

CHIMURENGA RENAISSANCE: DOUBLE DOUBLENES IN THE DIASPORIC MUSIC OF TENDAI MARAIRE

by

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Abstract. Over the past decade, emerging Seattle-based artist Tendai Maraire, the American-born son of Zimbabwean teacher, performer, and ethnomusicologist, Dumisani Maraire, has crafted a unique musical position by marshaling multiple diasporic strands in his music. These include both the centuries-old African-American diaspora that took shape through the “Black Atlantic,” as well as an emerging diaspora that is specifically Zimbabwean in nature. In this article, it is argued that the layering of these distinct diasporic histories has fostered a type of “doubled doubleness” in Tendai Maraire’s music, extending DuBois’ original conception of “double consciousness” to encompass multiple sites of identity location: the American superculture, the Shona culture of his parents, the old African diaspora, and the new Zimbabwean diaspora. It is further argued that Maraire has articulated this “doubled doubleness” musically through his relationships to musical styles associated with both old and new African diasporas, most notably North American hip-hop and Zimbabwean *chimurenga*, a genre that has historically functioned as a form of resistance to colonial rule.

Over the past decade, emerging Seattle-based artist, Tendai Maraire, the American-born son of Zimbabwean teacher, performer, and ethnomusicologist, Dumisani Maraire, has crafted a unique musical position by marshaling multiple diasporic strands in his music. These include both the centuries-old African-American diaspora that took shape through the “Black Atlantic,” as well as an emerging diaspora that is specifically Zimbabwean in nature. In this article, I argue that the layering of these distinct diasporic histories has fostered a type of “doubled doubleness” in Tendai Maraire’s music, extending DuBois’ original conception of “double consciousness” to encompass multiple sites of identity location: the American superculture, the Shona culture of his parents, the old African diaspora, and the new Zimbabwean diaspora.¹ While DuBois emphasized the “[feeling] of his twoness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings” (DuBois 1962: 315), I argue that Maraire’s unique relationship to old and new African diasporas fosters a consciousness that extends beyond the binary of DuBois’ original theory through intersectionality between multiple diasporic cultures. Through the concept of “double

¹ Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin coined the term superculture to describe “an umbrella-like, overarching structure that could be present anywhere in the system—ideology or practice concept or performance. The usual, the accepted, the statistically lopsided, the commercially successful, the statutory, the regulated, the most visible: these all belong to the superculture.” (Slobin 1987: 29). For a detailed study of the intersections of multiple musical cultures, see Mark Slobin’s *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (1987).

doubleness,” I suggest that the anxiety of “double consciousness” is multiplied through the pressures of belonging to more than one subcultural community. As I illustrate, Maraire has articulated this “doubled doubleness” musically through his relationships to musical styles associated with both old and new African diasporas, most notably North American hip-hop and Zimbabwean *chimurenga*, a genre that has historically functioned as a form of resistance to colonial rule.

As Paul Gilroy has indicated in *The Black Atlantic*, leaving one’s home culture creates opportunities to reflect on one’s subject position, both within and beyond this cultural “home” (1993: 150). Yet Gilroy’s examination of the African American diaspora does not extend to more recent African diasporic flows. As I will suggest, Maraire’s deliberate attempts to position himself as belonging simultaneously to both old and new African diasporas extends Gilroy’s perspective. Overtly emphasizing his liminal position as “a black man with two homelands who belonged nowhere,” Maraire stresses cultural entanglements, which are a product of both diasporic and colonial histories (Maraire 2012). His synthesis of recent African and older African American diasporic histories thus confronts legacies of colonialism even as it reflects upon contemporary issues of race in the United States. In the process, Maraire positions himself as a member of the global North *and* the global South, allowing him to occupy a unique position as authority figure and cultural critic.

The doubleness of diasporic identity creation is often celebrated as empowering; this is true of Gilroy’s description of the Fisk Jubilee Singers’ navigation of their own diasporic identity (1993: 87), and of Ingrid Monson’s exploration of doubleness as a rich resource for jazz improvisation (1994: 283). Yet the lived reality for Maraire has been anything but easy. By straddling the line between cultures, Maraire exposes himself to criticism from multiple points of view, including both his home and host communities. Maraire has at times been dismissed by his Zimbabwean peers for being too American, even as he has similarly been critiqued by his black American peers for being too African. His use of Zimbabwean instruments, for example, ‘others’ him within the American hip-hop scene, while his provocative Zimbabwean nationalism stirs tensions both in the Zimbabwean music community his father helped form in North America, and among Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe who believe that Maraire’s position in the global North has blinded him to the difficulties of contemporary Zimbabwean life. The dialogue between Maraire and the various interpretive communities listening to his music has led him to experience both identification and alienation, reinforcing his liminal position between the global North and global South.

As Thomas Turino has observed, once cultural practices, concepts, or forms move away from the location of their origin, they are necessarily reshaped by their new environments (2000: 8). A close reading of artists who straddle multiple diasporas, such as Maraire, reveals how this process can be particularly entangled. Maraire’s dual appropriation of the musical and social aspects of both Zimbabwean and African American cultures has resulted in a “double doubleness” that is musical as well as social, simultaneously reaffirming and destabilizing his identity negotiation, and occasionally

putting him at odds with the various communities from which he borrows. I begin by discussing the musical tensions between Maraire's Shona origins and his American upbringing. These tensions surfaced during his childhood, causing him to confront the "double doubleness" of his identity from an early age.² Next, I will look at the way Maraire signifies his unique position as a member of multiple diasporas through specific discursive and representational maneuvers.³ Finally, I offer an interpretation of Maraire's 2013 mixtape, *Pungwe*, as a case study with a particular focus on the music video for the track "Boom!" as a lens through which to view the complicated ways he has navigated between multiple poles of identity.⁴

Methodology

In the summer of 2011, I attended Seattle's Bumbershoot Music Festival in order to hear Shabazz Palaces, an Afro-futuristic rap duo featuring Maraire alongside Palaceer Lazaro, aka Ishmael Butler, the former front man for the 1990s conscious rap group Digable Planets. While I initially had trouble deciphering why Shabazz Palaces had caused such a commotion amongst the Zimbabwean music community, revelation struck when Maraire brought out an *mbira dzaVadzimu* and began to improvise over the slow, atmospheric samples that construct Shabazz Palace's musical aesthetic. In that moment, African American futurism and African historical traditions became blurred, perfectly encapsulating the diasporic experiences of both members of the group. Through this experience at Bumbershoot, I became particularly interested in how Maraire was able to situate himself in relation to concepts of tradition and modernity, spatially constructed zones of home and away, and unfolding temporalities of past, present, and future.

Between 2012 and 2014, I carried out fieldwork exploring the themes raised by Maraire's Bumbershoot performance in more detail. I concentrated my fieldwork in the Pacific Northwest, where the Zimbabwean music performance community is strongest, and where Maraire grew up and continues to reside. The biggest challenge of this fieldwork has been the lack of a truly cohesive musical "community" or single musical

² Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1991) allows us to see the fragmentation inherent in diaspora in a new way. For Bhabha, the negotiation of diasporic positions is a battle of identity, in which diasporic individuals come to understand themselves *vis-à-vis* both their home and host communities.

³ In *The Black Atlantic* (1993), Paul Gilroy deconstructs conventional narratives of black experience in both America and the larger African diaspora, demonstrating how diaspora and doubleness are inextricably connected. Yet *The Black Atlantic* is driven by binaries; home and away, black and white, America and Europe. In contrast, I see Maraire's music as leaving behind these binaries, and embracing multiple locations and positions, from which his diasporic identity is formed.

⁴ Turino's *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (2000) provides insight into ideas of cosmopolitanism, which has proved an important framing device through which to examine Maraire's family history and identity in relation to larger Zimbabwean community formations. Unlike Gilroy's emphasis on binaries, Turino's model of cosmopolitanism also reveals a process of socialization which involves multiple strands of culture. Through it, we become aware that conceptions of "indigenous" and "modern" are inherently reductionist in approach; instead, we come to recognize the multivalent nature of the musical communities in which Maraire grew up and performed.

“culture” within which to explore Maraire’s diasporic identity. This situation reflects the shifting conceptions of field research within the discipline of ethnomusicology and the conception of “culture” writ large.⁵

At the time of my field research, Maraire’s rap group, Shabazz Palaces, was in the midst of an international tour that included America, Europe, and parts of Asia. While this enabled me to attend Shabazz Palaces concerts in far-flung locations including Seattle, WA and Ithaca, NY, it also made it difficult to interview Maraire and immerse myself in his musical world. Given this fact, I engaged multiple modalities in my interactions with Maraire, from face-to-face conversation to phone and e-mail interviews. I also spent time making sense of the ways Maraire represents himself publicly, through blog postings, promotional materials, and the multiple websites that frame Maraire’s evolving musical projects. Finally, I spent time with the Zimbabwean music community founded by Tendai’s father, Dumisani Maraire, in the Pacific Northwest, attending summer music festivals such as Zimfest, in Seattle and Nhemamusasa North, on Vancouver Island, BC.

Musical and social tensions in Maraire’s childhood

Tendai Maraire’s birth outside his family’s ancestral home in Zimbabwe marked the beginning of a process of identity negotiation that has persisted throughout his life. At home, his father Dumisani Maraire, an ethnomusicologist and performer, and his mother Lora Chiorah-Dye, a dancer, instilled a respect for the musical arts of Zimbabwe such as the performance of the *nyunga nyunga mbira* (hereafter referred to as simply *nyunga nyunga*) and the Zimbabwean marimba. As Maraire recalled:

I was born when they were teaching and touring. Music was a part of my life from day one, whether it was my mother singing when she cleaned or just to put me to sleep, which she did all the time. So the foundation of my whole being started [with] Zimbabwean culture, food, and music. (Lynch 2011)

Yet the young Tendai also became acculturated into the Black American hip-hop scene as a child growing up in Seattle’s Central District, a predominantly Black American community. Musically, he was exposed to hip-hop as it moved from the margins to the mainstream American superculture in the 1990s.⁶ At the same time, the

⁵ Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley’s edited collection *Shadows in the Field: New Perspective for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (1997) considers this shift and its effect on the fieldwork experience. Nasir Syed’s contribution to the volume illustrates this shift in the virtual realm; through video services such as YouTube and communication tools such as Skype, Syed is able to supplement his research on Hindustani music through an online community. Kay Kaufman Shelemay’s contribution “Musical Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music” asks us to shift our conceptions of what constitutes a musical community; Shelemay complicates a static interpretation of community to include individuals who have been left out by scholarship.

⁶ Hip-hop itself is the product of multiple diasporic groups; block parties served as a site for interaction between Black American, Latin American, and people from the West Indies. Through the blending of multiple histories, a new culture was created. For more on hip-hop, in particular the diasporic origins of this musical culture, see Tricia Rose’s *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994), Anthony Kwame Harrison’s *Hip Hop Underground* (2009), and Adam Krims’ *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (2000).

performing traditions of Zimbabwe offered him a way to construct a connection to the home he had never visited. As Tendai has become a professional artist, elements of both musical cultures have provided rich source material, allowing him to position himself among multiple musical worlds.⁷

However, this positioning was not a simple process, and musical tensions that arose during Tendai Maraire's childhood destabilized his connection with both Shona and American cultures. Between 1982 and 1986, his father lived in Zimbabwe, where he had returned to develop an ethnomusicology program at the University of Zimbabwe. Dumisani left Tendai's mother Lora and their children in Seattle, including the teenaged Tendai. Upon his return to Seattle, Dumisani found that his son had developed musical interests beyond the *nyunga nyunga* and Zimbabwean marimba he had taught him. Specifically, Tendai had begun playing violin in school which caused his father to fear that his son would lose his connection to Zimbabwe. As Tendai discussed in our interviews, this proved a source of tension within the family. Back home in Zimbabwe, Dumisani had struggled against the incorporation of Western instruments into Zimbabwean classrooms, and the idea of his own son picking up the very instrument he had fought against led him to demand that Tendai give up the instrument entirely. Tendai's father felt that Western classical music would limit his children's connection to Zimbabwe; however, Tendai felt that the real limitation would be *only* playing traditional Zimbabwean music.⁸

As Peggy Levitt explains, "when children are brought up in households that are regularly influenced by people, objects, practices and know-how from their ancestral homes, they are socialized into its norms and values and they learn how to negotiate its institutions" (2009: 225). In interviews, Maraire often evokes images of his early proficiency in Zimbabwean music:

The story is I was 18 months, at a class with my parents. My mother used to keep a drum by me while they taught. My father was teaching a student a part and I just got up interrupted him and started playing the part. I don't remember a thing but I also never remember not knowing any of the songs and dances we performed. (Lynch 2011)

⁷ In the ethnographic text *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (1989), Ruth Finnegan proposes the term "musical worlds," in lieu of culture, to mark the specific way the musicians she worked with were able to negotiate between multiple social and musical situations with relative ease. For Finnegan, the idea of a single music culture is limiting; it presents a static model, where an individual either does or does not belong. In the case of Tendai Maraire, it is possible to see how an artist can move fluidly between the porous borders of culture to create his own interpretive musical world.

⁸ Between 1966 and 1967, Dumisani Maraire was educated at Bulawayo's Kwanongoma College of Music, an institution that focused on research and education of Zimbabwean music. The school provided him with the opportunity to learn marimba and *nyunga nyunga*; both newly developed icons of Rhodesian nationalism would eventually be re-contextualized as icons of Zimbabwean nationalism. During his time at Kwanongoma he developed proficiency on the marimba, and while his knowledge of the *mbira* was minimal at the time, he was recommended to take an artist-in-residence position at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA. Through this position, Dumisani Maraire introduced the marimba and the *nyunga nyunga mbira* to a whole new audience of Americans.

Maraire's American upbringing enriches his diasporic identity, linking cultural expressions of the African American diaspora to the Zimbabwean diasporic experience. Maraire recognizes his position between these diasporas when he says, "Being an American, having that American side to me, ya know what I'm saying, the culture was in me to be Zim, but my habits and everyday practices were American" (Maraire interview 7 July 2013). The connection between cultures goes beyond a bilateral view of home and host cultures and incorporates the multiple sites from which African American diasporic experience developed.

The distinction between old and new African diasporas was a source of conflict, particularly within the social circles in which Maraire grew up. The disjuncture between his black American and Zimbabwean identities first became clear when Lora took her sons on a trip to their homeland.

In 1994 our family visited Zimbabwe for the first time with our mother. At the time Biggie [The Notorious B.I.G.] was just hitting the scene. We were driving down the street bumping 'Juicy'. I remember we pulled up to a pick-up truck that had some uniformed workers in it. A white man was driving. Now imagine a minivan with young black kids—hats to the right, Gucci glasses—screaming in deep Biggie voices: *it was all a dream!* The workers looked at us like "Shhhh... Not good." The white guy mugged but straightened up when we mugged back. Young Maraire Boys being crazy at home. I hung out the window and said 'hay man if you don't like it you can leave.' (Devriendt 2012)

Through this performance, Maraire effectively presented himself as a member of a particular Zimbabwean cosmopolitan formation, a group who can afford Gucci sunglasses, listens to American rap, and who can insult White Africans for their outsider status. As Turino has observed, the twin forces of colonization and missionization combined to produce a cosmopolitan community that began to emerge in the 1930s, and cohered even more strongly through the Rhodesian government's education and cultural policies. As time passed, new social values, as well as new musical practices, took hold amongst an urban Zimbabwean middle-class, who began to see themselves both in relation to rural "pre-modern" Zimbabwean life, and to "modern" institutions, such as churches, schools, and the colonial state (Turino 2000: 9).

By the 1960s, this cosmopolitan community had become a distinct Zimbabwean cultural group. Decades of socialization increasingly placed local cosmopolitans in a liminal position between colonial and indigenous cultural resources, reflecting what Homi Bhabha has referred to as the fragmentation that is at the core of cosmopolitan and diasporic community formations (Bhabha 1994: 2). Turino, for example, quotes Chris Mhlanga, a Zimbabwean *mbira* performer, who describes this liminality quite well:

Those who are *in the middle* are not very much restricted. They can do the Western life, they can do the spiritual life, so they stay *in the middle*. Some who believe they are staying in the Western style, of course, they stay in the Western style because they are in good houses [i.e., members of higher classes], everything is good, but when it comes to spiritual life now, there is a bar [constraint], a little bar, that will never take them completely to the Western. (Mhlanga in Turino 2008: 39. Emphasis in the original)

Mhlanga's assertion is a testament to the complex position of the Zimbabwean

cosmopolitan formation. The story of the Maraire family fits neatly within Mhlanga's description of how cosmopolitan Zimbabweans internalize elements of Western "style," even as they maintain a relationship to Shona spirituality and its associated practices.

While his first trip to Zimbabwe gave Maraire a physical connection to his Shona roots, it also reinforced the difficulties of negotiating his place in relation to both old and new African diasporas. His self-conceptualization was complicated by his peers both at home in America and "home" in Zimbabwe; questions of his place in "their" culture fueled the volatility that comes out in Maraire's music and personal views.

When I first came back to America after that first trip to Zim, a kid named Serge and I were known as the "African Booty Scratchers." I didn't understand why people who looked like me were laughing at me. Even the ones that knew me before I left. I always felt that America saw us the same; not as African American, Zimbabwean or even Black. Just ignorant Negroes. As I got older my friends and I learned we're all in the same social and economic positions. But I still had American friends who thought I felt better than them because I was Zimbabwean and friends that were from Zimbabwe who thought I was better than them or lost my culture because I had a curl and wore Jordans. (Devriendt 2012)

Maraire's liminal position made him a target of criticism from the multiple communities he identified with. Yet through a process of identity negotiation that pulled from multiple cultural spheres, old and new African diasporas, Maraire was able to construct a more nuanced understanding of his music, his culture, and himself.

The streets of Seattle gave Tendai Maraire the opportunity to explore the Black American culture that constituted life outside of the Maraire household. His family's location in Capitol City, the historically Black American neighborhood of Seattle, exposed Maraire to the hip-hop lifestyle that was quickly gaining popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. In the early 1980s, Maraire and his brothers learned to breakdance, practicing their pop-and-locking technique and battling other dancers in Capitol City; a young Tendai took center stage at Sumer Break '84, Seattle's first mainstream hip-hop event. In high school Maraire rapped under the moniker Boy Wonder, and performed opening sets for hip-hop artists like Snoop Dogg and Slick Rick. He and his siblings Ziyana and Dumisani Jr. formed the hip hop group C.A.V.É., a Christian rap group that gained popularity on the west coast during the 1990s.⁹

But the Maraire siblings' adoption of this American musical form once again came under scrutiny by their father. As Maraire recalls:

My dad basically looked at it like "you guys are rapping," [and leaving your Shona roots behind], but we were more like "we're rapping cause we've been playing [the *mbira*] since we were 2 years old, 1 year old, 18 months whatever. We're not concerned with that. We're gonna go do this other shit too because we like it, we love it. And then as time evolves we'll figure out how it all incorporates." (Maraire interview 7 July 2013)

⁹ In addition to his siblings in America, Maraire's half-sister Chiwoniso Maraire was also a musician; her performance of *nyunga nyunga* in a pop music setting was immensely popular both in Zimbabwe and internationally. Born in America and raised in Zimbabwe, Chiwoniso's music suggests her own type of "double doubleness." For more on Chiwoniso and her music, see Ezra Chitando and Pauline Mateveke, "Challenging Patriarchy and Exercising Women's Agency in Zimbabwean Music: Analysing the Careers of Chiwoniso Maraire and Olivia Charamba" (2012).

C.A.V.É. disbanded in the late 1990s, allowing the brothers to each pursue solo musical careers in different hip-hop genres. The styles of rapping that Ziyanaï and Dumisani Jr. performed closely paralleled contemporaneous trends, with Ziyanaï gravitating toward West Coast gangsta rap and Dumisani Jr. turning to East Coast consciousness rap. On the other hand, Maraire's more eclectic approach used hip-hop as a platform to educate Americans, Black Americans in particular, of the struggles going on back "home." Yet Maraire explained to me that the hip-hop community in the 1990s did not warmly welcome his Afrocentric message.

"I think that people's comprehension of Africa has finally grown up... I was on this from day one. They didn't even know what I was playing when I pulled out an *mbira* on stage 20 years ago and rapped with it. No one cared, rappers within this community laughed. I remembered the day; I sat and watched them laugh. The world just wasn't ready for that. They didn't understand, with gangsta music at the time, east coast 5% music; they didn't want to accept a dude with an *mbira* talking about political views out in South Africa or Zimbabwe. That was far from their imagination." (Maraire interview 7 July 2013)

Following this rejection, Maraire would not rap publicly with an *mbira* until nearly two decades later. On his 2010 mixtape, *Wona Baba Maraire* [Look at Father Maraire], he hinted at the development of the *chimurenga* hip-hop style that he has pursued to this day. Maraire positions himself as the legitimate heir to his father's musical legacy by referring to himself as "Baba Maraire," or Father Maraire, a term conventionally used to refer to the male head of a patriarchal lineage. "I am ready," Maraire contends, "to take the responsibility of picking up where my father left off. I just want to...spread my culture while I make the world aware of the social and economic issues Zimbabwe is dealing with" (Kizito Arts Movement 2012). Even as he continues to perform Zimbabwean music in the style of his father, however, Maraire has one eye looking to the past and the other looking toward the future, and his musical output as the new "Baba Maraire" adds a contemporized branch to the Maraire musical legacy. Even on this single album, for example, he places the *mbira* in multiple musical contexts, thereby constantly shifting between musical and social positions, enabling him to critique and comment upon the embedded cultural histories that are at play in his family's unique diasporic positionality.

The final track on the mixtape, "Is She?," features Maraire performing a radio-friendly ballad on the *nyunga nyunga mbira* while singing English lyrics through an auto-tune filter. This track, with its sleek production and pop sensibilities, contrast starkly with the contemporary Shona music that comprised the majority of the mixtape, and it is this divergence that signaled Maraire's attempt to merge his musical worlds once again. By placing Zimbabwean instruments in multiple musical contexts Maraire presents his "double doubleness;" constantly shifting his own discourse of tradition enables him to critique and comment upon the embedded cultural histories that are at play within the musical genres and instruments he chooses to juxtapose.

Discursive and representational maneuvers

In 2012, Tendai Maraire released *Pungwe*, his first mixtape under the new moniker 'Chimurenga Renaissance'. In Maraire's announcement of the mixtape, he defined his experience in between cultures thus:

Pungwe has arrived. Take a holistic journey of a Zimbabwean native raised in American poverty; a black man with two homelands but who belonged nowhere. A new culture emerged, history was penned, life was born. (Maraire 2012)

In *Pungwe*, Maraire vocalized his frustrations with many facets of his particular diasporic subject position. In addition to foregrounding matters such as the racial politics of the contemporary American landscape, he also concentrated heavily on what he perceived as the appropriation of Zimbabwean musical culture by the North American musical community that his father had helped to establish in the 1960s.¹⁰ Indeed, both the lyrics and music of *Pungwe* constitute Maraire's response to a community he perceived as taking liberties with Dumisani's musical legacy, and Zimbabwean musical culture in a larger sense. These tensions served as source material for Maraire in his new musical role in Chimurenga Renaissance.

Both the moniker Chimurenga Renaissance and the title *Pungwe*, a reference to the all-night political rallies held during Zimbabwe's liberation war, connect Maraire's crusade against the misappropriation of his father's Zimbabwean culture to a concept deeply embedded within Zimbabwean history, known as *chimurenga* (liberation or struggle). As Zimbabwean scholar Maurice Vambe explains:

The term *chimurenga* comes from the name of a legendary Shona ancestor, Murenga Sororenzou. Murenga was well known for his fighting spirit and prowess, and legend has it that he composed war-songs to encourage his soldiers to continue the fight against their enemies in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. (Vambe 2004: 167)

The fighting spirit of Murenga inspired Zimbabwean musicians to develop *chimurenga* music, a genre that incorporates Shona lyrics and *mbira* in a rock band setting, in the 1970s.¹¹ Artists such as Thomas Mapfumo, Comrade Chinx, Jonah Sithole, and Susan Mapfumo performed *chimurenga* music as a way to resist the repressive Rhodesian regime. This music encouraged the liberation fighters in the struggle for

¹⁰ Dumisani Maraire's legacy continues today through the teachings of his students, who are now located across the United States, as well as the incredible repertoire he arranged for the Zimbabwean marimba and *nyunga nyunga*. During interviews with Dumisani's former students, it became clear that his views on who could perform and participate in the music would often change depending on his mood. I would like to thank my reviewers for pointing to this complex topic, in particular the contradictions between Dumisani's views in rehearsal and in private, and his active role in fostering participation by local Americans in music from Zimbabwe.

¹¹ During the 1970s, Zimbabwean rock bands were at the forefront of popular culture. This position not only gave them social clout as professional musicians, but also provided the artists the opportunity to bring their social and political messages to a larger audience. For more on the role of Zimbabwean rock music in the nation's liberation struggle see Alec Pongweni's *Songs that Won the Liberation War* (1982), Paul Berliner's *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (1978) and *Turino* (2000).

independence during the Second Chimurenga, or the Rhodesian Bush War, of 1966–1979. The genre succeeded as a political vehicle, due in large part to the inability of the Rhodesian power structure to understand the lyrics, which were doubly subversive through their use of the Shona language and metaphor. Yet the music itself similarly subverted the colonial “invention of tradition” by mapping Shona *mbira* music onto cosmopolitan instruments.¹² Mapfumo developed a powerful nationalist aesthetic through the use of *mbira* music, transcribing pieces from the *mbira dzaVadzimu* repertoire that he then performed on his electric guitar. Zimbabwean musician Cosmas Magaya recalls how Mapfumo was able to subvert the restrictions of the Rhodesian state:

My colleague, Thomas Mapfumo, introduced *mbira* music on the guitar, because the guitar was a Western instrument. So, the colonial rulers did not mind about that, but then Mapfumo was singing *Chimurenga* songs. You know, encouraging people to go and join in the war...fight for your own country...So you can see that the music played a very important role during the liberation war.” (Epps 2012)

Through this subversion, Mapfumo brought traditional *mbira* repertoire into the Zimbabwean pop music sphere, thereby attempting to reinvigorate a sense of pride in indigenous Shona culture within a society affected by cosmopolitanism and Westernization.¹³

After Zimbabwean Independence in 1980, Mapfumo’s *chimurenga* songs gradually began critiquing the post-independence leadership, altering his pre-conflict political views to call into question President Robert Mugabe’s dominance over the nation. While the dominant narrative of 1980s Zimbabwean popular music was pro-government and pro-Mugabe, Mapfumo’s subversion of this narrative in the 1990s defied the political manipulation of *chimurenga* music as political propaganda, and instead retained the genre’s flexibility in its capacity to criticize. For Maurice Vambe:

¹² In *The Invention of Tradition* (1992), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger deconstruct the notion of tradition, revealing the multiple processes of invention that interweave the past and present. The authors point to the late nineteenth century European expansion into Africa as an important site of tradition construction. Zimbabwean musical culture was appropriated by missionaries, who sought to infuse music with “content that reflected their evangelical concerns.” (Vambe 2004: 171) This commoditization of music turned it against its roots, and gave music “the capacity to promote preferred messages; it promoted African-Christian melodic messages that laughed at and mocked African expressions aimed at freeing people from the yoke of colonialism as primitive African music.” (ibid.) This new Christian-capitalist form of music regarded traditional *mbira dzaVadzimu* and ngoma drums as unholy.

¹³ It is tempting to situate *mbira* music in the past and in contrast to Zimbabwean music in the present, but this bifurcation is more closely associated with the perspective of the individual conceptualizing the instrument; following Turino, I suggest that the *mbira* is an icon that indexes a particular type of Zimbabwean or Shona-ness. Therefore while the *mbira dzaVadzimu* might point towards a very present spiritual world for a rural nganga healer, it may signal a distant past to a urban cosmopolitan who has been taught to disregard, and even fear, the spiritual properties of the instrument. For more on the complicated relationship between cosmopolitan and national communities in Zimbabwe, see Michael O. West’s *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965*, and Turino (2000).

[Mapfumo] attempts to create an alternative *chimurenga* discourse of struggle running parallel to, but consistently attacking, contesting, and undermining official truths about the direction of the struggle for economic self-realization...Mapfumo's version of *chimurenga* music, especially songs from the 1990s, could be described as the voice of the silenced majority suffering from an imposed Economic Structural Adjustment Program that has eroded the little material gain made by the people at independence. (Vambe 2004: 169)

By criticizing the same governmental forces that he helped put in power through musical promotion, Mapfumo demonstrates that rather than blindly following politics, *chimurenga* music constantly alters its message to best reflect social attitudes towards power dynamics. As Vambe explains, "*Chimurenga* music is not a discourse in which the authenticity or purity of the values and belief systems of Africans are unproblematically asserted, nor is it a musical space in which African identities are totally distorted by dominant Zimbabwean discourses" (Vambe 2004: 169). *Chimurenga* music is not so much a musical genre as a form of social discourse; identity is not simply stated, but is negotiated by performers playing a variety of difference musical styles.

As a "force field of relations shaped, precisely, by contradictory pressures and tendencies," (Vambe 2004: 168) *chimurenga's* continuous negotiation shares important similarities with another musical culture: hip-hop. Hip-hop scholar Tricia Rose argues:

Rap music brings together a tangle of some of the most complex social, cultural, and political issues in contemporary American society. Rap's contradictory articulations are not signs of absent intellectual clarity; they are a common feature of community and popular cultural dialogues that always offer more than one cultural, social, or political viewpoint. (Rose 1994: 2)

Hip-hop is inextricably linked to politics and American social life but like *chimurenga*, the message that is promoted does not always reflect the values of all those within the hip-hop culture, or American culture writ large.

In her 2007 article "Beat Streets in the Global Hood: Connective Marginalities of the Hip Hop Globe," Halifu Osumare, a scholar of black popular culture, offers the term "connective marginalities" as a way to describe the popularity of hip hop, in particular the culture's global reach. "Hip-hop," argues Osumare, "as an extension of African American popular culture becomes a global signifier for many forms of marginalization. In each case 'blackness' and its perceived status is implicated as a global sign" (2007: 172). These "social resonances" can connect at points of culture, class, historical oppression, or "simply the discursive construction of 'youth' as a peripheral social status" (Osumare 2007: 172). Through these "connective marginalities," peripheral groups relate their individual situation to the history of Black American marginality. As a form of social discourse, hip-hop, like *chimurenga* music, destabilizes a simple binary between the center and periphery and instead serves as a vehicle to critique multiple communities. Hip-hop's global status has not limited its ability to subvert dominant discourses and norms. As Osumare claims, "although rap music is situated in the continuum of historical exportation of American pop music, hip-hop as a culture has interjected its own often self-empowered messages and attitudes that are not necessarily under the control of the music industry" (ibid.). These messages of empowerment and struggle,

and a conscious attempt to subvert dominant social and cultural narratives, are at the core of both hip-hop and *chimurenga* ideology.

The critical resonance between *chimurenga* and hip-hop provided Maraire the platform to establish himself as an artist who transcends national boundaries to represent a larger diasporic consciousness. Maraire uses his Chimurenga Renaissance moniker to connect with Zimbabwe's musical *chimurenga*, but it is the direct correlation between the struggle for Zimbabwean nationalism and Maraire's struggle to reclaim his national identity that best articulates his message. While the incorporation of the term "renaissance" indicates that this music is the contemporary extension of the Shona struggle, Tendai's moniker also points explicitly to the Harlem Renaissance, effectively creating a bridge between historical Zimbabwean and Black American social movements. By extending his own version of *chimurenga* to include the past struggles of the Shona people as well as the struggles of the Black American community, Maraire routes his identity from Harlem to pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

"Boom!"

This connection comes out clearly in his music video for "Boom!," the first single off of the *Pungwe* mixtape. With his rapping, Maraire articulates Zimbabwean *chimurenga* through the lens of his own doubled doubleness. "Boom!," said Maraire, "is me throwing my first punch at those that still disrespect the music" (Devriendt 2013). As Maraire reflected to me:

You know...when I'm rapping in 'Boom!' I'm specifically talking about the Zim music community in America. The community has done what they do with everything else, taken something African and just did whatever they want with it, as they please. And it's personal to me now.

When you're talking about "*Chemutengure*," a song that is about Westerners coming in and taking over and pillaging the land, when it's talking about *chimurenga* songs and you're coming and speaking songs of freedom and my people, it's fucking disrespectful. That's it. There's no other way around it. (Maraire interview 7 July 2013)

Conjuring the image of Cecil Rhodes' 1890 pioneer column and the First *Chimurenga* war (1896–1897), Maraire connects his fight against a dominant and appropriative superculture to his ancestors' struggle against an oppressive regime of foreign settlers. The militant nature of *chimurenga* imbues Maraire's musical work, allowing him to set up defensive, and at time offensive, positions against his "enemies," those that would limit the autonomy of Zimbabwean culture.¹⁴

By filming the "Boom!" music video in Zimbabwe, Maraire positions himself as a culture-bearer, one who is able to critique aspects of American and Zimbabwean

¹⁴ In the music video for the single "Pop Killer," off Chimurenga Renaissance's 2013 mixtape *Defenders of the Crusades*, we see Maraire using his *mbira* as a literal weapon. As he raps "smells like a heist to me, trust fund conspiracy, full of collusion, pillaging and deceit" Maraire holds his *mbira* as if it were a pistol, points it towards the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, and pulls the "trigger." For Maraire, the greed of white settlers and their Zimbabwean colluders has played a major part in destroying Zimbabwean culture.

societies from a privileged geographic position. Atuanya Priester, the Black American producer who travelled with Maraire to film “Boom!,” constructs a visual representation of Maraire’s diasporic history through the juxtaposition of the past and present realities of Zimbabwean life. The video was shot in late 2012 in Snake Park, a suburb of Harare. As Maraire reflected, this location was chosen due to its own liminality: “I like the fact that Snake Park has both modernized homes with bricks as well as...huts” (Roosblad 2013).

The video for “Boom!” begins with the sound of rushing wind, accompanied by an image of a Zimbabwe Bird that serves as Maraire’s Chimurenga Renaissance logo. Unlike the stone-carved Zimbabwe Bird featured on the nation’s flag, Maraire’s bird is constructed of precious materials: the body is gold and silver with a ruby for an eye, and in lieu of the usual pedestal, the bird is perched upon a very large diamond. The disjunction between the ubiquitous, stoic national icon and Chimurenga Renaissance’s flashy logo showcases Maraire’s reverence for his home culture, while also indicating to the viewer the difference between Maraire’s diasporic viewpoint and the lived reality in Zimbabwe.

The dream-like introduction of the music video opens on a field of purple wildflowers, as an electric guitar is accompanied by an ethereal, roiling synthesizer pad. Maraire’s main collaborator Hussein Kalonji performs the guitar’s melody in a fingerpicked style that recalls the *soukous* music performed by his father, Congolese guitarist Raymond “Braynck” Kalonji. As the sound of a drum machine’s rim shot pans from left to right, Maraire appears in the video, singing the hook to “Boom!”:

The beat goes boom boom boom boom
 And the beat, and the beat
 The beat goes boom boom boom boom
 And the beat, and the beat
 (transcribed by author from Maraire 2012)

When the beat drops, Maraire moves from singing to rapping, showcasing his particular style of lyrical flow. Maraire raps in a steady flow of sixteenth-notes, pausing only to emphasize significant words or to sing the hook. His assertive delivery style is matched by the militant nature of his lyrics: “I do this for my uncle, that used to spray gas on Cecil Rhodes’ crew that stole our homeland. That’s why we punk the farmers, kick they ass up off the block, now the sleazy billionaires want my president shot” (transcribed from Maraire 2012).

Images of the Second *Chimurenga* war (1964–1979) are nested within videos of Maraire hanging out in present-day Zimbabwe. These images from the past reflect stories from the Maraire family’s diasporic memory: when Maraire raps “So why should Africa ever want for anything when we’ve got the richest land, kings, queens. Like my mama, who fled war to rock shows with pops. Ducking in the bushes, dodging AK shots,” his words are accompanied by historical video footage of *chimurenga* soldiers and *pungwe* meetings.

Throughout the video, Maraire fashions himself as a rural Zimbabwean: one who wanders through fields, eats *sadza*, a cornmeal dish that is a staple of Zimbabwean

cuisine, and hangs out with other rural Zimbabweans. “Boom!” presents an assemblage of Zimbabwean culture that more closely reflects an idealized version of rural life, one that is relatively affected by the Western world. But at points in the music video, the bubble of indigeneity is pierced; while Maraire plays soccer with local children, the viewer may catch a glimpse of the BMW and the driver that Maraire and Preister hired for traveling around Zimbabwe. Maraire recalls, “There was basically a debate to take it out and I was like, ‘No leave it in,’ to let people know that we got cars!” (Roosblad 2013).

Based on our knowledge of Maraire’s complex background, the construct of his rural identity is deliberately discursive – a representational fiction. Maraire begins “Boom!” by ushering us into this fictional world, telling us, “If you’ve never been to Zim, imma bring that shit to you” (transcribed from Maraire 2012). This succinct message exposes Maraire’s intended audience as those who live outside of Zimbabwe’s borders. It becomes clear then, that “Boom!” is not intended for Zimbabwean nationals, but for the Black American community back home in America. Maraire directly references the bridge that he has constructed between Zimbabwean and American cultures through his particular style of *chimurenga* hip-hop. “Now, I must hip these niggas to this *chimurenga* sound. Get them pluckin’ on *mbira* up west and down south. Show all my Zim boys that we’re welcome on the block. Once we all come together Africa’s gonna pop!” (transcribed from Maraire 2012). We may see how the *mbira* serves as a connection between Maraire’s American upbringing, “up west” in Seattle and his Shona history, “down south” in Zimbabwe.

The instrument encourages dialogue not only between the musics of American and Zimbabwean cultures, but also the multiple national, cosmopolitan and diasporic people who compose those cultures. For Maraire, the Zimbabwean music community in America does not actually represent the diasporic black cultures that it revolves around; the dominance of a white majority in the musical community has, in Maraire’s opinion, presented an obstacle for Black Americans who might be interested in the music.

I try and get Black Americans to also embrace this music, appreciate, love it and play it. They don’t because, why would they feel like this music is available to them if they’re watching a white person play it and they think, “oh I don’t want to participate with that person, and it doesn’t feel right when this is the person who did so much to me.” Now you’re supposed to go play with them? That healing process wasn’t there for Black America and for white people in America. (Maraire interview 7 July 2013)

Maraire situates himself as the interlocutor between old and new African diasporas, placing these groups in dialogue with the American superculture. His in-between status provides a space for Maraire to be critical of multiple hegemonic groups while also presenting himself as a member, and through his music a representative, of multiple entangled black cultures. The liminal position that is explored in *Chimurenga Renaissance* is an empowering expression of “double doubleness” that incorporates the plural consciousness of diasporic groups.

Imbued with Zimbabwean nationalism, Maraire’s message closely adheres to the ideological platform of controversial Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Yet as a

diasporic citizen, Maraire is an outsider to the goings-on of Zimbabwean political life, creating tension between his Zimbabwean nationalist messages and his lived experience as an African in America. One of the ways he grapples with this tension is by referring to Robert Mugabe, “his president,” as a “nigga”, thereby discursively bringing him within an imagined sphere that is simultaneously Zimbabwean and Black American. The distance between Maraire’s subject position and the realities of Zimbabwean life makes his music a target for critics. Shaun Matsheza, a Zimbabwean blogger with the website *ThisIsAfrica.me* argues that Maraire is coming from a privileged point of view, that of the diasporic Zimbabwean. This identity allows Maraire to assert his roots without necessarily experiencing the realities of living back home.

Diaspora Zimbabweans, especially those born and raised outside the country, find it easier to loudly proclaim support for Mugabe. Maybe that is all because they never had to stand in a bank queue for ten hours straight, or to actually meet the people who were displaced and made homeless by operation *Murambatsvina* or the farm invasions before it. Their opinion is not influenced by memories of 2007 and 2008, when you would have wads and wads of banknotes but all you could find in supermarkets in Zimbabwe was firewood and safety matches...The liberation rhetoric espoused in Maraire’s track is too backward-looking. No, Tendai, Mugabe didn’t know what he was doing when he kicked out the Whites. Mugabe is not the unyielding champion of indigenous people’s rights that you portray him as. If he were, he would not have instigated genocide against his own fellow countrymen who had suffered in the war as much as anyone else: the people of Matabeleland... The real vanguard of the *Chimurenga*, the war veterans, whose renaissance you proudly proclaim, had to physically confront Mugabe and remind him of why the war was fought. No Tendai, Mugabe didn’t know what he was doing. (Matsheza 2013)

Matsheza’s powerful statements question the legitimacy of Maraire’s claims to cultural ownership. The viewpoint of a Zimbabwean national sheds light on the fissures in Maraire’s multilayered identity.

I suggest that Maraire’s clashes with the spectre of colonialism in “Boom!” arise not only from his experience as a diasporic Zimbabwean, but also from the history of appropriation of Black American musical culture. Maraire parallels these historic American tensions to the development of a Zimbabwean American musical community that consists of a White American majority. As Maraire raps in “Boom!”:

I don’t give a damn about they emotional feelings
 They say they love the music but I know they’re just stealing
 Ya’ll been stealing since Rome, it’s in your nature, you can’t stop
 If you touch my music you’re getting socked
 (transcribed by author from Maraire 2012)

By tapping into Black American diasporic memory, Maraire gives himself more room to claim ownership over “his” music while also critiquing White American’s attempts to perform Zimbabwean music. However, the perspectives of other Zimbabwean musicians have problematized this negotiation. A common theme of interviews I have conducted over the last two years with diasporic Zimbabweans and Zimbabwean nationals has been the complicated nature of ownership and representation of an art

form that has had its own international diaspora.¹⁵ As *mbira* player Patience Chaitezvi Munjeri reminds us, the *mbira* “is an ancestral spirit instrument. No one has a right to this...no one composes songs in this kind of music because it has control from the *mbira* spirits.” (Munjeri interview 17 October 2013) Attempts to re-connect to this indigenous point of view expose Maraire’s own cosmopolitanism, inherited from his father; as the title of diasporic Zimbabwean rapper Fore’s 2012 mixtape tells us, *Going Back is Not the Same as Staying*.

As I have illustrated in this article, Maraire’s complex relationship to both old and new African diasporas has resulted in a “double doubleness” that is musical as well as social. This condition was apparent in the musical tensions that arose early on in Maraire’s childhood. It has continued to characterize how he represents his subject position through specific discursive and representational maneuvers. In particular, “Boom!” showcases how Maraire manipulates his identity to fit into particular narratives from the multiple poles of his identity location: the American superculture, the Shona culture of his parents, the old African diaspora of the Black Atlantic, and the emerging Zimbabwean diaspora. The “doubled doubleness” of this cross-cultural space enables Maraire to embed himself into the multiple histories of Zimbabwean and Black American communities while retaining his individuality. His liminality, which once made him a target of ridicule from peers at home and abroad, is now the most powerful creative force behind his music.

¹⁵ Since the 1970s, Shona *mbira* and Zimbabwean musical arts have spread not only to the United States, but also throughout the world. This is due both to diasporic movement of Zimbabweans as well as increased global cultural flows between Zimbabwe and countries. Today it is possible to find Zimbabwean teachers and national enthusiasts in places such as Canada, Germany, and Japan. For more on the international spread of Zimbabwean musical culture see Chartwell Dutiro and Keith Howard’s collected volume *Zimbabwean Mbira Music on an International Stage: Chartwell Dutiro’s Life in Music* (2007), Sheasby Matiore’s dissertation “Performing Zimbabwean Music in North America: An Ethnography of *Mbira* and Marimba Performance Practice in the United States” (2008), and Berliner (1978).

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