DIASPORIC RETURNS IN THE JET AGE: THE FIRST WORLD FESTIVAL OF NEGRO ARTS AND THE PROMISE OF AIR TRAVEL

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The First World Festival of Negro Arts (FESMAN) was decidedly a product of African independence, reflecting cultural and political aspirations of an emergent world order. It was also decidedly a product of the jet age. While air travel seems commonplace today, the commercial jet airliner was still a novel sign of futurity in 1966. Early stages of commercial jet travel often followed colonial routes into Africa, a postwar extension of Europe's imperial era. FESMAN offered the opportunity to reimagine air travel for the service of the international community built around independence-era Africa and the African diaspora. This essay examines the trope of air travel as a vital symbol of modernity invoked by FESMAN's organizers and participants. For example, many American visitors to the festival noted both the speed with which Pan Am jets shuttled them to the once-prohibitively remote continent as well as the shining international architecture of the newly built airport. The trope of air travel is perhaps most beautifully elaborated in American filmmaker William Greaves' lyrical documentary, The First World Festival of Negro Arts. The film strategically employed the marvel of air travel and its potential as a medium for

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facilitating the global networks proposed by the festival. Focusing on Greaves' film and American observations, this essay will explore the ways in which FESMAN proposed a global blackness for the jet age.

The First World Festival of Negro Arts (FESMAN), held in Dakar, Senegal in 1966, was decidedly a product of African independence, reflecting the cultural and political aspirations of an emergent world order. Countries throughout Africa, South America, North America, Europe, and the Caribbean were invited to send delegations of artists and performers to represent their Black populations. In addition to the cultural displays, the festival was preceded by a nine-day colloquium entitled "Function and Significance of African Negro Art in the Life of the People and for the People" in which artists and academics alike explored the weighty topic of Black art through speeches and presentations. As Andrew Apter (2005, 2016) has explored, FESMAN used its range of art displays and spectacles to provide an international stage on which newly independent African nations solidified models of national culture and identity. FESMAN, like other Pan-African festivals of the 1960s and 1970s, also fostered new models of community and belonging that troubled national boundaries as participants from across the continent and throughout the diaspora considered their ties to a global Black cultural network in which FESMAN (and by extension Senegal) figured as its temporary hub (Wofford 2011).

Yet as much as FESMAN was made possible by the political ascendance of independence-era Africa, it was also made possible by the technological advances of the jet age. While air travel seems commonplace today, the commercial jet airliner was still a novel sign of futurity in 1966 and a touchstone for postwar politics on the global stage. In fact, the trope of air travel became a vital symbol of modernity invoked by FESMAN's organizers and participants. For example, American visitors to the festival noted both the speed with which Pan Am jets shuttled them to the once prohibitively remote continent, as well as the shining international architecture of the newly built airport (Povey 1966a). Thus, while often seen as a parenthetical experience, or merely a utilitarian technology in the Pan-African festivals, air travel and, indeed, the jet age itself was a key constitutive element of events such as FESMAN. Air travel drastically restructured the diasporic experiences of Africa in the second half of the twentieth century and played an important symbolic role in the ways in which the newly independent nations imagined their connectivity to the world. For such new nations, the image of the jet plane functioned as a symbol of a modern forward-looking sovereignty, while jets simultaneously offered the real possibility of returns to the motherland for diasporic participants and observers such as those from the United States. The trope of air travel is perhaps most beautifully elaborated in American filmmaker

William Greaves' lyrical documentary, *The First World Festival of Negro Arts*. The film strategically employed the marvel of air travel and its potential as a medium for facilitating the global networks proposed by the festival. Focusing on the trope of air travel as it was invoked in postcolonial cultural festivals and in Greaves' film, this essay explores the ways in which FESMAN proposed a global Blackness for the jet age.

Africa and the dawning of the jet age

Arguably, Africa was always central to the global emergence of air travel and played a central role in the initiation of the jet age. Under colonialism, air transport in Africa was an increasingly important means for connecting European metropoles with their colonies. Beginning in the 1920s, airports throughout the continent were opened to link a vast geography where even roads and railroads were often not ideal modes of transportation. Gordon Pirie (2009, 161) described the development of airways in Africa as "a process not unlike a second scramble for Africa." Indeed, aviation technologies were often invoked in terms that echoed well-established justifications for the colonial project; as both a symbol of human progress and the spreading of civilization as well as a tool for commercial exploitation and profit (Pirie 2012). For the British Empire, the London to South Africa trip became the ultimate measure of such progress. The development of a commercial airline service for the North–South route by the aptly named Imperial Airways reflected the imperial aspirations of the likes of Cecil Rhodes, the British colonizer who imagined the unbroken extension of British colonial power in Africa from Egypt in the North to the southern tip of Africa. In fact, in these early stages of commercial flight, the consumer base for such travel was generally limited to senior colonial officials and business executives (Dierikx 2008, 31–34). While shorter than travelling by steamship, such air trips were lengthy and arduous by today's standards. In its inaugural year of the London to Cape Town route, Imperial Airways' North–South journey took eleven days, including dozens of stops along the way (Flight 1932). Through the 1930s and 1940s, races were held by airmen to cover the distance of the route and the reduction of the time it took for commercial flights to traverse the continent were touted as signs of the efficiency of Imperial Airways and its successor in the Commonwealth, the British Overseas Air Company (BOAC). By 1945, BOAC service from London to Johannesburg, which flew through the day and night stopping only for passengers, freight, and fuel, completed the trip in only forty-five hours (Flight 1945).

Thus, it comes as no surprise that Africa figured large in the initiation of the jet age by the first ever commercial jet flight, which was offered by BOAC on

May 2, 1952. Flying at 450–500 miles per hour, the 36-passenger de Havilland Comet jetliner hopscotched from London to Johannesburg in just under twenty-four hours, cutting in half the time to make the trip (Flight 1952). This inaugural flight of the jet age suddenly made the world seem a much smaller place, but it also mirrored the efforts of Imperial Airways by extending the colonial ambitions of the British Empire into post-World War II global politics.

Despite its use as a tool for colonial domination, Africans and people of African descent were also intensely involved in the development of air travel even in its earliest stages during the colonial era. Many saw the stakes of anticolonial and anti-racist efforts as embodied in the participation of Blacks and Africans in the dawning jet age. In her book exploring Pan American Airlines' interests in global markets, Jenifer Van Vleck (2013) highlighted the importance of air travel in nationalist discourses of self-determination in Africa. For example, the Nigerian nationalist paper *West African Pilot*, founded in 1937 by Nnamdi Azikiwe (who would become the first president of Nigeria), not only invoked the image of aviation through its name, but also ran a number of articles discussing the importance of Black participation in air travel. One October 1942 example titled "Travelling by Air" asserted:

> "If any person feels that the African is destined to be left behind in the march of progress of humanity then that individual must be living in a fool's paradise. The African has no intention of allowing others to leave him in the background."

The writers of *West African Pilot* saw this as more than an issue on the continent, however. They noted the important strides taken by African Americans in aviation through the famous Tuskegee airmen. A November 1941 article titled "The Swarthy Bird-men of U.S.A." noted the six American aviation schools that trained African Americans to pilot in the US war effort and raised the question, "What do these portents mean to European States which have 'possessions' in Africa? Is this news not significant and does it not indicate in a way, the shape of things to come after the war?"

The independence era in Africa coincided with the expansion of technologies of travel which arguably shaped the relations of postcolonial nations with one another and with the world. Jet travel was capitalized upon by people of African descent almost immediately following independence. Jet technologies made it possible to hold large-scale political and cultural events on the African continent. While the Pan-African Congresses and the meetings of Black writers and artists had taken place in locations such as London, Paris, and Rome throughout the first half of the twentieth century, African cities such as Lagos, Dakar, and Algiers could now claim positions as the hubs of Pan-African discourse.

One early example immediately following independence was the December 1961 cultural festival in Lagos, Nigeria organized by the American Society of African Culture (AMSAC), the US chapter of the Société Africaine de Culture (SAC). SAC, like its US counterpart, originated from the conferences of the Congress of Negro Writers and Artists first held in Paris in 1956 and Rome in 1959 (Baker 1966). Thus, the 1961 event in Lagos shared FESMAN's roots in the Congresses of Negro Writers and Artists. The event celebrated the opening of AMSAC's headquarters in Lagos, and reflected the eagerness of African Americans to foster connections to the newly independent nations.[1] African independence also coincided with an increasing interest in travel among Black Americans. For example, a 1962 article in the popular African American magazine *Ebony* noted that the market for foreign travel among African Americans had grown 173 percent over the previous decade. Further, Africa was often on the itinerary for travellers. Under the heading "Africa is Calling" the article informed readers: "The increased interest in Africa is beginning to be a boon to the travel industry. Negro Americans, proud that the land of their fathers is coming of age, are flying to the continent to attend independence celebrations and anniversaries" (Ebony 1962a).

The celebration in Lagos brought thirty-three African American artists, musicians, and writers to Africa, including Hale Woodruff, Nina Simone, Langston Hughes, and Lionel Hampton. While this was a limited and elite group of visitors, the romance of the trip was conveyed in the pages of *Ebony* for many to experience second hand (Ebony 1962b). Air travel – the notion of the speed of transport, the thrill of touching down on the continent – became significant tropes in the narration of the American experience of Africa. For example, in addition to noting the distinguished passenger list on the US jetliner that shuttled AMSAC participants to Lagos, the article emphasized the diasporic nature of the experience by recalling the impact of Hampton's rendition of *Flying Home*:

> The climax of the final concert came at the end of the evening when vibes man Hampton led a mixed American-African group of musicians in a half-hour, free-for-all jam session on the theme of his world-famed *Flying Home*. The tune, whether chosen by chance or design, echoed the sentiment of the cultural visitors at the time of the group's arrival. (Ebony 1962b, 87)

In this account, *Ebony* framed the voyage as a sort of diasporic redemption story – a return home. William Branch echoed this sentiment in his recollection of the experience in a 1962 AMSAC newsletter:

> For most of us making the trip, it was our first time in Africa. Though we came from divergent backgrounds, professions and interests in life, all of us save two were united by one common bond: we were Americans of African descent paying a

1 The opening of AMSAC's Lagos headquarters may have also reflected the desire of the US Central Intelligence Agency to engage with the newly independent nations of Africa. While unknown to most of the participants and membership of the organization, the CIA funneled funding to AMSAC. AMSAC's role as a financial supporter of SAC and a vital patron of artistic and cultural exchanges between African American and African artists highlights the complicated nature of global Black relations during the Cold War. AMSAC was deeply involved in US participation in FESMAN as well. Wilford (2008) has written a compelling account of the CIA's connection to AMSAC.

> visit to "the old country." And as our Alitalia jet airliner braked to a halt at the airfield at Lagos, one of the group was heard to observe: "well, it only took about three hundred years, but we"re back home at last.'

Such descriptions elucidate an image of optimism and joy associated with the promise of travel to Africa from the diaspora enabled by the jet plane.

Of course, even before it hosted the flood of international visitors to FESMAN, Senegal was also engaged in the complicated global politics of the jet age. Senegal's Dakar-Yoff Airport had long functioned as an important port in Africa. Located on the western-most point of the continent, Dakar was a main stop-off, along with the Canary Islands, for transatlantic flights between Europe and South America. As such, it emerged as an important player and desirable partner in international aviation. As the young nation gained independence, Yoff Airport became a significant touchstone for Senegal's sovereignty and power on the international stage.

Perhaps the most revealing episode involving postcolonial Senegal's aviation resources in global politics was its sudden importance during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 (a year after the AMSAC proceedings) (Meuhlenbeck 2012; Kaiser 1993). As the USSR began to develop nuclear capabilities on the Caribbean island, the United States found itself rushing to enforce a blockade to stop the action. Not wanting to challenge the US quarantine of Cuba by sea, the USSR looked to the airways. Soviet jet planes had the capability to transport the necessary materials and personnel to Cuba in order to carry out an airlift without a sea route, yet the jets could not make the trip from the USSR without a stop to refuel. Given existing treaties with European nations and Canada that blocked the option of a northern route, West Africa emerged as the only viable option for any USSR–Cuba airlift seeking to transport military supplies and personnel. The only countries with runways large enough to host such jet traffic were Liberia, Senegal, Morocco, Ghana, and Guinea. President Kennedy's ambassadors leapt into action to secure promises that each nation would uphold the US blockade. Senegal had a position of neutrality and thus found itself unwillingly entangled in the global tensions of the Cold War. President Senghor agreed to close the airport to Cuba-bound traffic from the USSR. Phillip Meuhlenbeck (2012, 219) described his eventual compromise: "In order to maintain the appearance of Cold War Neutrality, the Senegalese foreign minister announced that his government would prevent Dakar's airport from being used for military purposes by either side for the duration of the crisis." According to US ambassador Philip Kaiser (1993), the move to assist the United States cost Senghor some political capital at this early stage of his administration and it was one factor in the December 1962 coup attempt by Senghor's detractors.

Thus, Dakar's airport was more than simply a space of travel, it was a space of international and domestic politics. This fact was capitalized upon in the

FESMAN events. Dakar-Yoff Airport received renovations and new modernist terminal buildings that joined other projects associated with FESMAN like the Musée Dynamique and the Daniel Sorano National Theatre to reflect the viability of the newly independent nation. A full-page advertisement run in the *New York Times* in January 1966 listed "airways" among the categories of progress undertaken by the nation in preparation for FESMAN. The spread discussed how air travel to and from Dakar had grown 150 since independence. To aid this, the newly rebuilt airport served fifteen airlines, could host the largest jetliners, and welcomed direct flights from New York three times a week. (nothing to scoff at in this early moment of transatlantic air travel). These renovations were noted by festival visitors. For example, John Povey described his return visit to Dakar on the occasion of the festival thus:

> Dakar was very much "en fete" for the occasion. As soon as one stumbled out of the Pan Am jet that now brought one direct from New York there was an encouraging sense of renovation. Last year there had been a small wooden hut to handle arriving passengers, now there was a handsome new airport – its architecture was international rather than African but it was large and light. (Povey 1966b, 25)

Through the airport, Dakar framed itself as an innovative and international city – a model capital for any modern African nation. FESMAN offered an opportunity to show off this fact to the world.

Jets and modernity in William Greaves' *first world festival of Negro arts*

Few accounts make as explicit the central role of jet travel in FESMAN than William Greaves' poetic documentary film, *The First World Festival of Negro Arts*. Greaves' film was commissioned by the United States Information Agency in order to create a document of the proceedings of the festival from the perspective of a US filmmaker. While the agency originally wanted a five-minute documentary, Greaves eventually made the forty-minute film that is best known, as well as a shorter twelve-minute version. Greaves' documentary was reportedly one of the most popular USIA films on the African continent, though it was not allowed to be shown in the United States until Greaves acquired the distribution rights (Musser and Knee 1995).

Despite the constraints of its commission, Greaves used the opportunity to create an unusual film that posited the First World Festival of Negro Arts as a node of Black expression crossing global and temporal boundaries while dismissing the role of objective reportage in favour of poetic interpretation. Greaves described the film as "the first opportunity I had to make films that expressed a Black perspective on reality. Until then I had not had access to financing which would permit that" (Musser and Knee 1995, 394).

Indeed, Greaves' film is a different take on documentary as a genre, presenting a montage of scenes and images originally shot without sound and edited to include a shifting soundtrack of African and diasporic music all guided by the voice of a narrator who, instead of offering the objectivity and authority associated with documentary, embraces poetic metaphor and ambiguity. Personifying the debates, spectatorship, and exploratory discourse of FESMAN, the narrator, who quite possibly is meant to embody the festival itself, repeatedly poses the question, "Who am I?"

The film's opening scene immediately foregrounds a notion of diasporic return that emerges constantly throughout. It commences with the sound of music – a chorus sings and chants to the rhythmic beating of African drums – while the audience is presented with a view of a man with his jacket slung over his shoulder. He stands on a beach busy with people and fishing boats that navigate the crashing waves. This is Langston Hughes on the shore of Dakar, Senegal, the western-most point of continental Africa. Knowing he is in Dakar, one imagines that he gazes across the sea toward North America, dramatizing the distant journey he has apparently undertaken. Hughes moves along the shore as an engaged spectator, observing but clearly a stranger to the bustle of the fishermen and activity on the beach, as the disembodied voice of the narrator recites the beginning refrains of Hughes' famous poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." Tsitsi Ella Jaji (2014) has given a persuasive reading of this opening scene of Greaves' documentary, analyzing its use of the contemporary US literary figure, in order to recount a literal return to origins that the festival imagined for the diaspora. The film's marriage of the setting and the poem visualizes the desire for remembrance and reconnection to Africa expressed in Hughes' poetic account of ancient shores.

Following this scene, and the title images, the film then begins its lyrical montage of national dances, musical presentations, art exhibitions, and political pomp, all the while capturing shots of viewers taking in the spectacles with intense engagement. Yet the concept of travel and, indeed, the airplane emerges soon in the documentary. In fact, the trope of air travel is an unexpectedly dominant aspect of this account of the festival. In all, approximately seven of the film's forty minutes either feature airplanes or take place in an airport.

The jet plane makes a particularly jarring entrance into the documentary approximately eight minutes into the piece. In this scene, the camera pans across an audience enthusiastically observing a dance presentation in front of the national mosque. Suddenly, the sound of a jet interrupts the otherwise continuous musical soundtrack, and the viewers turn their eyes to the sky. A diminutive plane is seen in the distance, moving across the screen and, almost immediately, the scene is transported to the high-modernist setting of Dakar airport. Greaves' camera records the final descent of a large Boeing 720 jet

plane with its four turbine engines. Viewers hear the skipping screech of tires as the jet touches down at the airport. As it taxies, we see that the jetliner is part of the Ethiopian Airlines' fleet, emblazoned with the nation's iconic heraldic lion.

Of course, the entrance of the plane in the festival and the choice of Greaves to include the scene is not a *non-sequitur*. The airliner was an increasingly important symbol of independence and modernity and was key to much of the festival's overarching rhetoric. Ethiopian Airlines was a nationally controlled airline company, first chartered in 1945 after the end of World War II (Guttery 1998, 59). It mirrored and served as a model for similar national airlines as they spread across the continent following independence. The desire for such ventures in aviation were not necessarily motivated by profitability; rather, the airline served as an important national symbol. Ben Guttery in his *Encyclopedia of African Airlines* (1998, 2) described the importance of investing in national airlines in independence-era Africa:

> Following independence from European powers, most countries wanted their own flag carrier or national airline. Every country currently has or has had one. Each wanted a big jet, say a 747 or DC-10, even if demand did not require an aircraft of that size. This aircraft was to fly the country's colors with pride. Each country was using the airline to make a statement: We are now independent and free to do as we please. (Guttery 1998, 2)

The presence of the Ethiopian airliner in Greaves' film functions as more than a symbol of national sovereignty. It also introduces a model of African modernity that was key to the functioning of the festival itself. As the documentary camera follows the Ethiopian airliner along the runway, the narrator introduces a striking rhetorical turn with the following proclamation: "Once upon a time all of Africa south of the Sahara was called Ethiopia by the ancient Greeks who sometimes journeyed here. To them, Ethiopia meant the land of the sun-burnt faces." At this moment in the film, the door of the jetliner opens and out comes Emperor Haile Selassie as the narrator continues: "Thousands of years ago the early Egyptians called Ethiopia the land of Isis and Osiris, the land of the Gods. Welcome Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, we greet you. The mere mention of your nation stirs memories of a glorious past" (Greaves 2005).

The introduction of Haile Selassie and Ethiopia revolves around a compelling dialectic. On the one hand, Greaves presents viewers with images of the ruler emerging from a new, nationally controlled airliner that serves as a futuristic emblem of postcolonial Africa while, on the other hand, the narrator's laudatory prose emphasizes a vision of Ethiopia as an ancient kingdom that stirs memories of a glorious past. However, the logic of Greaves'

juxtaposition of past and future is actually not unprecedented and is arguably a reflection of the Pan-African strategies of the festival and its symbolic invocation of air travel. Certainly, within African American visual culture, Ethiopia has deep symbolic roots. Since the early twentieth century, Pan-Africanist discourses of racial progress and self-determinism were often associated with Ethiopia. Renée Ater (2011) has convincingly explored the ways in which African Americans embraced "Ethiopianism," as reflected in Meta Warrick Fuller's famous 1921 sculpture *Ethiopia Awakening*. The sculpture depicts a woman with a pharaonic headdress standing erect with her legs bound in the wrappings of an Egyptian mummy. Her bindings are falling away, however, and her torso and hands give the sense of slowly awakening as the muse emerges from her metaphoric slumber. *Ethiopia Awakening* was likely inspired by Fuller's close interaction with W. E. B Dubois, a central figure in the early development of Pan-Africanist thought and who played a role in organizing the Pan-Africanist conferences of the early part of the century. For Fuller, Dubois, and many African Americans, Ethiopia and Egypt (as the one African nation not colonized) represented both the power of ancient kings and the possibility of African and African American cultural and political ascendance.[2] Rendered in the middle of the transformative process of awakening, Ethiopia is figured as both the past and the future literally unfolding – serving as a catalyst and model for African American liberation.

The mixing of history and futurity in Greaves' juxtaposition of modern jet imagery and the narrative allusion to Ethiopia's glorious past was actually observable throughout FESMAN. Another example is the construction of the Musée Dynamique, which was built to house FESMAN's exhibitions of traditional African art. Some have aptly noted the ways in which the building echoes the classical form of a Greek temple, yet its minimalist and utilitarian design is also typical of the modern, international style – projecting, again, the image of African participation in postwar modernism (Vincent 2016). The juxtaposition is further heightened within the modernist interior spaces of the museum, which framed the traditional African art with the contemporary curatorial strategies resonant with what would later be referred to as the white cube.

Though the traditional artworks on display were drawn from across a broad range of historical and geographical traditions, framed within the museum they became classical muses for Black modernity. Pushed into the past-made-present in the museum space, the traditional art object must be abstracted to a sharable notion of African tradition. Some viewers have argued that the look to tradition and history was a failure within the festival, one that stymied postcolonial progress. For example, US observer John Povey (1966b) argued the interest in the past

2 Ater (2003, 17) quotes a letter by Fuller in which she described her vision for *Ethiopia Awakening*: "Here was a group (Negro) who had once made history and now after a long sleep was awaking, gradually unwinding the bandage of its mummied past and looking out on life again, expectant but unafraid and with at least a graceful gesture. Why you may ask the Egyptian motif? The answer, the most brilliant period, perhaps, of Egyptian history was the period of the Negro king."

> "is at the very heart of the weakness of this festival – it looked backward not forward, it sought the safe refuge of tradition instead of the bold emphasis on change, and, in doing so, it regrettably confirmed the worst of racialist assumptions, that ignorance that sees African arts as primitive, dark and savage, irrelevant to modern, progressive concerns."

However, Senghor and the organizers of FESMAN saw the reconnection to this notion of tradition as a foundation upon which independent Africa would build itself anew. Consider Senghor's invocation of traditional African art's potential role in his inaugural speech for the museum:

> "Our contemporary society, in the second half of the twentieth century, preoccupied by the materialistic problems, inundated by electronic calculations and technically oriented solutions … can be helped by the negro masterpieces here to live a better life and thereby fulfil its human vocation for universality" (Senghor 1995, 227).

For Senghor and his theory of Négritude, African traditional art offered a key to the future.

Souleymane Bachir Diagne (2016) has proposed a similar reading of Négritude's complicated relationship to tradition where the perceived opposition of progress and rupture against fidelity and backwardness is exposed as a false opposition. Such understandings reframe the juxtaposition of modernity and tradition in both the Musée Dynamique and of Greaves' introduction of Ethiopia and airplanes into his film. Thus, the embrace of modernity embodied by the use of modernist architecture or the jet plane should not be conceived of as a rupture with history (as some narratives of modernity suggest), but rather a mending of the rupture created by colonization for African nations on the one hand, and of slavery for people in the diaspora on the other.

Indeed, FESMAN offered a possibility of return for diasporic artists and viewers travelling to the African continent, a return enabled by and often read through the rapid nature of jet travel. The festival's explicit goal was to reconsider Black cultural affinities and thus it is not surprising that the works of artists and performers displayed at the festival were read through the discursive debates around Négritude and absorbed into the festival's discourse of Black cultural affinity. For example, while a number of the visual artists from the United States, such as William Majors and Sam Gilliam, created work that had no explicit ties to their African heritage, their pieces were effectively altered by FESMAN's Négritude framing and absorbed into the festival's discourse of global Blackness (Wofford 2009). Yet individuals who travelled to Dakar were also swept up by the discourses of cultural belonging that the festival proposed. Just as Greaves' film offered images of a dramatic spiritual and cultural

reunion embodied by Hughes on the seashore, many African American participants used the opportunity to reassess their connection to the continent. Consider Hoyt Fuller's recollection of the responses of his fellow participants to their journeys to the festival:

> A few were carried away. Poet Margaret Danner, who had been trying to make the journey [to Africa] for many years and who once wrote a suite of poems called *Far From Africa*, wasted no time in draping herself in an elegant peach-tangerine boubou and going native. (Fuller 1966, 102)

Margaret Danner's performative act is perhaps one important aspect of the performance of Pan-Africanism enabled by the festival – a performance whose rapid reassessment of subjectivity and identity is matched only by the rapid nature by which the poet was able to transport herself to Africa.

In the jet age, new kinds of returns are possible – a fact made clear when the airport makes another appearance as the concluding scene to Greaves' documentary. The scene follows a montage of the events at the colloquium in which viewers are given a sense of the intensity and passion with which FESMAN participants debated theories of Négritude and other aspects of African and diaspora culture. The scene then almost seamlessly shifts from the engaged crowd at the colloquium to the interior spaces of the modernist airport terminal. The space of the airport appears as a natural extension of the festival itself, and the visitors continue their intense discussions almost unbroken. Among their packed luggage, the camera spies loosely wrapped items of African art, mementos soon to be transported across the Atlantic. The US participants line up on the tarmac to board the jetliner that will shuttle them back to their lives in the United States. In the last moments of the film, we see a very young Alvin Ailey bound up the steps to the airplane. Before entering the aircraft, Ailey turns back to wave a goodbye and, as the screen freezes on Ailey in the midst of this farewell gesture, the narrator beseeches the participants (and perhaps the film's audience): "Goodbye. Remember what happened here. Remember. Remember" (Greaves 2005).

In our Internet age we forget the novelty of rapid travel as the 1960s unfolded. And, perhaps, we forget the ways in which rapid travel enabled new possibilities of remembering as an embodied experience that Greaves, Danner, and the other participants of the festival seem to highlight so strikingly. The festival gave a space for this sort of memory as much as it tested the new cultural and political possibilities of Pan-Africanism in the independent era. In this sense, FESMAN and the new technologies of travel made possible new kinds of diasporic return in the jet age.

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