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Turning the Table Over: Collaboration and Critique at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

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TURNING THE TABLE OVER: COLLABORATION AND CRITIQUE AT THE
NEW ORLEANS JAZZ AND HERITAGE FESTIVAL

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Geography & Anthropology

by
Erin C. Jordan
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Abstract

In the late 1970s, the African American Jazz Coalition responded to the marginalization of black vendors at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival by partnering with the Festival to create the Koindu Marketplace, now known as Congo Square. Whereas much public representation of the Festival suggests a transcendence of racial boundaries inside Festival grounds, the content and structure of contemporary interviews with the activists reflect continued racial tensions, power dynamics, and resentment. This thesis analyzes oral histories with the founders of the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition stored at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Archive. Critical discourse analysis of these interviews focuses on linguistic structures and inherent frames of worldview. Juxtaposing interviewers' intentions regarding the Festival's mission with what the activists consider a continued marginalization of black culture, I highlight moments of both conflict and heightened self-awareness amongst the participants.

I. Worldview (2004)

Kalamu ya Salaam, a New Orleans poet and activist, sits in front of a bookcase and looks almost defiantly out of the screen. The image is home-video quality, not the stuff of documentary film. Salaam's interviewers are present as disembodied voices coming from behind the camera: producer Andrew Robertson directs project contributor Pam Dixon to start the tape.

After some confusion with opening protocol, Dixon asks: “Would you let us know... would you tell us how you became involved with the Jazz Fest?”

Salaam discusses the first Jazz Fest performances he witnessed in 1970, then introduces his more active involvement almost a decade later: “I was part of the Koindu Coalition, which was a coalition of black activists, vendors, artists, who were pushing the Jazz Fest to be more inclusive... in the decision-making process and... and in the... economics of the Jazz Fest. More inclusive of black people, and out... out of that—“

Robertson interrupts. “And these were all local...”

“This was local, this is all local,” Salaam says, then continues.

In the following minutes, the interviewers continue to redirect the conversation in this way, questioning the activists’ methods, the nature of the Jazz Fest at the time, and what exactly Koindu was.

“How was Koindu... structured?” Robertson asks. “That was not... I mean... it was part of Jazz Fest? It was not a separate part that inserted itself, or it was?” The interviewers revisit the “separateness” of the Koindu marketplace and “localness” of the activists in this way throughout the tape.



Figure 1: Framing Worldview: Kalamu ya Salaam

While attempting to pin down the “structure” and reasoning behind the Koindu marketplace, Dixon hits a political hotspot: “The controversy remains, we hear this all the time, the nature of products sold in the Congo Square area not being handcrafted [...] The word ‘trinkets’ was used in an interview, and it was stressed, on the other side, that there should be affordable things, for kids. There should be things that were not too expensive, for class issues, actually.”

“Fuck ‘em,” Salaam replies, pausing for his words to take effect before explaining further, “You can then appreciate—I say that on purpose because now you can appreciate—you had two worldviews clashing, and I’m not even going to attempt to explain myself from the standpoint of another person’s worldview.”

II. Activism and the Archive: Historical Narrative Produced

This 2004 interview with Kalamu ya Salaam is one of several archived oral histories that describes the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition's efforts to desegregate the Jazz Fest workforce in the late 1970s. After hearing the exchange above, I became interested in exploring the ways that recent interviews with these activists reflect continued racial tensions, power dynamics, and mutual resentment between the activists and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation. As interviewers and narrators confirm and contest the Jazz Fest's racialized history, they expose discourses of institutional racism and individual misunderstanding. Collecting, addressing, and teaching this history are fraught with tension. I explore these tensions through critical discourse analysis and ethnographic research to highlight the Archive's contributions to New Orleans public history. How is race talked about, or around? How has the story of the Coalition been constructed or marginalized, and how can its inclusion in the Jazz Fest Archive contribute to current dialogues in the United States?

The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation is the governing body which partners with Festival Productions, Inc (FPI), to produce the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (McCaffrey 2005:3). The terms "Jazz Fest" and "Jazz and Heritage Foundation" refer to these manifestations of the organization formed in 1970: the former refers to the production and management of the annual event by FPI, while the latter is the non-profit arm tasked with broader cultural preservation. The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation Archive (from this point forward, "the Jazz Fest Archive") also falls under the umbrella of the Foundation and houses various artifacts and recordings associated with the Festival. A founding member of the Festival, Allison Miner, initiated this collection by organizing the Festival's African, Folk, Food, and Music Heritage stages. Interviews recorded at these stages generated the oral histories at the

heart of the Archive (McCaffrey 2005:21-22). In 1996, the Foundation purchased a historic building on the corner of Toulouse and Dauphine Streets in the French Quarter. There, archivist Rachel Lyons has devoted the last fifteen years to organizing, maintaining, and building the collection into a research center for Jazz Fest history, music, and public culture. As far as I know, scholars have made use of the Archive for its historic content rather than the ways in which this material has been organized and constructed.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a framework for linguistic analysis, draws attention to power struggles and inequalities in spoken and written discourses (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000, Fairclough 2011, 2015, Wodak 2015). Norman Fairclough, the first to write extensively on CDA, divides the process into description, interpretation, and explanation, each of which contains a list of questions for working through a text line by line (2015 [1989]).

Applied to the opening scene, CDA highlights interviewer Dixon's implicit quotation of others. "We hear this all the time," she says. "The word 'trinkets' was used." This distancing—the passive construction of information as "heard" and words "used," but not by anyone in particular — allows Salaam to attack the degradation of Koindu "trinkets" more directly because the interviewer has detached it from herself. Her words also reference a larger discourse: the original Festival art management claimed that African American vendors were denied entry because their wares were of lesser quality. By inserting the concepts of class difference, the interviewer introduces the connection between class and race as a motive for eventual inclusion. She also overtly frames the issue as controversial. Implications of affirmative action come to mind. The activist responds: "Fuck 'em."

Revisiting and clarifying his seminal work, Fairclough frames CDA more generally as a trajectory to identify, contextualize, and eventually solve critical problems. This process begins

by asking the CDA scholar to “focus on the social wrong, in its semiotic aspects” (2011: 13). Focusing on the social wrong requires us first to identify it. Throughout the tapes, the white (in this case) interviewers involved identify themselves as progressives. The African American narrators are organizers and warriors. CDA of interviews in the archive demonstrate that all participants support a racial “us” vs. “them” dichotomy; the power exerted by interviewer onto narrator gets mapped onto whiteness.

“Racism,” while an obvious gut-reaction, is an emotionally charged and divisive term, and engaging in a “hunt for racists” (Hodges 2015) distracts from larger systemic issues. In this paper, I mean to prompt conversation and promote more inclusive listening. An accusation only slams a door. My analysis problematizes monolithic assumptions about both blackness and whiteness. Correlations between racial identities and professional, educational, and political opportunities in New Orleans only exacerbate the differing ideologies between (and within) groups.

Dixon responds to Salaam’s obscenity with repeated non-verbal cues in increasingly high tones: “Mhm. *Mhm*. ***Mhm!***” She sounds chagrined. The interviewers’ incoherence after Salaam makes his stand highlights their close affiliation with the Jazz and Heritage Foundation’s commonly held understandings: they are shocked to hear such an emphatic disagreement. The interviewers are not malicious in their use of what Salaam identifies as racist themes, nor is their dependence on and control of a dominant narrative intentional. The “social wrong” here instead lies in dynamics associated with race, class, and institutional support, which sours interactions between the parties. A power struggle is woven almost invisibly through their interactions, and critical discourse analysis serves to illuminate the sources of this power. Throughout this text, I

engage with the opening interview, drawing upon other examples to contextualize discourse styles and misunderstandings in larger context.

In conjunction with my analysis of oral histories (2004-2014), I interviewed the primary Archive oral historian, Andrew Robertson of the opening scene, with the assumption that his personal experiences with Jazz Fest and race in New Orleans are often reflected in the questions he asks. Through my interviews with Robertson, I explored his understandings of race, class, “local”-ness, and ownership of culture in New Orleans. Robertson reflected nostalgically on the music scene in New Orleans and the process of conducting oral histories; my analysis of Robertson’s personal account illuminates how interviews contribute to the construction of local histories as well as to understandings of difference within and between New Orleans communities.

Critical theorists Kinchelone and McLaren explain the relevance of including interviewers’ perspectives: “because all interpretation is historically and culturally situated, it is the lot of critical researchers to study the ways both interpreters (often the analysts themselves) and the objects of interpretation are constructed by their time and place” (Kinchelone and McLaren 2000:288). Highlighting Archive interviewers therefore contributes to the public record by providing additional perspectives and paying attention to the voices that have shaped the record so far. By analyzing archived interviews and conducting my own, I inevitably insert myself as another voice into this dialogue, even where I am not physically present.

Oral histories of the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition activists fit into a larger racial discourse in the United States. Many of these activists took to the streets of New Orleans in the 1970s to protest police brutality. Salaam spearheaded some of these events. In 2014, he and his contemporaries saw history repeated with continued violent, often fatal, policing of African

Americans, as in the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City. When the policemen involved were not found guilty or even indicted for their crimes, cities erupted in violent and non-violent protest. Racial tensions returned to the forefront of public discourse. At the 2015 Jazz Fest, Helen Regis and I told a New Orleans photographer of our research focus on the Coalition. He recounted his experiences as a student activist at Dillard University in the 1960s and explicitly connected his past involvement to current events: “A lot of young people don’t know these things. Hopefully Baltimore will wake them up” (Waters 2015, personal communication).

At the same time, black New Orleanians continue to fight for equal opportunities in the city, especially following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Organizer and former Foundation Board president Bill Rouselle identifies the structural nature of the struggle:

Rouselle: I guess my point is that racism is alive and well as a systemic part of the American landscape. It manifested itself in New Orleans in such dramatic ways after the storm that it's hard for us to forget. There will be another couple of generations that won't forget what happened after Katrina. And it still resonates in people's consciousness. (Rouselle 2015, interview with Regis)

Fostering open, meaningful conversations between activists (often people of color) and institutions (many of them historically white) remains crucial. Analyzing nuances within these conversations helps us imagine future possibilities.

III. Jazz Fest: "The culture, ultimately, was being pimped"

Salaam: The Jazz Fest exists because the city of New Orleans was trying to figure out a way to profit off of jazz.

Locals in the know understand that Jazz Fest was created primarily to drum up tourism. As far back as the late 19th century, business leaders have framed New Orleans culture for tourist consumption, culminating in the creation of the New Orleans Association of Commerce in the 1910s. The Association of Commerce actively created the city's visual/aural "destination culture," particularly through the marketing of jazz music, Mardi Gras, and stereotypes of voodoo (Gotham 2007:307). In 1962, the Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association called George Wein, producer of the Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals, to create a similar showcase for New Orleans jazz music. Wein visited the city twice in the 1960s with the explicit intention of organizing the festival, but each time, the planning fell through (Wein 2003). First, Wein refused to work in a place where he could not stay at a hotel with his wife, an African American. When the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, continued racial exclusion put the Festival off for several more years. In 1968, Wein was informed that his interracial marriage "might be a political embarrassment" for the Mayor, and another man got the job (Wein 2003:357). After two years in which the Jazz Fest infamously had more performers than audience members, the Chamber of Commerce decided that Wein was more asset than liability. He signed a contract to produce the festival in 1970.

The integration of New Orleans' social spaces was therefore intricately linked to the creation of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and further, to the tourist industry. Anthropologists Helen Regis and Shana Walton explain, "Fifty years after Brown v. Board of Education, social spaces in America are still fairly segregated, and all festgoers who are so inclined can savor the special conditions under which music seems to break down barriers of

class, race, and geography” (Regis and Walton 2008:422). This idea is emphasized in popular writings about the festival. The *2005 Incomplete, Year-by-Year, Selectively Quirky, Prime Facts Edition of the History of the Festival*, sold in most New Orleans bookshops, opens with a quotation by Festival producer Quint Davis:

I think the Festival has always been a place where when people come together, they feel part of the community and they have a positive, shared human existence. The audience, the musicians and everyone remember that they’re a community and that’s the feeling that the Festival conveys. That’s what the Festival is. The sum is greater than the parts. (McCaffrey 2005: n.pag)

However, this integration remained shallow (Regis and Walton 2008). Salaam explains, “the culture, ultimately, was being pimped” (Salaam 2004). African Americans were excluded from the Festival's decision-making process. Black communities did not benefit from development opportunities tied into the Jazz Fest production, specifically opportunities for local music producers, artists, and other entrepreneurs.

The Afrikan American Jazz Coalition demanded inclusion in financial and organizational aspects of the Jazz and Heritage Foundation. These activists used the circumstances of the Festival's founding to support arguments that the Foundation was commodifying local— specifically African American—culture for the tourist industry’s gain. Interviews echo:

Dan Williams: How can we not be involved and you’re dealing with our music?
(2012, interview with Lyons and Robertson)

Muhammad Yungai : The Jazz Festival is an institution whose reason for being is basically the culture of black people in America. So it’s founded on black culture, but the black artists, artisans, and people that were actually making a living selling things that we made, were pretty much being rejected. (2015, interview with Regis)

Lynn LeBeaud: When you talk about New Orleans Jazz and Heritage, jazz and the jazz heritage is African Americans. African Americans. Years ago they used to call it

‘jack ass music.’ And they combined it to ‘jazz.’ Now it's known all over the world. It is *ours*. (2015, speech at Creating Congo Square exhibition opening)

African American activists have responded to this commodification by using the Jazz Fest as “a potentially productive site for activism, cultural critique, and profit-sharing” (Regis 2013:84). Addressing the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation in a letter and an invitation to meet at the St. Bernard Community Center, the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition threatened to boycott, even disrupt, the Festival in 1978. Over the next couple of months the activists and the Foundation came to an understanding and formed a partnership. Beginning in 1979, African Americans would organize and run the Koindu music tent and marketplace, and they would have a larger presence on the Foundation Board and in decision-making positions. They also negotiated that a percentage of Festival profit be re-invested in the black community.

These changes have come to define the Foundation's mission: "To promote, preserve, perpetuate and encourage the music, arts, culture and heritage of communities in Louisiana through festivals, programs and other cultural, educational, civic and economic activities.” But in the Jazz Fest origin myth and surrounding lore, the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition's influence has been ignored.

The activists have very different memories. In separate conversations at the Archive, activists Randolph Scott and Muhammad Yungai describe the Coalition’s pivotal influence on creating community outreach programs in support of musicians, artists, and educators. Their stories highlight two major components of this process: challenging the structure from a legal standpoint and being denied the recognition that would follow. Scott explained to Regis and Lyons how activists were able to raise awareness for the Foundation’s obligations as a non-profit organization:

Scott: We noted that the Jazz Fest was NOT putting back their resources as they were legislated to do or required to do in the community. They hoarded the money, and they did not give back to the community. So that was a part of our demand, is to demand that they spend that money back into the community as they were a non-profit. As they were required to do. We hit hard with that. We hit Quint with that, we hit George Wein with that, we hit Federoff with that. (Sekou and Scott 2015, interview with Regis and Lyons)

“Hitting hard with that” ultimately produced results. In 1983 or ’84, the Foundation began to invest in the New Orleans community through grants to artists. Yungai described the results in particular and how the Foundation and the media portrayed the changes:

Yungai: The Jazz Fest gets all the credit. Even the first year, "Oh, we're doing it." They didn't even say, "We were in conjunction with the Afrikan American Jazz Festival Coalition, we're going to make this grant available," something like that. They just announced and took all the credit: "Yeah, we're a great non-profit organization and because of the support we've gotten from the community, we're giving some of it back, making the grant." Okay, all right. Well, we feel good. We feel good that we prompted this, so we're not going to try to grandstand and say that we did it. But it was us. People don't know that. (2015, interview with Regis)

This example provides a clear view into how events and actors can be erased in the production of history as we know it. Michel-Rolph Trouillot explores this silencing of historic voices throughout his work. He traces “the interplay between inequalities in the historical process and inequalities in the historical narrative,” (Trouillot 1995:45). Various iterations of power can affect the production of these narratives and public knowledge. With reference to this silencing, Anthony Bogues (2014:149-50) writes “the black radical intellectual as critic is first of all engaged with challenging the various knowledge regimes of any dominant power.” The formally acknowledged history of Jazz and Heritage Foundation grants diverged from the activists’ experience of it from the very beginning.

Teun van Dijk (2015) and Ruth Wodak (2015) identify racist discourses in the media and public realms. Van Dijk explains, “Dominant discourse in society, such as that of politics, the media, and education (including research) are controlled by social groups with specific privileges

and power of access” (2015:385). He finds that journalists and researchers are more apt to cite official white sources than minority perspectives, for example, and that these minorities are often presented as less reliable and credible (2015:387). Researchers' biases affect the presentation of information, and therefore the readers' and listeners' knowledge base. Critical discourse analysis and its predecessor, Critical Race Theory, focus on these public discourses and “the control and production of knowledge—particularly about people and communities of color” (Ladson-Billings 2000:272).

Adam Hodges (2015) continues in this tradition by analyzing news coverage of the 2013 trial of neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teenager. Hodges analyzes media coverage and discussion to show how the public struggled to identify Zimmerman as either a racist or nonracist (Hodges 2015:208). Media personalities relied on stories to support these ideas in on-air interviews: they spoke of his service to African American youth or of the racial slur some claim he uttered in his 911 call. Besides the understanding that “racism” is a simple dichotomy through which individuals can be classified (a concept Hodges borrows from Bonilla-Silva 2013), the interviewers also reveal pre-existing positive or negative conceptions about Zimmerman that influence the direction of their interviews.

The Exhibition

Anthropologists Regis and Walton have been conducting ethnographic research of the Jazz Fest since 2000. In 2013, in partnership with the Foundation, they immersed themselves in documenting the founding of the Koindu African Marketplace on the Festival grounds, in part to overcome a prominent gap in the public record. They conducted oral history interviews with the Koindu Pioneers, the original vendors who partnered with the Jazz and Heritage Foundation in

1979. Encouraged by these conversations and the Koindu founders' hopes to commemorate their thirty-fifth anniversary, Regis and Walton pursued funding to curate an exhibit. In April 2015, they worked with the Jazz and Heritage Foundation Archive to create a gallery exhibition, *Creating Congo Square: Jazz Fest and Black Power*.

Together with archivist Rachel Lyons, they organized oral histories, archival photographs, newspaper articles, letters, and office memoranda to tell the Koindu story. The narrative stretched from early 70s struggles of Canal Street vendors to the present-day Congo Square stage. Regis and Walton continued to conduct their own oral histories to include the perspectives of as many founding members as possible. The exhibit also pulled heavily from interviews conducted previously by researcher/producer Andrew Robertson, who spoke with me about his motivations for research.

- 1 Robertson: I began to do oral history myself and recognized that there was no oral history of the Jazz Fest. So that's a gap.
- 2 Jordan: Mhm.
- 3 Robertson: So, you know? What are you going to do with your time? You fill the gaps, right?
- 4 Jordan: Right.
- 5 Robertson: [laughs] I don't know, but... But anyway, so that's kind of what led me into it, but when you say what led me into the research of Jazz Fest, well I had already lived researching Jazz fest. So it's, but researching it in a way that everybody else does. This... the record of some of the behind-the-scenes stuff-- as it turns out, the body of work that we've done is hopefully important to scholars later. (2016, interview)

In addition to “filling in the gaps,” oral history democratizes the production of historic records to some extent by pursuing first-person accounts that might otherwise be neglected. Many oral history projects have focused on neglected voices in an effort to combat the silencing of previously marginalized groups, such as Albanian immigrants to Greece (van Boeschoten 2008), homeless populations (Kerr 2008), and Japanese citizens forced into concentration camps during WWII (Dubrow 2008). In her explanation of this latter project, Gail Dubrow emphasizes

“the active role that oral history can play not only in reshaping public memories but also advancing social change (2008:138). Salaam has made use of this strategy in his own work, which he discusses in a conversation with Tom Dent:

- 1 Salaam: Anyway, both of us have been doing quite a bit of taping, oral history, whatever you want to call it. However, we do not come from an academic background in our approach. Can you speak a little about this?
- 2 Dent: Yes. The emphasis in most academic criticism is on authentication and record keeping, not on creativity. For example, most of the people who do academic work on Black New Orleans history end up focusing on the Creoles, because they left written records. But when you consider someone like Buddy Golden, or the phenomenon of Congo Square, or any aspect of our culture which has come down through oral narration, then academics have a hard time understanding that history, since it is not documented in writing. Usually, they just ignore those aspects of which they can't corroborate through sources they would accept. (Dent 1993, interview with ya Salaam)

Dent in particular identifies the gaps oral history can fill and the necessity of scholars to proactively document otherwise neglected voices. The use of public spaces to exhibit these stories can then spread their lessons beyond the academy.

Regis and Walton invited me onto the *Creating Congo Square* project as a graduate assistant, introducing me to the political nature of the exhibit and to the Jazz and Heritage Archive. This backstage look into the creation of the exhibit revealed that it was a process in which discourses were constantly negotiated. In addition to my responsibility to transcribe Regis and Walton's most recent interviews, I began to volunteer at the Archive on the days our group would meet, verifying pre-existing transcripts that we would be using in the *Creating Congo Square* exhibit.

The Archive sent interviews to a third party for transcription, and verification was the process through which the typed text was confirmed against the original recording in-house. Though my responsibility was to ensure the exact wording and the spelling of local names and places, I was also able to pay attention to the nuanced interactions between interviewees and

narrators (the more agentive term for “interviewees” in much oral history literature). The nuances of transcription also became clear. The process of transforming oral speech into a written, legible document is necessarily political, mediated by a third-party transcriber with inherent biases (Bucholtz 2000).

Originally, as a student fairly new to transcription, I typed everything I heard, assuming that the exhibit curators would decide what was and was not important. I originally transcribed the final moments of the opening dialogue as follows:

- 1 Dixon: We’ve got that, anyway, the the controversy remains, we hear this all the time, the nature of products sold in the Congo Square area not being handcrafted, and that issue was an issue in the beginning. I—the word “trinkets” was used in an interview and it was stressed, on the other side, that there should be affordable things, for kids, there should be things that were not too expensive, for class issues, actually, so um...
- 2 Salaam: Fuck ‘em.
- 3 Dixon: (laughs) That’s your answer, okay. Okay. So you, well, what you’re saying
- 4 Salaam: You you you you you can then appreciate, I say that on purpose because now you can appreciate you had two different worldviews clashing, and I’m not even going to attempt to explain myself from the standpoint of the other person’s worldview. That doesn’t even make any sense. ... (2004 interview)

Verifying transcripts provided insight into the Archive's preferred format: incoherence was smoothed and false starts were erased. Interviewers and narrators both became more eloquent in this form of "naturalized transcription," through which oral traditions and styles are made to "conform to written discourse conventions" (Bucholtz 2000: 1439). This editing was even more pronounced in the creation of the exhibit text panels so as to streamline the content for accessible reading in a gallery setting. My original presentation of the opening scene, as well as most transcript quotations throughout this text, replicate this style for ease of explanation.

However, my training in discourse analysis justified the inclusion of utterances at the syllabic level for my research purposes, if not for the Archive's. Smoothing the transcript erases the interviewer’s original hesitance in her question. We lose her reaction to Salaam’s statement:

an almost immediate attempt to rephrase him—“So, well, what you’re saying...” We also miss Salaam’s initial repetition that follows: “You you you you you can then appreciate.” Typed, the words suggest what linguists call “incoherence.” On the tape it seems more like he is searching for common ground. I learned to look for instances like these in the documents I was verifying, even if I did not insert them into the Archive’s files.

IV. Personal Identities: “Us” vs. “Them”

One of the most striking threads throughout the Coalition oral histories is the separation of historic and contemporary Jazz Fest organizers and New Orleans populations into politically-charged categories of “us” and “not-us,” black and white. Regis explicitly addressed these exclusions in her interview with Former Board President Bill Rouselle:

- 1 Regis: I think that one of the things that really shocked some people about the Coalition's... actions was that idea that jazz, you know, is "**ours**."
- 2 Rouselle: Mhm.
- 3 Regis: You know, from the perspective of the activists. You think it's... I think especially from a white liberal perspective, people like to think, "Well, it's everybody's music."
- 4 Rouselle: [laughs]
- 5 Regis: Do you know what I'm saying? I think it was a little shocking for **them**, maybe, to hear, "Oh no." [laughs]
- 6 Rouselle: I'm just telling you where it came from. I mean, you know.
- 7 Regis: Right.
- 8 Rouselle: You can accept that or not.
- 9 Regis: Right. (Rouselle 2015, interview with Regis) (bold text for emphasis, mine)

In general, people use pronouns to reinforce a sense of self and other: "The word ‘we’ is situational in that it can refer to a variety of collectivities depending on the context. It implies both inclusion and exclusion: by logical extension, the word ‘we’ implies ‘they’ " (Eriksen 2015:2). The media uses these pronouns to create a sense of national, racial, and class identities (Eriksen 2015, van Dijk 2015, Wodak 2015). Rouselle and Regis’ conversation quoted above distills a primary, though rarely stated, contention regarding the Jazz Fest: to whom does jazz music and culture belong? And, to some extent, to whom does New Orleans belong?

The “situational” nature of these pronouns, or “deixis” refers to the ways in which certain words take on different meanings depending on their contexts. “I,” for example, will have a different meaning for different speakers referring to themselves. “We” and “our” are even more complicated: not only will different speakers implicate different groups in the use of these words,

but the same person can also refer to widely varying groups depending on the context. Unlike Regis, who accepts the division between white and black New Orleanians in common discourse and focuses on its repercussions socially, in their conversation with Salaam, interviewers Dixon and Robertson explore these deictic nuances:

- 1 Dixon: Okay, well, I asked you earlier, too, how well you feel, I think you've probably even answered, how well you felt the Festival represents **our** culture, and you said, "whose culture?"
- 2 Salaam: Yeah, who is "**our**"?
- 3 Dixon: Yeah, who is "**our**?" And I said, "The people of New Orleans."
- 4 Salaam: Yep
- 5 Dixon: All of 'em...
[...]
- 6 Salaam: I'm just saying, that... people who claim New Orleans, the majority of the people who claim New Orleans, don't live in New Orleans, don't pay taxes in New Orleans, don't involve themselves in the day-to-day life of New Orleans to make it better or worse or whatever.

Interviewers and narrators continuously contest the "us"ness of New Orleans identity in this way. Salaam contends that the culture exploited by the Jazz Fest belongs to a particular group, which he defines as those living there, paying taxes, and involving themselves to make the city better. Elsewhere, he and others define this group as primarily African American.

Read in response to such attitudes, the interviewer's initial question becomes a claim in a historic debate. She intentionally defines "our" as "the people of New Orleans" (line 3), "all of 'em" (line 5). Salaam intentionally pushes back at this definition (line 6).

In the late 1970s, the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition called upon this strategy, echoing previous Civil Rights activists in the formation of a wide but united "us" identity: "The Voting Rights Act served as a social force. Blacks could exert political influence only through discipline, organization, and a high degree of racial solidarity" (Hirsch 1992:288). Discussing his mentor, Oretha Castle Haley, with Regis, Rouselle discusses how a united black identity was explicitly taught: "**You** ain't got as much money as **they** got. **You** ain't got as much firepower as

they got. But **you** can outwork **them**" (emphasis mine). With this understanding, the activists formed groups consciously across social and geographic lines. Rouselle explains, "There was this interesting Uptown/Downtown mix [at my high school]. It's funny how things in life prepare you for other things. Having been exposed to and around people from all over the city really helped me later on as I became involved in politics and organizing and stuff like that" (2015, interview with Regis). He emphasizes this personal social strength throughout interviews with both Regis and Robertson. Other activists also value this quality in their peers. When asked about how the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition came to be, Yungai described a group of Canal Street vendors who organized around Sekou Fela's shop. "Sekou knew everybody," Yungai explained. "He knew a lot of people that had different skills, and from different parts of the city" (2015, interview with Regis). Meetings of twenty quickly grew into the mobilization of a hundred or more.

Fela echoes: "I told the vendors that you were not going to be able to win this fight just the vendors pitted against the Jazz Fest. The strategy was to include all of the different groups - gospel choirs, Black Social and Pleasure clubs, Black Indians, food vendors, musicians." (Fela and Scott 2015, interview with Regis and Lyons). Joining forces with various social and cultural groups in the city, as well as with former student activists out of Dillard and Southern University, these vendors were better equipped to face the Jazz Fest producers.

Alliances amongst African Americans formed not through lenses of shared nationality, geography, or religion, but rather through the historic oppression they shared (Redmond 2013). Music was a central organizing medium. In one interview, Dan Williams references several songs rooted in the Black Power movement. First, he references Nina Simone: "We understood that there was some segregation happening, some racism happening, so we had to approach it.

We were young. We were gifted, and we were black!” (Simone 1970). Next, he explains of a march in which he and his peers were teargassed: “We were singing some of the civil rights songs: ‘We Shall Overcome,’ and ‘Down by the Riverside.’” The activists took part in imagining a unified black people who would transform the political system. The strong “we” links Williams and his cohort to a larger Black Power movement.

Salaam attributes the success of the Coalition to the New Orleans business community’s economic goals and the power of a marginalized group to disrupt them. He explains how George Wein and Quint Davis were able to overcome “the segregationist element represented by the Anglos and the Italians” in the New Orleans business scene. “For many of us in Koindu,” he explained, “we looked at it, we said, ‘If the Jewish community can do it, we can do it.’”

- 1 Salaam: You had ... the various ethnic factions of this city at work, and what finally brought **them** all to the same table was that there was money to be made, and everybody can make a little bit.
- 2 Robertson: Mhm.
- 3 Salaam: And what brought **us** to the table was **they** recognized that **we** would kick the table over--
- 4 Dixon: Mhm.
- 5 Salaam: --if **they** didn’t allow **us** to sit there.

By mobilizing the various subsections of the black community into one unit, as Fela and Rouselle did, the organizers could change the frame of the conversation. Twenty-five years later, maintaining the “us” vs. “them” linguistic strategy lets the activists use their oral histories to continue contesting the dominant narratives that have subsumed and commodified their identities.

V. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of interviews by Regis, Walton, and Robertson shows how the relationship between the Jazz and Heritage Foundation and former African American activists in New Orleans remains tense. Each of these interviewers is white, as am I, and identifies as politically progressive, as I do. Each was pulled to New Orleans as a young adult, whereas I grew up forty miles north of New Orleans, in a white, upper-middle class city on what locals call “the Northshore.” These interviewers’ shared whiteness does not mean we have equivalent knowledge and experiences; our various perspectives provide different angles in understanding racialized discourses regarding the Jazz Fest. Ultimately, the Jazz Fest Archive will provide the most comprehensive historical collection of the Festival as a cultural phenomenon. The Archive’s lens has the potential to mediate understandings of scholars and festival attendees to come.

CDA is closely tied to theoretical questions regarding the maintenance of power structures. Attention to the subtleties of oral and written discourse illuminates these larger ideas. At the level of utterances, words, and sentences, speakers convey and interpret a deep set of values. Through these cues, interview participants read each others’ attitudes and purposes and judge them to be in collaboration or at odds with each other. Layers of context interact in the production of every conversation: (1) the immediate text/language (utterances, words, sentences); (2) intertextuality, or the reference of a text to previous discourses; (3) social conditions of the conversation’s setting (time, place, those present, their relationships to each other); and (4) the social, political, and cultural framework in which the interaction takes place (Wodak 2015: 373). These levels are pertinent to my analysis of Jazz Fest interviews in that researchers can locate potential conflict in specific, often overlapping, sources.

Claudia Strauss (2005) locates discourses at three levels: personal psychology and experience, social roles in conversation, and perceived public acceptability (203). My analysis shows that misunderstanding on any of these contextual levels can lead to dissonance between interview participants: different people's intentions and understandings of the broader contextual picture are constantly interpreted and negotiated by their counterparts.

The Immediate Text: Contested Words

Strauss (2005) highlights various aspects of "talk" as points of analysis: keywords, associations, references to self-image, emotional hotspots, intertextual references, and ambiguous statements. As seen in Section I, interviewers Robertson and Dixon use ambiguity and implication--black vendors' wares as "affordable," "for class issues," and "for children"--to layer micro-aggression into individual words and phrases.

Interviewers and activists dispute the meaning and appropriateness of words throughout these transcripts. We see this struggle with the words "local," "boycott," "fragile," and with various understandings of "economics" and "class" throughout the following section. For example, in the following passage, "separateness" is explicitly contrasted with "partnership":

- 1 Robertson: How was Koindu... structured? I mean, it was part of Jazz Fest, it was not a **separate** part that inserted itself... or it was?
- 2 Salaam: The Koindu Coalition was, was just that, a coalition of folk around the issue. When Koindu became part of Jazz Fest, it was ... legally ... a **partnership**, because the Jazz Fest had no say-so about the decision makers of Koindu. [...] Once it became Congo Square, then it was actually a division of Jazz Fest, underneath the staff's control. But prior to that it had not been.
- 3 Robertson: So it really was a **separate**—
- 4 Salaam: Yes.
- 5 Robertson: —sort of thing that was—
- 6 Salaam: It was a **partnership**.
- 7 Robertson: —included.
- 8 Salaam: It was a **partnership**. (bold text for emphasis, mine)

The interviewer's use of the term "separate" calls to mind *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the legal establishment of "separate but equal" opportunities and institutions for white and black Americans. His insistence on this frame continuing on the third, fifth, and seventh lines suggests the dominance of this frame: he understood Jazz Fest as an entity that would either encompass a venture like the Koindu Marketplace or need to be entirely separate from it. Salaam instead focuses on the autonomy of the Marketplace. The Coalition and the Foundation are economic and political equals in his view.

A text also exists beyond the level of the words and participants immediate to the interaction (Wodak 2015). Conversations between researchers and activists are produced in the context of decades of national, local, and personal history. Their words also serve as intertextual references to historically racialized discourses. Decoding these references requires deep knowledge and contextual understanding.

I stumbled into one such discourse in the writing of this paper. Throughout my first draft, I discussed the ways in which the Coalition activists had worked to "integrate" the Jazz and Heritage Festival and the Foundation Board. In a conversation with Regis and Walton following this initial draft, they alerted me to white liberal claims on this term that many advocates of Black Power rejected (2016, personal conversation). I decided to research Salaam and his intellectual background further in an attempt to more fully understand different uses of this term and the worldviews associated with it.

In an article about Salaam's poetry and political work, Mary Ellison (2003:80) explains that "[Salaam's] is a politics that can trace its descent back to the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s; it also stems from the creative fusion of rebellion and music that has been New Orleans' gift to black struggle." Here she situates him politically and culturally and

continues by discussing his work with the Free Southern Theater, which soon evolved into takeovers of Southern University and City Hall. Following militant, armed displays against the Ku Klux Klan's public demonstrations in the city, Salaam's approach later became more pragmatic, focusing on the economic powers that reproduced inequality (ya Salaam 1981). This economic focus characterized the Koindu Coalition's threatened disruption of the Jazz Festival.

Research into the Free Southern Theater (FST) and Ellison's conversations with Salaam also provided insight into the nuances of "integration" I had previously lacked. In 1965, FST founders John O'Neal and Gilbert Moses sat down with actors and board chairman to discuss the organization for the *Tulane Drama Review* (Moses et al 1965). During this dialogue, O'Neal explains the dark underbelly of "integration":

The problem --and I don't know how to make this clear except by talking about what's wrong with the word 'integration'--is that to limit the theatre to black, white, or black and white is to avoid the situation. The word 'integration' assumes the status quo--white on top, black at the bottom--and it means that we should get the black and white together by moving the Negroes up since the white don't want to be pulled down and the 'poor colored folks' don't want to stay down and out either. But the point is that nobody wants to be benevolently 'lifted up.' The Movement - the Negro revolt - is of people who have recognized that society as it stands has no place for them and so that society must be transformed. (Moses et al 1965: 72-73)

Salaam succinctly summarizes this idea thirty years later: "If you mean [...] integration as a movement from the periphery into the centre of the social system without any change to that social system, I'm opposed to it; if you mean by integration a creolisation or mutation, a transformation, then I've got no problem" (Ellison 1995: 84).

"I need you to come with me": Social Conditions and Stance Affiliation

Mediated discourse analysis further explores the role of relationships and society by framing the speech act as a culmination of three sets of information: the particular actors' experiences, the combination of actors, and the larger social discourses that take place (Scollon

and deSainte-Georges 2011:71). Linguistic anthropologists have called these opinions, conditions, and resulting manifestations, “stance affiliation.” Stance refers to the way in which a speaker conveys a positive, negative, or neutral attitude toward the subject matter (Du Bois 2007, Hyland 2011). In an interaction, speakers respond to one another’s conscious and unconscious stance-taking, reading cues about the other person’s intentions to determine how the interaction will proceed and how they should respond. Participants' stances toward one another can be collaborative, combative, or somewhere in between. These affiliations become part of the causal relationship that reflects larger debates and shapes new information. Positive stance affiliation effectively builds rapport.

In the following examples, Walton's open, enthusiastic approach allows her to build an emotional connection to second generation vendor Enoch Ecclesiastes. As they discuss his childhood on the Jazz Fest grounds, Walton acknowledges and repeats the narrator’s statements as ways to both affirm them and to move the conversation forward:

- 1 Walton: Your dad let you keep some of the sales?
- 2 Ecclesiastes: He would pay you.
- 3 Walton: He would pay you? So you would get commission.
- 4 Ecclesiastes: He would pay you commission on your earning and hourly salary.
- 5 Walton: So you worked the booth.
- 6 Ecclesiastes: You worked the booth, and he gave us an area, and you maintained the area. And if you were good, you got promoted, like a job. Which he trained us really early.
- 7 Walton: To be businessmen.
- 8 Ecclesiastes: To be businessmen. (Ecclesiastes 2015, interview with Walton)

Lines 2 and 3 reflect these parallels. The narrator’s use of “you” includes the interviewer in the remembered scenario. He picks up on the interviewer’s repetitions as well, as seen in the sixth and eighth lines. At some point in the interview, Walton and Ecclesiastes just start riffing off of each other’s words:

- 1 Walton: So you don’t want your spiritual and soul over here.... You don’t want to go to

- church on Sundays...you're going every day.
- 2 Ecclesiastes: I need it to be 24/7, and I need you to come with me.
- 3 Walton: You need me to come with you?
- 4 Ecclesiastes: I need you to come with me. And we go together, that's double the prayer.
- 5 Walton: I'm with you. That's great.
- 6 Ecclesiastes: We here right now in church.
- 7 Walton: We're churching right now.
- 8 Ecclesiastes: That to me is real.

Walton and Ecclesiastes foster a collaborative discourse through the use of pronouns: second person and first person plural in particular highlight trust and common goals. In the first line, the interviewer reflects on the narrator's views on sociality. She uses the second person in an attempt to summarize and theorize from what he has said. The narrator answers by inviting her into this way of living: "I need you to come with me" (line 2). The participants repeat this statement between themselves, then the narrator refers to them as a joint entity: "I need you to come with me. And we go together" (line 4). By the end of this passage, both the interviewer and the narrator are using the first person plural pronoun to express a shared state.

Interviewers and narrators do not always align so easily. In his interview with Regis, past president Bill Rouselle repeatedly challenges her authority. He opens the interview by inquiring about the nature of her work: "Did the Foundation commission you to do additional work, or?" Regis responds by locating herself in partnership with the Foundation Archive, but also as a researcher for Louisiana State University, serving the people of the state through various projects. Goodnaturedly, but not without an edge in his voice, Rouselle retorts, "If your governor doesn't cut all the money out from under you." The two share a laugh, but throughout the interview Rouselle retains control of what is and isn't discussed, often flagging touchy subjects with a repeated "That's another story."

Regis uses affiliative methods of stance, allowing Rouselle to set the pace of the interview. She answers his questions and often gives only short verbal cues to prompt for further information. He decides how much he would like to say. In the example that follows, she asks Rouselle about a community meeting that many have called the most contentious of the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition's conversations with the Foundation:

- 1 Regis: Were you at that St. Bernard Meeting?
- 2 Rouselle: Mhm.
- 3 Regis: That famous St. Bernard meeting?
- 4 Rouselle: Mhm.
- 5 Regis: [laughs]
- 6 Rouselle: Yeah, I was there. I might have been the moderator. I don't remember now.
- 7 Regis: Okay.
- 8 Rouselle: When we met with George, you're talking about?
- 9 Regis: Right, yeah.
- 10 Rouselle: Oh, yeah.
- 11 Regis: Yeah.
- 12 Rouselle: Yeah, I was there. (Rouselle 2015, interview with Regis)

Through this push and pull for information, Rouselle eventually acknowledges his presence and role at the meeting (lines 6 and 12). "I might have been the moderator," he says at first, and then, "Yeah, I was there." Regis responds to the narrator's challenging stance with repeated positive responses "okay" and "yeah." Eventually, Rouselle goes into more detail about the event.

Robertson and Lyons' discussion with past board president Dan Williams reveals a more aggressive approach in bringing up a similarly critical moment:

- 1 Robertson: It's like who were the "we?" And how did it go forward? And the interesting thing to me I was going to ask about too, along this year line, was this first meeting in 1970 was with George and Quint...
- 2 Williams: Mmm-hmmm....
- 3 Robertson: They wanted to meet you because you were already doing this work and all that? Or was it sort of this cordial thing and then y'all maintained a kind of "hello, how do you do?" until this came up?
- 4 Williams: Mmm-hmmm....
- 5 Robertson: Or... How was the relationship? Obviously, Jazz Fest from day one was on your radar.
- 6 Williams: Right...

7 Robertson: So that's the first thing. (Williams 2012, interview)

Rather than aligning himself with Williams, the interviewer's stance is distanced—"and all that" (line 3)— and controlling, with a series of questions that he does not give Williams a chance to answer (lines 1 and 3). Rather than finding a place of common ground to meet him, Robertson leads Williams to a "first thing" to address and provides him select options for addressing it.

Arguing in Other People's Terms: Contested Frames

Stance affiliation begins to overlap here with a way of classifying "right" and "wrong" outcomes for an interview, for research, and for discussing and interpreting the past. What Salaam calls "worldview" in Section I above, linguistic anthropologists have also called "frames," "schemas," or "scripts." Tracing the concept's roots in performance studies, psychoanalysis, and interpretive anthropology, Deborah Tannen defines a frame as an expectation of how things are or should be done based on past experiences (Tannen 1993:19). Schiffren defines it slightly differently as "what people think they are doing when they talk to each other" (1993:233). Tannen and Schiffren refer to these frames particularly as they exist in discrete units of context and interaction. An interview would then serve as a frame for which participants will have expectations both for acting and for interpreting others.

Here I use the frame concept more broadly as a way of viewing the world, in the tradition of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003). He identifies several cultural logics which serve to support a dominant racial ideology in the United States. Through the use of extensive survey data and interviews, Bonilla-Silva organizes his findings into a set of frames – "abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism"— that contribute to the widespread belief among white people that society can be color-blind, or undifferentiated by racial factors (2003:26). Abstract liberalism in particular prioritizes the possible achievements of individual

agents (“equal opportunity”) over the effects of structures and institutions on minority development. By relying on any combination of these frames, Bonilla-Silva’s white survey respondents interpret their actions and beliefs as *not* racist or race-conscious (2003:47).

The minimization of racism frame is closely related to the denial that racism exists (Wodak 2015). Citing Blauner’s work facilitating classroom discussions about race (1994), Michael Omi explains, “Whites tend to locate racism in color consciousness and find its absence in color-blindness. In so doing, they see the affirmation of difference and racial identity among radically defined minority students as racist” (ibid Omi 2001:267). Avoiding discussions of race thus seems a solution to racism for these students, but in fact silencing these issues allows problematic institutions to go uncritiqued.

Actors may impose frames of expected meaning on the people around them: interlocutors may not only misunderstand or talk past one another, but also actively apply their own frames. In the transcripts I analyzed, this active re-framing is often seen when interviewers summarize narrators’ statements for their own understanding. In the example below, interviewer Dixon reframes the narrator on both the first and third lines as she tries to make sense of the activists’ actions, specifically by imagining their words. Salaam rejects this frame with repeated negations.

- 1 Dixon: And so someone you knew brought you in and said, “We want your opinion on this,” or “we want your voice in on this”?
- 2 Salaam: No! We told them we were going to boycott it, we were going to shut it down.
- 3 Dixon: Uh huh? So you went to Jazz Fest, and said, “This is what’s happening, and this is how it will be”?
- 4 Salaam: We sent them a notice. We didn’t, like, go.

Dixon shapes Salaam’s words to fit her conception of power relations: those with power invite those without. At the very least, the marginalized group asks permission to be included. Bonilla-Silva argues that racial ideologies supported by white dominant frames “blur, shape, and provide many of the terms of the debate for blacks” (2003:171). Returning to the Salaam oral history, his

later statements on worldview directly reject Dixon's provided framework: "I'm not even going to attempt to explain myself from the standpoint of the other person's worldview. That doesn't even make any sense."

Dixon's assumptions, though not explicitly racialized in nature, show the difference between an institutional frame of mind and an activist one. Salaam meets his interviewer's focus on the bigger (economic) picture with a blatant refusal to engage with her logic. However, when she attempts to shift to his wording in the following lines, he rejects this as well and reframes his argument:

- 1 Dixon: You were going to boycott.
- 2 Salaam: No, we were going to disrupt.
- 3 Dixon: Ah.
- 4 Salaam: You've got us confused with the NAACP. We were going to shut it down.

Although Dixon has taken on an aligned stance by using Salaam's word "boycott," he appears unsatisfied with this frame and readjusts it to make his point more explicit. "We were going to shut it down" provides a definitive rejection to Dixon's original suggestion that the activists passively responded to the Festival's invitation to include them.

Although anthropologists Regis and Walton also reframe the narrator's statements in their interviews, they elicit much more positive responses from their narrators. This suggests that there is a general similarity between their worldviews or that they pay more careful attention to the narrator's statements, skills derived from years of training in oral history and ethnographic interviewing. The framing also happens on a much smaller scale, generally in the narration and understanding of specific events as opposed to a larger Jazz Fest narrative. In the example that follows, Walton moves narrator Ecclesiastes' story forward with summative statements about the overall picture:

- 1 Ecclesiastes: Seeing people slide in the mud [...] for us, we can't get no money. And to them this is the greatest place, the greatest day on earth.
- 2 Walton: But it's a disaster for y'all. For the vendors...
- 3 Ecclesiastes: I tell people, there's two ways to do this. You can chase a dollar. Or make a connect. And you chase dollars, and don't make the connects, or make the connects and not chase the dollars, then there'll be disaster. But me speaking to people and trying to assert some kind of relationship; it's helpful for the rest of the year.
- 4 Walton: Yeah, but you still go home broke that year.
- 5 Ecclesiastes: You do. But, in a month, they going to call you. They have an anniversary, a birthday, and they had your card and they remember you made this great product, that you just didn't sell a lot of. So the idea is to establish some relationship. (2014, interview)

Walton's statements reduce a complex situation into mere financial losses: "It's a disaster" and "You still go home broke that year." However, in this respect she serves as a foil for Ecclesiastes' message about the long lasting connections that are formed at Jazz Fest, transcending simple losses. By providing one common interpretation of a disastrous festival weekend, Walton introduces an opportunity for the narrator to explain his philosophy. Her summary does not threaten or shape his intended meaning.

One-on-one with Walton, I asked her about the dynamics of this interview (Walton 2016, personal conversation). She provided context, emphasizing the stakes: she had felt the pressure to "build a bridge" for further conversation. In the interview, she represented herself as well as Regis and the Foundation. Considering this, and the fact that she conducted the interview in situ at the Festival, Walton looks back on the experience as a performance of roles, calling on Briggs (1986) and Goffman (1974). By validating the vendor's struggles through overstatement, she gives him room to speak more positively about the Festival experience. They "co-create" (Walton's word) a transcript in which Ecclesiastes praises the Festival and emphasizes his expertise and worldview.

Regis and Walton also form theses that narrators refute more explicitly. They were particularly shocked to find that, following the meeting at the St. Bernard Community Center, subsequent meetings were held in Foundation President Judge Gerald Federoff's courtroom. Convinced that this was a power play to frighten the activists into submission, Regis addressed the experience of these meetings in two separate interviews. In the first selection, her narrator, Bill Rouselle quickly dismisses this idea:

- 1 Regis: I'm trying to imagine what that felt like, to be in that courtroom for a meeting...
- 2 Rouselle: I don't...
- 3 Regis: Was it designed to be intimidating, do you think? To hold it in that location?
- 4 Rouselle: I don't remember that meeting. (2015, interview)

In an interview with another activist, Muhammed Yungai, she attempts to gain support for her idea again:

- 1 Regis: And I guess some of the meetings that happened after this St. Bernard meeting were in Judge Federoff's courtroom.
- 2 Yungai: I remember having one or two meetings over there.
- 3 Regis: That must have been kind of strange. To be in somebody's courtroom? For a meeting?
- 4 Yungai: We didn't care.
- 5 Regis: You didn't care?
[all laugh]
- 6 Lyons: Well that just blows that whole theory.
- 7 Regis: [laughing] I mean, I would have been intimidated, but you're saying...
- 8 Yungai: Maybe they were trying to intimidate us, but it didn't work. I mean, we were so fired up about what we were doing, and we didn't worry about that kind of stuff. (2015, interview)

Approaching the historical record empathetically, Regis projects a sense of anxiety and intimidation that she would have felt in Federoff's courtroom onto the activists. However, these activists' accounts reflect a fearless determination that had helped them to overtake university campuses and even City Hall to demand justice. Members of the Afrikan American Jazz Coalition "were so fired up" about creating a more inclusive Jazz Fest workforce that they were not intimidated by the institutions in place, or by the designated gatekeepers.

Historians and Anthropologists: Interview as Frame

Although clear differences in personalities between the interviewers affected their styles, a primary disconnect was between the professional researchers and the university-trained anthropologists. Archive interviewers focused on finding factual information and confirming what they already knew from personal experience and from other data sources. When I spoke to Robertson, he emphasized the necessity of “determining the veracity” of what his interviewees were telling him. Expectations on his part resulted in leading questions, active reframing of the activists’ points of view, and fact-checking of important dates and players.

Anthropologist interviewers cited training in cultural relativism and interpretive anthropology for their interests in worldview difference and meaning-making processes instead. By valuing experience-based, nonlinear narratives rather than an objective truth, they could focus on building understanding, trust, and connection. Even when their expectations did not align with the narrator’s experiences, otherwise positive stance affiliation gave them room to be corrected without needing to be confronted.

VI. Learning Moments: CDA in Use

Worldview in Nuance (2004/2015)

We are viewing a video-recorded interview in an Oral History class at Louisiana State University.

Kalamu ya Salaam, a New Orleans poet and activist, sits in front of a bookcase and looks defiantly into a camcorder. An unseen man directs an unseen woman to start the tape. She fumbles and makes mistakes with the introduction, which the male interviewer and Salaam both hasten to correct. When the woman finally asks her first question, already there is an uncomfortable buzz in the air.

She asks: “Would you let us know... would you tell us how you became involved with the Jazz Fest?”

Salaam pauses before answering. “First as a fan,” he says. “1970 went to see the Jazz Fest at the Municipal Auditorium... I think. I don’t remember. I want to say Sara Vaughn, George Duke...”

She tries to help him through his hesitation, suggesting names, suggesting dates. He looks annoyed.

In our classroom, my peers are tense. Our professor (Regis) pauses the tape. The interviewers’ actions are interpreted in different ways by different people. An undergraduate anthropology major empathizes with Dixon: “She was just trying to help.” Others feel that the interviewer has far overstepped these bounds. She comes across as correcting him, trying to shape his answers from an “expert” point of view. Our co-teacher, Jennifer Cramer, director of the T.H. Williams Center for Oral History, points out the interesting rhythm of Salaam's diction:

he incorporates pauses, she explains. He tastes his words before he speaks them, and the interviewer steals their flavor through her interjections.

The tape is back on. The tension gets worse.

“Then I was part of the Koindu Coalition,” Salaam continues, “which was a coalition of black activists, vendors, artists, who were pushing the Jazz Fest to be more inclusive... in the decision-making process and... and in the... economics of the Jazz Fest. More inclusive of black people, and out... out of that—“

The male interviewer interrupts. “And these were all local...”

It seems a non-sequitur, but Salaam is not phased. “This was local, this is all local.”

A few minutes later, “How was Koindu... structured?” the interviewer asks. “That was not... I mean... it was part of Jazz Fest? It was not a separate part that inserted itself, or it was?”

Our professor (Regis) pauses the tape.

Some of my peers are enraged. I feel uncomfortable. I know something is wrong, but I don't know how to explain what it is.

The hardest part of the interview for me comes once they lead Salaam past his limit for patience. “Fuck em,” he says, when one of the interviewers cites those who have discredited the Congo Square area for selling “trinkets, “affordable things,” and “things for kids.”

“Fuck em,” he says, just this once, and it’s enough. You can hear her pull back emotionally, embarrassment and possibly fear in her voice.

She squeaks almost. “Mhm,” she repeats as he explains the differences in their worldviews. “*Mhm. Mhm,*” she says. The refrain pains me.

Our professor asks us what we can learn.

I learned a lot of frustration, compassion, and uncomfortable self-awareness.

The female interviewer reminded me of a version of myself. It seemed highly possible that from a position of privilege and limited understanding I might speak out of turn, borrow words I do not fully understand, and subsequently regret them. I do not think she is racist. I think she did not realize, that this interview gave her the opportunity to learn. White populations in the South, even those who identify as liberal and progressive, often do not realize the extent to which our lives are pre-segregated (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Hartigan 2001). Kalamu ya Salaam had made his life out of words; he was not going to let subtle racialized slights slide.

Viewed this way, the transcripts provide space not for criticism but for learning.

Redemption (2009)

The tape starts without preface. “I am William Rouselle, Jr, Former New Orleans Jazz Festival board member and two-term president.”

“You started to say that you were involved before,” Robertson adds, alerting the listener that the conversation began before the recording. Rouselle’s work in organizing and producing made him a close colleague of both Kalamu ya Salaam and George Wein over the years. From work with the Free Southern Theater to being one of the first African Americans on the Foundation board—preceding Koindu Coalition involvement—Rouselle has achieved much through rhetoric and attention to the sources and impacts of social power.

The interview, part of an ongoing series focusing on past Foundation Board presidents, was different than the one with Salaam. On his own—and as oral historian rather than as project director—Robertson comes off as relaxed and collegial. Whether it is this difference in roles and resulting social dynamics or the passage of time between interviews (2004 to 2009), the improved rapport and stance with Rouselle is clear.

Noticeably, in several places Robertson rephrases himself mid-utterance to be more open

or hesitant. When discussing the Foundation’s consideration of a total cigarette sponsorship in the 1980s, Robertson states that it was “probably, and you tell me, but I’ll throw it out on the table, probably the most controversial decision y’all had to make since the 1978 St. Bernard decision.” He prefaces a bold evaluative statement—the Kool cigarette decision was “controversial,” as was the 1978 Koindu Coalition involvement—with hesitant words and phrases, or “hedging.” Through his statement and style, Robertson puts Rouselle in a position of power.

A few minutes later, Robertson uses this tactic again when broaching the subject of Koindu:

- 1 Robertson: Well let's come back **a little bit**, if you don't mind, to the 1978. I'd like to again contextualize that a little bit. You've got, when you say it was 90% white, **I guess** you had Dodie and I guess you had Tom was on there? Or did he come on there with you guys?
- 2 Rouselle: I think Tom may have been on there.
- 3 Robertson: That is what I'm thinking.
- 4 Rouselle: He may have preceded 1978. But he was one of the people that convinced George that he needed to expand the board. He was an inside agitator if you will.
- 5 Robertson: But he was sort of... give me a little description about Tom and his mindset I guess. I was about to say something about him. (bold emphasis mine)

Hedges like “if you don’t mind,” “a little bit,” “I’d like to,” and “I guess” reduce his authority while prompting Rouselle to respond and to verify Robertson’s prior knowledge and understanding. Most notably, Robertson seems to catch himself before framing FST director and Foundation member Tom Dent in a particular way. He stops himself from making a judgment and asks Rouselle to define his former colleague for the record.

Initial disagreement resolves to compromise several other times throughout the interview as a result. Even when Robertson inserts his own opinion and perception, Rouselle’s response is more positive than that of Salaam’s in the opening interview. The following moments highlight

different ways in which Robertson frames particular understandings of Jazz Fest and New Orleans culture, and how Rouselle engages with these interpretations:

- 1 Robertson: I think what I'm getting at is we have a living culture. That is what we are talking about. It is there. The Festival itself was both a local celebration and a...
- 2 Rouselle: It has become a tourist attraction.
- 3 Robertson: Yeah. But it also meant that the musicians didn't have to go to Europe to make a living.
- 4 Rouselle: That's right.

In the above quotation, Robertson presents and supports his personal argument for the positive connection between the Jazz Fest and New Orleans “locals.” Rouselle makes use of Robertson’s hesitation to interject, “It has become a tourist attraction,” boiling this argument down to a purely economic focus. His word choice emphasizes the outsider nature of attendees, a subtle disagreement with his interviewer’s thesis. However, Robertson reclaims the positive nature of Jazz Fest by applying this economic focus to local musicians. Rouselle agrees. At this point, the interviewer’s frame has ostensibly been accepted.

Rouselle takes the opportunity, however, to distinguish the Festival (as a money-making venture) from the Foundation which, under the leadership of Salaam, purchased the local radio station WWOZ. He explains, “It is not going to compete with your commercial radio stations and it wasn’t intended to. As a repository of our culture, our history, our music, it is an important institution because of that.” This argument replaces the economic frame with a more cultural one—back where Robertson started, but on Rouselle’s terms.

- 1 Robertson: Well then let's sort of attack the idea that it is fragile now. How fragile is it, do you think?
- 2 Rouselle: The...?
- 3 Robertson: The culture. And I'm asking this in relation to what you would say about Jazz Fest and that as a piece of infrastructure now that it is in place rather than what it was before.
- 4 Rouselle: I can never describe New Orleans culture as fragile because it lives in the heart and soul of every person who is a true New Orleanian wherever you are.

By explicitly connecting the preservation of a “fragile” New Orleans culture to the development and maintenance of the Jazz Fest, the interviewer calls upon an earlier moment in the interview that seems to legitimize the Festival’s commodification of jazz. His simple question reflects a widely-held claim that the Festival serves rather than exploits New Orleans heritage. Rouselle’s refusal to define the culture as fragile runs similarly deep: New Orleans culture does not need to be saved and it is maintained by every “true New Orleanian.” The “Foundation as savior” frame, mirroring a tradition of “salvage anthropology,” is rejected.

Their comments here also make reference to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and its effects on New Orleans communities. The dialogue above continues:

- 1 Robertson: Right. It is an approach and an attitude for sure.
- 2 Rouselle: It is an approach, it is an attitude, it is born out of... I guess who we are. What troubles me about the culture is the absence of, I hate the fact that we have people who want to come back home and they are not here and they can't get back here. It has impacts on the musicians who have never really been treated the way they should have been for what they've given and done for the city. I don't consider it fragile. I consider it necessary for people who love the culture to stand up and step up and put in place the policies necessary to make sure that it doesn't erode.
- 3 Robertson: Do you think there is something politically that should be done. Isn't being done?

Rouselle reframes “fragility” as political, prompting the two to discuss options for organizing, producing, and finding sponsorship for New Orleans artists who have been marginalized since the storm. Earlier in their conversation, Robertson had posited on the lack of political support in the weeks following the hurricane:

- 1 Robertson: I feel like, I mean one of the things is we've been able to reconstitute a community of people like you say who are really dedicated to being here. That is the first thing. Then you got this whole question that still bothers me that nobody has done a documentary on yet, of who decided who put the one-way tickets in the hands of the people and there wasn't a two-way ticket back. Even a year later or something. Who made that decision?
- 2 Rouselle: It was a one-way ticket and there is no way you can get around it. That is exactly what it was.

Turning the Table Over/Around (2015)

Robertson references this as a moment of pride in our own interview, the second of two in his beautiful Lakeview home:

- 1 Robertson: We started talking about Katrina and I said "Yeah, still bothers me that so many people got a one-way ticket out of here."
- 2 Jordan: Mhm.
- 3 Robertson: You remember that?
- 4 Jordan: I remember that.
- 5 Robertson: And he was like, "Wow." That was a way of speaking and a revelation to him that he could take and use.

I had reached out to Robertson as a student of the Archive, interested in researchers' backstories and in hearing what lies between the lines of the oral histories on file. Graciously, he invited me into his home, where I set up my recording device next to a bookshelf much like where Salaam sat eleven years before.

In my interview with Robertson, I found myself several times in a position of unequal power. I wanted to respect his experience and contributions to the archive while also challenging his depictions of the Jazz Fest as an integral leveling device in the city. I was less interested in the "hunt for racists" (Hodges 2015) than in an honest dialogue and a conversation toward change. In attempting to be subtle, however, I achieved only misunderstanding. A Masters student half his age and fairly new to studying Jazz Fest, I often took the path of least resistance: subordination.

I hesitated to bring race to the forefront of the conversation. When Robertson mentioned "where famously George [Wein] goes to the big revolt in St. Bernard Projects and... you know, gets reviled by people there, you know," he repeatedly used the phrase "the times":

- 1 Robertson: That's always been a fascinating period.
- 2 Jordan: Mhm.
- 3 Robertson: You know, so those aspects of what we learned... Because the other thing is that I know... you have to understand the times.

- 4 Jordan: Mhm.
5 Robertson: And having been immersed in those times. [pause] The turmoil of social effort. [laughs] (2016, interview)

“The times” also served as a euphemism for social struggle in his own past interviews. “Talk a little bit about the times,” he directed Salaam over a decade earlier. With the use of this phrase, I saw an opportunity to transition to a more topical discussion. “What about Jazz Fest in that larger, sort of, Civil Rights movement?” I asked. From the look on his face—blank and unresponsive—I instantly regretted not echoing his phrasing.

“You'd have to define Civil Rights movement,” he said, after a pause. I was not eloquent in my response. Surprised that I needed to define what I had thought was a shared concept, I stumbled through a definition:

- 1 Jordan: Okay... um, so... more equal opportunities for African Americans, uh, more integrated spaces and institutions...
2 Robertson: Integrated spaces?
3 Jordan: And institutions, as well.
[long pause]
4 Robertson: That's what the Civil Rights movement is?
5 Jordan: Well, how would you define--
6 Robertson: For you? [pause] No, I just want to understand. [long pause] More integrated spaces... Let's say that, um... [pause] More integrated spaces... Yeah, yeah, in a funny sort of way.”

I felt embarrassed. Robertson seemed to have difficulty in addressing the issue explicitly, but I was not equipped to approach things more delicately. Clearly he asserts power in demanding and then contesting my definition of Civil Rights. His resistance reflects negative past experiences discussing it, but after picking apart the inherent frame in my question, he then addresses my contention with his own theory, supported by years of experience:

- 1 Robertson: What I would say is... first of all, the largest contribution is the visibility of the African American--
2 Jordan: Mhm.
3 Robertson: --New Orleans culture. And therefore the increasing understanding of how important it is to... our identity. Because whether you're a racist or not, we live in

an African American-derived culture and we're the better for it. [pause] So, I would say that the biggest contribution that Jazz Fest makes is the visibility. There's more visibility and there's, therefore, over a period of time, more appreciation of... what that culture has been, is, and can be. For instance, I brought up Indians and different people decided that they needed to be paid for doing what they did spontaneously as a piece of culture.

4 Jordan: Mhm.

5 Robertson: I'm not, I'm not criticizing that, I'm just observing it. Because it's an evolution, and all culture evolves.

Robertson's comments pay homage to the African American influence in New Orleans, and he situates the Jazz Festival as a potent space for making this culture "visible" to white music-lovers who did/do not frequent segregated New Orleans music spaces. However, he also introduces the idea of dichotomizing profit and culture. Although he claims not to be making a criticism, these comments continue to reverberate in brief references to Salaam:

1 Robertson: You have to understand, you know, when Kalamu [ya Salaam] and... the other people... were really... very aggressive about Jazz Fest, that's about economic opportunity, and so in the end, if you go through the record, or if you learn about the record, which we've been doing over this last period of time of the oral histories plus some of the paperwork that Rachel has been able to get...

2 Jordan: Mhm.

3 Robertson: Then you learn that it was about economic opportunity. It was just as "good ole boy" as the good old boys, you know? It's an economic opportunity for a certain group of people.

While he previously recalled a positive moment from his interview with Rouselle, his analysis of Salaam suggests lingering resentment he feels about a contentious past interview.

The exchange taught me a valuable lesson about my research question: racialized differences and perceptions were not the only issues being contested in these interviews, nor were they the only ones participants responded to. These issues are ensconced in worldview and self-image, especially when race is wrapped up in histories of inequality and blame. I struggled to talk about race even with someone who looked like me. I could not bring myself to discuss invisible racialized privilege.

VII. Moving Forward

- 1 Robertson: At that time, did you feel that it was a pretty racist sort of selection process or they just were out to lunch and just not thinking about it or?
- 2 Williams: They were never confronted.
- 3 Robertson: It's pretty... like you say, it's pretty obvious in retrospect. [laughs]
- 4 Williams: Yeah, they were not confronted.
- 5 Robertson: They needed to be told...
- 6 Williams: They were never confronted because the people that they had on the board didn't address those kind of issues.

In situations of historic racial inequality, conducting conversations, interviews, and research projects with sensitivity and equity is not easy, but it is necessary: "White antiracism is, perhaps, a stance requiring lifelong vigilance" (Frankenberg 2001:77). As Williams suggests in the block quotation above, ignorance often lies at the heart of misunderstanding between groups.

Anthropologists now understand "race" as a social construct through which hierarchical power relationships are mapped onto differences in skin color (Trouillot 1995, Gomez 2005). In addition, whiteness has often been defined as the "unmarked" category: the term "people of color" implies that Euro-American people have no color (Frankenberg 2001, Lindsay 2007, Ware 2001). Ruth Frankenberg (2001) dismisses this idea, asking, "to whom is whiteness invisible?" (77). Her question highlights the centrality of white voices in the dominant discourses, even within academia: whiteness is anything but invisible to minority groups, who deal with a constant deluge of white faces and values.

Other researchers have been troubled by the idea that whiteness is monolithic (Gallagher 2000, Hartigan 2001, Arat-Koç 2014). This stems from a racial essentialism that discounts other types of power such as class, gender, or nationality. Hartigan's (2001) study of a working class white community in Detroit describes this disconnect particularly well: through conversation and experience, he locates the power to self-segregate in suburbs as an unrecognized feature of the white middle and upper class. Working class neighborhoods and schools are more likely to be

the sites of forced integration by city administrators, a power dynamic that subjugates all of the communities involved. Marxist and Critical Race theorists have struggled to find a middle ground (Bakan and Dua 2014), especially as various forms of racism shift and evolve. Arat-Koç (2014) explains how “culturalism works as a form of ‘race-thinking’ or ‘race-like thinking’, even in contexts when it applies to forms of unequal relationships other than ‘race’” (312). He argues that neoliberalism is the ultimate cause of this new prejudice, as it was in the creation of “race” as an understanding of difference.

When scholars refer to “whiteness” as assumptions that go unsaid regarding the extent and effect of historically racialized inequality, they therefore must “hold onto the unreality of race while adhering tenaciously to the recognition of its all-too-real effects” (Frankenberg 2001:73). Frankenberg summarizes this point succinctly in her essay’s opening lines: “the emphasis on race as process rather than thing has from the start been critical to my understanding” (2001:72). A study of whiteness should include an understanding of how ideas regarding the “normative” have been produced and reproduced over time, taking into account the intersectionality of oppression.

Critical Whiteness scholars agree that “whiteness” as an axis of power hides as cause and effect of a society’s dominant narrative. A critical linguistic perspective allows us to get at those hidden meanings by picking apart this narrative starting with individual words.

In this thesis, I situate the analytical frames of “whiteness” and “Discourse” as concepts central to a social justice agenda, both in the field of anthropology and in my own future work. The application of these approaches provides insight into the anthropological significance of hegemonic ideologies in legal, media, and educational settings. It also aids white researchers in forming the increased self-awareness necessary to pursue an anti-bias agenda. My pursuit of

further understanding on this topic grows from the understanding teacher educator Victoria Haviland (2008) explains: that studying the power associated with our own positionality should not be done “in ways that make people feel only guilt and discomfort, without presenting them with viable options for how to act on these new understandings,” but rather as a site of immense potential for growth (52).

Regarding his interviews thus far, Robertson explained, “That’s the thing about this body of work, it builds on itself.” He was referring to the necessity of returning to the same narrator again over time with increased knowledge, but I found his statement poignant for the considerations of all researchers contributing to a public body of knowledge, whether on Jazz Fest or on critical discourse difference over time. This wisdom also applies to an anti-racist education agenda. My analysis of these interviews pushes past evidence of racist discourse to focus on valuable learning moments for researchers to come.

Efforts to destabilize or rebalance the historical record (as with the *Creating Congo Square* exhibit) still actively negotiate dominant power structures. Transcripts, taken out of context and interpreted by others, can take on a life of their own in other research projects. This paper works to raise consciousness about the ways in which language shapes interactions and can be used to exacerbate or bridge social difference. Constantly analyzing our own interviews through Critical Discourse Analysis and other linguistic paradigms, anthropologists can remain self-aware of our conscious and unconscious linguistic frameworks.

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