

“Plant (n) ation” by Rita Antwi

Introduction Song: Roll Jordan Roll

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oFcFzJT7Tw>

26 seconds

Why I choose the title for my podcast

“Plant (n) ation”

Plantation for the simple fact that slaves were taken from their countries and enslaved and forced into slave labor on the plantation farms.

The word **Plant** represents the coded messages that (were planted by the slaves) the slaves used codes to communicate, send messages, and feel a sense of liberty.

Nation represents the ship, the plantation, the reinforcement of colonization through the modern day systemic racism.

The reason I put brackets around the letter **(n)** is to demonstrate what Frantz Fanon says in his book *Black skin white masks* about “The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation.” the quote demonstrates the use of the n word and how its perceived on both side of the spectrum.

Show intro monologue:

How do you do ? My name is Rita. In today's podcast I will be talking to you about the importance of sound and what sound can illuminate. More specifically I will be focusing on the enslaved and how music created a form of solidarity amongst them. Historically, Blues, Gospel, Jazz, Hip Hop and all sorts of music originate from the plantation system as well as from African traditions. Now this may be shocking to some but it's the truth. Often times when people think about slavery (if they know anything about it) they envision plantations with cotton fields. However there was so much more that happened within the fields. **Coded messages** for instance, were used among the slaves as a way to express their sorrows, maintain traditions, escape imprisonment, and coordinate labor etc.

Life

<http://123hulu.com/watch/QG3wJlGo-life.html>

33.39-52

The Hold/Slavery

Frantz Fanon is a radical existential thinker. Says no to “nostalgia” it's a particular way that the past is being captured and rendered as recognizable especially to a certain audience. Fanon is saying let's just reject that lets make sure that what we are addressing does not infringe upon a very particular nostalgic version of the past. It is so tempting to say ...there's this purity of sanctity when it comes to what pre settler life was like. Fanon however is rejecting that he does not want to rest the critique on a nostalgic version of the past because its false. “I will not make myself the man of any past” There's a genocidal logic in saying there's a specific image that we are open to recognizing. Colonial violence shapes the very dynamics of “recognition” Fanon is

warning us not to be naive about this activity called recognition because the very system of colonialism is at play in that very activity.

Let me takes us back to the time when it all began

Ship sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIg-e7jiugo>

0.2-12

...In the sixteenth century during the rise of capitalism. Europeans invaded African nations capturing thousands of Africans and selling them as slaves. They were crammed on to a ship. planked one top of the other, raped, brutally beaten, and chained. Intense violence ensued as they sailed across the Atlantic. Forced to exert themselves to harsh labor conditions on plantation systems. In countries from the Caribbean, South America, and North America. Sold as false commodities in order to keep up with the growing supply and demands of products such as sugar, tobacco, rice, and tea.

Marx critiques the industrial revolution involving its psychical and existential upfront violence it entails. He talks about how human relationships have switched from being holistic into a commodity.

“Fantasy of capitalism involved automations” this quote is suggesting that the more automotive people become the more they won’t be able to think, feel or advocate for rights. which is the danger of capitalism. However no only that but Fanon and Marx criticize the way in which capitalism is portrayed, because it seems to down play the atrocities of what took place, by focusing solely on the benefits of capitalism.

What is **existentialism**? How do we define the very nature of existence,? An existentialist would say it’s not “being” it’s “becoming” it’s not something so dead and constraint that we already know what it’s going to do. In fact existence is about life and becoming is not scripted you never know where it’s going to take us there is a metaphysics. The stakes are high to affirm yourself as human. To be human means that there has to be possibility for change.

Frantz Fanon stresses on the fact that recognition can also be radical and advisory, in the voice of the “we” because solidarity is being hailed and performed. which leads me to my next point ...

Chain sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEAbFWYazIo>

0-7 seconds

Freedom/Will

In The Under commons book by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten there is a chapter called “the fantasy of the hold” In this chapter they talk about sound and how it is crucial in order to know how the enslaved were thinking and feeling. It’s through sound especially through soul music, jazz, and hip hop that the listener can become plural and in tuned.

The sound for thinking, ideas, and logic in this case was music. During slavery it was illegal for Africans to read, or write which led to high rates of illiteracy within the black community. However, singing was a tradition engrained in African culture. The songs were known as “spirituals”, Spirituals were originally an oral tradition that imparted Christian values while also describing the hardships of slavery. Singing was a very essential part of African tradition, and on the plantation fields it served as rhythm for work, inspiration, and motivation. Singing was a way for my ancestors to proclaim their values and solidarity with one another. As I mentioned previously songs were used as coded messages as a way to remember important things and communicate.

It was through spirituals that music was reinforced through the plantation system. Today I want to share with you the voices of my ancestors ...

Wade in the water

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRpzEnq14Hs>

Start at 05 seconds - 1:40

This first song is known as wade in the water, this song was used by spirituals to convey the message of escape. It helped the slaves get off the trail and into the water, so that dogs (known as slavecatchers) could not track down the escapees and would lose their trail. The lyrics of the song are instructions on how to avoid captivity and reach freedom.

Swing low sweet chariot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljup8cIRzIk>

Start 03seconds 1:41

This Second song is known as Swing Low Sweet Chariot, this song was sung by spirituals to convey the message of preparation. If a slave heard this song being sung, it was indication that it's time to escape, so be prepared, and let's make our way from the south to the north. where freedom awaits us.

Sound

Music primes a kind of knowing that is linked to sounding and listening. There is an relational ontology to how to understand music and you can't understand it unless you look at it as a whole and then you can apply that to story elements as well. Musicians occupy a particular historical and cultural moment. Music is contextual, cultural, subjective. Music has the tendency to evoke emotion in a way that nothing else can, slave ships for instance used music as a sense of hope during a period when there was no liberty.

Over the course we have learned about the importance of sound and what sound can illuminate. I want to demonstrate the power of Sound and how it turns into Solidarity especially in this case the enslaved.

Jessica Abel who is a sound expert explores how music teaches us to hear a story. How listening creates knowledge that has qualities of experiential, contextual, fallible, and changeable.

If autonomy is something that is not even safe guarded or recognized it makes sense then that solidarity is going to be the most pressing resource. The resource cuts down between really focusing on the “I” and the “we”. As a Marxist (Frantz Fanon) focus on the “We”. We don't just think about the hold (the slave ship) we have to somehow be in it in a way. Through sound (music) there is solidarity amongst the oppressed. Frantz Fanon creates a distinction in terms of how thinking plays out as a resource for being moral agents who object to injustice and who really have the capacity to fight injustice and make the world a better place.