on the Ku Klux Klan, suggesting that both references are equally destructive toward the African-American community (Guzzio, *Trauma* 180).

country for ten years and a new sound that he now recognizes as hip-hop has emerged: "[...] one voice dominates, rapping, scatting, till they complete their business" (*PF* 50).

Philadelphia Fire is further provided with authentic musical qualities when Wideman integrates intertextual sections of the KKK's rapping on a Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest,* e.g.:[206]

> *This is your rap-rap-rap-rapcity rapper on*
> *the dial*
> *So just cool out and lissen awhile*
> *Cause if you don't dig what I'm rappin*
> *bout [...].* (*PF* 158)

Further intertextual insertions of rap lyrics in italics, which are set apart from the main text appear in the same chapter two more times: on page 161, it is rapped or signified on the MOVE community with "*Dreads was seeking heaven, all they caught was hell* [...]" (*PF* 161), and in the latter, the KKK boasts themselves with "*In the park called Clark we rule the dark* […] *We the youth, the truth / You better learn us* [...]" (*PF* 165-66).

In addition, there are two rap-influenced children's speeches that suggest movement toward possible salvation. The first, perhaps spoken by Simba Muntu, is a meditation on death beginning with "*If when you die no heaven no place to go where do you go when you die?*" and ends with "*So our blood runs warm and safe inside*

206In part two, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is retold in the style of speech characterized by 1960s-era poets (L. Lewis 150-51). Cudjoe wants to perform the play with urban children whose opportunities are limited and thereby demonstrate that they are able to achieve something extraordinary (Eschborn 139). Cudjoe portrays Caliban as a model for African-American people struggling for freedom in the twentieth century. By calling Caliban a godfather of the children, he connects the oppressed character of the play with poor African-American children (Eschborn 141). Calibalism, "[...] naked under his dreads," which symbolically stand for chains, appears as an oppressed subject (*P F* 129), whose humanity Cudjoe insists on (Eschborn 141-42). Wideman intends to deconstruct the way the police and the media see urban, male, African-American youth (Guzzio, *Trauma* 178). By rapping on *The Tempest,* Cudjoe demonstrates Shakespeare's enduring relevance (Eschborn 141): "[...] the master blaster, bad swan from Avon, number-one voice and people's choice, scratcher and mixer and sweet jam fixer, ripsnorter and exhorter, cool as a refrigerator prestidigitator" (*PF* 129).

because there is no place to go after you die" (*PF* 50-52). The second one, not nearly as innocent as the first one, but nevertheless hopeful in its energy and truth, is perhaps repeated by Timbo as he quotes Simba Muntu (*P F* 91). By quoting rap lyrics, Wideman triggers the sound of rapping in a reader's ear and makes the text musical (compare 2.1).

Moreover, implicit references to rap music in the form of structural analogies and word music (compare 2.1) contribute to *Philadelphia Fire*'s literary acoustics. Wideman uses strategies of free indirect discourse, and thus creates a so-called *speakerly text* (Guzzio, *Trauma* 7). In his experimental compositional technique, the author resorts to characteristics of rap music and includes typical African-American vernacular. The novel is peppered with a rapping style as cultural codes, contained and associated with rap music. Rap lyrics, black vernacular, and verbal puns keep the oral tradition alive in the written spaces of *Philadelphia Fire* (Guzzio, *Trauma* 178). Examples are phrases such as "Hey bro" or "Hey homey" (*PF* 193), and word games with shortened sentences and rhythmic effects: "Run. Spot, run. Look at Spot run" (*PF* 187). Also repetitions such as "[...] *please, please, don't go* [...]" (*PF* 156) copy the sound of rap music.

This effect is also achieved by accumulated statements in the following example: "[...] young black boys shotgunning […], black girl babies raising black girl babies and the streets thick with love and honor and duty and angry songs running along broken curbs, love and honor and duty and nobody understands [...]" (*PF* 158). This paragraph consists of only one sentence and dramatic effects resulting from urban failures are enacted by the repetitions of the words "love" or "honor." An increasing tempo of this rapping style emphasizes desperation in *Philadelphia Fire,* and at the same time contributes to the novel's musicality.

Numerous parallels between Wideman's writing and rap music can be drawn: Musical pauses can be compared to literary gaps, and constant variations on stories and characters resemble musical improvisations (Guzzio, *Trauma* 28-29). For instance, the protagonist and his son are confronted with moments of silence during their phone conversations (*P F* 99). Wideman layers multiple stories, traditions, voices, and tropes in his work (Guzzio, *Trauma* 27). The novel becomes a

polyphonic narrative by presenting different perspectives from Cudjoe, Margaret Jones or Timbo on the MOVE bombing, and by shifting identities with Wideman as a writer, autobiographer, subject and fictional double (Guzzio, *Trauma* 184). The polyphonic nature of the novel is also apparent in multiple discourses, including dramatic monologue, rap lyrics, journalistic reports, Greek tragedy, and Shakespearean dialogue (Guzzio, *Trauma* 184), or time shifts between past, present and future (see 5.1.4). Riffs such as the search for Simba Munto are employed as repetitions, or as rephrasings within his own canon (Guzzio, *Trauma* 27).

All in all, music becomes a sustaining force in the dialogue with the traditions of the protagonist's African-American past and as a metaphor of the novel's style (Guzzio, *Trauma* 26, 28-29). The author improvises in oral communication and experiments with rap music in his fiction, thriving on the potential for experimentation in storytelling (Rosen 37-38; TuSmith, "Introduction" xii). With rap music in some form or content in *Philadelphia Fire* (Guzzio, *Trauma* 26, 28-29), Wideman creates an authentic as well as a musical atmosphere.

5.1.2 Breaks of Silence

In *Philadelphia Fire,* a reader is activated to take part in the event of the novel by Wideman's offer to identify with Cudjoe on common grounds of his search for identity in postmodern times while the author signifies on urban failures. This process involves a quality of empathy – an ability to listen and comprehend, which leads to partial identification. Empathy, sympathy, and compassion are part of the creative process, which take the writer out towards the other, whom he becomes temporarily and by whom he is changed (Grandjeat, "Brother Figures" 620).

With places of silence, *Leerstellen* are provided for a reader's active participation in the reading event of the novel. When Wideman deals with African-American history, he not only addresses "black" readers but appeals a universal audience (Eschborn 186). Wideman's novels have steadily encompassed a world beyond his immediate family. The author refers to American history in general or to

Africa.).[207] The cultural collapse and traumatic events of his early novels spread further to considerations of global chaos, genocide, and terror. He illustrates our post-traumatized culture, and a possible local global apocalypse (Guzzio, *Trauma* 190-91), with which a reader of our postmodern times can identify.[208]

Part three of the novel explicitly refers to Philadelphia as "the city of brotherly love" three times (*PF* 169, 175, 181; Eschborn 143). Philadelphia, the city where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were signed, stands for the founding principles of democracy, freedom, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. Wideman contrasts the literal meaning of Philadelphia as the "city of love" with its gloomy depiction of poverty, greed, and violence when the rich get richer, and the poor poorer (Eschborn 40, 132-33), which can be sensed worldwide.[209] Wideman reveals a stark portrayal of this new racial *nadir* through the narratorial eyes of J.B. and Cudjoe, which culminates in a plea to lay bare forces and bring objective light to the shadows of the urban crisis (J. Lee 233-34) with a cosmopolitan appeal.[210]

Besides identification with current urban failures in Western civilizations, a reader might identify with the protagonist Cudjoe, whose inner life is fragmented. The hero undertakes a journey that will forever alter his comprehension of the world and finally, his comprehension of himself. The protagonist is a solitary, heroic figure

207In Wideman's view, history is not static but a collective effort of human minds, from which no-one is excluded. Each individual member contributes to the collective mind and is also guided by this mind (Eschborn 28).

208Particularly in the middle section of the novel, Wideman asks fundamental questions by referring to James Baldwin's future apocalypse (Lewis 145-46).

209Many studies of urban development have detailed ways, in which projects to renew downtown areas by drawing commercial investment have displaced poor and largely minority residents to high-density public housing projects (Dubey 580). In the decade of the 1970s and 1980s, both popular and academic discourses contributed to the notion that urban communities of color must be increasingly managed, monitored, and in some cases, criminalized. The contemporary urban crisis demands new forms of struggle, new ways of understanding the spatial configurations of the city (J. Lee 233-34).

210Especially in part one and two, the problem of urban poverty is addressed (Eschborn 122). The contemporary urban crisis demands new forms of struggle, new ways of understanding spatial configurations of a city. Many studies of urban development have detailed ways, in which projects to renew downtown areas by drawing commercial investment have displaced poor and largely minority residents to high-density public housing projects (Dubey 580). In the decade of the 1970s and 1980s, both popular and academic discourses contributed to the notion that urban communities of color must be increasingly managed, monitored, and in some cases, criminalized. Our contemporary urban crisis demands new forms of struggle, new ways of understanding the spatial configurations of a city (J. Lee 233-34).

on the quest for his self, his identity. Cudjoe has no idea what he really is because he is so used to seeing himself through the eyes of others. The event of the bombing acts as a catalyst for him to address his personal gaps in life (Guzzio, *Trauma* 173; "Father's Texts" 185).[211]

Cudjoe states in *Philadelphia Fire* that this might be a detective story when he considers the type of story that he is writing about the MOVE bombing (*PF* 46). In the first part, the writer Cudjoe returns from a self-imposed exile on a Greek island to attempt to trace the whereabouts of Simba Muntu, a child who is supposed to be the solve survivor of the fire. What motivates Cudjoe to return to the US has to do with his growing sense of betrayal of himself, his sons, his talent, and his former commitment to change the world. However, Simba is not found, which underscores the tragedy of a lost generation of American youth (Eschborn 122). When Margaret Jones, an ex-member of MOVE, asks him about his plans, Cudjoe replies that he wants to find the boy and tell his story (Eschborn 126, 185).

The motif of lost children pervades the whole text.[212] It symbolizes that our generation is lost in the ecological crisis. Fragmented selves need to search for themselves and become whole subjects again. Simba is not found and Wideman's son remains imprisoned, which underscores the tragedy of the lost generation of American youth. Cudjoe's generation has given up on the possibility of sustaining or changing the world. The characters' voices, all of them are fragments and fictions of Cudjoe, and the fractured narrative are symbols of a society breaking apart (Lucy 486-87).

Wideman creates points of silence or *Leerstellen*, which activate a reader's imaginative engagement in the process of reading. Silent places or gaps in Wideman's work are compared to a "[...] place like the Australian Aborigine's

211Finding the way to his self is a singular quest, removed from family, community and love. By the end of his journey, the hero returns to human surroundings as a changed and complete human being (Guzzio, *Trauma* 192).

212In addition to Cudjoe's two sons and Simba, the novel describes his friend and literary mentor Sam's eighteen-year-old daughter Cassy, who dies in a car crash; the children who grow up poor in West Philadelphia and are to perform *The Tempest;* the Kaliban Kiddie Korps, the gang of ruthless criminal children Simba is said to have joined; the starving gypsy children at the Spanish coast whom Cudjoe remembers full of guilt because he could not help them; the Wideman persona's imprisoned teenage son suffering from a psychological disorder and Caliban in *The Tempest,* an orphan living on an island (Eschborn 127).

dreamtime where everything happens at once, everything connects, where the function of the dream is story and the function of the story to create the world" (Guzzio, *Trauma* 29). *Philadelphia Fire* is not only a text, which is structured by many narrative voices but also one that allows multiple conversations between text and readers. It summons a silent subject in its imagination, who, otherwise will not speak (Guzzio, *Trauma* 29).

The motif of silence connects the public catastrophe of the MOVE bombing with Wideman's, or Cudjoe's private catastrophe of the son's imprisonment. The novel introduces the paradox that father and son rather communicate through silence than through words, which reflects the fact that they find the situation too horrible to speak about it (Eschborn 135). Silence rushes to fill the void that words could not when Cudjoe speaks to his son over the phone: "I breathe into the space separating me from my son. I hope the silence will be filled for him as it is filled for me by hearing the nothing there is to say at this moment" (*PF* 99). Language fails when it attempts to address the unspeakable and unutterable in post-traumatic narratives (Guzzio, *Trauma* 175).

5.1.3 Concept of Great Time

The multi-vocal structure, which Wideman uses in *Philadelphia Fire,* resembles an ecosystem. Even though this form might have a disorienting effect on the reader, the author grasps a reader's emotional attention, which leads to the recipient's biophilic experience *via* the text's composition as an ecosystem. Such an unconscious biophilic experience is deepened with natural images of environments. In the following, I will illustrate this polyphonic nature of the novel (compare 5.1.1), which resembles the ecological principles of an ecosystem.[213]

Cudjoe is an unsuccessful African-American writer, who functions as a focalizer in the first part, and may be interpreted as a Wideman persona (Eschborn

213The "high culture" of *The Tempest* and *Oedipus at Colonus* exist alongisde the "low culture" of the Kiddie Korps, rap music, and Caliban's voice. These moments are further evidence of Wideman's polyphonic style (Guzzio, *Trauma* 178).

124).[214] Wideman enters the narrative in his own in part two, characterizing Cudjoe as his "airy other," his "mirror or black hole." Wideman, much like Cudjoe, has struggled to bridge the gap separating "the ghetto Kid and the man of letters" (Dubey 585; J. Lee 2002: 239; Sheppard 90). Although Cudjoe sometimes disappears in the course of the novel, he is regarded as the protagonist. The novel represents him as the most important character and center of consciousness (Eschborn 125). In the first part, which comprises nearly half of the book, the reader learns about the tragic event from his perspective (Eschborn 122).

Cudjoe's view of the fire combines an inside and outside perspective, a double vision, which makes him a special kind of observer.[215] Cudjoe is connected to the event by his earlier life in Philadelphia and collects information from Margaret Jones, an ex-member of the sect. She has an insider's sense of what happened. Timbo, the mayor's cultural attaché and Cudjoe's former fellow student offers a view of a high-ranking city official in part two. His monologue describes the city's most pressing problems, especially poverty, drugs, and crime. J.B., a black homeless person and Vietnam veteran, from whose perspective part three is told, is an interior monologue (Eschborn 124, 130, 132).[216]

Next to structural improvisations or variations on characters, stories, multi-perspectivity, a hybrid blend of different textual forms such as music and fiction represent the idea of the ecological principle that everything is in flux (Guzzio, "History" 29-30). For example, a three-voiced structure reflects three different

214Cudjoe and the author share certain characteristics: Wideman has two sons, plays basketball, and once lived in Philadelphia. Wideman was married to a "white" wife, Judith Goldman, from whom he later divorced (Eschborn 124).

215As a former high school teacher in Philadelphia, he sees things from an inside perspective because of his familarity with the urban environment. He is aware of the social problems in the African-American community, which might cause certain African-Americans to join a back-to-nature sect in the attempt to leave behind what they regard as corrupt civilization. Nevertheless, having lived outside his mother country for a decade, Cudjoe also looks at the situation from an outside perspective. After a long absence from the United States, during which he mostly stayed on the Greek island of Mykonos, he returns to Philadelphia in order to find the little boy who escaped naked from the fire on Osage Avenue (Eschborn 125).

216J.B. Is an abbreviation for the soul singer James Brown. J.B.'s interior monologue has a historical aspect, namely his memory of the Vietnam War. He remembers guarding the Vietnamese women and children who have been taken by hostage by American soldiers in order to force their husbands and fathers to work on the rubber plantations. The American soldiers did not give the women any food or water in the heat of the jungle as long as the men do not return (Eschborn 143-44).

genres: autobiography, fiction, and history (Guzzio, *Trauma* 34, 172). Cudjoe resolves that "[...] he must always write about many places at once. No choice […]. First step is always […] toward the sound or image that is everywhere at once, that connects […]. Always moving" (Dubey 581).[217] A circle in Wideman's work is reminiscent of the ring shout, where all the voices standing around the ring testify or participate in the song – all the stories are heard in this chorus of voices.).[218] The image of circles implies the connection between voices and selves, between individuals and communities (Guzzio, *Trauma* 34, 172), and represents the ecological principle that everything is connected to everything.[219] A sense of spontaneity including time shifts, perspective, and diction, transforms the novel into an ecosystem and at the same time reflects a reader's active engagement within a complex worldview (TuSmith, "Introduction" viii), which leads to biophilic experiences.[220]

Wideman plays genres, voices, and perspectives off one another until they become less distinctive and fluid (Guzzio, *Trauma* 22-23). Finally, they lead to transcendence and a reader's biophilic experience within the realms of the fictional ecosystem. Hereby, Wideman employs the idea of great time as the union of past, present, and future. It is the technique of telling stories on different time levels at once towards the end of *Philadelphia Fire* (Eschborn 185-86). Great time is fluid and compared to an ocean, in which one can swim in different directions.[221] Here, all that has ever been, is, and will be, becomes one in the collective infinite enterprise of the mind. The boundaries between past and present, the living and the dead dissolve (Eschborn 24, 25, 37). Wideman himself is a trickster figure, wearing multiple masks, speaking in tongues, parodying the audience, telling us lies (Guzzio, *Trauma*

217 The play on movement is also embodied in the name of the organization MOVE (L. Baker).

218 Furthermore, Wideman blends genres such as historiography, autobiography, theory, letters, drama, and slave narratives (Guzzio, "History" 178).

219 The image of circles implies a connection between voices and selves, or individuals and communities (Guzzio, *Trauma* 34, 172).

220 Rhythm, incantation, and orality in the novel engage our ears, our minds, our hearts, and in TuSmith's words "[...] makes us better human beings" (TuSmith, "Introduction" x).

221 Great time is ancestral time, which is non-linear because it has always been here, and it will always be. It can be compared to a river, a sea, or an ocean, which we swim through. As we pass through it, we are not going in one direction; we are floating. Great time is also the time of art and of imagination (L. Baker 266-67). Also Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest,* is timeless as suspended in an always already present that does not allow it to slip into memory (TuSmith, *Conversations* 110).

247). In imaginative spheres of play, reader's imagination is transcended. The trickster figure is an act of imagination in tribal cultures and offers intellectual liberation. Thus, characters as well as readers are freed from adherence to terminal creeds. By playing with language, the trickster writer specifies for us the value of human life (TuSmith and Byerman 249-50). Wideman is a trickster figure using art to subvert authority.[222] His work has a sense of play and trickery by his ability to speak in double or play with the possibilities of the doubles (Guzzio, *Trauma* 30).[223]

The connection between past, present, and future is further dramatized in the closing section of the novel. Cudjoe waits at Independence Square for the bombing victims' memorial service to begin. Looking around, he is reminded of a riot that took place in the square on July 4, 1850. He feels the ghosts from that incident brush past him and fill the square. The past and the present meet when Cudjoe

> […] hears footsteps behind him. A mob howling his name. Screaming his blood. Words come to him, cool him, stop him in his tracks. He'd known them all his life. Never again. Never again. He turns to face whatever it is rumbling over the stones of Independence Square. (*PF* 199)

The "fever" that caused the incident, the racism and hatred that spurred it on, has followed Cudjoe all his life. The burden of that history has always been the "footsteps behind him," but now Cudjoe is ready to confront history no matter how painful. In a life-affirming stance, "[n]ever again" will he run away from who he is or from his past (Guzzio, *Trauma* 187). Here, Wideman examines the recursive dialogic relationship between past and present, making it the foundation of the novel (Guzzio, "Father's Texts" 179).

In addition, a reader's biophilic experience is deepened by Wideman's references to natural surroundings and the symbol of fire. The story of *Philadelphia Fire* leads from the Greek island of Mykonos to the main urban setting of

222The polyphonic nature of the novel makes it difficult to embrace the narrator as the most accurate but reveals the fact that the trickster's stories must in some ways be valid (Guzzio, *Trauma* 171).

223In his self-defined literary style of the academy and the street reverberates Mikhail Bakhtin's description of polyphonic or carnival texts, in which different social discourses are in dialogue with one another (Guzzio, *Trauma* 184).

Homewood, Pittsburgh or Philadelphia (Eschborn 4, 39). Wideman also describes green environments in cities, in which the art of hip-hop music came into existence. The natural symbol of fire resides somewhere in deep in our unconsciousness as a symbol of what we fear most and at the same time of what we desire most. Fire is a kind of immortality. Out of the fire the phoenix rises from the ashes, figured in our imagination and the unconscious collective lore (Presson 110). In part one, Cudjoe internalizes the fire, which sets him in motion, in thought, and deed. As he rehearses his interest in the boy, who has survived the fire, he reviews his own history. Fire is the image that is everywhere at once, which connects and destroys. Two houses are simultaneously on fire: one on Osage Avenue and the other one within Cudjoe's own psyche (L. Lewis 146).[224]

All in all, Wideman's triple-voiced structure, his multi-perspectivity on the outbreak of the fire, and the blend of various genres mirror ecological principles, which turn the novel into the form of an ecosystem. The disorienting composition of the novel affects a reader's emotional state, and opens him/her up for experiencing biophilia. Wideman uses art to subvert authority in a trickster-like way, leading his readership into the transcendent realms of great time. A reader's biophilic experience is further deepened with Wideman's emphasis on the natural symbol of fire.

5.1.4 Creative Storytelling

In *Philadelphia Fire,* the search for Simba or the Lion Man (*PF* 17) represents the search for one's self, or in other words, one's inner nature. This self is only found by the creative act of storytelling. In creativity, human beings become nature themselves and creative processes flow freely. Characters and in turn Wideman's readership have the possibility of experiencing healing biophilic feelings *via* the novel's musicality. Wideman shows that we can find ourselves again and perceive biophilic feelings in the creative act of storytelling, which is one of the most important features in rap

224Cudjoe's metaphorical house on fire is introduced by a first-person narrator who receives a telephone call from his “lost” son, clearly incarcerated, and then by introducing an adult couple watching television in bed only to discover their former neighborhood, Osage Avenue in West Philadelphia, on fire (L. Lewis 147).

music. In the text's inherent rap music lyrics, it is pointed out: "*Play not work. This truth can set you free*" (*PF* 91), and re-connect you to your inner self. Again, in part two, Wideman advises: "To be who you are you must draw your own circle. Or rather, as you grow, as you become, you'll draw many circles, your sense of who you are, who you must be grows, changes" (*PF* 151). The activity of drawing circles leads to one's wholeness.

In *Philadelphia Fire,* words and stories have therapeutic powers and encourage the process of healing in a traumatized world with wounded people (Guzzio, *Trauma* 197). Biophilic feelings save characters from destruction and despair. Wideman himself describes storytelling as one of the cultural elements that contribute to individual survival (Eschborn 45). In *Philadelphia Fire,* wounds of the past are redressed in an imaginative act of creativity (Guzzio, *Trauma* 134). Storytelling in rapping taps into the human "[...] capacity for wonder, for play, for imagination" and this is "the capacity that modern civilization, mass civilization, is eroding, crashing" (Dubey 585). In the novel, the art is what succeeds, performs and transcends the situation as well as the person (L. Baker 264).

The KKK's transcendent art of graffiti as well as rapping plays an important role. The Kids Krusade or Kaliban's Kiddie Korps are described as "[t]hey don't want to be something else. They don't want to be white or shareholders or grown-up" (*PF* 89). They are human beings who listen to their inner selves, and with their art they act in the name of nature. Their creative products, "[v]andalism or tribal art or handwriting on the wall" (*PF* 88), "[...] were a transforming presence" (*PF* 88). Wideman describes them as "[s]econd nature instantly" (*PF* 89), by which he refers to the indirect perception of biophilia through the medium of graffiti.

Moreover, the KKK heal themselves by rapping in the imaginative play, *The Tempest,* which is never performed, though. In this improvisational play, "[t]he saddest thing […] is that Caliban must always love his island and Prospero must always come and steal it. Nature. Each one stuck with his nature" (*PF* 122). It is not in the performance itself but during the creative process of rapping when life-energizing biophilia can be perceived: "What's the point? Doing it. That's the point" (*PF* 133).

The creative play is situated in a park and enhances the connection to nature: "Black kids in the park doing Shakespeare [...]" (*PF* 143). Not only the KKK, but also the protagonist Cudjoe and through him the author perceive biophilic life-energies by creatively telling the story about the search for the lost child over and over again. Hereby, Simba is connected to nature. In the first part, Wideman explains that Simba Muntu is translated as Lion Man (*PF* 17) and emphasizes his deep connection to the natural world. Simba is Wideman's or Cudjoe's "[...] lost limb haunting him [...]" (*PF* 7-8). Therefore,

> [h]e must find the child to be whole again. […] He knows he must find him. He knows the ache of absence, the phantom presence of pain that tricks him into reaching down and down again to stroke the emptiness. (*PF* 8)

Simba Muntu can be interpreted as our own lost self, and the fact that we have lost the ability to perceive biophilic feelings.[225] Nature deep inside us has been neglected, which is symbolized by the orphan Simba. This leads to a feeling of emptiness, and even pain. Yet, an inner voice calls the protagonist to search for his lost part of self, which is emphasized two times in this paragraph.

Towards the end of the novel, the creative act of telling the story about his lost self personified in Simba makes him whole again. In a transcendent soundscape in the last section of the novel, Cudjoe perceives biophilic feelings with the background of drumming: "Music trails him. Raps at the boys gathered in the doorway […] He can't help feeling naked. […] The burden of returning is remembering he has no secrets" (*PF* 193). Rapping helps him to see his very self and to acknowledge truth in himself. Finally, "[d]rums bound them, braided them, infused them with the possibility of moving, breathing, being heard" (*PF* 198).

With Wideman's concept of storytelling either by Cudjoe or the creative processes of the rapping KKK, the author provides an experience of healing biophilia when his readership joins in these spheres of play. A reader develops and modifies his/her self-image by an imaginative act of transcendent boundary crossing in energizing raps

225At another place in the novel, Simba is described with "[...] hero, magic, they say" (*PF* 91), which confirms my interpretation of him as a personification of biophilia.

and the search for the lion boy.

5.1.5 The Tree of Life

With his concept of self-reflexivity, Wideman aims at a reader's consciousness and reminds of a human being's connection to nature by referring to the principles laid down in the *The Tree of Life.*[226] The tree of life symbolizes an arcadian ideal of simple human needs, which can be satisfied without violating the harmonious natural order. In the novel, the possibility of racial and civic harmony, of natural resources evenly distributed among all is prefigured. Even though the MOVE community lead their lives according to the book, Wideman shows that their one-sidedness in the neglect of the technologic world leads to self-destruction. In contrast, he portrays the KKK with their life-affirming stance as role models, as wholesome seeds containing the hope of genuine, not cosmetic, urban renewal (Dubey 583).

Wideman's storytelling is characterized by a high degree of self-reflexivity. His storytellers reflect extensively on their relationship with the past as a way of examining their present situation and finding their true inner nature. Especially the writer Cudjoe creatively combines inside and outside perspectives on historical events not only to investigate the MOVE bombing (Eschborn 49) but also to re-learn techniques of conceiving biophilic feelings. In analogy to Cudjoe, Wideman aims at a reader's self-reflexivity in the process of becoming conscious of one's inner self.

In this endeavor, Wideman refers to the holy tree of life, calling his readership to become conscious that they are part of nature and asks them to re-gain respect for life in general or biophilia: “He taught us about the holy Tree of Life. How we all born part of it. How we all one family. Showed us how the rotten system of this society is about chopping down the Tree (*PF* 10). With this paragraph in the first chapter, Wideman criticizes the current systematic way of thinking and its

226After Richard Corey's suicide, J.B. gets hold of his briefcase and finds a notebook about the *Tree of Life*, which represents the doctrine of the MOVE ideology (Eschborn 144). *The Tree of Life* suddenly turns to smoke and shes in J.B.'s hands, what symbolizes the green ideal conflagration (Dubey 583).

negative effects regarding biophilic life-energies: “Society hates health. Society don't want strong people. It wants people weak and sick so it can use them up. No room for the Life Tree. Society's about stealing your life juices [...]” (*PF* 10). The author hints at capitalistic aims of society when he points out: “it wants people weak and sick so it can use them up.” With the voice of Reverend King, the author summons his readership to respect, praise and be life (*PF* 10-11) as well as to ask questions such as “*where did I come from?*” (*PF* 148)

However, MOVE's protest also involves an ever-increasing group and calls the lifestyles and values of the majority into question (S. Berry 162-63). Disenchanted with capitalism's failure to fulfill the needs it induces, MOVE seeks to opt out this system by reducing and tailoring consumption to satisfy only natural demands of survival (Dubey 582). The sect members neither use modern technology nor subscribe to laws (Eschborn 128). Even though Wideman shares their stance of favoring biophilia, he criticizes their one-sidedness and instead favors balance between the synthetic and natural world.

Against the apocalyptic tendency in *Philadelphia Fire* and the one-sidedness of the MOVE community Wideman sets a life-affirming stance with the performance of the KKK, illustrated as a gang that has a revolution in mind (Guzzio, *Trauma*). Narrative comments indicate that the KKK may be under Simba's leadership. Cudjoe remarks that their graffiti serves as a “[...] ritual mask, summoning power; a dream, a revelation [...]” (*P F* 89). These children are envisaged as wholesome seeds, containing hope of genuine, not cosmetic, urban renewal (Dubey 583). Although Wideman does not abandon the concept of powerful communities, he emphasizes throughout the novel that an individual like Simba has the potential to incite change (S. Berry 171-72).

All in all, *Philadelphia Fire* illustrates that the performative act of KKK's graffiti art and rapping produces audience agency in the active pursuit of change. With the KKK and Simba's life-affirming stance, Wideman demands a re-evaluation of personal commitment on the part of the reader. Similar to Cudjoe, a reader should learn from Simba how to survive by doing things his way, especially when “the world is on fire” (L. Lewis 157). The principles in the *Tree of Life* and KKK's life-affirming stance

express the fact that hope must be re-discovered (Lewis 148), especially in our transcendent times. The perception of biophilic feelings must be re-learned. With the ambiguous example of the MOVE, Wideman indicates that we cannot only go back to natural roots but we also need to appreciate the positive developments of society regarding technology.

5.2 *The Plot Against Hip Hop* – Biophilic Education

> 'Remix. It's all a remix.'
> 'What?'
> 'Biggie was right.'
> 'About what?'
> 'It was all a dream.' (*PAH* 12)

This dialogue, which resembles a hip-hop music performance, is the last exchange between the protagonist D Hunter and murdered music critic Robinson. It sums up the George's main intentions in *The Plot Against Hip Hop.*[227] By asking "Who did this?" the author symbolically questions rap music's cultural transformation into a business-ridden enterprise. In the novel, the author then teaches hip-hop music history. Questions such as "What?" stir a readership's attention and produce emotions of suspense, which ultimately compel to join D Hunter on his search for the true murderer.

A reader sympathizes with the detective and identifies him/herself with the fact that business obsessions might have negative effects on a person's health (compare 2.2.2). On this hunt for truth, George provides possibilities for his readership to experience biophilia in a subconscious way due to a fictional, remix-like structure, resembling an ecosystem (compare 2.3.1). On the novel's surface, the reader is informed that the golden age of hip-hop music "was all a dream." George advises his readers to do better in creating one's individual life (compare 2.4).

227 George has published a series of books that examine African-American cultural identity, popular music and social change. Through the filter of hip-hop music culture, ranging from political developments to most personal struggles, George has charted African-American experiences since the mid-1980s (D. Jones 667). George himself is above all dismayed by the hyper-consumerist direction mainstream rap music has taken (Brandom). In *Death of Rhythm and Blues* (1988), he notes that "[...] the challenge facing black artists, producers, radio programmers, and entrepreneurs of every description is to free themselves from the comforts of crossover, to recapture their racial identity, and to fight for the right to exist on their own terms" (200). The development of hip-hop music over the last two decades was marked by the mass media's discovery and, in George's own words, maybe hijacking, of African-American youths as creators and consumers. The result is that hip-hop music no longer belongs to its creators (George, *Hip Hop America* x).

5.2.1 Rap Music History

The Plot Against Hip Hop is written like a history from a third perspective, auctorial point of view. D's investigation takes readers on a journey, in which they are exposed to hip-hop music history lessons (Faniel 822) which indicate the music's lost authenticity (Welch 64). George creates a musical atmosphere by numerous references to events, musicians, topics, song titles or albums, soundscapes and intertextual lyrics from hip-hop music history over the last forty years (compare 2.1.3).

Imaginary content analogy takes place with George's thematization of characters related to the world of hip-hop music. Either fictional or real-life figures appear in the novel. For example, murdered Dwayne Robinson is described posthumously by Fly Ty as "[...] one of the few motherfuckers who cared to know the history of our music [...]" (*PAH* 14). Robinson was in his fifties when he worked as a music critic and historian, having published a number of books (*PAH* 15-16). For instance, *The Relentless Beat* is mentioned several times (*PAH* 14).[228] Moreover, George praises real-life figures such as Jay-Z, with whom the protagonist D Hunter "[...] enjoyed working for […] cause the brother had cleaned up so nicely" (*PAH* 8). Numerous other hip-hop music artists from the "golden days" are praised, e.g. Doug E. Fresh or Rakim, Red Alert, the Classical Two, the Tracherous Three, PE, BDP, and De La (*PAH* 9).

At Robinson's funeral, a cast of real-life figures whom Robinson had written about and became friends with are mentioned: "Spike Lee, Anita Baker, Whitney Houston, Chuck D, Prince, Vernon Reid, and so many others" (*PAH* 19). However, D Hunter is forced to work with characters from the hip-hop music business because of his security company. For example, "D was writing an e-mail to Russell Simmons about handling security for his next Diamond Empowerment event [...]" (*PAH* 11). In addition, Walter Gibbs is described as "[...] early hip hop manager […] during the breakthrough '80s. In the '90s he secured a distribution deal with a major label […].

228 *The Relentless Beat* was taught at colleges and "[...] he had continued to lecture from it every Black History Month" (*PAH* 17).

He executive produced a couple of rap soundtracks for urban movies [...]" (*PAH* 26).

George meticulously depicts rap musicians' appearances from the beginning of hip-hop culture, when "[...] rap stars wore loose jeans, sideways Yankees caps, and a snarl" (*PAH* 7) to nowadays. Jay Z is described as "[...] rap star, record mogul, and living breathing brand, with the hottest chick in the game wearing his ring […] looking dap in a creamy white suit with […] trendy shades" (*PAH* 7). In the chapter "Big Pimpin" the author vividly portrays the way rap music has turned to, namely into a money-making business. Rap stars have taken on several roles, e.g. MC, record as well as fashion label businessmen. The author underscores Jay-Z's stardom with the sight of flashbulbs exploding and the sound of the rapid click of cameras (*PAH* 7).

George illustrates the violent way hip-hop music has turned to not only with the music critic's murder but inserts elaborate descriptions to show that death has become a common sight: "[...] back in Brownsville, Brooklyn, a lost neighborhood where the streets were saturated with generation after generation of ghetto blood. […] No one who grew up in the Ville was surprised by death" (*PAH* 12). In addition, contemporary rappers are shown to be very violent according to Gibbs: "[...] you can barely get two MCs to do a tour together without someone shooting someone backstage" (*PAH* 30).[229]

In the mode of *telling* (compare 2.1), George makes certain stages of rap music history the topic of discussion. For instance, "D […] found himself […] squeezed into a corner with Grandmaster Flash and Kool Moe Dee talking about a rap tour circa 1984" (*PAH* 20) after the funeral. Around the time of the murder, "[Robinson] was working on a memoir/revisionist hip hop history" (*PAH* 16).[230] Dwayne's book, *The Relentless Beat* deals with the "golden age of New York hip hop" (*PAH* 24). For the author, D and late Robinson, "[...] Chuck D and KRS-One were street prophets, […] Rakim and Kane were true urban poets, and […] talents

229George also laments the fact that not only violence is praised in hip-hop music, but also its connection with drug dealing: "It was on 116th Street that some of these urban griots, these proud street reporters, turned drug dealing into musical entertainment, taking their narratives into self-congratulatory boasts [...]" (*PAH* 38).

230Apart from fictional books D has written, George also mentions hip-hop music magazines *Source* and *Vibe* (*PAH* 33).

like LL Cool J and rival Kool Moe Dee were champs of […] boasting" (*PAH* 24).

The author creates an authentic atmosphere by describing hip-hop musical historical settings. The protagonist keeps "one gold record on his wall. It was for Public Enemy's *It Takes a Nation of Millions*" (*PAH* 11) and "[...] a framed vintage Run-D.M.C. poster" (*PAH* 11).[231] At another place, D recalls his youth when he went to the Apollo or to Union Square (*PAH* 9). Furthermore, D makes out a freestyle battle when he listens to the mysterious tape, which "[...] they did […] at the Harlem World Disco on the corner of Lenox and 116th Street [...]" (*PAH* 16). When D discovers Truegod's record collection, he remembers that "[t]here had once been a great store called Rock and Soul Records on Seventh Avenue near Madison Square Garden that was always the best place to grab the hottest twelve-inch singles" (*PAH* 44).

Not only real places from hip-hop music's golden age but also imaginative soundscapes contribute to the novel's musicality. The author creates soundscapes, in which the protagonist listens to or is surrounded by hip-hop music. For example, he listened to "Old School at Noon," a radio show on the local hip-hop music station (*PAH* 9) when he was young. In the first chapter, D Hunter attends a party at the Boathouse, where "[...] DJ Beverly Bond played the latest hip hop/R&B fusion" (*PAH* 9). Shortly after Robinson's death, D listens to "Rakim's 'Lyrics of Fury' on his iPod when the two patrolmen arrived" (*PAH* 13).

Furthermore, George pointedly critiques the way hip-hop music culture has taken, namely its missing truth. Nowadays, plenty of musicians follow mainstream rules with the aim of making money. While Russell Simmons was running a Hip-Hop Summit in St. Louis, he was "[...] raising awareness about the pitfalls that could affect black youths [...]" (*PAH* 8), yet with a soft promotion for his clothing line (*PAH* 8). By contrast, the author uncovers how hip-hop music turned from rebellion to a marketing gold mine (Gold).[232] In "You Must learn," George points out that

231In addition, more figures from the world of old school hip-hop music are mentioned when D discovers the writer Truegod's collection of vinyls: "D noticed the Two's *Rap's New Generation,* Teddy Riley's first credit as a full-blown producer [...]" (*PAH* 45).

232George further shows that not only the musicians themselves but also the targeted audience is "the offspring of the rich" (*PAH* 9), whose "[...] daddies might be useful [...]" (*PAH* 9) for a rap music star.

“[t]hese days everybody was complacently capitalistic and proud of it” (*PAH* 35).

In addition, George alludes to a conspiracy theory when he connects gangster rap music with “*intelligence-directed psychological operations*” (*PAH* 35). He goes on with “[b]ootlegged rap CDs were being used to fund CIA counterterror operations in the Caribbean,” (*PAH* 35) or “*chemical warfare (crack, malt liquor, PCP, heroin) [is committed] to destabilize and commit genocide in targeted communities*” (*PAH* 35). According to him, “*[m]any people cannot fathom just how deep this war against the rising consciousness in the music went (and is still going)*” (*PAH* 35). Even though George cites this information from a hip-hop music blog, he indicates a massive deviation from hip-hop music's original values. Later on, the author reveals that the famous Sawyer memorandum was not only supposed to be a marketing survey but apparently a blueprint on how to control hip-hop music and at the same time the future of “black” America (*PAH* 41). On the whole, George signifies on the idea of corporate America taking over hip-hop music (Vaughn).

Regarding word music, the novel's language is pervaded by typical African-American vernacular, contributing to the text's acoustics. George uses words like “niggas” (*PAH* 8), “homiez” (*PAH* 11) or phrases such as “[t]hat's some new shit” (*PAH* 18) or “*Don't duck me anymore, motherfucker*!” (*PAH* 28). Parallel sentence structures copy the sound of hip-hop, for example “There was no more. No more light. No more words. No more Dwayne Robinson” (*PAH* 12). Making up nicknames, which is common in hip-hop culture, contributes to the novel's musicality. For instance, “Fly Ty, a.k.a. Detective Tyrone Williams” (*PAH* 14) is called Fly Ty because “[h]is grey hair was cut short and his sideburns just long enough to let you know why everyone called him Fly Ty” (*PAH* 14).

George further reproduces rap music in the mode of *showing* with references to and partly cited hip-hop music lyrics scattered throughout the book. For instance, each chapter is titled after a famous hip-hop song (Chambers): “[...] D was listening to Rakim's 'Lyrics of Fury'” (*PAH* 13) after Robinson's death, which the author turns into the next chapter's heading, “Lyrics of Fury” (*PAH* 14). Before Robinson dies, he mumbles the Biggie Small lyrics, “It was all a dream” (*PAH* 12). In the last dialogue between Robinson and D Hunter, George creates his own rhyming lyrics in a call-

and-response pattern, reminiscing of MCs performing live (*PAH* 12). Shortly after Robinson's death, D Hunter mentions a "KRS-One rhyme" with "'out of here'" (*PAH* 13).

Moreover, structural analogies to rap music in the form of a fictional remix (compare 2.1.3) make *The Plot Against Hip Hop* musical, too. For instance, George weaves back and forth between hip-hop music's golden age and present hip-hop music by reminiscing, name-dropping, connecting characters, and suggesting clues as musical breaks in the process (Faniel 823). Hereby, he follows the principles of a hip-hop music song, in which "[...] history is ever present or sampled and repeated or looped" (K. Powell 6). In the first chapter, "Big Pimpin,'" D Hunter looks back to his young days "[...] when a gem from the Classical Two or the Treacherous Three was dropped" (*PAH* 9). Further time shifts regarding hip-hop music history occur when Robinson clutches a "TDK audio cassette," which "looked ancient" (*PAH* 12).

Multi-vocality mirrors the remix-like structure of hip-hop music (compare 2.1.3). George connects Amina Warren-Jones, D Hunter or Amos Pilgrim and other characters and lets them tell their stories. Next, George employs breaks in the form of shocking incidents, which are followed by a flow in rhythmic motion. These breaks can be compared to so-called "ruptures in line" (T. Rose, *Black Noise* 36-40; compare 2.1.3) in hip-hop music. For example, a break disrupts the flow of the text when "[s]lumped at the foot of the door, […] was the music critic Dwayne Robinson. Blood oozed from wounds to his chest and arms, and there was a nasty slice to his right cheek" (*PAH* 11).

All in all, George creates an authentic atmosphere of hip-hop music in *The Plot Against Hip Hop.* He makes the music the topic of conversations, thematizes events, artists, and places from the golden age to current business oriented ways in rap music. Implicit intermedial references in the mode of *showing* contribute to the novel's acoustics by structural analogies. Besides time shifts, breaks, and multi-vocality song lyrics are cited and hip-hop vernacular is used.

5.2.2 Search for Truth

The novel's authentic atmosphere helps a reader to identify with the search for truth. A reader's emotions are stirred by D Hunter's sympathetic portrayal. Last but not least, a reader's active engagement in D Hunter's search is induced by *Leerstellen* in the form of secretive hints to the murderer of the music critic. This leads to a reader's internal suspense.

Firstly, a reader is not only beckoned to question the veracity and authenticity of hip-hop music culture from its golden age to its present hold on the American populace (Chambers), but also to relate to the universal topic of increasing value money takes in postmodern times and the fear it stirs in us. With a sharp analysis, George shows a reader what happens when a music cultural form such as hip-hop mixes up with capitalism. Connected with it are greed, corporate control, mass consumption, surveillance, competition, which results in murderous deeds (Chambers).

In "The Blueprint for Hip Hip," George points out the universal effects of capitalism. When D Hunter searches for Robinson's murderer, he says that "[...] the answer had to be found, as it was always and forever, in following the money" (*PAH* 56). Later on, D dreams of late Robinson in the role of a schoolteacher, who writes the following statement on a blackboard: *"Cash rules everything around me. Hard times are sweeping just like the flu. Broken glass everywhere*" (*PAH* 134). Again, George poignantly describes the fragmented inner life, symbolized in the image of broken glass, with the conclusion that "cash" creates fear.[233] The enemies seem to be less the individuals but rather the money that motivates (Nagy).

Secondly, a reader is given the opportunity to sympathize with the protagonist D Hunter because he does not follow the money-oriented ways which hip-hop culture has gone. Instead, "[...] he'd kept the pin clear of diamonds" (*PAH* 9). The protagonist is aware of the events in his environment and this awareness affects his

233The hunt for money is also deeply connected with the fear that we are all exposed to in this century: "Fear was still paying the bills. In fact, fear was one of the great growth industries of the twenty-first century" (*PAH* 94).

feelings and behavior. His identity is directly connected to the hip-hop community, with whom he shares common thoughts in his voluntary search for Dwayne's murder (Nagy).

On the one hand, D Hunter bears the image of a strong personality in the role of a security officer. On the other hand, the protagonist is vulnerable as a human being because he is infected by Aids in bodily respects, and suffers from African-American pain in psychological and emotional respects. D Hunter is a tough, black-clad product of crime-ridden Brownsville, Brooklyn, where his family has been devastated by violence. Thereupon, he has dedicated himself to protecting people in the age of insecurity (compare 1.). Hunter has his own secrets, his own vulnerabilities, which he fights as he becomes a reluctant private eye (Chambers; Scott, "Down"). According to the writer Truegod, the protagonist's reputation is "being soft-hearted" (*PAH* 46). Likewise, Danielle Robinson, the victim's wife, states that "'my husband really liked you' [...]" (*PAH* 20), "[...] taking his large hands in her slender fingers" (*PAH* 20).

Even though D Hunter is "[s]treet tough with a harsh personal history" (Scott, "Down"), he is also depicted as a human being with real feelings, especially when the strong bodyguard shows tears two times in the novel. First, "[...] his eyes began to water" (*PAH* 12) when he found Robinson dead in front of his office. At another place, Hunter falls into tears when he reads excerpts of his dead friend's planned novel: "The first tear fell down on the cover of the *January 2010* composition book. It was big and fat, and splashed when it landed" (*PAH* 131).[234]

Thirdly, a reader is actively engaged by rhetoric questions about the murder, which invite him/her to participate in the search. For example, George asks "why would anyone slash a man like that with a box cutter in goddamn Soho?" (*PAH* 12). By placing a murder not in the ghetto quarters of New York City but in Manhattan, the author creates a mystery: "'C'mon, Fly Ty, this shit happens in the hood, not Soho. Kids like that don't drive into white neighborhoods in Manhattan to do this'"

234Moreover, D Hunter has also sympathizing effects on George's audience when he falls in love with Amina: "D's butterflies were so strong he was at risk of mumbling his way through the entire evening" (*PAH* 104). When he entered her home, he felt "[...] as awkward as a thirteen-year-old on his first date [...]" (*PAH* 105).

(*PAH* 15).

In addition, the cassette type that Robinson clutched in his hands is an object, which is unknown and sets another question mark: “Haven't seen one of those in years, he thought. It was a black plastic TDK cassette [...]” (*PAH* 12). The cassette tape re-appears throughout the novel. For example, when D Hunter spends detective Tyron a visit: “'Just touched his neck, […] took that tape out of his hand” (*PAH* 14). When Fly Ty and D listen to the tape, “[a] hip hop beat filled the room and two voices could barely be heard underneath” (*PAH* 16). After recognizing Dwayne's voice, it remains a mystery who the other voice is: “'That's Dwayne right there,' D said. 'I don't recognize the other one'” (*PAH* 17).

The dramatic effect in this scene is further increased with the label “*Harlem World Battle*” (*PAH* 12), indicating the worldwide dimension of the murder. It is followed by an accumulation of D Hunter's description of this era, which mirrors the protagonist's shock: “That was another era. High-top fades. Painter's caps. Four-finger rings. Dapper Dan's Gucci knockoffs. Dwayne Robinson's era” (*PAH* 13). These facts become even more dramatic when George explains that “*[t]he major record labels are all controlled by the same elite of people, who run their businesses through [...] the heads of secret societies […] eventually obtain total control over the world*” (*PAH* 36).

A further *Leerstelle* is created when Walter Gibbs, who “[...] had known Dwayne since both were young hustling dudes trying to make it in the intense, innovative New York of the early 1980s” (*PAH* 19). However, Gibbs did not turn up for the funeral, which “[...] led several mourners to wonder aloud, 'Where the fuck is Gibbs?'” (*PAH* 19). Hereby, a reader might be given a clue as to who could have been the murderer but this clue is again negated because D did not speculate about it and filed this fact away (*PAH* 19).

Next, the Sawyer report is portrayed as another hint: “The cover sheet read: *THE HIP HOP AUDIENCE: Its Attitudes, Trends, Demographics, and Future.* Below that was: *SAWYER MARKET GROUP, 1700 Broadway, New York City.* It was dated February 1989” (*PAH* 46). And exactly this Sawyer report seems to be a hunt-

ed object because it leads to the next crime scene, in which the writer "Truegod went down to his knees, clutching his throat, trying to hold back the blood as his life flowed away through his fingers" (*PAH* 48).[235]

To conclude, D Hunter's voluntary search for the music critic's murderer and his soft-heartedness despite his job as a security guard leads to a reader's sympathy and empathy, which in turn grasps his/her emotional attentiveness to take part in D Hunter's search for the murderer. During this tedious search, George places several *Leerstellen* in the form of a mysterious cassette tape, excerpts from a planned novel, the so-called Sawyer Memorandum, or figures such as Walter Gibbs. George provides hints for the murderer yet those hints are again negated.[236]

5.2.3 Fictional Remix

With time shifts in the capsule of hip-hop music history of the last forty years, multivocality of a large number of characters, breaks in the form of tragic events, and an ensuing flow of rhythmic motion, George creates an aesthetic structure of the novel, which parallels a remix-like hip-hop song. In turn, such a structure follows ecological principles, which transform the novel into an ecosystem (compare 2.3.1). George's fictional time shifts (compare 5.2.1) not only resemble the inherent texture of a hip-hop song but also follow the ecological principles of circularity with non-linear and multiple feedback loops (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner). In an imaginative soundscape, D Hunger's memories slide back: "It was a strange place to listen to the rhymes of Moe Dee and Busy Bee blasting out of an ancient boom box that someone had found in the evidence room" (*PAH* 16). D could make out "a great freestyle battle" (*PAH* 16), which used to be held "[...] at the Harlem World Disco on the corner of Lenox and 116th Street [...]" (*PAH* 16).

235Apparently, Sawyer was the name for "[...] a plan for the best ways to exploit the hip hop audience. People called it the Sawyer memorandum" (*PAH* 75).

236Even though Shamontiel L. Vaughn (2014) points out that George focused on rather reminiscing on old school hip-hop music and less on making readers care about Dwayne's death, I think that both Dwayne's death and the reminiscing on the golden age of hip-hop music enact each other in a reader's reception.

In this fictional remix, characters long for humanity and have to tell their stories to become whole again. Amina, the widow of Anthony Jackson or Malik Jones, tells D her story about her husband's loss and "[...] it feels right. Especially after what you told me about your family. I guess we're both a little damaged" (*PAH* 108). In return, "[...] D opened up to her a bit" (*PAH* 106), and told her about "[...] the deaths of his three brothers [...]" (*PAH* 106). What Amos concerns, he confessed that he "[...] commissioned the Sawyer Group to create a detailed report on the nature, marketability, and long-term potential of hip hop culture" (*PAH* 154) in a "[...] long story to share" (*PAH* 153).[237]

Furthermore, the two voices, which could be barely heard underneath the beats on the cassette tape, were the murdered writer's voice and another voice, which could not be made out (*PAH* 16-17). However, the unknown voice may be interpreted as the voice of an ancient spirits, the one from hip-hop music itself, or the voice of the subjective self, which calls for truth and authenticity, waiting to be heard. This multi-vocality of either fictional living voices, who have to tell their stories to free themselves from emotional or psychological pain, as well as the voices by possible spirits, who call for lost truth in hip-hop music, are not only reminiscent of MCs, who try to transfer the message, but also prove the ecological principle that the complexity of the novel's structural network is a consequence of its diversity (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner).

An clear example for a break is Truegod's murder: "As the writer attempted to draw his gun, the red-garbed attacker slashed his face, his arm, and then his jugular in three rapid back-and-forth swings [...]" (*PAH* 47-48). Thereupon, the scene is symbolically followed by the break beat sound of a tour bus: "A tour bus came down the road and deafening break beat accompanied it [...]" (*PAH* 49).[238] These breaks or ruptures characteristic of hip-hop songs show that ecological processes are

237Even though critics such as Shamontiel L. Vaughn criticized George for his detailed background stories of single characters with "[...] they could've all had their own book" (2011), Toni Nagy cites the author himself in an interview, saying that George deliberately created it this way to psychologically show that there are many different agents involved in the heinous subjugation of hip-hop (2011).

238Further examples, which break up the narrative story line are D Hunter's being robbed: "'[...] you got robbed. Both your office and your house. Both tore up and cleaned out'" (*PAH* 139), followed by Amina's apparent suicide (*PAH* 142-43).

non-linear (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner).

A hip-hop song receives its flow by its powerful rhythmic motion. George states in *Hip Hop America* (1998) that he loves hip-hop music's spirit and its rhythmic intensity, which he mimetically interweaved into the novel's rhythms (xi). This rhythmic intensity is achieved by chapters, which comprise of the same size with each of them having a message. This procedure provides the novel with a certain beat when every chapter is subtitled with a song title. For example, Rakim's "Lyrics of Fury" (*PAH* 13) appear at the end of chapter two and again on the following page as chapter heading (*PAH* 14). Moreover, the chapter heading, "Dead Homiez" (*PAH* 11), sets the beat in the story about music critic's murder.

In addition, the Biggie Smalls lyrics, "It was all a dream" permeate the novel and re-appear again and again. Firstly, they are introduced with Robinson's last words in "Dead Homiez" (*PAH* 12). Secondly, they appear in the inscribed copy of *The Relentless Beat* in "Lyrics of Fury" in a changed version of "*Keep on dreamin'*" (*PAH* 18). Thirdly, the writer Truegood contends to know why Robinson said these last words before he died (*PAH* 40). The re-appearing lyrics "It was all a Dream," together with the chapter headings provide the novel with a certain beat or, in other words, a constant energy flow that keeps the structural ecosystem in dynamics.

In retrospect, George's time shifts are analogous to ecological feedback loops. The multi-vocality in the novel indicates an ecosystem's complexity and dynamics. Breaks in the form of shocking experiences resemble the ecological phenomenon of non-linear loops. Rhythms in the form of repeated lyrics or headings contribute to the novel's liveliness and keep the network together. Following from this, the sum total of the fictional network becomes more than the sum of its parts (F. Capra 297-304; Commoner), and provides the novel with ecological energy, which reader perceives in his/her subconscious.

5.2.4 “Dead Homiez”

The Plot Against Hip Hop does not contain many real soundscapes for a reader's biophilic experience, except for reminders of the golden age of hip-hop music, which served to emit biophilic life-energies. By neglecting active imaginative soundscapes in the novel, George explicitly shows how the music, which is at the same time a mirror of its environment, has turned into a lucrative product, leading to “necrophilia” in the “dead homiez's” inner lives (compare 2.4.1).[239] D Hunter loves the music he grew up, though, and laments the days when hip-hop music comprised of a truth. For example, D Hunter recalls his youth when he went

> […] to Apollo to see Doug E. Fresh or Rakim headline […], listened to Red Alert spin […]. He listened to the 'Old School at Noon' shows on the local stations *religiously,* loving when a gem from the Classical Two or the Treacherous Three was dropped. PE and BDP and De La were the stuff that had *animated* his life when he was young. (*PAH* 9; emphasis mine)

Artists such as Doug E., Fresh, Rakim, the Classical Two, or the Treacherous Three produced hip-hop music with biophilic quality. These artists and their music “animated” D's life and became his near-religion. The protagonist reminisces the days when parties were held in parks and mad passion ruled the scene (*PAH* 9). Musicians were drawn to green environments of city parks in the beginnings of hip-hop music, which indirectly indicates a search for biophilic-life energies (compare 2.3.1). Mad passion was an expression for life and especially biophilia but unfortunately, life energies have been turned “into lucrative product” (*PAH* 9).

After Robinson's death, “[...] D was listening to Rakim's 'Lyrics of Fury' on his iPod [...]” (*PAH* 13). To overcome his grief for his friend's murder, which also symbolizes the death of true African-American music, Hunter flees into an original and true hip-hop soundscape. In “All of the Lights,” D listens to a precursor of hip-hop music, namely Marvin Gaye's *Here, My Dear,* and “[...] smiled to himself [...]”

239The stabbing of music critic mirrors parts of the history of hip-hop music: “[...] energy [is turned] into a lucrative product” (*PAH* 3), and the real spirit of African-American music has been lost. With it, the members of the current hip-hop music culture have lost their true inner selves.

(*PAH* 148). Biophilic feelings of wellbeing are perceived, enriched by the setting of the Pacific Ocean, which "[...] had always tripped him out [...]" (*PAH* 148-49).

Jay-Z is portrayed as an example for keeping hip-hop music's spirit alive. In his daily fight to survive the nowadays money-oriented business-related struggles in hip-hop music, "[he] would bore of the business pitches and head over to the studio where his latest mentee, a kid from Baltimore who had […] old-school skills, was laying down some tracks" (*PAH* 10). After a glamorous party, he teaches a young boy how to mix old-school tracks (*PAH* 3, 10). Authentic music-making functions as a regenerative therapy, and he would even stay most of the night (*PAH* 10), enjoying the positive energy in the act of music-making.

In general, hip-hop music is nowadays big business but has lost therapeutic functions (compare 2.1.3). The "deadening" aspect of this music is extensively illustrated in chapter two, "Dead Homiez" (*PAH* 11). The protagonist's inner life is symbolically portrayed with the description of D's office: "[...] so dark some people called it his dungeon. Black walls. […] No bright colors. Nothing white save the printouts from his laptop [...]" (*PAH* 11), and "[h]eavy drapes covered the windows; the walls and ceiling were black, as was most of the furniture" (*PAH* 50).

Furthermore, George describes the girl group who plays at a Boathouse party as being "faceless" (*PAH* 11). With the adjective "faceless," he illustrates how biophilic life energies have been lost when "[...] that energy [was turned] into lucrative product" (*PAH* 9), and musicians have become lifeless puppies of the music industry. He comments on this sight with the ironic phrase, "In God we trust – in cash we lust" (*PAH* 10). A change has taken place in hip-hop music when it went from generating biophilic life-energies to the "necrophilic" lusting for money.

To conclude, *The Plot Against Hip Hop* shows directly how hip-hop music lost its original ability of producing life-sustaining biophilic life-energies when it was turned into lucrative product. George rarely incorporates soundscapes, in which a character experiences biophilic feelings, except for indirect back shifts to the golden age of hip-hop music. Images such as faceless musicians or D Hunter's office black interior symbolically express the "necrophilic" tendencies in recent hip-hop music.

5.2.5 "You Must Learn"

The image of Robinson in the front of a classroom giving a lesson from the book *The Plot Against Hip Hop* (*PAH* 134) explains clearly George's educative intention with this novel. In *Stop the Violence: Overcoming Self-Destruction,* he states that hip-hop music is supposed to serve as a tool for communication and education. With hip-hop music as his tool, the author then calls for a life-affirming stance in postmodern times, which enables the reception of biophilic life-energies (compare 2.4.1). In *The Plot Against Hip Hop*, "dreaming" becomes the code word for a life-affirming stance. The author advises his readers to overcome self-destruction and not become faceless in times when "[...] *people [are] anxious to get paid, needy for fellowship, and extremely jealous of those more successful than themselves*" (*PAH* 125).[240] Such a "stunning sense of insecurity" (*PAH* 126) has human beings made forget how to perceive essential biophilic life-energies. This is symbolized in Robinson's death, accompanied by the words "It was all a dream" (*PAH* 12).

George hopes to make his readers conscious about the "necrophilic" effects of a business-oriented culture and advises to "*[k]eep on dreamin"* (*PAH* 18).[241] Human beings should re-learn how to listen to themselves and look behind encrypted signs. The novel serves as a paradigm for inspecting those things in American life and life in general that we hold sacred: are they as pure as we think or are they "all a dream?" (Faniel 823). Furthermore, George advises his readership to become creative detectives of their own selves with Robinson, D Hunter or Djane Beverly Bond as role models. Life in postmodern times has turned into a remix, and the way to an integrated subject is equated with a successful detective story. Similar to D Hunter's search for Robinson's murderer, life is about constantly uncovering new clues and building a more adequate self in the process of continual re-interpretation and regeneration (Ahrens and Volkmann 7; Gras, "Dialogical Ethics" 235-46).

George gives his readers the advice of becoming detectives of their own true

240In an interview with the Huffington Post, George says "I'm hoping I'll educate young people, while introducing older folks to some of the fears harbored by many young people" (Nagy).

241Late Robinson had inscribed a copy of *The Relentless Beat* to D with the words, "*My man. Keep on dreamin*" (*PAH* 18).

selves, similar to D Hunter or Robinson, who are on the search for truth in hip-hop music. For instance, the late music critic cleansed his soul by documenting the "necrophilic" road hip-hop music has gone (*PAH* 57). He tries to convince his readership from "[...] the culture's ability to positively transform black American and, maybe, the world" (*PAH* 56) by creating ourselves and following our dreams.

George not only depicts the story of certain characters on their search for wholeness but also portrays musicians as role models. For instance, Beverly Bond has learnt how to listen to her inner voice. She first came to New York City to pursue a modeling career. Although happy with this career, her first love was music and following in her mother's footsteps, she became a serious record collector. She decided that the best way to express her affinity to music was to become a djane. So, in no time she became one of New York's top ones, spinning records at major events: she "[...] played the latest hip hop/R&B fusion [...]" (*PAH* 9). Bond serves as a role model because she neglected the strictures of a male-oriented dj-world. Instead, she followed the call of her inner voice.

In general, George makes the point that human beings should neither follow "necrophilic" tendencies nor lose hope in life. Rather, we are advised to create our lives over and over again and take on a life-affirming stance in order to realize our dreams and transform them into reality.

5.3 *The Haunting of Hip Hop* – The Message of the Drums

Referring from the novel's title, *The Haunting of Hip Hop,* one of Berry's thematic key issues is the loss of truth, which as the music's essence, haunts current hip-hop music. In the following analysis I will depict the way Berry uses the drums as a medium to convey biophilic-related feelings in a structurally polyrhythmic composition as well as transcendent soundscapes with hip-hip music. In Berry's messages, a certain beat is discernibel underneath (compare 2.3.1; 2.3.2). After identification with characters on the search for wholeness and a reader's activation by *Leerstellen* in dreams, silence or the unknown, Berry advises to develop loving relationships toward human and non-human beings, especially in times when economic goals are prioritized over truthfulness both in art and human behavior (compare 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.4.1; 2.4.2).

5.3.1 Flow and Beat

Berry creates literary acoustics (compare 2.1) by the evocation of imaginative soundscapes, in which Freedom produces hip-hop beats in New York City. Especially structural analogies to rap music, such as time shifts, multi-vocality, polyrhythms or "flow and beat" produce the text's musicality. The author makes less use of strategies such as intertextual references or word music.

The atmosphere of modern-day hip-hop music is depicted with the Freedom, a successful hip-hop music producer, who is based on real-life figure True Master (*HH* 208) as protagonist.[242] The author provides the reader with authentic images such as Freedom rolling through New York City streets in his car with his beats

242Berry praises Freedom's success with "[...] all the music Freedom produced went to the top of the charts, and he was the most popular hip-hop producer in the business" (*HH* 17). In a paradoxical way, his grandmother tells him: "'Son, you can't work for the Devil and expect to get heavenly wages" (*HH* 17). Hereby, with the equation of "business" and "devil," Berry criticizes the way hip-hop music went from an authentic form of cultural expression to a money-oriented business.

blaring on the stereo (Bashir 24). Freedom's both financial and musical success is seen when filmmaker Scott Baker plans to "[...] do a movie based on [his] music [and] give [him] whatever [he] need[ed]" (*HH* 76).[243] At several places in the novel, Freedom describes how he produces his music. "[...] Freedom liked to talk about *his* music [...]" (*HH* 27; emphasis in the original) and explains: "If you want to make phat sounds, you gotta listen to everything [...]'" (*HH* 27). Also Freedom's talent is praised by Berry when she describes his fast way of producing tunes: "He usually got the sound he needed from an artist in one or two takes. If later on, while mixing the tracks, he felt that he needed more, he simply created the tracks electronically" (*HH* 28).

Besides descriptions of Freedom as a producer, references to real-life musicians evoke cognitive as well as emotional effects (compare 2.1). For example, Elum N Nation "[...] was blaring some gangsta rap" (*HH* 27).[244] Later on, Ava and Charles meet at the House of Tina, where DJ Donny "[...] was already setting up" (*HH* 48). In chapter 16, Freedom goes to the same venue where DJ Donny was djing (*H H* 75). Finally, a party in the spooky house takes place and a fictional, transcendent soundscape emerges: "*The music in the house played over and over. […] The beat was incredible [...]*" (*HH* 138).

Furthermore, Berry praises hip-hop musicians' truthfulness when she describes Tupac, Biggie Smalls, Amon Rashidi, The Roots, and Black Thought as "righteous artists" (*HH* 139). DJ Donny is admired: "[In] the DJ world Donny was something of a legend. In the eighties, he could have played in the big hot clubs, but he chose to stay in the hood" (*H H* 75). In a *telling mode* (compare 2.1), Berry criticizes the aim of making money and the loss of truth in current hip-hop music: "[...] no major record label would ever release [Freedom's tunes he created for himself] because [they were] filled with the messages of love [...]" (*HH 16*). Berry also depicts hip-hop music's original purpose as a psychological survival technique:

243 Scott Baker is a filmmaker from the higher ranks, who "[...] had been credited for writing, producing, and/or directing a total of fifteen movies in the past ten years. The last four had been box office hits […], while his previous works yielded eight Oscar nominations and several Golden Globe awards" (*HH* 110).

244 Elum N Nation is described as "[...] high and happy and the gold and diamonds that adorned very one of his fingers caught the reflection of the low light [...]" (*HH* 29).

"*The songs were born of suffering and sorrow* [...]" (*HH* 53). Originally, the music was created to give strength for human beings in pain: "*More of our children have been lost and enslaved to the hollow music that gives no strength; it gives no joy. […] The music must tell them the truth*" (*HH* 181).

Besides, Berry emphasizes the expressive psychological healing method of storytelling as well as the importance of the drums by laying sustaining rhythms underneath. The author believes that it is the drum which lead to hip-hop music as a dominant, rhythmic lifestyle: "Hip hop is the drum brought back. […] I hear those rhythms […] polyrhythmic things going on, laying one layer on top of another layer [...]" (qtd. In Turner). Accordingly, Berry applied musical polyrhythms in structuring the novel, along with a multiplicity of voices. A consonant switch from the ancestors' perspective to the living takes place, in which multiple voices tell their stories. Most important, Ngozi, the enslaved African drummer,, resides in a *limbo* and cannot complete his transition from the physical life until the story of his drum is told to Freedom (Turner). Later on, Bella, "[...] *the woman with the bloody newborn […] screamed. 'It's time for my story to be heard'*" (*HH* 176). Except from Ngozi and Bella, other characters from the spiritual world need to tell their stories in order to heal themselves similar to the mode of storytelling in rap music (compare 2.1.3).

In addition, Berry weaves together two separate stories in her novel. In the first one, Ngozi was stolen into slavery and his task was to transfer a message to the living with the instrument of the drums. Here, the importance of beats in hip-hop music is emphasized again. The second story centers around Freedom, the successful hip-hop music producer from New York City, who is torn between the business demands of nowadays hip-hop culture and the search for his own self. Hereby, time shifts between ancestral time and the present copy the call-and-response pattern of African-American music is "sampled" (compare 2.3.3).

However, Berry makes less use of word music to evoke musicality in the novel. Exceptions are scenes in which popular and respected Freedom is greeted with boasting, loud talk: "'We got big Freedom in the house, the phattest producer of hip-hop music in the WO-RLD [...]'" (*HH* 74-75). Similarly, intertextual intermediality is rarely used, except for two times: DJ Donny's censored lyrics are depicted in chapter

five (*HH* 29). At another place towards the end of the novel, a few lines of a gospel rendition as part of one of Freedom's songs are cited during his burial (*HH* 193).

All in all, Berry creates an authentic, musical atmosphere with elements from hip-hop music and signifies on the business-like way hip-hop music has taken by praising artists such as DJ Donny for their truthfulness in music-making. Hereby, she portrays the protagonist as being torn between his financial and musical endeavors. By emphasizing its healing storytelling effects as well as its life-sustaining drum beats, which reverberate in the novel's underlying structure, Berry brings the original purpose of music as a survival technique back to light.

5.3.2 Haunting of the Self

A reader might sympathize, empathize, and identify with the characters in *The Haunting of Hip Hop*. Both readers and fictional characters are on the search for wholeness in postmodern times, marked by inner fragmentation (compare 1.). Regarding the structural composition of the novel, a reader's emotions are grasped *v i a* disorienting effects. Call-and-response takes place between the ancient or spiritual world and the imaginary present environment. Especially the search motif and the staging of spirits during a transcendent moment create tensions in a readership. In silent places and dreams, *Leerstellen* are created for a reader's imagination. For instance, the haunted house represents a place of the unknown.

Firstly, a reader might identify with current problems Berry signifies on. For example, the loss of connection to one's own self, which is exemplified by Ngozi's statement: "*They were unaware of the enslavement. The economic enslavement. The ones who thought that having things made them more important. They didn't understand that they didn't own things, rather the things owned them"* (*HH* 104).[245] Berry laments on the feeling of emptiness by postmodern human beings: "[...] *the greatest pain was in his heart. He felt an emptiness he had experienced long ago*"

245Ngozi himself suffered separation "[...] from his true self [...]" (*HH* 22).

(*HH* 40).[246] This feeling of emptiness results from the inability to connect to one's inner self or the disability to comprehend the eternity of our being, our past and present (*HH* 166).[247] The protagonist Freedom is on the search for his true self, symbolized by his attraction to the "old house" as the home of the spirits, "which called him back" (*HH* 7).

In a paradoxical way, Berry illustrates Freedom's adhesion to material goods when "[...] he had a feeling that one day he'd own this house. What he didn't know was that this brownstone would come to own him" (*HH* 8). Here, Berry demonstrates a paradox: The protagonist searches for truth, which in turn he won't be able to find as long as he believes in material wealth. On the one hand, "[...] all the music Freedom produced went to the top of the charts, and he was the most popular hip-hop producers in the business" (*HH* 17), but on the other hand, "[he was] so much in demand that he was not free to produce anything *he* wanted to" (*HH* 17; emphasis in the original).[248]

Furthermore, gaps are provided, in which a reader can sympathize with not only ancestral Ngozi or the protagonist Freedom but also with characters and their daily struggles. For example, Ava Vercher was Freedom's lawyer and one of his stabilizing influences in his life. She appears to be a strong African-American woman but is apparently more complicated in real life (Turner). Ava is "*afraid to love 'cause she afraid to lose*" (*HH* 94). She went to Harvard and established herself with her academic career, but is afraid of falling in love because of of not being able to believe in or trust her feelings. Charles, who spent his childhood being bullied, made it out of "the hood" to Princeton and came back "white" ("The Haunting of Hip Hop"). Charles is on the search for his own self after having adjusted himself to another culture without listening to his inner voice.

246Berry emphasizes a universal appeal in her novel when she transmits the image of Ngozi was "*[...] now linked together in a common suffering"* (*HH* 21).

247The death of Ngozi as "[...] the death of separation" symbolizes "[a] separation from his true self [...]" (*HH* 22). The loss of one's self has universal appeal in the novel: "[...] *although they were from different villages, different tribes, they were one people, and now they were experiencing a similar death*" (*HH* 22).

248Furthermore, Freedom is given the following advice by Scott: "With your musical genius and contacts, we an make a lot of money together, and at the same time 'expose' the masses to the real side of your hip-hop world" (*HH* 57).

Secondly, Berry's readership is emotionally activated by the structural technique of call-and-response with time shifts between the ancient and current narrative time. Suspense is induced by a character's search motif or by the staging effect during the transcendent moment, which is in turn enhanced by the unknown of the haunted house. Berry calls the haunted house "a poltergeist thing" (*H H* 63), which triggers fear not only in the fictive characters but also in the readership. What makes the house scary is the fact that no-one knows exactly anything about it. There is only the rumor that it is actually haunted. For example, Charles points out: "'[...] to tell you the truth, that place gives me the willies. The family sees the rumor about the house being haunted [...]" (*HH* 62). Even though Freedom knows that the house is haunted, the protagonist is eager to make it his home because somehow it gave him the feeling of ease: "[...] Freedom felt more peaceful than he'd in a long, long time and knew beyond doubt that this would be his home" (*HH* 86).[249]

Tension is built up when Ava and Charles enter the house and actually meet the embodied spirits. Upon the encounter, they leave screaming: "[...] Ava let out a scream that caused Charles to scream, too" (*HH* 73). Even more tension is aroused when Berry uses the technique of staging: "There standing in front of them was the Gathering" (*HH* 73), or "there in front of the group stood a very dark man holding a drum" (*H H* 73). By placing the group of spirits on the stairs in the hall, they resemble performing rap musicians while Ava, Charles, and Freedom are members of the audience, who are being taught about African-American history. Berry uses the the search motif of when Ava, Charles, and Freedom are looking for inner wholeness, which is symbolized in the image of the haunting house.

A reader's attention is grasped by the haunted house, which is entangled in Berry's structure of call-and-response as well as time shifts between the ancestral world and the narrated present time. For example, Harry Tubman or Freedom were already called by ancestral voices when he was a child: "'Yo Tayembé,' the voice said again" (*HH* 10). In chapter 30, which is named "echoes," perspectives from the spirit Ngozi, whose speeches are italicized, shift to the voices from the novel's living

249Freedom is even warned by a homeless man, who functions as a so-called trickster in the novel: "'Not the place to crash, chief. Haven't you heard? This house is haunted,' the man said to him" (*HH* 85). And Freedom himself knows that the man was right, thinking loudly "'Maybe this place is haunted. Anytime the homeless folk don't ask for money, something ain't right'" (*HH* 86).

fictional characters (*HH* 138-39).

Thirdly, in silent places and imaginative dreams, Berry creates *Leerstellen* for the reader to be filled. These gaps or fissures enable the representation of musical meanings in fictional terms (Gysin, "Voices" 281). For example, "Harry started communicating without speaking. He would play drumbeats on any surface with any object. [T]he playing was accompanied by what appeared to be day-dreaming and it grew louder" (*HH* 11). Within the scope of such gaps, Harry builds up connections to the spiritual world. A reader's imagination is spurred by Freedom's openness in day dreaming.

To conclude, a reader opens him/herself up for an ensuing emotional experience of biophilia when Berry produces *Leerstellen* in the form of silence or imaginative dreams. With Berry's signification on the fragmented inner lives in times of ecological upheavals, a reader tends to identify, sympathize and empathize with the novel's cast of characters. Regarding the topic and structure of the fictional work, a reader is attracted to the haunted house, which is emotionally engaging because of its mystery of actually being haunted. In addition, a disorienting structure related to the applied call-and-response technique, the search motif full of suspense, as well as the staging technique during the transcendent moment, activate a readership to take part in the meaning-making process of the novel.

5.3.3 Rap Musical Composition

Berry uses characteristics of hip-hop music in compositional techniques, which make the structure of the novel resemble a hip-hop music song. Berry stitched *The Haunting of Hip Hop* together by its natural rhythms of 46 chapters divided into two parts. Each of the chapters is very short, consisting of only two to three pages, and each chapter is preceded by a proverb, which gives the chapter its meaning and summarizes its message. At the same time, chapters resemble drumbeats. Such created rhythmic effects are the foundations of typical hip-hop song structures, and

the sound bed, on which Berry lays her messages (Turner).[250]

Even though the novel may seem fragmentary or even ill-constructed due to fast scene changes, it hangs together as it contains rhythms from the inside, which are responsible for keeping the fictional network in dynamics. Such a rhythmic construction leads to the novel's life on its own. In ecological terms, this strategy contributes to turn the fictional work into an ecosystem. Unconsciously, rhythmic effects remind a reader of his/her connection to cosmic rhythms. In doing so, truth is communicated and biophilic feelings of wellbeing emitted. Furthermore, the recurrent call-and-response technique is used to depict the communication between the spiritual and the real world, imitating the proceedings of a hip-hop music live performance when MCs battle against each other. A battle is especially apparent when the spirit Bella constantly tries to capture one of the male visitors to the haunted house (*H H* 199-200).[251] Again, the chapter clearly represents the communication between the members of "the Gathering" and the "living souls" (*HH* 138-39).

The fictional soundscape is not only held together by internal rhythms but also by the recurring phrase, "Ye oh Ye Ba Ba" (*HH* 11). This phrase functions as a "call" from the spiritual world and is exclaimed by Ngozi. In turn, Freedom replies with "Yo Tayembé" (*HH* 10) or with an exact repetition of Ngozi's phrase (*HH* 53). These phrases reappear throughout the whole novel and establish the novel's topic. They are responsible for setting up the communication between the spiritual and the fictional real world.

Moreover, a variety of voices express themselves according to hip-hop music's inherent quality of storytelling, which has psychological healing effects:

250 In chapter eleven, Berry points out the importance of the drumbeat: "*The songs were born of suffering and sorrow, but without the rhythm of the drum, they could not send the message home*" (*H H* 53). The "rhythm of the drum" is essential to convey messages in hip-hop music and in Berry's novel.

251 Bella can only free herself when she is able to tell her story. She once left for New York City because she is a talented African-American singer and wanted to hire her own band. She fell in love with a "white" man, got pregnant, but he left her in the end because he did not want to have a black child (*HH* 199-201). The spirit Bella is not with peace with her own self and takes each male visitor to the haunted house as the father of her child, who was responsible for her abortion. When she meets Freedom, she tries to give him her child: "*The woman with the child moved closer. 'Don't you want him?' she screamed. 'You told me you did'"* (*HH* 167).

> The house had been inhabited by spirit memories for years and had become a holding place for memories waiting for the Gathering of Souls, a time when spirits could tell their story to connect with the living. […] The memories were difficult for them to relive, but they had to be experienced and told so that the living could find peace. (*HH* 58)

In this paragraph, Berry shows that reliving bad experiences and expressing one's feelings has therapeutic effects in music. For example, Bella *"could not let go of the things that had caused her pain*" (*HH* 181) without telling her story in the chapter entitled "Ngozi's story": "'*It's time for my story to be heard*'" (*HH* 166). Finally, the stories told by Bella, Ngozi, Ava and many more lead to the novel's multi-vocal quality.

By using musical characteristics such as call-and-response techniques, multi-vocality, polyrhythms and recurrent phrases as themes, the novel takes on qualities from hip-hop music. The sum total of the novel's network becomes more than the sum of its parts while representing a new creation in itself with unconscious biophilic healing effects on the reader. Multi-vocality of ancient voices is proof of the ecological principle of diversity, and the call-and-response technique confirms that processes are circular with nonlinear and multiple feedback loops. Berry's foremost use of polyrhythms mirror cosmic or universal rhythms as well as keep the fictional network in dynamics.

5.3.4 "A Battle for the Living"

When indigenous people talk about spirit, they are basically referring to the life force in everything. Sabonfu Somé (*HH* 74)

In *The Haunting of Hip Hop,* the spiritual world acts as a life force or natural energy. Ngozi, Freedom, and Ava connect themselves with their inner selves, and thereby perceive life-sustaining feelings of biophilia *via* the connecting medium of the

drums.[252] The ongoing battle between the spiritual and living characters symbolizes a battle between necrophilia and biophilia with the latter's winning in the end. An imaginative, transcendent soundscape at an illegal hip-hop music party at the haunted house emerges:

> *Ngozi sat down and began to play the drum. He played slowly and sweetly at first. The rhythm became stronger and more and more syncopated. The beat was now fast and furious. 'Do you know who you are? Do you see what you once were? Do you feel all that you could be again?'* (*HH* 130)

Ngozi, a young West African man was stolen into slavery from the fields while searching for the perfect wood to make a drum with which to welcome his first son into the world (Gysin, "Voices" 281).[253] Hereby, the the drums connect him to his own inner self. He asks his readership if they know who they are, and if they feel that they could be nature again. In this soundscape, tension is built up with accumulated beats, which leads to Ngozi's biophilic experience.

Ngozi, a member of the spiritual world, represents life force. During the gathering of the long gone spirits, a very dark man stands in the front of the group, holding a drum, which serves as a medium to communicate with the next generation (*HH* 73). Ngozi fulfills his task to connect with the living and to help them for re-connection with their own selves: "*The sounds that I've played have been heard by others who are also unconnected. They do not know who they are* [...]" (*HH* 166).

Freedom, who is summoned by Ngozi, connects with the spiritual world. He experiences biophilia *via* the drum beats in hip-hop music. When he closes his eyes, he hears the beating of distant drums. In ecstasy, Freedom hears the drums again. For example, he sleeps with a girl he does not love but in the rhythms of movements he hears the rhythm of a drumbeat. Afterwards, he can still hear the drum song and remember it forever (*HH* 86-87). Between the beats, Freedom can even hear "[...] the sound of waves crashing into a shoreline" (*HH* 43). Such an imaginary experience

252In chapter eleven, Ngozi explains the function of the drums regarding biophilia: "*These drum beats […] cause folks to feel who they is, who they really is*" (*HH* 52). For him, the drums are a medium to re-connect with one's self and to reach inner wholeness.

253As material for the drums, Ngozi uses wood as an element of nature. This phenomenon enhances ecological connections to nature *via* the drums: "*He had to find the piece of wood* [...]" (*HH* 2).

increases Freedom's perception of biophilic life-energies.[254]

Not only Freedom, but also Ava and Charles feel a certain pull towards the haunted house, where the spirits or symbolically, biophilia itself resides: "Charles […] knew what Ava was feeling. He too had felt that pull" (*HH* 133). Similar to Freedom's habit of falling asleep during his biophilic experiences, Ava allows herself to lucid dream and thereby listen to her inner self. "She allowed herself to slide into a deep state of unconsciousness, not quite asleep, but certainly not awake, and she began to dream" (*HH* 79-80). In one of those dreams, Ava confronts herself in communication with the spirit Jimmy.[255] She recognizes her anxiety of not being able to love because of being afraid to lose (*HH* 94). The spirit Jimmy has the ability to make Ava aware of her inner fragmentation and her fears, which need to be overcome by positive biophilic life-energies.

The lawyer receives biophilic feelings of wellbeing not only in the process of lucid dreaming but also by listening to Freeman's music.[256] Hereby, she is inspired and convinced of herself. It motivates her to complete her work and finally fall into a deep sleep. Freedom's music touches her heart and makes her happy. After biophilic experiences, she feels like wanting to sing and dance all at the same time (*HH* 154): "She listened, or rather felt, the full force of the music [...]" (*HH* 174). Biophilic energies cumulate in a transcendent party-like atmosphere at the haunted house, indeed a holding place for memories and a gathering for lost souls. The transcendent soundscape resembles a hip-hop music event in a club, where hip-hop music is performed live (*HH* 58).[257] In chapter 30 of the second part, "*The music in the house played over and over: […] The beat was incredible, but without the words that echoed truth, it was pure emotion*" (*HH* 138). The phrase "pure emotion" signifies an intense experience of biophilia.

254Similar images appear during Ngozi's biophilic experience: "*He saw the beauty, the richness. He saw the shoreline. […] He looked at the lush greenery and could hear the ocean lapping onto the shore*" (*HH* 108).

255The spirit Jimmy asks Ava directly: "What you should be asking yourself is whether or not *you* are" (*HH* 81).

256"Ava got up and timidly checked her apartment. She took in a deep breath and realized in spite of all that had happened, she felt amazingly energized" (*HH* 100).

257The haunted house is situated "across from the park" (*HH* 24). A park overshadowing the house is not only a reminder of the beginnings of hip-hop music in parks but also points to its symbolical meaning of a place with stored biophilic life energies, surrounded by a natural environment.

What follows is an ecstatic description of "poisonous" passion. The music from the haunted house is loud, which attracts Freedom. It was a night of transcendence: "Some of them would hear the same tune. None of them would have the ability to comprehend that this was a universal tune, […] a beat that would link the younger generation to the ancestors and free them from the bondage of negativity" (*HH* 140). In this transcendent moment, spiritual characters as well as imaginary real-life characters are healed from "necrophilic" tendencies in the perception of biophilic life-energies. During the communal experience of biophilia, not only Freedom finds some kind of peace for himself, but all the other participants of the event "are connected" (*HH* 191) as well. Hereby, ancient time melts together with narrated time, similar to Wideman's concept of great time, which symbolizes ecological eternity. For example, Freedom not only finds the connection to his naturalness but also to his forefathers as spirits (*HH* 85), which is further mirrored when "[t]he beat and the melody had merged" (*HH* 201) in his sound.[258] In the end, "[t]he fathers had now joined with the sons, and the path of those lives was completed" (*HH* 201).

In the last chapter, Freedom finally becomes whole again after having succeeded in what he was supposed to be doing: "*It was the music he'd been sent to make. It was righteousness rolled into sound. The beat and the melody had merged. For Freedom, purpose had collided with destiny*" (*HH* 201). Freedom followed his inner voice and created his last work, *Redemption Song*. In it, he mingled beat and melody perfectly for listener's intense biophilic experience.[259] All in all, Berry invites her readership to take part in biophilic experiences at the haunted house after sympathizing, empathizing, and identifying with Freedom, Ava, or Charles. In an unconscious way, transcendent soundscapes transfer biophilic life-energies to s reader, who emotionally opens up in created *Leerstellen.*

258After Freedom's symbolical death, he can finally see his real and pure self: "There was always a fascination with seeing oneself without the interference of the opinions of others" (*HH* 173). This fascination in seeing himself reflects the biophilic fascination for natural images (compare 2.3.).

259In addition, Charles and Ava told Freedom's transcendent life experience and turned his story into a movie (*HH* 206).

5.3.5 "Lessons of Life"

In *The Haunting of Hip Hop,* we meet a slew of young, successful characters as well as old, wise figures with lessons to learn from (Bashir 24).[260] With her focus on the function of the drums, which were originally used to send messages (*HH* 53), Berry speaks about the concept of love and hope, the gift of listening to one's own voice, and the development of individuality out of diversity, linked to creative matters (compare 2.4.2). Berry illustrates the degrading quality of hip-hop music, which mirrors the postmodern phenomenon of losing one's self and results from an attitude, which prioritizes economic aims. The beat in hip-hop music is powerful but its messages have become hollow (Cho). The music is haunted by irresponsibility and cultural disconnection. Berry's argument is that a medium so powerful wastes itself by promoting regressive thought processes. Once it reconnects with its traditional spirits and rhythms, it is able to incite change (Turner).

The Haunting of Hip Hop symbolically represents hip-hop music's failure yet at the same time emphasizes the potential to change the world with the medium of the drum (Turner): *"More of our children have been lost and enslaved to the hollow music that gives no strength; it gives no joy. Freedom's music will find its way to them, and they will listen"* (*H H* 181). Similar to hip-hop music's lost ability to transfer biophilic feelings, "our children" have lost the ability to perceive the energy of biophilia. Nevertheless, similar to the KKK in *Philadelphia Fire,* Berry hopes that Freedom becomes a role model for her readership by creating tunes with true messages.

In addition, Berry explicitly advises her readership to re-learn how to listen to one's self, or in other words, to re-learn how to perceive biophilic feelings when she gives a voice to the wisdom of older people. The restless mind, which is a common phenomenon in today's society, must be calmed down to hear one's inner voice. Freedom's grandmother advises: "[Y]ou need to sleep to hear what the ancestors are

260Berry points out that "[...] the Gathering […] had come together out of the necessity to communicate with the next generation" (*HH* 73), and all of them "had a message to convey" (*HH* 73).

telling you [...]" (*HH* 31). It is important to listen to oneself and appreciate one's inner nature. In this respect, Charles grandmother points out:

> 'It's simple Charles. I listen. Stuff is all in the air,' she continued. 'Most folk don't listen. Sometimes,' she said, looking at him sternly, 'folks who have a natural ability to hear learn to shut things out. This life is too much for most folks, so they choose to not hear.' […] Getting rid of this be like getting rid of myself. You oughta try to listen more' […]. (*HH* 106-07)

If one listens to one's inner voice, one would know not to worry (*HH* 196). For example, Dora's brother Charles had tried to run from his roots and his true nature. The greatest danger then would come from himself. Grandmother told Dora: "All you have to do is listen […] You listen, and your life won't be so confused" (*HH* 130). Freedom's name already indicates freedom of one's self, of being connected with the spirits of nature. It is not material freedom, but the feeling of freedom within him. Freedom listens to his feelings and acts accordingly to his inner voice. Only through the spiritual world he can truly set himself free (*HH* 227). So, Freedom becomes a role model for postmodern readers. He is given this task from his ancestors, in particular from his father Ngozi. He is to pass on this ancestral wisdom *via* the drums: "*Freedom will tie the present to the past*" (*HH* 166).[261]

Furthermore, Berry's focuses on the concept of love that comes from within and in turn signifies biophilia as the love of life in us as well as in human and non-human otherness. Missing brotherly love is mirrored in musical terms: Hip-hop music, which is ranked in the highest places in the charts is without love messages. Against this trend, Berry sets hope in Freedom's, which are filled with the message of love for the revolution he dreamed of (*HH* 16). Berry's message of the novel is that we should prioritize love to hate and learn how to forgive each other in order to become whole. "*And although Ngozi had reason to feel hatred toward the man, Ngozi had not been taught to hate; all he could feel for this man was pity*" (*HH* 41). Berry favors the concept of love and emphasizes its strong power: "[...] *the proverb that taught their ancestors that the only weapon that can do battle with hatred is the*

261 The author points out that we are all born with a certain purpose in life, and life's journey must be completed ("The Haunting of Hip Hop").

weapon of love and peace" (*HH* 41).

In addition, Berry shows that pain is something which hinders human beings from personal progress. It is important to let go off pain and forgive (*HH* 159). For example, Bella could not let go of her pain, and so she ended up inflicting pain on others (*HH* 181-82). However, towards the end of the novel, Bella settled into her spirit and by forgiving she became her true self (*H H* 202). Ava, the successful lawyer, compares love with an ocean, which can be dangerous and at the same time bring happiness. Nevertheless, it is risky: "[...] Ava knew that her real fear was in surrendering herself to just the *idea* of love. She thought of love as an ocean in which you either get lost or drown […]. In her heart she wished for balanced love, but in her real life she settled for what she knew she could control" (*HH* 46-47). Ava serves as a role model for Berry's postmodern readership with her extensive reflections on the fear of love, which prevents her from perceiving biophilic feelings.[262]

In sum, Berry's didactic function is to stir hope in her postmodern readership and motivate them for the revolution of love. Her concept of love implies developing a voice to listen to oneself and re-learn how to perceive biophilic feelings. At the same time, biophilia as the love of life concerns our behavior in an inter-subjective way. Not economic goals but the love towards each other is to be prioritized.

262For instance, Ava serves as another role model when she realizes that "[...] these simple country folks were wiser and lived better than she herself did. They understood that property was not in material wealth and could not be measured. For them, prosperity was peace" (*HH* 190).

6. Concluding Remarks - “Love it or Lose it?”

In this concluding chapter, “Love It or Lose It?” I will summarize the theoretical propositions and subsequent analytical findings on the biophilic healing effects of blues, jazz, and hip-hop musical aesthetics in African-American prose fiction. Thereafter, I will refer to David W. Orr's essay, “Love It or Lose It: The Coming Biophilia Revolution” (1993), in which the author urges to make a conscious decision between “necrophilia” and biophilia in order to save our future humankind from self-destruction. In the conducted analyses, it has been proven that it might be possible to induce a readerships' life-affirming as well as creative attitude to life in the reading process of an African-American novel or short story. Consequently, an experience of biophilia *via* an African-American text as ecosystem enriched by the intermedial use of blues, jazz, and hip-hop music is provided. For the purpose of a reader's active emotional engagement in the event of reading, it is a prerequisite for a text to be created authentically, i.e. the African-American writer does *not* aim at an authoritative audience (compare 2.1.1).

Firstly, in each of the discussed novels and short stories, African-American authors create authentic atmospheres with music as language of emotions and psychological survival technique. Hereby, African-American writers incorporate blues music elements mainly by creating word music, citing song lyrics, and producing imaginative bluesy soundscapes. In contrast, “black” authors using jazz music elements from the Jazz Age, swing, bebop, or free jazz eras, compose their artworks principally according to the form of a jazz song, which can be most clearly seen with the form of the short story. In elaborative musical soundscapes with jazz music, protagonists heal themselves from pain. Authors of urban fiction preferably use intermedial strategies in the form of polyrhythmic structures, expressive storytelling elements, and copy the sound of rap music in rhythmical language or integrate rap lyrics in an intertextual way. Consequently, authenticity is achieved by portraying the fact that blues, jazz, and hip-hop music serve as both emotional and psychological survival techniques not only for the musicians but also for African-

American writers (compare 2.1).

Regarding the aesthetic reception, a reader is emotionally engaged in the event of the novel the during the reading process. In the African-American oral culture, the call-and-response pattern “calls” a reader and waits for his/her response. Iser calls this phenomenon a *Leerstelle,* an empty space for an implied readers' integration in the meaning-making process (compare 2.2.1). A reader opens him/herself up by sympathy, empathy and identification with a topic or a character. Emotions are also induced *via* fictional forms or contents (compare 2.2.2). Through sympathetic characterizations in novels with blues musical elements as well as detailed descriptions of a character's emotional state expressed in jazz music, a readership's empathy is facilitated. Identification with the topic of urban failures and a general fragmentation of the inner lives of characters lead to a reader's active participation in the meaning-making process of novels with elements of hip-hop music.

In novels with jazz music elements, time shifts or a multi-vocal structure have disorienting effects on a readership, and the phenomenon of staging imaginative soundscapes leads to tensions in a reader's unconscious. Regarding novels with hip-hop music, the search motif creates suspense with the effect of a reader's active engagement and crime scenes occur surprisingly. With emotional stimulations in the form of tension, suspense, surprise, or disorientation, African-American writers activate their readers in the tradition of the call-and-response pattern, which produces so-called breaks for ensuing processes of meaning-making (compare 2.2).

When a reader opens his/her emotional barriers, biophilic feelings are perceived. Such an effect is achieved either in an unconscious, ecological experience, i.e. when a text is turned into an ecosystem, or an ecological imagination in the form of transcendent soundscapes (compare 2.3). Particularly African-American novels with blues or hip-hop music elements and authentic “black” American vernacular turn a text into an ecosystem by copying the talk singing in repetitions, alliterations, assonances, and internal rhymes. In structural respects, fictional works with blues music elements turn a novel into an ecosystem mainly by phenomena of natural wildness of the improvisational processes in refined novels and shorts stories with

jazz or blues music by structural analogies. Ellison's *Invisible Man* is a clear example of how the author uses the structure of a blues song, or Morrison creates an ecosystem by multi-vocality and time shifts as improvisations around the topic of a character's search for his/her inner self (compare 3.1.2; 4.1.4). Instances of turning a fictional artwork into an ecosystem by imitating song structures are the short stories by Petry and Baraka (compare 4.3.3; 4.4.3).

Authors of urban fiction comprise of inherent polyrhythmic structures, which mirror biorhythmic processes. For example, a fictional ecosystem is created by Berry *via* regular shifts between the voices from ancestral and imaginative present time. In *The Plot Against Hip Hop,* a rhythmic effect is created by structuring the novel in regular intervals with subchapters providing hip-hop music's inherent beat (compare 5.2.3; 5.3.3). Furthermore, a reader is able to experience biophilic-related feelings in musical fictional soundscapes of blues, jazz, and hip-hop. Because of music's strong affinity with nature, an active or passive healing process *via* music and in turn *via* prose fiction is indeed possible.

Regarding novels with blues music elements, biophilic energy is transferred in energetic soundscapes of for example *Dirty Bird Blues*. The protagonist Man heals his inner pain and overcomes his fragmentation by expressing his sorrows and in this process reconnects himself to nature (compare 3.2.5). Ellison's protagonist Invisible Man receives restorative, biophilic feelings in his decent into himself while listening to Louis Armstrong's “Black and Blue” (compare 3.3.5). These examples show that biophilic experiences of blues music are mainly generated by blues music's function of expressing deepest emotional realities, in which a musician or listener experiences ecological transcendence (compare 2.1.1).

Similar to McKay's *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* Morrison provides wild and energetic dance scenes of the Harlem Renaissance from the 1920s in New York City, comprising of transcendent energy (compare 4.1.1). However, novels and short stories with jazz music mostly depict biophilic healing effects in soundscapes, in which an individual character reaches inner wholeness by spontaneous improvisations. For instance, Carla finds her inner self during her separation from Maxwell in the creative act of soloing (compare 4.2). Likewise, Petry's protagonist

goes through a transcendent healing process while soloing on the drums (compare 4.3.4). “The Screamers” transmits ecological energy in screaming riffs to free themselves from suffering from political oppressions (compare 4.4.2). Regarding novels with hip-hop music, biophilic transcendent soundscapes are less integrated into novels in comparison to prose fiction with blues and jazz musical forms of intermediality. This phenomenon stems from the fact that hip-hop music has lost its true quality after its golden age. Instead, possibilities for biophilic experiences are provided in the creative process of storytelling with its emphasis on rhythms.

For example, Berry's *The Haunting of Hip Hop* consists of only one extensive soundscape in the haunted house with the death of the protagonist (compare 5.3.4). In *The Plot Against Hip Hop,* protagonist D Hunter reminisces on the lost quality of truth in hip-hop music by remembering transcendent music-making scenes (compare 5.2.4). Wideman re-awakens healing biophilic energies with the KKK's rhythmic rap on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* even though the transformed play was never performed (compare 5.1.1). From the conducted analyses, it can indeed be inferred that prose fiction provides a readership with the possibility of experiencing healing biophilia. Imaginative soundscapes with blues music and their expressive quality of feelings, jazz music with spontaneous improvisations, and hip-hop music with rhythmic storytelling effects provide both readership and fictional characters with restorative biophilia.

An ecological imaginative experience can further be deepened by African-American authors' references to natural symbols or an integration of imaginative natural landscapes. Such effects result mainly from the fact that blues, jazz, or hip-hop music have been a reflection on their respective environments, which is mirrored in the musical transformation into prose fiction. Ecologically powerful affects are achieved with images of natural environments in McKay's *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* in the form of the setting of the waterfront of Marseilles (compare 3.1). In Wideman's *Philadelphia Fire,* the ancient Greek island of Mykonos is the place from where the novel starts, and Berry alludes to images of the sea in Freedom's moments of transcendence (compare 5.1.; 5.3.4). In *Invisible Man,* Ellison's protagonist symbolically descends into an Earthen cave, similar to Joe Trace in *Jazz,* who

searches for his mother in the setting of a forest (compare 3.1.3).

Further natural images which contribute to a reader's unconscious biophilic experience are portrayed in animal symbolism. For instance, Major repeatedly uses the words bird or fish, and compares human beings' behaviors to those of animals (compare 3.2.2). In a similar fashion, Ellison compares Invisible Man's hibernation to the one of a bear (compare 3.3). Regarding texts influenced by jazz music, both Morrison and Crouch make references to a bird, which symbolically portrays the protagonists' inner lives, for example Carla's attempt to re-learn "how to fly" in *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* (compare 4.2).

Further metaphorical or direct expressions of natural references are accomplished in "The Screamers," *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot,* and *Dirty Bird Blues*. While Major makes explicit use of the word "natural" in song titles, descriptions of characters, and their music-making processes, McKay repeatedly describes musical soundscapes with adjectives such as "wild" (compare 3.2.2; 3.1.2). The color green is used as a symbol for natural imaginative environments in *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* as well as in "The Screamers" (compare 3.1; 4.4.4). In general, the discussed African-American authors use natural symbols of animals, images of natural landscapes and ecological metaphors. Hereby, a reader's unconscious is connected to his/her natural self. While authors of prose fiction with integrated blues and jazz music elements allude to nature with animal symbolism, authors of urban fiction mainly resort to the strategy of depicting natural environments and emphasizing lost possibilities of experiencing biophilia in urban surroundings.

Each of the discussed novel or short story has an educational function, namely making conscious of the existence of biophilic life-energies and the affirmation of the love of life, particularly with the comic mode of the blues, the improvisational free play of jazz music, and the concepts of flow and layering in hip-hop music. Regarding novels with an atmosphere of blues music, characters represent the love of life in a happy and self-confirming phrase after having expressed their sorrows. According to the comic mode in blues music philosophy, African-American authors show how to restore the power to actively solve existing

problems and negate “necrophilic attitudes” (compare 2.4.1). Prose fiction with jazz music elements illustrates the fact that jazz music philosophy signifies possibilities by its improvisational, transcendent free play, and in this process convey a life-affirming quality. The concept of flow, layering, and ruptures in line mirrors characters' efforts in how to stick to one's biorhythms in a life-affirming stance, particularly in times of crisis or ruptures.

In addition to a life-affirming stance, African-American authors advance a creative approach to life (compare 2.4.2). As products of nature, human beings are advised to listen to their inner voices and act in harmony with the cosmos. Hereby, African-American musical principles of improvisation, call-and-response, group consciousness, rhythmicity, multeity-in-unity correspond with ecological principles. African-American authors using musical intermedial strategies add valuable advice to the message of the music on how to lead a life creatively in the 21st century. Firstly, a reader's creativity is spurred by the improvisational quality of African-American music, which implies spontaneous activity and leads to the reader's harmonious accordance with natural processes. An improvisational quality is expressed in novels with blues music by portrayals of a character's creative reaction to negative experiences when protagonists prefer a comic to a tragic solution. In prose fiction with both jazz and hip-hop music elements, an improvisational quality is mirrored in the multi-vocal structure, while an imaginative, improvising effect is additionally emphasized in fictive soundscapes of jazz music, particularly apparent in Petry's “Solo on the Drums.”

Secondly, freedom in improvising is limited or regulated by rhythmic effects inherent in African-American music. Authors of African-American prose fiction advise to stick to natural biorhythms. Particularly in novels related to hip-hop music, a constant regular beat pervades the process of reading, which is most clearly depicted in Berry's *The Haunting of Hip Hop.* Morrison uses the traditional functions of the drums in order to convey the ancient wisdom of the importance of biorhythms (compare 4.1.5; 5.3.5). Thirdly, African-American music contains the principle of multeity-in-unity, saying that each player develops his/her own style in a group, in which interdependence prevails between single players. This principle mirrors the

ecological principles of interdependence, circularity, and diversity of an ecosystem. A human being, conscious of being rooted in a network of natural phenomena, is advised to act accordingly to those principles. In this sense, Berry is a clear example of how to use hip-hop music in advocating the love of life to perform harmonious inter-subjective relationships (compare 5.3.5). "Necrophilic" or capitalistic endeavors are negated. In general, prose fiction with blues, jazz, and hip-hop music learn a readership how to develop individuality in the form of stylization, and at the same time, acknowledge diversity of various life forms in postmodern times *via* characters as role models.

With a life-affirming stance and a creative approach to life, fictional characters function as role models, giving valuable advice and inspirations on how to overcome the ecological trauma of the 21st century. The current ecological crisis is born out of the irony of unintended consequences and it has not only material reasons but the origins are mainly found in the prevalent way of how a culture thinks (Buell, *Imagination;* Tucker, *Ecology* 1). Mechanical results of past conditions are the principal barriers to real joy and perceiving biophilia (Bohm, *Creativity* 25). Our society has preferred re-active to active moments, which prevented human beings from experiencing themselves as initiative (Rowan).[263]

A creative approach, to which readers are motivated to in African-American novels with blues, jazz, and hip-hop musical aesthetics *v i a* African-American musical characteristics, has far-reaching consequences in the endeavor of overcoming our current ecological crisis. Roger S. Ulrich (1993) points out: "[...] creative problem solving must have played an absolutely central role in the crescendo of innovation that has driven much of human progress" (111-12). In order to reach a positive way out of our current ecological crisis, it is essential to focus on the creative potential of human beings, which is spurred by a re-connection to our natural selves and the perception of biophilia: "[B]ecause natural settings have been

263Whenever we try to be mechanical, we fail because the natural mind cannot properly act mechanically (Bohm, *Creativity* 24). In a self-sustaining confused state of mind, it can no longer see what is creative and what is mechanical by starting to suppress real originality and creativity, which threatens the mechanical center of a self and constitutes a process of "falling asleep." The fear of making mistakes is added to one's habits of mechanical perception in terms of pre-conceived ideas, and learning only for specific utilitarian purposes. This fear results from a state of mind that believes that life and happiness depend on security (Bohm, *Creativity* 4, 17).

found to elicit positive emotional states, exposure to such environments may facilitate creative problem solving or high-order cognitive functioning via their ability to alter one's emotional state" (Roger 111-12).[264] Therefore, it is essential for humanity to react at this very moment and decide against necrophilia according to David W. Orr: "If we are to preserve a world in which biophilia can be expressed and can flourish, we will have to decide to make such a world" (416-17).

264History indicates that a failure to understand that creativity is essential to the whole of life can lead to a "mechanical, repetitious order" in society at large (Bohm, *Creativity* xxi). Consequently, any given culture (including our own) may disintegrate, not only because of external forces and pressures, but also due to the "internal decay" that accompanies the dissipation of the creative impulse (Bohm, *Creativity* xxi).

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