Université de Montréal

Who Got Da Funk?

An Etymophony of Funk music from the 1950s to 1979.

par

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Cette thèse intitulée :

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a été évaluée par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:

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Abstract

The codification of music into categories of style or genre is an activity that fans, musicians, journalists, producers and academics engage in on a daily basis. Over the years a significant body of literature has been created theorising genre formations. While we are able to identify, understand and problematize general terms such as rock, jazz, funk, disco and metal, there has been relatively little musicological discourse to investigate the musical basis for this vocabulary. The consequence of the lack of musicological discourse is that genre formations are often created around personality, politics, fashion or socio-cultural activity rather than the sonic experience. Existing musicological discourse on genre suggests a hierarchical approach has developed which privileges writing on jazz and rock leaving 'minor' genres such as funk relatively ignored.

The aim of this thesis is to present an etymophony of funk which traces the development of the genre through an investigation of the sonic text. To facilitate the discussion I have created a conceptual framework for understanding the process of genre formation. The framework provides a basis for understanding how the network of intertextual musical relationships, within their socio-cultural context, act as points of departure for stylistic and genre formations. These stylistic formations are traced through musematic analysis of a representative body of works created around existing literature on funk.

The thesis begins by discussing the current literature and meanings that circulate around the music of funk. Once these preliminaries have been dealt with, the main body of the argument traces the development of funk from the 1950s until 1979. The thesis is subdivided into three distinct sections. The first section discusses the early formation of the genre from the 1950s until the end of the 1960s. The second section argues that between 1970 and 1974, intertextual ideas began to be redefined and a clear understanding of the genre emerged. The third section examines the diffusion of funk styles through the mid to late 1970s as musicians formed other traditions and began to experiment with stylistic characteristics of funk with some of these acting as a point of departure for new stylistic formations such as disco.

I argue that without musicological investigation of the sonic text, descriptions of genre formation will continue to construct a mythological past around personality and socio-cultural constructs that have little relation to the complexity of the intertextual process. I will argue that an etymphonic investigation of this kind invites us to re-examine the often neglected contribution made by individual musicians and the social framework that sustains music making. Finally, I suggest that if we are to understand the meanings that circulate around terms like funk, we must investigate primary sources by foregrounding the sonic text. It is only by undertaking scholarly activity of this kind that we will be able to critique essentialist and ideological genre formations and gain a clearer understanding of our musical world.

Keywords:

Etymophony, semiotics, museme, funk, groove, feel, Musicology, analysis, style, genre.

Résumé

La codification de la musique dans les catégories de style ou de genre est une activité à la quelle les fans de musique, les musiciens, les journalistes, les producteurs et les universitaires se livrent sur une base quotidienne. Au cours des ans un corps significatif de littérature a été créé qui théorise les formations de genre. Bien que nous soyons capables d'identifier, comprendre et théoriser les problèmes des expressions comme «le rock», le «jazz», «le funk», «le disco» et «le métal» dans les termes généraux, il y a eu comparativement peu de discours relatif à la musicologie qui puisse enquêter sur la base musicale pour ce vocabulaire. La conséquence du manque de discours musicologique est que les formations de genre sont souvent créées autour de la personnalité, la politique, la mode ou l'activité socioculturelle plutôt que l'expérience sonique. Le discours musicologique sur le genre qui existe suggère qu'une approche hiérarchique s'est développée qui privilégie l'écriture sur le jazz et le rock en laissant relativement ignorés des genres 'mineurs' comme le funk.

L'objectif de cette thèse est de présenter un etymophonie de funk qui suit la trace du développement du genre par une enquête du texte sonique. Pour faciliter la discussion j'ai créé un cadre conceptuel pour comprendre le processus de la formation du genre. Le cadre fournit une base à comprendre comment le réseau de rapports musicaux intertextuels, dans leur contexte socioculturel, agissent comme des points de départ pour les formations du style et du genre. Ces formations stylistiques sont localisées par l'analyse musematic d'un corps représentatif d'œuvres créées autour de la littérature existante sur le funk.

La thèse commence le par discuter discutant la littérature actuelle et les sens qui circulent autour de la musique de funk. Dès que ces préliminaires ont été traités, le corps principal de l'argument suit la trace du développement de funk à partir des années 1950 jusqu'à 1979. La thèse est subdivisée en trois sections distinctes. La première section discute les débuts de la formation du genre des années 50 à la fin des années 60. La deuxième section soutient qu'entre 1970 et 1974, les idées intertextuelles ont commencé à être redéfinies et une compréhension claire du genre a émergé. La troisième section examine la diffusion des styles de funk par le milieu à la fin des années 70 comme les musiciens formaient d'autres traditions et commençaient à faire des expériences avec les caractéristiques stylistiques de funk et quelques-uns uns d'entre ceux-ci interprétaient comme un point de départ pour de nouvelles formations stylistiques comme le disco.

Je soutiens que sans enquête relative sur la musicologie du texte sonique, les descriptions de formation du genre continueront à construire un passé mythologique autour de la personnalité et des constructions socioculturelles qui ont peu de relation à la complexité du processus intertextuel. En outre je vais soutenir aussi qu'une enquête etymphonic de cette sorte nous invite à réexaminer la contribution souvent négligée faite par des musiciens individuels et le cadre social qui soutient la réalisation de musique. Finalement, je propose que si nous devons comprendre les sens qui circulent autour des termes comme le funk, il faut enquêter sur les sources primaires par mettre en relief le texte sonique. C'est seulement en entreprenant l'activité intellectuelle de cette sorte que nous serons capables de faire la critique des formations du genre essentialiste et idéologiques et nous gagnerons ainsi une compréhension plus claire de notre monde musical.

Mots clés.

Etymophonie, sémiotiques, museme,
funk, «groove», «feel»
musicologie, analyses, style, genre.

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Example 275. *Thank You,* muted and scratch guitar. 400
Example 276. *Street Life,* guitar riff. 419

Conventions of notation

Transcriptions.

The main method for representing musical sound in an academic study of this kind remains, for the moment at least, traditional notation. There are a number of problems with notation in that, as a representational system, the musical symbol cannot hope to convey all the information found in live or recorded sound. Transcriptions function as a way of pointing the reader towards particular sounds or musical ideas contained in the recorded performance.

Most of the transcriptions found in the text were re-created using sequencing software. Material from the original recording material was recorded on an audio track and then reconstructed using sequencing software.[1] For the most part, the transcriptions concentrate on bass, drums, guitar, horns and voice. Commercially available transcriptions of James Brown were available (Slutsky and Silverman: 1995) and these assisted in preparing transcriptions especially the guitar of which I have a limited technical knowledge. A transcription of The Crusader's *Street Life* (Crusaders: 1986) was also available although the interpretation of some parts is different to my own.

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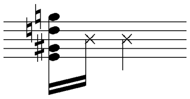
1 The software was E-magic's 'Logic' (5.1) .

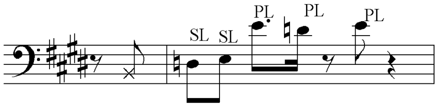
Notation.

The notation used in transcriptions are based on the following conventions:

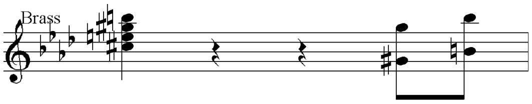
Guitar notation generally shows the chords as notes. A damped or muted string is notated by a cross head:



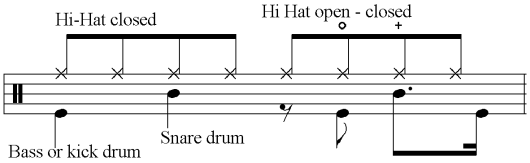
For **slap bass**, the slap with the thumb is indicated by SL, and pluck with the fingers by PL:


SL
SL
PL
PL
PL

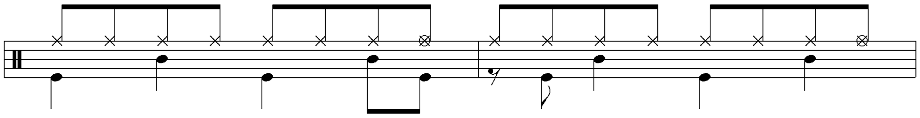
Brass instruments and all transposing instruments are written in concert pitch:



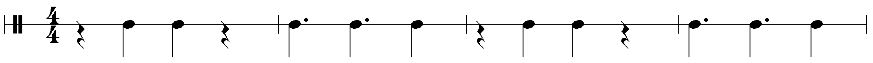
Drums are notated as follows:


Hi-Hat closed
Hi Hat open - closed
Bass or kick drum
Snare drum

A crash is indicated by a circle round a crossed head:

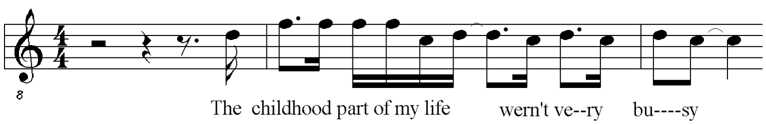


Single rhythmic lines are notated on a single line. Generally, these are examples of a particular rhythmic pattern rather than a notation of a performance:

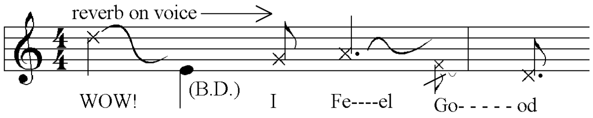


Wah-wah pedal is particularly difficult to notate and information is contained in the text to show where the pedal effect is heard.

Vocals are written in treble clef but with a small *8* at the bottom of the clef to indicate that the pitch is transposed an octave lower:



On a few occasions, a graphic notation is used to indicate the kind of gestures used in the voice:



Where necessary, the type of post production or performance effect, for instance reverberation, is indicated above or below the stave.

Chords are indicated by guitar style symbols such as E♭^{7} indicating a dominant seventh chord built on E flat.

List of abbreviations.

The following abbreviations are to be found in the main text. Further details of the terminology can be found in the glossary where relevant:

HS	Hypothetical Substitution.
Intro	Introduction (to a song).
IOCM	Inter-objective Comparative Material.
ITCM	Inter-textual Comparative Material.
M	Museme (as in M1, M2…)
MS	Museme Stack (MS1, MS2…)
OED	Oxford English Dictionary.
Outro	The ending of a song.
WEAM	Western European Art Music

Other Conventions

Song titles are given in italics, for instance: *I Feel Good* whereas album titles are indicated by the use of inverted commas, as in: "The Greatest Funk Album In The World".

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

My wife, Julie, my children, Samantha, Gareth and Claire, and my mother Marion, who made it all possible.

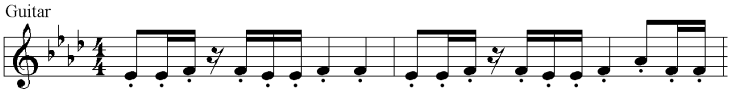
Acknowledgements

A study of this kind involves the help of a great many people both on a musical and a personal level. It would be impossible to name everyone individually as many contributions have come from words of encouragement or by shedding new light on a particular thought. While not wishing to demote the assistance of these people in any way by letting them remain nameless, there are some whose singular contribution cannot go unacknowledged.

My debt to Professor Philip Tagg of the University of Montréal is such that this study would not be possible without his invaluable assistance and musicological guidance in the preparation of this thesis. Moreover, without his vision and determination to create a musicology of the mass media, my musicological world would be a far less interesting place. My thanks also to past colleagues at Barnsley College including Duncan Waller and the three Petes: McGrother, Birkby and Fairclough, who were able to shed light on many of my questions; to Braham Hughes for his insight into the ways of funk; to Dr. Chris Belshaw (Open University), Pete Fairhirst, and Mike Hill for invaluable comments on groove. I am extremely grateful for the guidance of Dr. Peter Chapman in preparing the final draft of the text and to Frank O'Neill for correcting my translations.

I would also like to thank the staff at the Université de Montréal, especially Professeur Sylvain Caron who made the transfer from the UK as painless as possible, and the many students who have made my visits such a valuable personal, linguistic and academic experience. Finally, but not least, I would like to thank my family for supporting me through this study, for believing in me, and for keeping out of the way when things got tough.

Preface



[2]

This thesis began with a question: where did the muted guitar part in The Crusaders' *Street Life* (1979) come from? On the face of it, this seems like a simple question but as I began to ask academics, fans and guitarists, no one seemed to know. A search of the literature proved to be fruitless on this matter, even less had been written on this particular instrumental sound than on funk itself. Guitar tutors demonstrated the technique but said little about the origins of the sound or why that particular sound was used. In contrast, a great deal is said about performers and personalities who populate the funk scene and we can easily access histories of James Brown, George Clinton, Sly Stone and Bootsy Collins. From these histories we learn of personal struggle and development, and we read about financial, moral, emotional, mental, and other factors which contribute to our development as social beings. What we may not understand from these histories is how a musical sound develops to become part of a bigger, identifiable sound which is used by others for enjoyment, entertainment, communication, movement, ritual, expression and social engagement.

These individual sounds, when combined, can create an exciting musical force which are used by many people in society. For the most part, the development of these sounds has been ignored possibly because of the interest Western society has invested in organising itself around hierarchical structures. Leaders of bands tend to dominate with the 'side-men' being sidelined. In listening to James Brown we might easily forget that the 'James Brown sound' was the result of many individual, experienced musicians who informed the 'sound' using their own musical ideas, creativity and collective musical experience. This is a neglected area in music and only a few writers have engaged in the way that we develop as popular musicians with a notable exception being found in Green's *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002), a study that focuses on the transmission of skills in popular music practice.

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[2] Muted guitar part: Street Life (1979) . Three guitarists contribute to the creation of the rhythm track for *Street Life*: Arthur Adams, Roland Bautista and Billy Rogers. No information is available on which of these played the riff.

The transmission of skills is very much a social process and we learn from one another directly or indirectly. Many bass players, for instance, have learned from Larry Graham, although few will have met him personally. What these musicians learn are often fragments of musical ideas, riffs, techniques and sounds that are first imitated and sometimes transformed into something new. While Green studied how individual musicians learned their skills and developed an understanding of musical style, my own study focuses instead on the way that musical sounds were circulated amongst musicians and how these sounds became codified into the genre we now know as funk.

Examining the musical ideas of funk presents a problem. Ideas change over time and charting that progress can be more difficult than examining a particular 'product' or song. Musical ideas are subject to considerable change as they are taken up, discarded, transformed and reused. The opening part of this thesis discusses the musicological problems and outlines previous strategies that writers have taken to define funk as well as discussing the methodological considerations necessary for a work of this kind. To facilitate the discussion of this process a theoretical model has been created which will act as a conceptual map to help us make sense of the process of change. Using this model as a basis, the thesis divides the development of funk chronologically into three distinct phases. The first is the ‘proto-funk’ which examines the musical influences from the 1950s until 1969. The second is the ‘confluence’ of ideas which occur during 1970-71 were ideas were refined and consolidated into a more coherent genre. The final section is the ‘diffusion’ of styles which emerges during the latter part of the 1970s as the ideas of funk merge with other influences such as pop, jazz, rock and disco.

Introduction

The primary object of this thesis is to present an etymophony[3] of funk which, falling outside of the rock canon, is a relatively neglected genre within the study of popular music as a whole. The development of any musical style is normally traced through the history of musicians and artists who are closely associated with the music. The result of such an approach is to ignore the musical sounds themselves. The focus of this thesis is to discuss how funk, as a sonic experience, established itself as a recognisable genre and how the musical elements of funk were disseminated from the early 1950s to the end of the 1970s.

The present study emerged from my own interest in funk and the meanings it had for me. From initial studies I began to ask people where stylistic identifiers, such as the muted guitar sound found on so many funk songs, came from. It soon became apparent that although funk was a well established genre within the popular music repertory, its study was under-represented in the literature of the time. Even now, several years after the initial question arose, the situation has changed little. Yet the popularity of seventies funk seems to be on the increase. The record industry releases compilation albums with ‘Funk’ or ‘Funky’ clearly emblazoned on the cover of the

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[3] The term comes from Tagg (1994) as a means of studying the ‘origin of an item of sonic signification’ (Tagg, 2003: 806) distinguishing the study of sonic material from literary material as found in etymology. Etymology is defined as: “The process of tracing out and describing the elements of a word with their modifications of form and sense” (OED on-line, 2003). Although the etymology of a word is usually easily traceable in any good dictionary, music has no equivalency and very little is known about the elements of music and their origins by comparison to language.

CD.[4] Radio, TV and advertising make significant use of funk in their scheduling and to enhance the images they portray. In the world of DJs and remixes, the sounds of the early funk artists continue to be reused. Despite this interest, the actual study of funk as a musical genre and its genesis as a musical style remains largely uncharted. The only notable exception to this is Ricky Vincent's (1996) book, *The Music, The People, and The Rhythm of The One* which attempts to trace the history of funk. Although Vincent writes with infectious enthusiasm about funk his history of the genre involves no musicological study focussing instead on its personalities rather than on its existence as sound.[5]

The reluctance of musicology to engage with popular music has meant that there are very few writers who have engaged with the musical text in any consistent and sustained way. One of the few musicologists to receive recognition for engaging directly with the musical text is Philip Tagg. Although gaining much critical approbation for his methodological contribution to popular music exemplified through his work on *Kojak* (1979/2000) and *Fernando the Flute* (1991/2001),[6] writers such as Walser have suggested that Tagg's work has 'had less impact on the study of popular music than such distinction would seem to merit because of what many see as the excessive complexity and artificiality of his analyses' (Walser, 1993: 38). More

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4 See discography for detailed list of compilations consulted during this study.

5 See Tagg, 2003 (part 1) for a more detailed discussion of the relationship between musicology and popular music.

6 See Middleton (1990); Walser (1993: 38), Monelle (1992: 286), McClary and Walser (1990:283-4), Feld, (1994: 81-2) and Moore (1993: 12) for a discussion of Tagg's approach.

recently, Tagg's approach has been applied by a number of writers including Tamlyn (1998), Lacasse (2000a) and Kassablan (2001) demonstrating that a literal interpretation of the methodology described by Tagg (1982) need not be dogmatic and is open to interpretation.

A secondary objective of this study was therefore, to apply, at least in part, the analytical methodology developed by Tagg to discuss music of mass media. Tagg's methodology provides a comprehensive way of examining the musical sound through various techniques. While Walser may be correct in his criticism of 'artificiality' and 'complexity', the same criticism could be applied to any number of analytical techniques used in musicology. It would only take consideration of a few alternative methods such as Schenkerian or pitch set analysis to conclude that the same 'complexity and artificiality' is inherent in many approaches. What sets Tagg apart, and the reason for my own study, is that he is the first to actually *analyse* the sounds of popular music in a meaningful and relevant way[7]. Tagg analyses popular music in terms of what it means as intersubjective, social communication. While his early study of Kojak could has been criticised as being complex, his later studies of Abba and film music build on the theoretical principles established in Kojak and examine the musical message by engaging with the sound itself. Tagg's approach has an additional attraction in that by grounding the music in meaning, it immediately opens up any analysis to a more holistic interpretation which could include social, political, cultural, and economic as well as consideration of more personal interpretations as our bodies respond to music through physical responses, movement and dance. In short, his method seems to reject absolutist strategies so common in other analytical techniques employed by academics and addresses the music directly in the way that I hear it.

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[7] This is not to dismiss other attempts including Mellers (1973) analysis of the Beatles' music. This interesting work brings with it the vocabulary of the Western European Art Music and Mellers discusses Neapolitan relationships and augmented sixths in the music of Lennon and McCartney. Tagg (1979/2000) is helpful in this respect by citing works dealing with the functional analysis of popular music in the 1970s. The work of continental musicologists seems much more advanced and prolific. Tagg cites, Mühe (1968), Dörte Hartwich-Wiechell (1974), Rauhe (1972), Kneif, Olshausen, Feurich and Sandner (1977) amongst others.

The following study seeks to examine the origins of funk and its development as a musical genre.[8] The study is founded on the premise that the development of the genre occurred because the music had meaning – a resonance with the people who *use* the music and its resultant popularity emerges because of those meanings. My own interest in funk comes from a fascination with what is generally referred to as the *funk sound,* that is the totally of its constituent sonic parts and their observable effects on its listeners, including myself. One of the most obvious effects of the 'funk sound' is that it tends to make its listeners want to dance or move their bodies in particular ways.

To understand the development of funk I have drawn on the work of Hatch and Millward (1987) who use the metaphor of song families or musical families to provide a model for examining the repertoires of what is primarily an aural and improvised tradition. I have developed the initial concept of musical families to create a model which allows us to examine the musical threads which we weave into a history. While such a model allows us to take an overview of funk as a genre, it does not allow the individual contribution of musicians to go unrecognised. In the discussion of early funk, or what I refer to as the 'proto-funk', it becomes clear that individual performers had a significant influence in how the family of funk developed. The concept of a musical family has theoretical connections with intertextual theories developed initially by Kristeva (1969) and discussed recently by Lacasse (2000) in his work on musical sound in recordings. This work will be relevant to establishing intertextual connections between songs during the period of study and there will be further discussion of intertext in the methodology.

Before we embark on the study of the musical text, it will be necessary to discuss theoretical and methodological contexts that support my discussion. I will look at the existing literature on funk and, in particular, the musicological contributions made by writers such as Brackett and Stewart. Following this, I will outline my approach to the study before examining the meanings that circulate around the term funk. These considerations are outlined in some detail in order to provide a framework for the textual analysis which are to be found in part 2 of the thesis.

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8 Genre is discussed more extensively in the next chapter.

Part 1. Musicological Considerations: theory and method

1.1 The Musicological Problem

In the previous chapter I have suggested that relatively little has been written on the funk genre. In spite of the everyday use of terms such as 'funk' and 'funky' it soon becomes clear, through a review of the literature, that little has been written of a musicological nature. The two exceptions to the musicological neglect of funk include an analysis of James Brown's *Superbad* by David Brackett (1992/1995), and a 25 page article tracing the rhythmic development of funk entitled, *Funky Drummer* (Stewart, 2000). Aside from these articles and various transcriptions of funk pieces found in tutor books for guitar, bass and drums, little of substance, from any viewpoint, exists in printed form about funk except for Ricky Vincent's *Funk: the music, the people, and the rhythm of the one* (Vincent: 1996).

The absence of any literature is surprising given the influence that funk has had on music since the late 1960s. Much of this period was characterised by music for dance, a trend that continued well into the late1970s with songs such as Frantique's *Strut Your Funky Stuff* (1979). Funk has also been used in film (Hayes, 1971) and TV themes. As funk developed it produced and sustained a range of star performers including James Brown, Sly Stone, Isaac Hayes, George Clinton and Stevie Wonder. Performers such as Prince, the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, and Jamiroquai all used the funk idiom in their performances during the eighties and nineties while Public Enemy, Run DMC, Ice Cube, and NWA all sampled the work of pioneers like James Brown.[9] The continuing influences that funk has on music lend weight to Brackett's assertion that 'the legacy of funk cuts across a wide range of popular forms'.[10] Given the breadth and influence of the music across several years and in different genres, it is difficult to understand why so little has been written specifically on the music and sounds of funk.

The problems of writing about popular music in an academic context have been the subject for discussion for a number of years. Richard Middleton in *Studying Popular Music* (1990: 103), suggests that the musicological problem was such that, 'as a general rule works of musicology, theoretical or historical, act as though popular music did not exist'. Writing some ten years after this publication, Middleton is able to take a reflective view of the long term dialogue popular music has had (and continues to have) with Western European musicology:

> Since their beginnings, popular music studies have conducted an implicit (sometimes explicit) dialogue with musicology. To be sure, the musicological side of this conversation has more often than not been marked by insult, incomprehension or silence; and popular music scholars for their part have tended to concentrate on musicology's deficiencies (Middleton, 2000: 104).

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[9] See Gaunt (1995) for a discussion of this trend. Thompson (2002) has detailed references to songs used as samples.

[10] Brackett, David: 'Funk', The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed [01.01.2003), http://www.grovemusic.com

The polarisation of ideologies and the resultant discourse of an emerging popular musicology has, in many ways, left little room for the real business of analysing music. The writings of Tagg (1979, 1982), McClary and Walser (1988), Shepherd (1977), Middleton (1990), Moore (1993) and Brackett (1995) over the past twenty or more years all demonstrate the necessity to justify their approach against an entrenched musicological tradition.[11] In addition, some of these authors have found the need to construct a more appropriate musicological methodology which would be appropriate for the study of popular musical genres.

Popular music scholars have seen a resistance to the study of popular music in education. Walser (1993), for instance, sees the neglect and 'claims of disinterestedness' in popular music by traditional musicologists as a device to 'mask the ideological agendas of its culture' (Walser, 1993: 35).[12] Middleton seeks to explain this 'condemnation and neglect' of popular music as motivated by cultural class. In either case, the discussion points an aesthetic agenda which emerges as a musical hierarchy with some music being suitable for study, and some not. Middleton links the rise of the bourgeoisie with the development of the concert repertory:

> The construction of a 'classical' repertory went hand in hand with the construction of a new audience, and both were legitimated by a historical-aesthetic vision stressing the gradual emergence of music as an autonomous,

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[11] Many of these authors would probably sympathise with Brackett when he wrote that 'This project began as an attempt to find language that could explain my continuing fascination with popular music in the face of notable lack of encouragement within academia to pursue that fascination' (Brackett, 1995:xi).

[12] Two interesting commentaries on the value system of Western European Classical musicology are to be found in Frith, *Performing Rites* (1996) and in Tagg (2003).

> transcendent form with cognitive value (it opened a window on Truth, rather than simply providing social pleasures). (Middleton, 1990: 107)

The rise of popular music scholarship was not a part of the same process of legitimisation that occurred within the European Classical tradition. Popular music's success was more often than not legitimised by social use and valued through commercial transaction as a commodity rather than as an 'autonomous, transcendent form with cognitive value'. The consequence of this ideological hierarchy was that the first attempts to analyse popular music came not from musicians, but from the disciplines of sociology and cultural studies. While on the one hand, the involvement of sociologists and cultural theorists was of value in understanding how society used music, their involvement was of little value in understanding the sound of the music and how it affected us as participants.

Where writing has emerged on the sounds of popular music, it has often been narrow in range. Much of the interest of popular music scholars has been directed towards rock music and its various sub-genres. The scholarly activity devoted to other popular music genres, by comparison, has been slight in comparison. In addition to scholarly activity on rock, the increase in the number of popular music courses in the UK during the 1990s has resulted in a number of texts being developed specifically to support academic study. One such book includes *Rock: The Primary Text* (Moore, 1993), which seems to encapsulate much of the direction that popular music studies was taking. Moore's approach to rock music is in some ways quite traditional as he encourages his readers to examine the music in terms of textural layers by concentrating on rhythmic, bass, melodic and harmonic aspects of the music. His main concern is, ‘to trace the internal dynamics of rock styles... the... "syntactical" meanings’ (*ibid*:154). In doing so Moore sought, at least partially, to rescue rock scholarship from the socio-cultural analysis which dominated the study of popular music:

> I have pointed out at a number of places in the text that rock scholarship has, until now, largely been a creature of cultural and sociological reductionism, and that much of the blame for this must be laid at the door of those musicologists who have ignored massive regions of the ‘total musical field’ (Moore, 1993: 185).

On the one hand, Moore opens the door for more analytical and theoretical investigation of music while on the other; he closes it to the ‘total musical field’ by concentrating his attention on the study of rock. He is quite specific about this narrow field when he points out that, at the time of writing: ‘rock scholarship is still at an early stage’ (*ibid.* 187). Robert Walser (1993) continues to keep rock scholarship to the fore in his interdisciplinary, but extensively musicological, study of heavy metal genres.[13] The difficulty that arises in these studies is that rock (as opposed to pop, soul, funk, jazz, ska, and any number of other styles) becomes singled out not as a part of the total musical field but as the most important part of the musical field and, as such, the most valuable part to study. A consequence of this approach is to develop, even from an early stage, a new value hierarchy which shows traces of the same type of discourse that created the Western European musical canon. According to Wicke, 'Most rock musicians come from the *petit bourgeois* middle classes', [14] a view that leads us back to Middleton (1990) who provided the same analysis to the construction of the classical music canon. There is insufficient space to develop this argument further but it may be worth suggesting that in trying to address the deficiencies of musicology, some of these studies were in danger of replicating the same ideological characteristics which led to the exclusion of popular music, as a whole field, from the study of music as sound.[15]

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[13] It is worth noting that there continues to be a steady stream of Jazz books emerging although not many of these are of a musicological type. Perhaps one of the best examples of a musicological approach is Rattenbury’s study of Duke Ellington (1990).

The problem of restricting the musical field in writing about popular music genres is compounded, according to Bowman, by the paucity of material which deals with specific genres:

> In recent times there has been an encouraging increase in the musicological study of popular music by members of the academy… Despite this flurry of activity, as far as this author is aware, there has been no academic musicological work, other than Robert Walser's recent study of Heavy Metal, (Walser, 1993), that has attempted to ferret out the component parts of a given genre through an analysis of a sizeable body of repertoire. There is an acute need for such a work if popular music scholars are going to begin to

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[14] Wicke, 1991: 91.

[15] It is worth noting that this realignment has not just been in the area of popular music but significant thinking has been undertaken in the study of Western art music especially by writers such as Nicholas Cooke whose book *Music: a very short Introduction* (1998) provides an insight into the critical realignment which is taking place. Cook, along with Mark Everist in *Rethinking Music* (1999) provides further evidence of the development of new, if sometimes reluctant musicological thought by scholars from a variety of music-related disciplines. More recent work edited by Moore (2003) has tried to address the problem of musical analysis by widening the scope of study to include film, house, country, pop, soul and Turkish Arabesk.

> understand in concrete terms what is meant by terms such as rock, soul, funk, Mersey beat and so on (Bowman, 1995: 285).[16]

Bowman's point that we might not understand what is meant by genre terms like funk raises an important musicological problem. Without detailed investigation into those 'component parts' then we will continue to deal in generalisations which may not reflect the wider repertoire of a genre like funk. What is required is a different musicological approach to that proposed by the 'rockologists' and by traditional musicology. Furthermore, the failure to engage in scholarly activity into specific genres means that work that is undertaken is fragmentary and piecemeal. Without a sustained dialogue and subsequent investigations it is difficult to see how a sizeable body of knowledge can be built up on any particular genre.

In mapping out any genre a number of ideological issues emerge and any researcher has to question the perspective of his or her approach. McClary and Walser's (1988) article *Start Making Sense* raise some of these perspectives by asking a fundamental question about the relevance of music: ‘does it kick butt?’[17] In asking this question they raise an important issue about the relevance of musicological analysis and the relationship this analysis might have to the music itself. Their suggestion is that:

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[16] There have been earlier calls for musicological study, Simon Frith's "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music," in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception,* (ed. Leppert R. and McClary, S.) suggested that 'we still do not know nearly enough about the musical language of pop and rock'. Walser (1993) comments on this in his footnotes suggesting that Frith's 'real objection to musicological analysis is that it has, so far, been formalist; it hasn't really told us much about how any music produces meaning or why people care about it'. See also Fournier, K. 2002, *The Social Construction of Music Theory: The Quest of Meaning in Referential and Self-Referential Research,* (University of Western Ontario) for further discussion of the politics of musicology.

> ...musicologists have to be able to use their analytical skills to explain how the effects listeners celebrate are constructed; they should not – in their attempts at establishing intellectual legitimacy – turn the object of study into something unrecognisable to the fan (McClary and Walser, 1988: 287).

The suggestion here is an important one to this particular study. To understand funk, it seems important not to remove it from the experience of the listener as if reconstructing an event in a sterile laboratory. To facilitate this approach their suggestion is that the musicologist should:

> bring one’s own experience as a human being to bear in unpacking musical gestures, to try to parallel in words something of how the music *feels* (*ibid*: 288).

If we are, as Bowman suggests, to begin to understand a musical genre then McClary and Walser add the condition that any investigation should be done with some comprehension of music’s role in our lives. This is not only an ideological viewpoint: to understand the music we must try to understand in some way its impact on the people that make and listen to the music. We are all participants in the musical experience and our participation with and in music is part of the problem. In addressing the problem we may have to move away from analysing the music as object, but look at its affective and paramusical meaning. On the face of it, this would seem a straightforward and sensible approach as music is not just conceptual but carries with it an array of emotions and meanings. The problem, if there is one, is not the approach itself but the resistance that traditional musicology has had to this method. By introducing other aspects such as 'feeling' into the methodological approach we immediately problematize musicological approaches and add to the growing concern that musicological methodology may not necessarily analyse the music that people actually listen to.[18]

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[17] The quote is from a cartoon (Bloom County by Berke Breathed) which begins the McClary and Walser article where the Heavy Metal Band ‘Billy and the Boingers read a review of their performance which suggests that ‘with their latest record the newly relevant Boingers weave trance--like melodies that slip over the transom of social consciousness and insinuate themselves into your dreams’, to which they ask: ‘yeah, but do we kick butt?’ (1988: 277).

1.1.2 Musicology of the mass media

The problem of addressing the music that people listen to is not a new one. Tagg (1982) highlights the difficulty that formalist or phenomenalist musicological techniques have in 'relating musical discourse to the remainder of human existence in any way' (Tagg, 1982:41). The problem as he sees it is that those emotive aspects of music which make music a human activity, have been avoided in most music analysis and certainly within those of the Western art tradition. Tagg's solution to the problem was to go further than recognise the problem and to develop an alternative methodological approach that would address the problems that popular music analysis brought.

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[18] It would be interesting but impossible at this point to contemplate the history of ideas and look at the inter-related nature music has with other ideas of the time. The flurry of activity and the surety of discussion expressed in the 1990s could only happen as a result of what happened previously. Some of this may be identified in the work of Kerman suggested that "[m]usicology – the history of Western art music – had thrived in the universities of German-speaking countries for more than fifty years before the war, and habits of mind formed at those times and in those places have been with us ever since" (1985: 26). I think that the notion of 'habits of mind ' is particularly descriptive of the reluctance to change or to explore other ways. Kerman also points out that other viewpoints have existed. "... one prominent early musicologist, Hermann Kretzschmar, harkened to another nineteenth-century drum and developed a system of musical 'hermeneutics'…" (Ibid, 1985: 74). This raises a further issue of the politics of musicology and how a viewpoint, however habitual, can become the dominant ideology – obviously a discussion for another time and place.

This is not the place to undertake a detailed examination of Tagg's analytical model as it has been dealt with elsewhere.[19] For the purposes of this etymophony, I have adopted the major points of Tagg's methodology as a way of identifying the 'component parts' of funk by utilising the idea of musematic analysis. In addition, other aspects of the method has been used including the use of interobjective comparative material (IOCM) as a way of identifying similar units of musical code. More recently, Tagg (2004) has updated his terminology to include Intertextual Comparative Material (ITCM) as a way of identifying the textual similarities between material.[20] This revised terminology takes into account the adoption of intertextuality as a term within musicology and, for my own purposes, focuses on the intertextual relationships which emerge through my own analysis. In addition, I have also adopted the idea of hypothetical substitution or commutation as a constructive way of discussing and checking the 'validity of a semiotic deduction'.[21]

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[19] See Tagg, 1979, 1982, 2003.

[20] See Tagg (2004) 'Film music, anti-depressants and anguish management' at <http://tagg.org/articles/jochen0411.htmlt> where 'interobjective' and 'interobjective' are discussed.

[21] See Tagg, 2003: 98.

The value of Tagg's methodology in building an etymophony of funk music is that its underlying approach comes from the establishment of a communication model. Communication is a process, between people, to exchange ideas and feelings and as such is intrinsically linked to message and meanings. The 'why and how does who say what to whom and with what effect?' breaks down the whole rationale of an etymophony. [22] Why and how did musicians use funk to say what they had to say to their audiences from the late 1960s and how did this process take place over time?

A further advantage of Tagg's method lies in the breaking down of music into constituent parts while or musemes. The museme, developed in part from Seeger (1960) is:

> a minimal unit of musical discourse that is recurrent and meaningful in itself within the framework of any musical genre (Tagg, 1993: 31).

The application of this particular way of looking at music will be of particular advantage in dealing with funk because the music is largely based on short, recurring riffs which would lend themselves to this type of analysis. What seems very important in this approach is that the process or 'deconstruction' does not actually involve any destruction of the meaning inherent in the musical unit.[23] The unit can be simple or complex, but it retains its meaning through the relationship to the museme stack and to the music as a whole.

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[22] See Tagg, 1982, 1993, 2000.

[23] The frustration of years of breaking down musical works into themes, motives and other conceptual units was compounded by a, the necessity to reconstruct the piece in terms of how I actually understood it and b, by the fact that I never in my life heard the piece in this way and as a result always had the impression that I was conceptually inadequate as a musician. My problem was that I thought the two processes – of listening to and experiencing music and the academic study of music were in some way inter-related.

The final advantage of Tagg's method is that by building on a theory of affect and utilising hermeneutic interpretation, it is possible to begin to explore and analyse feeling in the music and, importantly for funk, the notion of groove. These meanings arise in the listener as they interpret the music and they form a basis for our understanding. By combining the hermeneutic and the semiotic Tagg makes it possible to work on what he calls 'hermeneutic hunches' and to use them as a basis for further investigation into the meaning of a piece of music. In this way, his method opens up the possibility of taking a holistic approach which allows us to 'reach a full understanding of all factors interacting with the conception, transmission and reception' of the music as an 'object of study' (Tagg, 1982: 44). Ultimately, as Tagg points out,

> Choice of method is determined by the researcher's 'mentality' – his or her world view, ideology, set of values, objective possibilities, etc., influenced in their turn by the researcher's and the discipline's objective position in a cultural, historical and social context (Tagg, 1982: 45-6).

In short, in tracing the development of funk I am aware that the sounds generated are the result of people working together to communicate ideas and to shape a musical sound which 'kicks ass'. The decision to investigate funk through semiotics is one that has emerged from a specific ideological process which primarily foregrounds the musical text. In choosing to adopt Tagg's approach, I am conscious of the particular musicological context that I am writing in and its relationship to musicology as a whole.

The process of thinking or re-thinking music is not new but part of a continuum which for an extended period of time has been dominated by an approach to studying music which has largely neglected the study of popular music. The debate surrounding this increasingly apparent omission in musicological study grew through a lengthy process of dialogue through the sixties and seventies and reached a moment of theoretical importance during the 1990s with the publication of a number of important texts. This thesis is a part of this continuum and draws heavily on the developing semiotic methodology and critical thinking of this period. It is important to this study that a semiotic approach allows an opportunity to study music as a sounding object. The reliance on Tagg's methodology comes from a strong desire not to re-invent the methodological wheel, but instead to develop the ideas through a study of the music of funk. In this way I will be able to not only contribute to the understanding of this particular musical genre, but to the development of semiotics as a tool for further musicological analysis.

1.1.3 Musicological precedents

I have already discussed how, during the 1990s, a great deal of attention was given to the justification of studying popular music with few words actually addressing the music itself. In his study of the backbeat in rock 'n' roll, Tamlyn suggests that the:

> ….analytical methodology appropriate to the musicological study of rock and roll is at a very early stage of development. However, this does not imply that there is a dearth of words relating to the genre, as a search of rock magazines and sociological studies will reveal (Tamlyn, 1998: 19).

If Tamlyn found the situation difficult for rock and roll, then the study of funk is almost non-existent by comparison. In terms of background literature, only Brackett (1992), and Stewart (2000), offer any substantial musicological discussion of funk music.[24] Bowman (1995) offers a musicological approach to the related area of Stax between 1959 and 1976. For the most part, any other musical discussion on the sounds of funk are to be found in tutor books such as *Guitarist* and *Modern Drummer* as well as tutors on funk and rhythm 'n' blues by Allan Slutsky (n.d.), Slutsky and Silverman (1996), and Rubin (2000).

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[24] This is, of course, related to English speaking literature and did not include a few examples in German literature which because of a lack of translation, was inaccessible. One French study (Cathus, 1998) was also cited in the search. Since completion of this thesis, Danielsen's *Presence and pleasure – a study in gunk grooves of James Brown and Parliament* (2001) has come to my attention. At first glance, Danielsen appears to be undertaking a similar study by looking at grooves. However, here main concern 'is to explore funk as a contemporary aesthetic experience' (2001: 4) which she does using Derrida, Heidegger and Lyotard amongst others. Her approach seems to essentialise funk as her view is that 'as funk becomes funk, the texture becomes more open and easier to grasp. Viewed in this way there are several songs from the main funk-year of James Brown that are probably too dense, too complex or perhaps rather too unstable to be typical funk tunes' (2001: 186). My approach does not consider funk to be 'typical' and tries to recognise the variety of approaches to funk. As such, here study, although interesting, offers little to my approach.

The main musicological contributions to the study of funk are found in Brackett (1992) and Stewart (2000). Brackett's article on James Brown is one which:

> .…presents a musical and textual analysis of James Brown's 1970 recording of 'Superbad' in the context of previous critical discourses surrounding James Brown and his music (Brackett, 1992: 309).

The strength of Brackett's observation is that he does deal with the analysis object as sound although he admits that he only deals with certain parameters (melody, harmony and vocal timbre) in any detail. However, he does add a number of other ideas which revolve around Louis Gates' theory of signifyin(g), notions of intertextuality and the performance environment. Brackett's particular strength is in the paradigmatic analysis he undertakes of the melodic content of *Superbad* which provides an interesting and informative introduction to the vocal style of James Brown.

One of the key features of this analysis is the discussion of the lyrics which, according to Brackett, make considerable use of 'Black English'. This approach is criticised by Tagg (1989) who questions the 'essentialization of ethnic characteristics'. While Brackett is drawing on the work of linguists such as Gates, his work does not acknowledge that a large community of non-black and, for that matter, non-American people, has adopted the language he refers to.

A further aspect of Brackett's analysis is his use of theories of intertextuality as a ways of understanding firstly the relationship to other musical material outside of *Superbad* and secondly, to aspects of black nationalism which were active in 1970. In these terms he sees the music signifying though the use of John Coltrane-like saxophone solos and the use of :

> ….index slogans popular in the sixties 'black power' movement: 'right on, brother', 'let it all hang out', 'brothers and sisters' an dparticularly evident in the closing call and response section – 'I need some power – soul power (Brackett, 1992: 313).

These different aspects of analysis show a varied methodology and an interdisciplinary approach which is one of the first analyses on the subject of funk. As such, Brackett is struggling to achieve a balanced approach in his work as part of his own search to develop an analytical methodology which deals with the music of James Brown but at the same time, grounds it in social meaning where the text is related to its context.[25]

Stewart's *Funky Drummer* is a confident and wide ranging article examining the musical genesis of funk music and the specific influence that the music of New Orleans had on developing this genre. It is a wide ranging article covering a number of points but looking specifically at the how the 'transition from triplet or shuffle feel (12/8) to even or straight eighth notes (8/8)' influenced the development of funk

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[25] This point is made in Tagg's review of Brackett's book, Interpreting Popular Music (1995) in which the analysis of Superbad appears.

(Stewart, 2000: 293).[26] The main focus of Stewart's study is on how the move to even or 'straight' eighth note rhythmic patterns allowed musicians from New Orleans to develop and explore the use of sixteenth-note subdivisions in their music.

Drawing on a number of sources including Payne (1996), Slutsky and Silverman (1996), Tress (1993,1995) and Smith (1994), Stewart argues that the development of funk is intrinsically related to the rhythmic practices of New Orleans. He cites three important influences including 'mixed metre' or 'open shuffle'; the highly syncopated music found in second line drumming; and the Caribbean influence found in New Orleans. Stewart also notes that many performers and arrangers from New Orleans came from a jazz background and continued making music from the 1950s to the 1970s. The suggestion is that these same musicians drew heavily on the jazz genre while playing R 'n' B and early rock 'n' roll.[27]

Stewart's study provides an interesting analysis of the transitional period from the early part of the 19th century until the 1960s. However, there are times when his analysis falls short of detail and at times he may be creating an inaccurate picture. Stewart states, for example, that:

> Little Richard Penniman's string of rock 'n' roll hits, from 'Tutti Frutti' (1955), 'Long Tall Sally' (1956), 'Lucille' and 'Keep A Knockin' (1957) to

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26 See glossary of terms for further discussion of rhythmic 'feel'.

[27] See Stewart, 2000: 295.

> 'Good Golly Miss Molly' (1958), mostly featured straight eighths. He and other early rock 'n' roll pianists such as Jerry Lee Lewis did not have jazz or swing backgrounds – their blues-based rock 'n' roll has more in common with non-swinging styles of boogie-woogie (Stewart, 2000: 294).

Of this group, *Lucille* may demonstrate the use of equal divisions of the eighth note, but the others show a strong shuffle beat. This broad brush approach is a feature of his style:

> For example, Romeo Nelson's 'Head Rag Hop' (1929), Speckled Red's 'Wilkins Street Stomp' (1929), and Cow Cow Davenport's 'Cow Cow Blues' (1928) are *mostly* [my emphasis] in 8/8 (ibid.).

This approach does not necessarily help put together an accurate picture of the development of funk. For a more accurate picture, there needs to be a more in-depth study of these rhythms and how they are used.[28] Stewart also provides a genre checklist for funk which outlines the main 'ingredients' of funk:

1. Sixteenth-note as the basic rhythmic unit
2. 'Linear' drumming which was often highly syncopated.
3. A style of singing derived from gospel and shared with soul.
4. Importance of improvisation, both collective and solo.
5. Influence of South Western horn players.
6. A more percussive style of playing from the string instruments, especially 'scratch' guitar…bass performance techniques eventually leading to the thumb-slapping innovations of Larry Graham.
7. A prominent role for the bass player in the overall texture.
8. Large bands or revues often with a collective 'family' or 'tribal' image.
9. Static harmonies often modulating to a bridge. Abandonment of the blues progression (Stewart, 2000: 310).

While such a checklist may appear to be useful in creating an etymophony, Stewart continues to develop similar generalisations and fails to establish any formal methodology or criteria for including these parameters. A genre checklist of this type provides no more than a summary of features which rests on an assumption that Stewart knows what funk is. The difficulty in beginning with a list is that it assumes that we not only ‘know’ what funk is, but that we can essentialise its qualities and condense them into a few points.

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[28] Tamlyn (1998) outlines such an approach in his study of the backbeat, but as yet, his approach has not been extended onto other parameters of the drum kit.

The checklist-approach is not necessarily suitable for an etymological study since from the outset, it adopts a positivistic strategy which implies we already know what funk is. Intuitively, from the perspective of the present time, it may be that we can adopt a general set of criteria for funk but it would seem important to have a detailed investigation of funk pieces as the basis for such a list. In this way we would be able to avoid the generealised approach which characterises Stewart’s discussion of Little Richard. This study will, therefore, undertake a more detailed analysis of textual material to avoid the more generalised assumptions of how a genre develops. This approach raises a number of questions about the choice of text to ensure that such a list is more than a collection of personal favourites. There will be a need to consider how the selection of textual material can be made so that a representative etymophony can be developed.

1.1.4 Choosing the analysis objects

The main aim of this thesis is to create an etymophony of funk tracing its chronological development from the 1950s until 1979. To avoid a subjective or positivistic approach, the selection of music for analysis will be crucial to the success of the etymophony. A subjective approach where I chose the pieces would achieve little more than to reaffirm my own personal concept of funk. A positivistic approach could achieve little more than verifying a checklist similar to Stewart's.

One possible approach would be to identify pieces for analysis where a numbe ro f sources cited a piece as belonging to the funk style. In this way, a particular song used as an example of funk could then be analysed in some depth to reveal those aspects which allow it to be considered as a funk piece. The pieces considered in the etymophony will therefore be identified by at least three separate sources as belonging to the funk genre. Cross checking the sources does not, however, preclude the influence of personal choice. Thompson (2001) lists over 1500 pieces in what is termed as 'an essential listening companion' but these also include sampled pieces. The list has been narrowed by cross checking Thompson with Vincent and then considering those pieces which the authors consider to be the best example of a performer or groups work. Drawing from these sources, a list of over 500 songs emerged which offer some sort of consensus about those pieces which can be included in the funk genre. This information provided the initial framework for the sample group and has the advantage of being chosen by others who consider themselves expert in the area of funk.

The total sample was then broken down into chronological periods, usually in year groups, to provide a comparative sample. Pieces were selected for close analysis on the basis that they contributed something unique or innovative to the funk genre. This method, termed judgement sampling in sociological investigations or market research, is designed to provide illustrative samples or case studies which relate specifically to the aims of the study. Judgements in these instances were based on comments made by Thompson, Vincent, and other authors involved in the initial research. In this way, the final judgement was not purely my own but relied on a correlation between sources.

The only other method by which a song was included in the sample was where the music itself pointed towards something in the musical vocabulary that required further investigation. In these cases, the work may not have been discussed in any detail by other authors but through listening to the sample, or by another musician making a passing reference to a piece, it has been necessary to investigate what appears at a chronologically significant moment.

There are problems with any method of sampling and ultimately, by virtue of choosing a particular methodology, subjectivity must be a factor which influences our choices. However, as Tagg (2000:111) points out, ‘subjective responses can operate as a *starting point* for the creation of hypothesis which, in their turn, can be modified by other approaches and other information in order to develop a more balanced and less ‘subjective’ method at later stages of research’.

Acknowledging this subjective starting point, and the subsequent modifications, demonstrate a necessity to create a manageable strategy for this etymophony. Sources were balanced out with one another using a simple criterion that the earliest chronological recording of any stylistic feature relevant to funk would be included. Given the number of songs available and the possibilities of other songs emerging during the period of research, it would be difficult to select a representative sample group by any other means. It might also be relevant to consider that that this is the first etymophony of funk. As such, I hope that the study sample might be enlarged in the future as others begin to develop their own interest in this genre.

1.2 What Is Hip? Genre, style and the use of funk

1.2.1 Understanding funk

In order to progress a discussion of funk it seems important to understand what the term 'funk' refers to and, by implication, what 'funk' does not refer to. Drawing boundaries around our musical interests gives rise to a number of descriptive genre terms that are, unfortunately, problematic. In discussing funk, it would be easy to assume that everyone understood the term and its musical, cultural, and socio-political meanings would be clear and transparent to everyone. However, even in a general discussion with other like-minded musicians it quickly becomes apparent that we do not share a common understanding of the term as the boundaries we create to define funk are not fixed. The difficulty in fixing genre boundaries becomes noticeable not only in lists of best funk songs,[29] but in compilation albums where a song such as Chic's *Good Times* can be found on *The Best of Funk* album and also on *72 Pure Disco Classics*'.[30] Listening to these albums, we may not be able to make any assumptions about the genre *Good Times* belongs to, but we are made aware of the difficulty of categorizing music by genre.

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[29] These might include charts, magazine lists and the recent popular UK TV productions 'Best 100 Songs'. Quite often there seems no rationale for the inclusion of songs.

[30] 'The Best Funk Album in the World…Ever!', 1995. (Circa Records: VTDCD44), 'And They Danced The Night Away: 72 Pure Disco Classics from the 70s & 80s', 1997. (Débutante 555 159-2).

Genre serves a number of purposes not least of which is to categorize music in order to organise our thoughts, our record shops,[31] catalogues, libraries and a variety of media formats in addition to creating theoretical frameworks for interpreting our experiences. The complexity and problems of genre theory have already been discussed in different contexts by Fabbri, (1982, 1999) Walser, (1993) Fornäs, (1995) and Toynbee (2000) and there is insufficient space to add to the general discourse. However, within the thesis as a whole, style and genre are understood as conceptual moments where some common understanding of individual or group style emerges. In the case of style, the conceptual points tends to be localized around an individual or a group of people. Genre, on the other hand, represents a conceptual idea that becomes sufficiently anchored to be recognised by the wider community. In this way it can be seen that there is a close relationship between style and genre.

A stylistic term can emerge when an artist or group begin to develop a musical vocabulary which is different to other styles. This moment, although in reality it is more of a dawning than a moment, can be referred to as a ‘point of arrival’ where there a sufficiently individual musical identity emerges around a performer or group of performers. As these stylistic ideas interact and perhaps coalesce, then a larger group identity or genre emerges through specific conjuncture of events musical and paramusical. What is important to my discussion of these terms is that I do not see either style or genre as a fixed term but rather as a fluid, dynamic term which changes over time as the music changes. However, in this dynamic process it is clear that at certain points in time the flow of musical ideas slow sufficiently long enough for certain combinations of sounds to acquire strong connotations of style or genre.

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[31] See Fabbri, 1999 for an insight into categorisation in record shops (on-line).

In trying to understand how musical sounds can be classified under the single genre term ‘funk’, it seems important to acknowledge that:

> ….genres overlap and texts often exhibit the conventions of more than one genre. It is seldom hard to find texts which are exceptions to any given definition of a particular genre. Furthermore, the structuralist concern with synchronic analysis ignores the way in which genres are involved in a constant process of change (Chandler, 2002: 158).

Two important points emerge from Chandler’s observations on genre. The first is that definitions, normally constructed for their clarity and precision, are difficult to establish because of the inter-related nature of different genres. Secondly, Chandler’s critique of synchronic analysis opens possibilities for the consideration of alternative analytical strategies. These strategies would not only take into account diachronic events, but also understanding genre as part of a complex, interactive network of changing musical relationships. These relationships can be seen to exist on a number of levels from the micro-levels of interaction between individual musicians in a band to the macro-level found in record companies, the media, and between fan groups.

If such a framework seems overly complex to be of any value in understanding funk, then a simplified process might be to carefully direct our focus on the musical or sounding text itself.[32] Studying the music as sound-text invites us to examine the codes and the meanings that develop from social practices and create a structured way of understanding funk as a genre. In this way, the discussion of *Good Times* potentially becomes much easier. As a single piece of music it can be placed in a genre category that has a clear identity but which may have developed through the appropriation of a number of different musical codes. Recognition of these codes would allow us to investigate genre through an appropriate interpretative framework that would acknowledge the fluidity of the musical text as part of a complex intertextual nexus. This approach presents a particular challenge to those who wish to find ways of fixing musical boundaries and alternative interpretative strategies may be required.

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[32] 'Every text is a system of signs organized according to codes and subcodes which reflect certain values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and practices. Codes transcend single texts, linking them together in an interpretative framework which is used by their producers and interpreters. In creating texts we select and combine signs in relation to the codes with which we are familiar… In reading texts, we interpret signs with reference to what seem to be appropriate codes. This helps to limit their possible meanings. (Chandler, 2002: 157) In this case, I am careful to indicate that texts are not necessarily written texts, but sounding texts. The distinction is necessary because of the reliance of so much analysis on scores which produce a different set of codes to those that fans, musicians and audience use.

1.2.2 Interpretative strategies

If we accept that genre develops as part of a complex dynamic process, then any attempt to ascribe a definition to particular pieces of music might seem to be counterproductive.[33] There has been a tendency for certain musical traditions to fix meanings and values through a strategy of objectification, a process that is now understood as both politically inspired and flawed.[34] While the discourse that arises from such a tendency will often be polarized, rather than argue for one particular case over another, it seems more important to understand that we possess an ability to view music from more than one position seeing it as both object and process. This point has been made by Bohlman (1999) who recognised that:

> As an object, music is bounded and names can be applied to it that affirm its objective status.... by contrast, music exists in the conditions of a process. Because a process is continually in flux, it never achieves a fully objective status; it is always open to becoming something else (Bohlman, 1999:18).

The idea of music 'always… becoming something else' agrees with earlier ideas of musical transformation discussed by Fabbri (1999) in his theory of musical genre. However, transformation does not mean that 'funk', as a term, is so fluid as to be

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33 The *Collins Concise English Dictionary* (1982) suggests that 'definition' is: a formal and concise statement of the meaning of a word, phrase, and/or the act of making clear or definite. The same dictionary give 'definite' as: clearly defined, exact; having precise limits or boundaries; known for certain.

34 I am thinking closely about the WEAM where less inspired theorists sought to fix certain forms (leaving once young students like myself in a quandary every time a fugue or a sonata didn't match textbook formulae) and certain styles without reflecting on the process that created them. Various dictionaries and 'Companions to Music' lay testimony to the need to fix terminology. Until recently, encyclopaedias of popular music edited by Clarke, D. (Ed.) 1989 and Larkin (1993) have a tendency to ignore musical definitions and concentrate on performers and bands.

without definition. It is possible to have a concept of funk that includes the dynamic processes that shape meaning. This is not only possible but necessary if we are to understand that the fluidity of these processes are a necessary pre-requisite for creating and developing new genres. ‘Nowhere’, suggests Walser:

> ….are genre boundaries more fluid than in popular music... musicians are ceaselessly creating new fusions and extension of popular genres (Walser, 1993: 27).

In terms of analysis, the elastic principle of genre formation creates a multitude of different but related codes that make attempts at definition difficult. At the same time, the codal variation that results from this process of change is part of the creative activity which enriches our musical experience. The desire to locate finite genre boundaries perhaps emerges from our need for closure: our scientific age expects clear, definitive answers. An alternative strategy to defining music is presented by Blacking who seeks to understand music in terms of social behaviour. Recognising that there are moments where the seemingly intangible processes involved in change are consolidated in some way, Blacking suggests that:

> Music is a product of the behaviour of human groups, whether formal or informal: it is humanly organised sound. And, although different societies tend to have different ideas about what they regard as music, all definitions are based on some consensus of opinion about the principles on which the sound of music should be organised (Blacking 1973:10).

Consensus, or agreed understanding, emerges through processes of negotiation, discourse, and socio-cultural contest to establish ‘certain preferred meanings’ (Walser

1993:33).[35] These preferred meanings are important for the communication of ideas and understanding and interpreting genres. Middleton suggests that, '[o]nce particular musical elements are put together in particular ways, and acquire particular connotations, these can be hard to shift' (1990: 10). Middleton explains this acquisition of meaning in terms of articulation theory and illustrates his point using several pieces of music, styles, and genres, where meanings have "sedimented" for a variety of reasons.[36] While these need not concern us here, his discussion of articulation does make some useful points, particularly that:

> A theory of articulation does not mean that the musical field is a pluralistic free-for-all. It is not *un*determined but *over*determined, and the ruling interests in the social formation take the lead in setting the predispositions which are always trying to constitute a received shape. (Middleton, 1990:10).[37]

It can be seen that in trying to understand funk as a genre, there is a potential for a 'pluralistic free-for-all' but there are moments where rules form in a seemingly 'natural' way. These moments are then legitimized through processes of discourse and negotiation, into significant forms which are recognised and shaped by their socio-cultural context. The converse would also seem true where textual formations appear 'unnatural' and are be perceived as having little or no value in a particular socio-cultural setting. While any taxonomy of genre would find it difficult to represent the diversity of the situation it is possible to use strategies found in articulation theories and intertextual theories to critique the more habitual thinking that reduces categories of music into an idealistic essence.

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[35] See also Middleton: "Cultural relationships and cultural change are thus not predetermined; rather they are the product of negotiation, imposition, resistance, transformation, and so on". (1990:8)

[36] Middleton draws on pieces such as the Marseillaise which, he suggests, has particular connotations which are hard to shift because they are rooted in France's revolutionary past. He also mentions the connotations created by certain types of folk song, romantic-lyrical ballads, and Tin Pan Alley (1990: 10).

In the discussion so far, I have tried problematizes the idea of textual boundaries by recognising the fluid nature of musical ideas. Musical boundaries are constructed by decisions to include or exclude codal formations. Funk music can easily be described as disco or rhythm and blues, acid jazz, jazz, rock or even hip-hop depending on the context in which it finds itself. Pleasure, audience, styles of interpretations, and listener relationships all contribute to generate meaning through the 'consensus of opinion'. Much of this interpretative strategy makes great expectations on the reader who must, in the end, interpret the musical text. However, as Chandler (2002) points out (with passing reference to Lacan), "the individual can occupy multiple subject positions, some of them contradictory, and 'identity' can be seen as the interaction of the subject-position" (Chandler, 2002:180). Subject position may change, sometimes in listening to one piece, and we have the ability to reflect on several, if not all, of these subject positions while examining any text.

The fluidity, or transformational process, described at the beginning of this section seems essential to understanding funk. Interpretative strategies can be developed which recognise the fluidity of the situation but also acknowledge that at certain points, textual relationships will be anchored in a specific contextual setting and acquire meanings which, as Middleton points out, may be difficult to shift. Funk can

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37 For overdetermined and articulation theory, see glossary.

be usefully understood, in semiotic terms, as overdetermined and open to many levels of interpretation. Multiplicity of meanings should not be seen as a problem as we have found our own strategies to deal with overdetermination in acknowledging our ‘multiple self’.

One final point in this complicated nexus of relationships is the notion that across these contextual socio-cultural and economic relationships is a flow of texts which exist because of the social habitat of the musician as creator. There are various interpretative strategies that have emerged which allow us to frame texts, but a single song will draw on multiple codes from a wide variety of contexts. The boundaries of any funk text are therefore never clearly defined because it is caught up in a flow of textual ideas. The challenge of any interpretative strategy that attempts to recognise the plurality of interpretations, will be to find moments where the flow of texts becomes anchored sufficiently in a moment of time, to acquire strong connotations of style and identity.

To explain the way that style and genre develop, the model shown in Figure 1 demonstrates the way that musical ideas flow over time. The starting point for the model is the plurality of codes that include the range of musical experiences that exist in the musical world. These codes are ‘transmitted’ throughout the musical community through social interaction. The second part of the model theorizes that at certain points in time, there will be moments of creativity where ideas come together. The points of arrival and the point of departure can be considered as conceptual points where the flow of ideas become sufficiently anchored to acquire strong connotations of style and identity. In this way, the moment where ideas come together can be understood as a moment where new conceptual frameworks are created to account for the changes in style or genre.

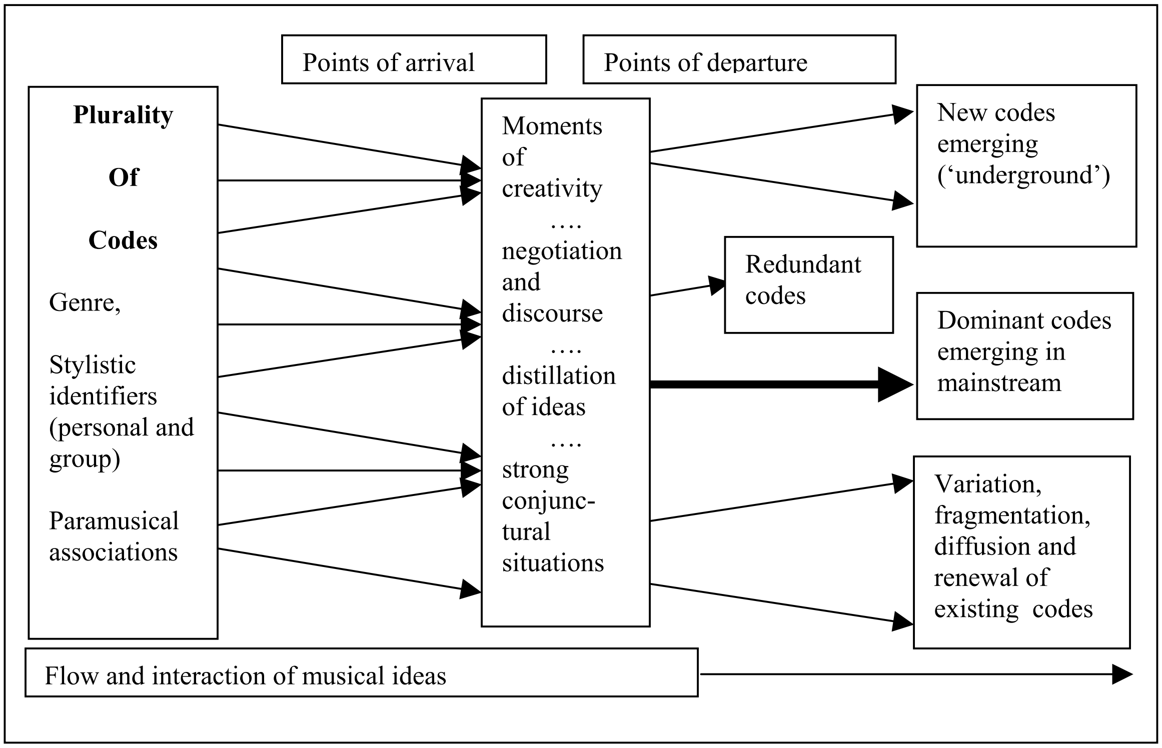
Points of arrival
Points of departure
Plurality
Of
Codes
Genre,
Stylistic identifiers (personal and group)
Paramusical associations
Moments of creativity
….
negotiation and discourse
….
distillation of ideas
….
strong conjunc-tural situations
New codes emerging ('underground')
Redundant codes
Dominant codes emerging in mainstream
Variation, fragmentation, diffusion and renewal of existing codes
Flow and interaction of musical ideas

Figure 1. Flow of musical ideas

These particular intersections in the flow of texts might be recognised as moments where the multiple strands of musical texts are distilled to create something new that becomes recognised and used by other producers. Similarly, identifying those moments where audiences *use* the new formations, thereby allowing new ideas into existing genre frameworks, or, more radically, modify the genre boundaries to include new sounds, will be important to this study. These are the moments where genres rules emerge, preferred meanings are articulated, and where new points of departure begin. The final aspect of the model is that it is cyclic, and as new codes emerge, they are added to the store of ideas and the process begins again.

The model also makes allowances for codes becoming ‘redundant’ but recognises that even with redundancy, the code may remain ‘stored’ as part of the plurality of ideas. These codes may, at some stage, be ‘renewed’ perhaps through a revival, sampling or exposure through some other media.

From this general, interpretative model, we will move to the more specific explanation of how funk developed in the following sections. However, before we explore the developmental and transformational processes that contribute to the creation of funk, it will be useful to consider the terminology used to describe these codes, and how genre terms such as funk emerged.

1.2.3 Definitions of Funk

However we describe genre and whatever the interpretative framework used, we rely on using words to assist in that process of cataloguing and understanding, or generating ownership and reflecting aesthetic attitudes. As a word, funk has a long history first being used in the fourteenth century and subsequently transforming in meaning from that early point. At various times, these words take on specific meanings which become fixed in the general vocabulary of the time. There are parallels to be drawn with the interpretative framework described in figure 1 and it is possible to imagine the range of processes that the word has gone through in order to establish its meaning. The use of the word funk to describe music characteristics did not emerge until the 1950s when it became closely associated with jazz. From this point in time the meaning of funk underwent a variety of modifications until sometime in the 1970s it came to denote a specific musical genre formation. It will be useful to trace the changes in meaning of the term partly to establish how and when funk became associated with a particular musical practice during the 1970s and also to illustrate how understanding terms like funk is part of a process.

1.2.4 Etymology of funk

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) gives several variants for funk stretching back as far as 1330 where it was used to describe a spark.[38] At the same time, a more uncertain meaning is found in R. Brunne’s description of something “at was not worth a fonk" (R. Brunne, 1330). Sixty years after Brunne, the term had acquired a much clearer meaning when in 1390, Gower wrote, "of lust that ilke firy funke, Hath made hem as who saith half wode". By the 1670s, the term had changed again to denote "touch wood" (tinder) or a horn containing touch wood as described by Channon (1673): "A flint and 'founck horn' which a man had put in his pocket the day before to strike fire in the night".

Around the same time as Channon, an alternative use of the word was to be found which suggests a malodorous smell:

> Betwixt decks there can hardlie a man fetch his breath by reason there ariseth such a funke in the night that it causes putrefaction of bloud.[39]

The OED does not give any additional information concerning the context for this quotation but the connotation of a foul smell was to continue into the 18th century where it became associated with tobacco smoke, an association found particularly in the dialect of the United States.

> What a Funk here is! What a thick Smoak of Tobacco is here! Here's a damn'd Funk, here's a great Stink.[40]

While the OED shows that the usage of funk in the sense of unpleasant smell lasts well into the 1930s, the use of funk to describe music is a relatively new

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38 Oxford English Dictionary, on-line version, accessed January 2003.
[39] 1623, W. Capps in P. A. Bruce *Econ. Hist. Virginia* (1896)
[40] 1725 *New Cant. Dict.* s.v.,

phenomenon.[41] In *Jazz* magazine of 1959, ‘You can even try to put too much ‘funk’ in a thing’,[42] and in *Melody Maker* of 1960, funk is used to describe the American jazz public as ‘funk’crazy.[43] By 1961, The Times uses ‘funk’ in a more specific but still ambiguous way, associating it with a number of musical styles:

> The contemporary jazz cult of ‘blues roots’- otherwise described as ‘soul’ or ‘funk’.[44]

Funk had been associated with the jazz style of musicians such as Horace Silver and in the UK at least, the terms ‘funk’, ‘soul’ and ‘blues’ appear to be interchangeable terms. Silver used the term in the title of his composition *Opus de Funk,* but he offers little in the way to differentiate the meaning of funk from blues:

> When you put a lot of little blues inflections in the solos, people would say you were really funky, by which they just mean bluesy, and that is how I came up with the title. So the critics started to talk about me as funky.[45]

The struggle that journalists had in trying to define an emerging genre is shown in the following extract from a 1962 edition of the BBC magazine, *Radio Times* which attempts a definition of funk by suggesting that:

> *Funk*, basically, ‘smelly’ signifies [the] return of modern jazzmen to earthy roughage of blues and New Orleans, but rephrased with modern techniques; similar to soul, only more extrovert.[46]

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[41] Unpleasant does not really do justice to attraction of malodourous smell that are also attractive.
[42] *Jazz* 292, 1959.
[43] *Melody Maker* 31 Dec., 1960.
[44] *Sunday Times* 5 Feb. 1961.
[45] Melody Maker (no date)
[46] *Radio Times* 10 May 1962.

The association of funk with jazz, blues, soul, New Orleans, took a new turn in 1967 when Dyke and the Blazers released *Funky Broadway* and in doing so, created the first clear link between the rhythm ’n’ blues style and funk.[47] Despite realigning ‘funky’ with rhythm ’n’ blues, there remained a resistance to using the word to describe the changes which were taking place musically and the next use of the word was in Lee Dorsey’s 1969 song, *Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky from Now On*. In using the term ‘funky’ there seems to be some distinction between recognising ‘funk’ and the musical process of being ‘funky’. By 1969 this was a different ‘funky’ to that of Horace Silver and it heralded a shift in musical approach. The shift in approach is significant because it seems that the performers began to recognise that something different was happening in their music that needed to be reflected in the title. The 1970 dictionary of African-American Slang suggests that the use of funk indicates a:

> ‘soul’ quality in black music, melancholy mood of the blues.[48]

In this way, the term begins to take on specific connotations around the idea of ‘black’ music unlike the 1954 edition of Time magazine which implies a specifically ‘white’ view of funk by suggesting that ‘funky’ was synonymous with authentic or swinging.[49]

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[47] See also Vincent, 1996: 61-2. “‘Funky Broadway’ was the first black dance record to call itself *funky*”.

[48] Dictionary of Afro-American Slang (1970:56).

[49] *Time* 8 Nov, 1954.

In considering these different sources, it becomes clear that the term funk has transformed in meaning over the years since its first recorded appearance in 1330. As a musical quality, funk became synonymous with blues and soul during the 1950s and 1960s and it was not until the 1970s that the musical meanings of all these words began to take shape.[50] As funk began to emerge as a recognisable style during the latter part of the 1960s, it became associated with African-American political agendas. James Brown's *Say it Loud I'm Black and Proud* (1968) and Parliament's *Chocolate City* (1975) are representative of the developing and continuing association that the music of funk had with black political consciousness. This association led to a quite different use of 'funk' which is explored further in the next section.

1.2.5 Funk as Black Consciousness.

The etymology of funk has demonstrated how a Flemish term was able to develop into a signifier for a particular musical style or genre. By the end of the 1960s, funk had begun to take on other meanings associated with African-American politics. Vincent (1996) emphasises this identification of funk with African-American interests by speculating that funk may have its origins in Africa rather than the Netherlands. Vincent suggests that slave trafficking introduced African words such as *lu-fuki* from the Congo and Angola regions which are used to identify the positive energy of a person. [51]

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[50] In the Groves On Line Dictionary, Brackett suggests that the word funk did not establish itself as a genre term until the early 1970s (1973 for him) with the advent of Kool and the Gang and EWF providing a widespread following in the pop world.

Vincent's strategy was to widen the etymological net to include African as well as European sources. In doing so, Vincent is able to link the word funk to place, in this case to Africa, and in so doing, is able to draw on his African-American heritage to claim ownership of the word. 'Thus', suggests Vincent:

> … the original assumption of etymologists and ethnomusicologists that words like *jazz* and *funk* derived from the interplay of musicians in the New Orleans region where jazz was born was only partially correct. The roots of the words – as was the spirit of the music – was brought into the scenario by Africans from Africa (Vincent, 1996:33-4).

By highlighting these exclusively African meanings, Vincent develops a deliberately Afro-centric viewpoint that allows him to link together the word 'funk', the music and his concept of African ancestry.[52] Before we are dismissive of such a strategy, it would be useful to ask how such a tenuous link can be supported despite strong etymological evidence that 'funk' had a strong, documented European ancestry.

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[51] Vincent (1996: 33) draws on evidence by Robert Ferris Thompson, 1983. *Flash of The Spirit*.

[52] Ekow Eshun produced a TV programme entitled 'My Africa: where are you really from'. In his search he was able to trace his ancestry back to a village. The results were surprising. 'My parents came from the town of Cape Coast. Visiting there, I traced my mother's family back through generations and discovered that my ancestor of seven generations past was white. He came from Holland. He'd arrived in Ghana some time around the 1750s. And he'd been a slave trader. After marrying an African woman, he'd had two sons. One of them became a Methodist minister. The other took up the family business and also became a slave trader'. For more information see: Eshun, E. (accessed 2 December 2005)<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ africalives/myafrica/blogs/005075> Ancestry may not always be what we expect and the difference between a spiritual-political home and our histrorical reality may be greater than we thought.

The search for ‘roots’ is common feature for validating genre formation. Jazz has its roots in New Orleans and the origins of rock music, ideologically at least, can be traced back to the ‘natural’ country blues style found in the American Mississippi. Moore (2002) discusses this issue in some detail suggesting that such a strategy (authenticity as primality), is important because, ‘it is the tracing back to an original which validates the contemporary’ (Moore, 2002: 215).

Funk is historicized as a specifically African-American music and the word itself has an important role to play in signifying this ‘community’. Such a positivist strategy can be developed only where there is an opposing discourse which might challenge the Afro-centric viewpoint. These oppositional strategies become very important in trying to understand and contextualise genres. The need to authenticate a particular genre in terms of place is a discourse that reveals oppositional struggles that may not be relevant to the music itself. The articulation of political meanings in musical genre relies on the wider socio-economic context.

Moore (2002) tries to address the problem raised by authenticity by shifting the problem from *what* is said to *who* said it. This is a simple but revealing strategy that recognises authenticity as an interpretative manoeuvre which says more about the interpreter, in this case Vincent, than the writing itself.[53] Vincent is an African-American Studies tutor at San Francisco State University and until recently presented the *All Funk Radio Show* on KPFA.[54] In the preface to his book Vincent indirectly describes *who* he is when he recalls his first day on his Masters course:

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[53] ‘Whether a performance is authentic, then, depends on who ‘we’ are’ (Moore, 2002: 230).

> …. I spoke of uniting politics with culture through the history of funk and the instructor... understood and directed by vision from that first day. His vision of *black essence* was mine... Within two years 'The History of Funk: Funk as a Paradigm of a Black Consciousness' was [written] (Vincent, 1996: xx).

Vincent highlights a number of key themes speaking as he does of 'black essence' and 'black consciousness' as part of his political reading of African-American cultural experience. His strategy is to convert a shared but personal vision into a political paradigm integrating political and socio-cultural frameworks. In reality, paradigms based on 'vision' may be difficult to defend except amongst like-minded visionaries. This is not the place to develop extensive justifications of arguments, but it does illustrate the importance of focusing on *who* says what. From this position, we will achieve a more profitable understanding of Vincent's particular genre formation.

By almost exclusively appealing to his African heritage and by citing no other possible origins of 'funk', Vincent emphasises a type of cultural awareness which negates any influence of 'Other'. He tactically excludes the possibility of any socio-cultural interaction between the peoples of America and their different origins by essentializing funk and using the term symbolically. The emphasis on Africa draws a range of significations from the historical experiences of the African-American peoples and links them to the present day.[55]

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[54] A Bay area 'free speech' radio station, San Francisco, California which is also found on the internet, at www.kpfa.org with further information on Vincent's show at www.kalilight.com/nsites/shows.txt

The historical awareness of the African-American people which has developed alongside the development of musical genres like 'soul' and the 'blues' is something which Keil (1966) emphasised as being important to the identity of those styles. One way of articulating this identity is in terms of a 'black consciousness' or a 'black essence' that has the potential to politically unify historically disparate peoples.[56] Moving political ideals into tangible artefacts is what Vincent and others have done by interpreting funk in such a way that the music acts as a unifying factor or a focal point for black consciousness. To validate such an approach it becomes important to develop a sense of continuity by identifying a particular point of origin, real or imaginary. Other writers have taken a similar approach using origins and traditions to validate contemporary practice.

> All the great black musicians working in a pop idiom – be it rock & roll, R&B or funk – become cultural curators or historical critics. By taking established black forms, preserving their essence but filtering these textures through an ambitious creative consciousness, they made astounding music that is in the tradition yet singular from it (George, 1988: 108).

Nelson George mirrors the ideology of Vincent and calls on traditions of the past, culture, consciousness, and truth to one's past as being important facets of any genre. Returning to Moore's question of, 'who' says what, we have to also consider 'who'

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[55] The use of peoples is my own attempt to express the diversity of the lived experience which has been explored by Tagg (1989) and Middleton (1990).

[56] The subject is a difficult one and has been discussed by Tagg (1986) and Southern (1983). Southern is careful to distinguish between the 'Music of Black Americans' and any 'black essence'

Vincent and George are representing. It can be assumed that representation will change in different contexts. Sidran (1972) explains this process in the context of the 1950s by drawing on the changing legal structures and social acceptance that African-Americans were acclimatizing to as part of a re-orientation of their own history.[57]

> ‘Soul’ music, then, was one origin of a cultural self improvement program (sic) and, in insisting the Negro had ‘roots’ that were valuable rather than shameful, it was one of the most significant changes to have occurred within black psychology. ‘Soul’ music was important not just as a musical idiom, but also as a black-defined, black-accepted means of actively involving the mass base of Negroes (Sidran, 1971).[58]

Just as Sidran accentuated the positive of soul in the 1950s and Nelson George the importance of tradition in the 1980s,[59] Vincent calls on an ideological and spiritual home to invoke an essence which gives ‘ownership’ to those who are part of the same philosophical process. The articulation of funk in this way does not need to make any strictly ‘logical’ sense, nor does it require validating in the context of the particular cultural space being occupied. It is an expression of political traditions, of solidarity and recognition of the past as a validating force for the present. We might be tempted to deny all this by concentrating on anti-essentialist arguments but that misses the

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in the music pointing carefully to where musical practices may be the same, even though social contexts between black and white were not.

[57] This becomes all the more important for me as a white, British writer – it would be all too easy to be dismissive of the conceptual arguments without having the faintest understanding of the particular struggles which existed and the legacy of this struggle.

[58] This issue appears in 1988 when Nelson George suggests that ‘The challenge facing black artists...is to... recapture their racial identity... Such a philosophy would have a positive impact on all institutions that support music and, because of music’s special role in the black American psyche, a strong influence on the audience’s thinking. (1988:201)

[59] This sense of pride has also been noted by Hatch and Millward who suggest that: ‘The term ‘soul’ both delineated a music and constituted the realisation of a new-found pride in a racial identity. It was originally used as a label for a jazz style of the late 1950s which incorporated gospel music and blues, thus acknowledging the roots of ‘contemporary black music’ (1987: 119).

point of genre and the emergent meanings of funk during the late 1960s. As bell hooks (sic) reminds us:

> Only by systematic resistance to the existing social order, which denies our worth, can we, as African-Americans, fully affirm ourselves as a people or as individuals. We must posit an oppositional worldview that offers practical strategies for political and social transformation, concrete ways of thinking and living differently (hooks,1992: 49).

The turbulent and difficult process of social and political change was articulated by some African-American musicians through their music. In the past we have seen genre formations around ragtime and jazz where the music has been interpreted as an affirmation of African-American individuality. Other similar strategies have been adopted by writers such as Gates (1988) who has used the idea of the trickster or signifying monkey to explain traditions such as the dozens.[60] By the end of the 1960s the 'oppositional worldview' outlined by hooks was found in James Brown's *Say It Loud, I'm Black And I'm Proud* (1968) and Sly Stone's, *Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey* (1969). Less open affirmation was to be found in Brown's *Sex Machine* (1970) and the tradition continued into the seventies in political pieces such as George Clinton's *Chocolate City* (1975).

hook's notion of systematic resistance may be one of the reasons that genre formations develop. Through the combined processes of negotiation and discourse; of social and cultural contest; as well as the intertextual borrowings, funk began to define itself in the image of the people who made and used its sounds. The meanings of funk that emerge around themes involved in 'black consciousness' do so at a particular time in the transformation of meaning for a word, the music and the politics of society in North America. To move from the seventeenth century Flemish word *fonck* to the music of James Brown may seem like an indefensible step unified by the essentialism of black consciousness, but by focusing on those who take this step of unifying past with present, we may begin to reveal something of the political and cultural processes and interrelationships which define funk as a genre.

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[60] There is insufficient space for any debate on the idea of the signifyin' monkey except to say that while there is a case for making a link between games like the dozens, many cultures have their own version of the trickster and of games like the dozens. The danger in affirming signifyin' as an African-American practice may suggest that it is unique.

1.3 Other uses of Funk

While issues surrounding black consciousness represent one aspect of understanding funk, there are other themes which emerge in general literature on funk which require consideration. In the following review, I shall look closely at how other authors have discussed funk and how their particular understandings relate to the musical sounds. Following this discussion, I look at how our understanding of funk has been shaped by song titles and by commercial genre nomenclature. Finally, I look at those contextual modifiers which examine funk from a less essentialist and more contextual position. The following list is not exhaustive, but represents an overview of the strategies that have been created to discuss funk in more general historical writings on popular music. The categories found include:

1. Canonic parameters
2. Track nomenclature

3. Historical periodicity
4. Commercial genre boundaries
5. Contextual modifiers

1.3.1 Canonic parameters

Several authors including Gillett (1983), Southern (1983), and Chambers (1985) refer to funk in their different perspectives of musical history. Each brings a different understanding of funk drawn from a range of musical sources; each falls short of discussing the music in any significant depth. Where the music is discussed, it is often done so in a non-technical and general way that fails to add anything important to our understanding of the musical features of funk. Their use of musical references serve another purpose of illustrating other themes and ideas that are central to their histories rather than illuminating aspects of the music itself.

Gillett's initial discussion of funk (1983) begins by reworking into his text those common qualities of funk which link the word to the non-musical characteristics of sex, smell and urban decadence.[61] Musically, Gillett's discussion of funk precursors points us in the direction of New Orleans pianists, various bass players who 'mess about with the timing between their beats and the drummers' (1983:245), and the 'rhythmic innovations' of James Brown. A large part of Gillett's discussion of funk is centred on Brown who, he suggests:

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[61] Gillett's work was expanded in 1993. My discussion concentrates on the earlier version as the later edition does not add anything in particular on funk music.

> ... turned all his attention to the function of funk for dancers, reducing the verbal content of his records to repeated phrases and exhortations... Dyke and the Blazers ("Funky Broadway", Original Sound, 1967), the Fat Back Band, and Funkadelic were among the bands whose careers were closely based on Brown's rhythmic innovations. Sly and the Family Stone... and many more made occasional use of them (Gillett, 1983: 245).

Gillett raises several points in his discussion of funk that require further consideration. Firstly, in a book of some 469 pages (1983, revised edition) he reduces funk to two paragraphs (p. 245) with additional pages on James Brown's pre-funk achievements and a cursory line on Sly Stone's involvement with the psychedelic rock movement. It would be unfair to be critical of *Sound of the City* for not dealing with funk in any sustained way when the aim of the book was to document the rise of rock 'n' roll from the 1940s. However, the approach is typical of those historical studies of genres that trace the development of a musical style as an isolated phenomenon. While it is true that without excluding some styles these histories would become extremely complex, it is also true that the same process produces a simplified version of events that fail to acknowledge the wider musical and sociological contexts that shaped and defined the genre. In addition, the fluidity of genre formations, discussed as part of a critical approach to history, seems to be lost in the pursuit of a history of the inevitable.[62]

The second problematic aspect of Gillett's writing is his reduction of funk to a form of functional 'dance' music. Generalizations on this scale obviously leave many aspects of a musical style not only unexplored, but unrecognised in terms of their wider contribution. This appeal to simplicity may help Gillett overcome the technical difficulties of writing a history, but not to acknowledge the complexities of style is a difficult omission to accept. The instrumental music and extended instrumental grooves found on songs such as *Cold Sweat* (1967), which extends to over 7 minutes of playing time, could arguably be considered as important a stylistic watershed as *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) or *Pet Sounds* (1967) are to rock writers.

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[62] For a further discussion of Gillett see Bradley (1992) who describes this style of writing as 'the *descriptive-evaluative mode'* (pp. 4-7).

The final problem with Gillett's discussion of funk is that he sees the music as rhythmically innovative and largely as an outgrowth of soul. In this particular instance, funk is reduced to a rhythmic essence and the wider musical and stylistic innovations are ignored.[63] For Gillett, funk is, on the one hand, a smell or sexual euphemism, and on the other, a rhythmic innovation for dancers to move. The historical context is never alluded to and at the time of writing, Gillett could never be aware of the influence that funk would have on other musical genres including rock 'n' roll. However, the wider musical and social context was never an issue for Gillett or other writers promoting the exclusive and privileged ideology of the rock canon.

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[63] There is a further question about the influence that Brown had on Dyke and the Blazers. This is a far more complicated issue than Gillett suggests. There are some similarities of style – the opening bass line is similar to *Out Of Sight* and the vocalisations at the beginning of the song do suggest Brown. However, the stylistic resonance could have been derived from Stax or other R&B sounds of the time. The heavy organ dominated sound is an example of an overlap of stylistic influences. As part of the intertextual strategy I argue that many of these stylistic ideas were being used as part of the wider musical vocabulary of the time and Brown, along with Stone acted as a filter pulling together ideas into a number of songs which could then be identified through the process of articulation.

Eileen Southern (1983) takes a similar approach to Gillett by viewing funk as an outgrowth of rhythm 'n' blues. Southern acknowledges the same 'perpetrator' of the style, James Brown, but adds a different list of representative musicians:

> "Funk," developed in live shows that combined music distinctive for heavy rhythms and dense textures with extravagant costumes and staging. Its chief representative was James Brown, the founder and perpetrator of the style. Other groups included George Clinton with the Funkadelics, the Ohio Players and the Commodores (Southern, 1983: 506).

Southern's view of funk is defined by the representatives of the genre she names in her text. To read and understand her, we have to have some common knowledge of the style and the artists she has used to create her boundaries. The choice of bands such as the Funkadelics, the Commodores and the Ohio Players is not only arbitrary, it also fails to distinguish between stylistically quite different musical approaches.

Chambers, writing in 1985, pursues exactly the same metonymic strategy for determining genre boundaries. He reiterates the accepted histories and points to soul music as the antecedent of funk. Chambers also emphasises the relationship between the cultural community of the African-American people with musical development but in a less personal way than Vincent. The result is an interesting mixture of unexplained terminology, emotive writing, academic judgement and generalizations about social message and meaning embedded in the music.

> Elsewhere, Soul music's more public developments shifted focus. In some cases, the musical timbres became even blacker, more 'funky', while other

> performers looked for a ‘hip’ sound that, following the example of Sly and the Family Stone, drew on certain motifs developed in white progressive music. If James Brown and such ‘street funk’ bands as Kool and the Gang represented the former tendency, then it was the Norman Whitfield produced Temptations (listen to ‘Papa Was a Rolling Stone’, 1972) and the singer-songwriter Stevie Wonder who led the second. But both wings of the heterogeneous soul movement remained united in their conviction that the ‘time for the blues is over’ (Jean Genet). An individual resignation had been superseded by the collective confidence of the ‘soul community’ (Chambers, 1985: 147).

Chambers divides the musical spectrum into black and white with specific musical styles containing the essence of whiteness and blackness. This type of writing has been critiqued extensively by Tagg (1989) and has been discussed earlier in the context of Vincent’s black consciousness. While there may be political reasons for claiming ownership of a particular category of music, it makes no sense to describe timbres as ‘even blacker’ and ‘white’. Groups such as Booker T. and the MGs,[64] as well as Sly and the Family Stone, are examples of bands for whom, musically at least, ‘black’ and ‘white’ was not an issue. Chambers’ writing also uses imprecise terms such as ‘street funk’ for which he offers no real explanation musical or otherwise but we can assume that he draws on romantic notions of the street or urban ghetto in an attempt to politicise funk. In this way, Chambers moves no further forward in understanding funk than Vincent except that the political rhetoric of black consciousness he discusses is played to the soundtrack of Kool and the Gang, the

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[64] Chambers writes that, ‘early examples of isolated black performers – Fats domino, Little Richard, Chuck Berry – were replaced by identifiable black sounds and labels: soul music, “Stax”, “Tamla”’. (1985:245) The ideas of ‘isolated performers’ and ‘identifiable black sounds’, especially in the context of Stax and the commercial success of Tamla suggests that Chambers was promoting a political agenda.

Temptations, Isaac Hayes and Curtis Mayfield rather that James Brown, George Clinton and Sly Stone.

Gillett, Southern and Chambers all create a different funk aesthetic by drawing on specific artists or bands to essentialize their ideas. There is little critical writing about the sounds produced by the artists they mention. Instead, the musical examples are used to illustrate the particular socio-political message of their histories. Gillett's reductive understanding of funk replicates a similar strategy to Southern who tries to essentialize the genre as a musical institution. Chambers, on the other hand, uses a similar method of essentialization but brings together musical values with political agendas which, for him, appear to be reduced to black and white.

If the writings of historians on musical value offer little insight into our understanding of funk, then perhaps a better strategy would be to explore the track nomenclature of the artists themselves. This offers a dual possibility of not only moving closer to the sources which created funk, but to the titles that artists and studios used to define and differentiate their music.

1.3.2 Track nomenclature, songs and the ideology of funk.

Although the histories of funk that have been examined so far seek to confirm James Brown as the innovative source of funk, a number of other musicians were also developing their own funk sound and signifying their new direction by using the term funk in their song titles. One of the earliest pieces to highlight this change was Dyke and the Blazers' 1967 song, *Funky Broadway*. The following year, Arthur Conley produced *Funky Street* and by 1969 the term funky became prominent in a number of titles including James Brown's instrumental, *Ain't it Funky Now* along with *Funky Drummer* of the same year*;* the Bar Kays, *Funky Thang*; and Lee Dorsey's *Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky From Now On.*[65]

It is not uncommon for popular song titles to contain genre words. On a surface level, words like 'jazz', 'rock', 'country', 'soul', 'disco', 'rap' as well as 'funk' function as a label to identify or differentiate commercial products amongst user groups. A similar strategy for naming songs is to use terms which indicate a particular style such as 'boogie', 'dancing', 'honky-tonk', and 'blues'. However, the use of genre words in song titles does not always correlate with a particular musical style. Songs such as *Opus de Funk* (1956), *Funky Town* (1979), [66] *Country Funkin*' (1994), [67] and *Funky Gibbon* (1975), [68] are indicative of a range of styles include jazz, disco, acid jazz and comic novelty songs that have appropriated the term. Rather than consider this type of song nomenclature to be arbitrary, Gilbert and Pearson (1999) suggest that:

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65 It can be noted that works such as Horace Silver's Opus de Funk (1956) used the term in an isolated way within meanings connected with the jazz genre. This was different to pieces such as Gillespie's use of *Old Man Rebop* (1946), *Cubana Bop* (1947), *I'm Be Boppin' Too* (1948), all of which was closely associated with a particular style of jazz. Similar terms are such as Rag, Stomp, and boogie-woogie can be found in titles of earlier jazz standards emerging from the dance crazes of the time.

66 *FunkyTown* (1979) - Lipps Inc.

67 *Contry Funkin'* (1994) - Brand New Heavies.

68 *Funky Gibbon* (1975) was a comic novelty song performed by the then popular British comedy trio, The Goodies. Musically there was little that could be considered funky, however the 'joke' was that the Gibbon was funky. Ike and Tina Turner had a hit with *Funky Mule* to add to the menagerie of funky animals. Vincent (1996: 167) mentions titles between 1970 and 1973 such as: *Funky Chicken; Funky Penguin;* and *Funky Worm* that emerged as contributions to the party dance.

> ….concepts like…. ‘funk’ (which, of course, approves a particular type of ‘feel’ in black and dance music) while acting as markers of aesthetic approval have additional and specific musical meanings which, to quote Robert Walser, are ‘contingent but never arbitrary’ (Gilbert and Pearson, 1999: 122).[69]

The contingent aspect of funk in track nomenclature is descriptive of a feel or quality that reflects wider the ideological concepts of funk. Titles such as, *Funky Broadway*, *Funky Street, Funky Town, Funky L.A.*[70] bring the funky quality to the places that people inhabit with the street being the most notable place in funk music. Other songs such as *Ain't It Funky Now; Make It funky;*[71] *Funky Drummer;*[72] *Funky Thang*; *Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky From Now On; Funky Stuff;*[73] *Strut Your Funky Stuff;*[74] and *Funky Woman;*[75] all point to musical or dance characteristics. These same titles could also relate to lifestyle, attitude, sexuality and the body. In addition to these particular qualities, the titles of George Clinton add a spiritual dimension. Clinton's *Give Up the Funk* (1975), invites us to consider funk as something tangible, or perhaps an essence.

Other songs from the funk genre introduce related concepts such as *Cold Sweat* (1967), *Dance to the Music* (1969), *Stand!* (1969), *Sex Machine* (1970), *Superbad*

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[69] They go on to say that: “These [concepts] connote specifically formal or timbral characteristics with histories and patterns of signification that can be usefully excavated if approached carefully.

[70] *Funky L.A.* (1971) - Paul Humphrey and His Cool Aid Chemists

[71] *Make It Funky* (1971) – James Brown

[72] *Funky Drummer* (1970) – James Brown

[73] *Funky Stuff* (1973) – Kool and the Gang

[74] *Strut Your Funky Stuff* (1979) - Frantique

[75] *Funky Woman* (?) – Maceo and All The Kings Men

(1970)*, What Is Hip?* (1973), *Good Times* (1973),and *Get Down Tonight* (1975)[76] without using funk in the title. These songs reference important aspects of funk ideology including smell, body, fashion, sex and the *baadass* attitude explored in films of the blaxploitation era.[77] These ideological concepts can be categorised as referring to the body (smell), the music (rhythm), image (style), spirituality (essence) and socio-political identities. It is in this ideological area that the meanings expressed in the song titles potentially become specific, yet often open enough to be represented in two or more ideological categories. John Jeffries (1992), writing on black popular culture, reminds us of Stuart Hall's three elements which he saw as existing in black popular culture: style; music (as part of the oral tradition); and the deliberate use of the body. Jeffries added one other element which was the city, 'the place where new dimensions of black popular culture are often born' (Jeffries, 1992: 159).

This provides a useful start for interpreting and categorizing ideological concepts from song titles. Jeffries suggests that in black popular culture the city is symbolic of hip, it is the locale of the cool: to be 'with it', you must be in the city. Funk, as a subset of black popular culture, will have similar elements which can be explored in Allan Tousaint's 1969 song, *Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky From Now On,* as sung by Lee Dorsey.

(spoken): Everything I do gohn be funky! (repeat)

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[76] 'Getting down' is part of the black vernacular of funk and is associated with sexual intercourse. (See Wilson, 1992 p112.)

[77] See glossary for explanation of 'baadass' and 'blaxploitation'.

> I have to be myself and do my thing
> A little soul can't do no harm, yeah (x3):
> Everything I do gohn be funky from now on, yeah
> Some may say I've got no class, but I'm doin' what I wanna do
> So go[78] with me if you can, or just do what you can do… (chorus)
> Never before have I felt so good just bein' natural me
> My little hang up and my little times, but deep inside I'm free
> Let your hair down, get down wings
> Who's to say what's right or wrong? (x5):
> Everything I do gohn be funky from now on
> ... (other ad-libs, to fade)

A number of ideological concepts emerge in this song which can be broken down into the following categories:

- stylistically funky: hair, clothes, accessories
- musically funky: concentrating on producing songs in a new funk groove which relates to dance
- socio-culturally funky: live a life in the funky (low class) community in the urban environment; getting down with it; historically linked to soul
- spiritually funky: 'deep inside I'm free', 'good', 'natural', 'me'
- politically funky: pride in black consciousness.

In the earlier 1967 song, *Funky Broadway,* similar themes can be identified in the lyrics that describe the funky elements of Broadway: its 'street cars', 'nightclubs', 'funky women' and 'dances'. The duality of the term *Funky Broadway* is expressed in the last few lines of the song before the fade: 'doing the funky Broadway…dirty filthy Broadway….'. Funky (dirty) Broadway is not only a place, but a dance (wiggle your hips now). By their very nature, these categories overlap and intersect but as a model they form the basis for understanding the ideology of funk expressed through song titles and lyrics.

What appears to be emerging between 1967 and 1969 is an identification of funk in the nomenclature of the song that emphasises its difference between rhythm 'n' blues and soul precursors. Just as 1967 is seen as a watershed for the differentiation of rock and pop,[79] expressed through new ideological concepts in rock, so funk was emerging as a way of articulating new ideological values in its community. These ideas are outlined in table 2.

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[78] This word may be go, it may also be groo(ve), it is difficult to say.

79 See Wicke, (1987:91-113) for a discussion on the ideology of rock.

Emerging ideological categories in funk.

Earlier meanings	Body and odours	Music, groove and rhythm	Spirituality and funk as essence	Image, style or 'veneer'.	Socio-Political context and antiestablishment message
Flemish fonck= fear Fallen into disuse	Social unacceptability 'Baadass' attitudes *Sweet Sweetback's Baadassss Song* is a visual tale of the sex romp of a twisted black antihero Sex and procreation *Cold Sweat* *Get down on it* Funk had been elevated to an *affirmation*, in much the same way that black had become beautiful…. [Affirmation of a sense of unity]… Funk was dirty and smelly, but it was *ours.*[80]	*Boogie All Night Long*, dance, *Get Down On It* *Dancing In The street* Oral tradition Spontaneity Creativity Participatory creativity (brotherhood and sisterhood, *One Nation Under A Groove*)	Spirituality Reason for being Funk as a way of life Get up over it 'be myself and do my thing' rhythm of 'the one' *I Can Take You Higher (Sly Stone)*	An essential aspect of the nature of The Funk is that it is *self-aware,* and comfortable with itself. "Most of the original perpetrators of The Funk – Sly Stone, Hendrix, Clinton, Miles Davis – were well aware of their freaked-out image, but rather than being ashamed of their looks, they were *proud* of them…"[81]	Subcultural contexts Place: the street *Funky Broadway* *Superfly* followed and romanticised the life of a drug dealer … pimps and pushers were glorified…. Anti-hero found in *Shaft* Black culture had emerged from its underground status in America to confront a white authority structure *Say It Loud, I'm Black and Proud* Sidran suggests that "Black music was also the voice of the emerging 'street culture'". [82]

Table 1. Ideological categories in funk

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[80] See Vincent, (1996:144)

[81] See Vincent, (1996:147)

[82] See Sidran, (1972:128). The context of his discussion is more soul-jazz orientated, but there are historical overtones.

1.3.3 Historical periodicity

We have seen that as a word, funk has been used to describe songs, delineate styles and create a genre identity from the 1950s to the present day. Over time, the meanings of funk have changed to take into account the dynamic nature of music and the need to appropriate the word at different times to describe emerging or changing musical qualities. We have also noted that some years seem more significant than others with 1967, for instance, forming a landmark in the use of the word 'funk' and 'funky' in song titles. The creation of historical periods, however they are defined, can lead to the development of new terminology which may, or may not, be helpful in understanding the development of funk.

In creating their respective histories of funk, both Vincent (1996) and Thomas (2000) interpret the changes in musical style by creating distinct periods. Vincent conceptualizes funk as a set of four 'dynasties' with 1965-1972 being the 'Original Funk Dynasty', 1972-1976 being the 'United Funk Dynasty' with 1976-1979 being the P-Funk Dynasty followed by 'The Naked Funk Dynasty' of the 1980s. The neologistic use of dy*nasty* is clearly a trope relating not only to the sequence of 'powerful family leaders' but to the smells and sexuality generated by the 'baadass' attitude of the funk 'thang'.[83]

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[83] Dynasty *n., pl.* **–ties. 1.** a sequence of hereditary rulers**. 2.** any sequence of powerful leaders of the same family. (The New Collins Concise English Dictionary, 1982). Nasty is a particular signifier for Vincent who describes various funk pieces such as the Last Poets 1970 album 'The Last Poets' as '*as nasty and truthful as it gets'* (Vincent 1996:234).

Thompson also identifies four eras in the history of funk. Firstly the ‘pre-funk’, where he looks at artists ‘whose work during the 1950s and 1960s unquestionably (sic) laid the groundwork for what was to come’ (Thompson, 2001: vii). Secondly, the late 1960s to the mid seventies are designated as ‘Classic Funk’. This era is followed by ‘Disco Funk’ which appears in the late 1970s and finally anything post-disco which he calls ‘The New School’. Thompson’s periodicity elaborates the strategies of those already seen in Southern, Gillett and Chambers by generating funk definitions through a detailed association of artists and bands. In this way, the funk genre is defined not by the music but by ‘the events, the people and the records’:[84]

> In telling the story of funk, there is no concerted attempt made to describe what the music sounds like, and no dissertation on language and lyrics, politics and meaning. This is deliberate (Thompson, 2001:x).[85]

In terms of understanding funk, these histories offer little more than basic signposting to important historical events. As such, they offer useful reference points marking out the dynamic processes involved in the creation of a funk genre. In understanding the context of the development of funk in terms of history and personalities, their periodization has some merits but neither writer explores the possibility of creating an historical framework based on the musical text. Even where a period is referred to as ‘disco funk’ there is little reference to the intertextual journey that funk has taken. By focusing on the socio-cultural context to create their funk histories, Thompson and Vincent are in danger of relegating the music to a secondary position as no more than an underscore for the history of personality. This is clearly a strategy that an etymophony would wish to avoid presenting instead, a periodization which reflects significant shifts in the musical text.

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[84] It could be argued that the records are the music, but for Thompson records are measured in terms of chart success and using an unexplained star system. Little commentary is given over to the sounds themselves.

[85] Thompson continues, ‘It has been said that writing about music is like dancing to architecture, an expression coined with funk fully in mind. No words on earth can truly capture the sound of the JBs in full flow.... so why even try?’. While he is correct in saying that we cannot describe specific sounds, we should try, at least, to understand them and elucidate something of their meaning.

1.3.4 Commercial genre boundaries

During the 1990s a renewed interest in funk provided the opportunity for record companies to release back-catalogues of material as compilation albums. Titles such as *The Best Funk Album In The World,* and *The Roots of Funk* (Rhino), as well as “Best of” albums centred around particular artists such as James Brown and Sly Stone provide a significant resource in the study of funk. As well as making available a wide range of songs for research, these albums may help in developing our understanding of funk as a genre. However, the creation of commercial genre boundaries could also create problems in interpreting and understanding funk in terms of its historical development.

In his review of “The Very Best of James Brown”*,* Ford (2002) identifies two distinct types of compilation album: the ‘chronological’ and the ‘creative’. The first, the chronological, serves a useful purpose for academic research and informed listening in providing dates, times, personnel members and often interesting and informative sleeve notes. The second, the so called ‘creative’ compilation, is the result of a less

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well researched more ad hoc approach being simply a collection from the record company's back catalogue which has little purpose other than to fill a perceived gap in the CD marketplace.[86] On *The Very Best of James Brown* for instance, he notes that tracks may have been shortened or extended by the use of sampling techniques, tracks may be speeded up thereby changing the pitch, or different performance versions may be included from the normally accepted originals.[87] In Ford's opinion:

> Acceleration gives us a complete travesty of the timbre of James Brown's voice... Brown's voice looses all its body, as if the fundamental tone of the harmonic spectrum of every pitch had been filtered out (2002: 129).[88]

Ford's analysis is a useful critique of the problems created by the production process involved in reissuing songs. The repackaging of original songs may therefore not be as straightforward or as truthful to the original as it seems. Consequently, the repackaging of funk as a contemporary commercial genre needs to be placed in the particular commercial and industrial context of its creation.[89] The labelling of compilations such as "Funk Power: 1970 A Brand New Thang" becomes important not only for assertively defining a genre, but in creating a canon from the retrospective viewpoint of the 1990s.[90]

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[86] In this sense it might be considered that such an album is distinctly un-creative. I assume that Ford uses the term as 'a creation': something put together in the manner of a hastily produced one-pot stew.

[87] James Brown is particularly well known for recording different takes of the same song which adds to the confusion in terms of chronicling his work effectively. We also know that he did at least two recordings or takes at a session and these 'alternative' versions are often found on compilation CDs as 'bonus' tracks.

[88] Ford goes on to say "I am reminded of the massive orchestrations of inappropriate instruments that used to murder Bach, Haydn, Handel and Mozart before the surge of interest in 'period performance' in the early 1980s" which brings him into the early-music authenticity arguments which somewhat dents his otherwise useful observations. An alternative set of authenticity arguments emerge from such a perspective: the idea that somewhere there is a definitive take which has been handed down at precisely the correct rpm thereby maintaining pitch characteristics, interactive nuance and the structural concept.

In his theory of genre, Fabbri (1999) accounts for change explaining it as the 'process of transgression' where new meanings emerge over time. While it may be possible to argue that a particular recording captured performance in a moment of time, it does not hold that the meanings of the music remain the same. Meanings in a piece such as *Super Bad* will have changed; what was relevant and meaningful or 'bad' about the song in 1970 will be different to an audience from a different generation of experiences. In one sense Super Bad, like any recorded song, belongs to its past but clearly new meanings can be created for contemporary audiences. A recording may appear to capture a moment frozen in time but the physicality of the record and the mythology of the creative process will often mask the technological and production processes involved in creating a final product.

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[89] In recent years there has been considerable protest about the packaging which surrounds our shopping habits, the most incredible of all was the vending of a single banana (complete with natural packaging) in a plastic box. Our obsession with the box (and what it stands for) may obscure
an important point – that once purchased, it becomes food just as once a CD is purchased via consumer mechanisms, it generally becomes music and the purchaser becomes a listener.

[90] *Funk Power* is a 1996 compilation from Polygram Records as part of its 'Chronicles' series. The compilation comes with a very detailed booklet which indicates that the album has been 'digitally remastered' but there is no information about the equipment used. It is interesting that although the notes clearly state that 'ALL RECORDINGS PRODUCED BY JAMES BROWN' in bold

To understand funk as it often appears in present day genre boundaries, it is important to remain open to the transgressional possibilities of the music. To do this we have to be aware of the commercial context of the recording. For an etymophony, the recording is potentially a primary source from which we examine the music.[91] However, we need to remain critically aware of the way that genres are constructed. As Fabbri (1999) reminds us:

> Whether we enter a record megastore or a virtual shop over the Internet, we are confronted with lists that include an increasing number of music types (whatever they are called), with no apparent care about taxonomic criteria (Fabbri, 1999).

The variety of music that has been reissued as funk serves to not only extend or reshape existing categories of the genre, but to make us aware of the multiple histories that are created and consumed today. There is no requirement for the record industry to create accurate taxonomies and in many ways, the arbitrary nature of genre serves their purpose well.

Commercial genre boundaries may, at first, be less useful to understanding funk than might be imagined. However, the commercial taxonomies may be useful in highlighting the transgressional nature of genre definitions. Fabbri's 'process of transgression' allows us to understand genre formations as a dynamic system rather

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capitals, the small print indicates that the compilation was produced by Harry Weinger and Alan Leeds with Bill Levenson as executive producer.

[91] Lydia Goehr's timely reminder that these arguments allow us to 'keep our eyes open to the inherently critical and revisable nature of our regulative concepts. Most importantly, it helps us overcome that deep rooted desire to hold the most dangerous of beliefs, that we have at any time got our practices absolutely right'. (Goehr, 1992:284).

than a fixed taxonomical system. In approaching recordings we therefore have to retain some of the critical reservations shown by Ford. We should not, however, be totally dismissive of what Ford calls ‘creative interpretations’. While they offer little of interest in tracing the development of early funk, they may be not only useful in understanding how funk is mediated in the early 21st century but also show us that some of this music has meaning to a new generation.

1.3.5 Contextual modifiers

Most of the discussion so far has attempted to understand funk through political, social, economic, and aesthetic contexts. A final consideration will be those paramusical areas that have developed strong associative meanings with funk. Placing the music of funk in the context of the cinema, dance floor or political faction may modify our understanding of the genre. In this way it is possible for new meanings to emerge which were not related to original connotative meanings of funk.

In his definition of funk, Brackett (2003) suggests that we should understand funk as part of an inter-related view of music and society:

> [t]he increased use of the term [funk] in the late 1960s coincided with a shift in African-American politics from the integrationist stance of the Civil Rights movement, associated with the rise of soul music, to the more radical stance of the Black Power Movement, a shift heralded by James Brown’s funk recording *Say It loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud* (1968).[92]

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[92] Found on < www.grovemusic.com> (accessed Jan 2003).

The implication of Brackett's view is that certain African-American political movements are associated in some way with particular musical genres.[93] The strongly political lyrics of Brown's *Say It Loud, I'm Black And I'm Proud* articulate a particular political context which link those extreme elements of Black Power with emerging funk styles. For a time, the radical politics appeared to complement the musical meaning of funk by reflecting attitudes of pride, power and difference instead of fashion, sex, 'baadass' attitudes and individual freedom. Vincent considered *Say It Loud* as a:

> ….turning point in black music. Never before had black popular music explicitly reflected the bitterness of blacks toward the white man – and here it was done with ferocious funk… "Say It Loud" was a call to *action,* whether James Brown intended it to be one or not (Vincent, 1996:78).

Other artists followed this radical approach. Sly Stone's *Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey* (1969) and Curtis Mayfield's *Mighty, Mighty, Spade and Whitey* (1969) were all part of a growing awareness of funk as a part of racial consciousness. Funky music was the backdrop to politically inspired music of Gil Scott-Heron, Stevie Wonder, George Clinton and the Last Poets. In this particular context then, funk is closely associated with radical political factions of the African-American community. However, this same community contained widely differing political views which are reflected in the

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[93] Vincent (1996) suggests that Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come* and the Impressions' *Keep on Pushing* along with Stevie Wonder's *Heaven Help Us All* 'were early examples of popular black music that went beyond the personal issues, dealt with a higher force, and spoke of the society. Rhythm and blues music as "statement" music would grow into soul music and eventually take on more explicit themes of protest, particularly after the changes promised during the civil rights

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movement failed to materialize' (1996:48).

diversity of themes explored by funk music. Political funk is, therefore, just one aspect of the plurality of meanings that emerge in the genre at this time. The political context offered an opportunity to express some important social and political issues using the rhythmic energy of funk.

A second paramusical context is the association between funk and the dance floor and, in particular, the rise of disco. As an area of study, disco has never received the interest of the dance movements associated with the late 1980s and with the 1990s. The importance of disco in creating a significant body of music as the soundtrack for dancing during the 1970s provides a conflicting context from the political seriousness of the Black Power movement. The success of bands such as Kool and the Gang, The Ohio Players, Earth, Wind and Fire, and Parliament concentrate on the politics of the dancefloor rather than civil rights. The political message is completely subverted by the hedonistic calls to *Shake your Groove Thing* (1978).[94] Our understanding of funk changes as it becomes associated with good time music and the excesses of the 1970s disco era.

In parallel to these associations, composers such as Issac Hayes and Curtis Mayfield were creating new contexts for funk by providing soundtracks for a new genre of film called blaxploitation. Films such as *Shaft* (1971) and *Superfly* (1972) opened new mass media associations exposing funky soundtracks to a much wider international public. Tagg (1979/2000) makes reference to the funk soundtrack in his analysis of

Kojak and notes that the sounds of funk create connotations of ‘modernity, intensive action and energy’ (Tagg, 2000: 155). Tagg considers that such music conveys the ‘intrinsic character of North American urban (perhaps even ghetto) modernity’ (ibid: 154) making it suitable for detective soundtracks with the ‘intensive action’ making it suitable for sports programmes.[95] It would be difficult, concludes Tagg, ‘to find TV or film productions dealing with country matters… family orientated soap operas… Westerns… comedy series… connected with funky bass figures’ (ibid: 154-5).

It becomes clear that any study of funk as a genre requires an understanding of the wider issues which are associated with the music. To understand funk we have to recognise the plurality of meanings emerging from different contexts, time frames and ideological viewpoints. This plurality should not be considered as antagonistically contradictory in any way since the different uses and interpretations of funk intersect at different points. These points are represented in figure 1 where specific conjunctions arise which focus and transform funk. These moments may be articulated at different times by politics, economics, other media (including film), dance crazes, or personality. Out of context, these articulating moments may generate conflict but at the same time, they co-exist as part of a larger musical and social continuum.

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94 Shake your Groove Thing (1978) - Peaches & Herb

95 Tagg (2000:154) cites the Swedish sports programme *Sportspegeln* and the BBC programme *Sportnight* (Hatch 1974) to illustrate this association.

To understand funk we have to understand it as a dynamic transformational process that forms a complex system of intersecting components. In recognising the plurality of funk, we have an important tool to critique the canonical culture puts funk and other genres, 'frozen, packaged and into the museum' (Tagg, 2004, 31). The commercial cultural practices of the late twentieth century record industry have accelerated this canonic systemization of genre but at the same time, created new interpretative contexts. Removed from it original habitus, funk resituates itself at the party, the supermarket, in the home of revivalists, in the memory of samplers, as soundtracks for visual media as well as in the books of music historians and academics. It is to these historical studies that we shall turn our attention in order to consider their contribution to understanding funk.

1.4 Historical frameworks

Histories in popular music have more often that not fallen into four categories identified by Thornton (1990) as (1) 'lists', (2) 'lives', or biographies, (3) '*oeuvres',* which are centred around significant genres or performers, *and* (4) 'objective accounts' based on particular sources such as Billboard magazine. This process, she claims, is a reductive one which relies on, "the formulae of listing, personalizing, canonizing and mediating" (*sic*), (Thornton, 1990: 89). What seems to be missing from this list is a history of style where the sonic text is used to construct as a means of creating a historical framework.[96]

Stylistic histories are to be found in the literature of European classical music exemplified by Rosen (1971) in his study of the classical style.[97] At the time of writing, no comparable literature exists which attempts to examine a wide range of popular styles by concentrating specifically on the music. For the most part, general histories as represented by Gillett (1983) pay little attention to the development of musical structure concentrating instead on ‘lists’, ‘lives’ and ‘objective accounts’. Other histories of styles are represented as narratives with the lives of authors such as Guralnick, (2002) intertwined with the history of a musical style. Attempts to examine the sounds of a musical style have been undertaken by Walser (1993) and Moore (1993) in their respective studies of Metal and Progressive rock.

A stylistic approach to history is not, as Rosen suggests, without its problems:

> the idea of the style of a group is a compromise… a fiction, an attempt to create order, a construction that enables us to interpret the change in the musical language without being totally bewildered by the mass of minor composers…. (Rosen, 1971: 22).

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[96] There is a relationship between style and Thornton’s ‘oeuvre’, however, a work suggests a completed product which forms the basis of the history based on ‘lists’. A stylistic history is much more concerned with the detail of the song and how these features relate to other music of the time. Thornton’s taxonomy suggests that a history would be centred around a particular genre, but this is not necessarily the case.

[97] In this respect, these histories are similar to art histories such as Gombrich’s *The Story of Art* (1950/1989) which traces pictorial art, architecture and sculpture from prehistoric cave paintings to the middle of the twentieth century. Like Rosen, Gombrich sought ‘to bring some intelligible order into the wealth of names, periods and styles which crowd the pages of more ambitious works…’(1989, vii).

The result of this compromise is to concentrate on a few key figures who encapsulate the ‘best’ of a particular style. In his desire to create order, Rosen’s work concentrates on Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven selecting and interpreting pieces for analysis. However, such an approach would seem inappropriate for the study of popular music not only because of the difference in the importance of notation, but also because popular music does not have the composer as a central creative figure. Popular song is, more often than not:

> …. a collaborative process, which may involve lyricists, songwriters, singers, instrumentalists, arrangers, orchestrators, producers, engineers, set designers, video directors, and much more (Middleton 2000b: 60).

The composer of the Western European Classical tradition is largely replaced by the central figure of the singer who, unless performing in a ‘solo’ context, will ‘front’ a band. A ‘major’ figure in funk histories is James Brown who is usually credited with inventing the funk sound. Chambers (1985), for instance, suggests that James Brown was a ‘central force’ (1985: 187-8) in the development of this new style of music while Gillett (1983) suggests that Brown was ‘the man who pursued [funk] most fanatically’ (1983: 245). Brackett makes a similar observation noting that: ‘Brown did the most to develop what came to be known as funk’.[98] The suggestion of all these writers is that funk was emerging as a style from a series of sources and Brown’s particular contribution was to act as both a catalyst and advocate of the style. With his celebrity status, his ability to control his own artistic direction and significant exposure in the musical world, Brown was well placed to be a conduit for an emergent style.

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[98] www.Grovemusic.com accessed, 2003.

The danger of placing Brown at the foreground of a musical history is that it could easily invalidate the collaborative process which was essential for the creation of his songs. Musicians such as Melvin and Maceo Parker, Clive Stubblefield, and Jimmy Nolen were not just a 'backing band' but had an important role in creating Brown's identifiable musical style during the 1960s. An additional danger in foregrounding Brown is that it is an approach that can easily sideline contributions made by other artists such as Booker T and the MGs, Dyke and the Blazers, The Meters, Lee Dorsy, and Ray Charles.[99] The omission of these and other artists involved in funk creates a distorted history which not only offers little insight into our understanding of the way that funk developed but creates an historical hierarchy which may go unchallenged. By concentrating on individual historical figures we are not only in danger of over-simplifying a complex historical weave, we are also in danger of creating aesthetic hierarchies around personalities.

On the one hand, this type of approach may be, as Rosen suggests, a method of 'creating order' but at the same time it is possible to see that history could soon become disordered. A different approach to historical writing has been suggested by

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[99] Thompson (2001) note that 'James Brown… became the undisputed Godfather of Funk…. But other acts were working in a similar arena – instrumental acts, like… Booker T. & the MGs, Motown stars Junior Walker and the All-Stars, and vocal groups like Archie Bell & the Drells (Thompson, 2001:vii).

Hatch and Millward (1987) who present a ‘new approach’ to popular music history by introducing the concept of ‘song families’ as a way of tracing change and continuity in music. In this way, Hatch and Millward acknowledge the importance of cover versions not only to introduce older genres to new generations of consumers, but as a point of departure for evolving new styles. Tracing song families was also a way of discussing the creation, consolidation and transformation of musical traditions.

One advantage of applying this model to a history of funk would be to recognise that a work such as *Cold Sweat,* arguably a milestone in the development of the funk style, is not a ‘first cause’ but:

> ….a transiently privileged moment of departure within networks of family resemblances, bearing comparison with similar moments within networks of repetition, Signifyin(g) and [at the time of writing,] remixing’ (Middleton, 2000b: 83).[100]

This idea is particularly useful in approaching any history because it highlights the transient nature of the historical process (highlighted in Fabbri, 1999) and provides a strong critique for writings that seek to create over simplistic, linear frameworks. The danger of over-simplification is that we may create a new history which, in ignoring the ‘networks of family resemblances’ may produce a distorted image which fails to take into account important musical and social processes which contribute to the formation of a both individual style and genres.

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[100] In the context of the quotation, Middleton uses intertextual theory to discuss the concept of the remix which has become an important part of musical creative process at the turn of the century. Although this chapter does not include information on remixing, it seems a particularly evocative word in the context of song families and intertextual networks. It could be argued that remixing is indeed an old practice which existed in pre-computer music making through the use of models and sharing musical ideas, only in the latter part of the twentieth century did it become so literal a term.

If we are to develop an understanding of funk and how it developed, then a different approach to those suggested by Thornton may be required. By foregrounding the musical text in an etymophony, we may begin to gain a better understanding of how individual styles and genres develop. In any historical overview, there must be an element of selection. The difficulty with some historical writing is that the overview creates such a selective picture that rather than creating a 'compromise' a hierarchy of works emerge which 'filter out' the mass of pieces which could be included. By concentrating on the collaborative nature involved in production, and by acknowledging songs as 'moments of departure' within an intertextual network, we may discover relationships which are not apparent through other means.

The point of departure for tracing the development of funk comes in the first instance from other histories that point to specific recordings containing elements of funk. Rather than approach this etymophony from an advantage of 'knowing' what funk is (see Stewart, 2000), my intention is to develop an understanding of funk by investigating the musical text and its relationship to other texts. By considering songs as 'moments of departure' within 'song families' we begin to appreciate the dynamic nature of these texts and their relationship and interdependence on each other. Viewed from this perspective, funk becomes much more of an open concept which invites us to investigate the way it changes and develops rather than fix meanings or create points of origin.

To capture this process of change, the etymophony divides into three sections: prehistory (proto-funk), confluence and diffusion. These terms derive from the model outlined in figure 1 (p. 37). This is primarily a transitional structure which avoids the terminology created by other authors such as Thompson who prefer terms such as ‘classic funk’ and ‘dance funk’. Such terms fail to reflect the plurality of codes that exist both within the emerging genre of funk and in music as a whole. At the same time, these terms provide a clear framework to examine works in their time and the intertextual relationships that created them. The discussion will begin with the proto-funk period and will investigate the music that commentators such as Brackett (1992, 1995, 2003) and Stewart (2000), Vincent (1996) and Thompson (2001), along with listings on compilation albums have suggested are important influences on the early formation of funk.

Part 2. Prehistory: Proto-funk

2.1 Introduction: the proto-funk

To facilitate the discussion of this early period in funk, I have chosen to discuss music from 1953 to 1969. The start date is suggested by Brackett (2003) who observes that during the 1950s, an aesthetic of funkiness emerged in genres such as rhythm 'n' blues and jazz. Brackett (2003), is quite specific in his claim that:

> ….elements of [funk] can be found in recordings of the 50s: Professor Longhair's *Tipitina* (1953) and the Hawkettes' *Mardi Gras Mambo* (1954), both from New Orleans, blended Latin rhythms with the texture and harmonic patterns of rhythm and blues, while, blues-based harmonic progressions and gospel vocal techniques, with its rapid tempo and aggressive cross rhythms, intensified the polyrhythmic implications of the earlier proto-funk recordings (Brackett, 2003).[101]

One of the aims of the early part of this chapter will be it investigate these claims and to examine those elements which Brackett and others identify as funk. To validate these claims of a proto-funk aesthetic appearing in the 1950s, it will be necessary to identify these elements and then examine their place in the wider intertextual network that develops around funk. In theory, these proto-funk pieces will contain musical codes which will leave a trace in other texts as they are reworked into new genre configurations.

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[101] Brackett (accessed 2003) in Grove On-Line: <www.grovemusic.com> The influence of Longhair on the development of funk is also supported by Stewart (2000).

It should be clear that the focus of this etymophony is not to discover sonic etymons,[102] but to identify those musical characteristics that become influential to the emerging sound of proto-funk. Using ideas from the model presented in figure 1, it will be possible to see how Brackett's ideas could come together to form a recognisable proto-funk style.

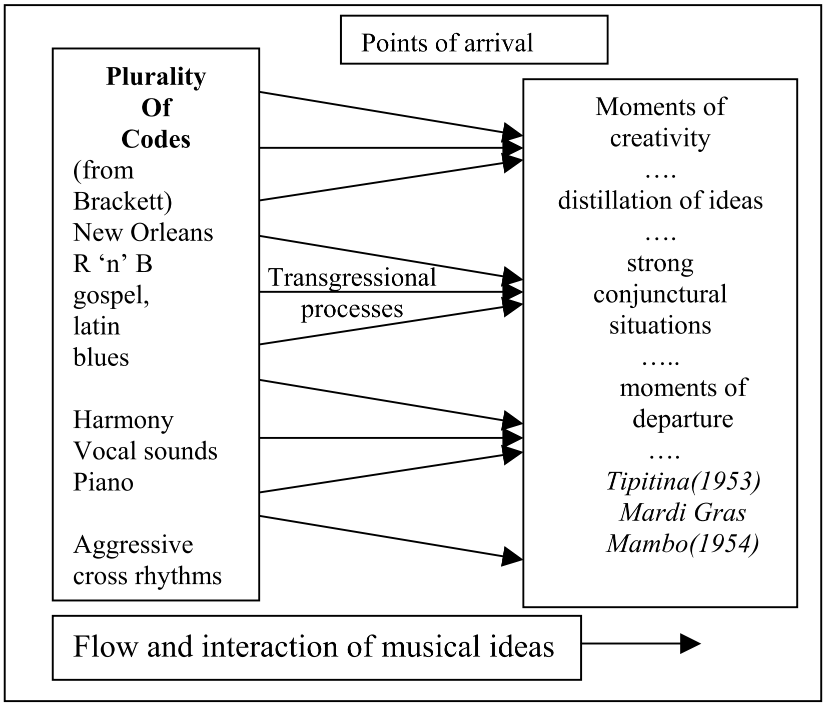
Points of arrival
Plurality Of Codes
(from Brackett)
New Orleans
R 'n' B
gospel,
latin
blues
Harmony
Vocal sounds
Piano
Aggressive cross rhythms
Transgressional processes
Moments of creativity
….
distillation of ideas
….
strong conjunctural situations
…..
moments of departure
….
Tipitina(1953)
Mardi Gras Mambo(1954)
Flow and interaction of musical ideas

Figure 2. Emerging proto-funk

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[102] Derived from 'etymon': a form of a word, usually the earliest recorded form or a reconstructed form from which another work is derived. (Collins Concise English Dictionary, 1982.) The implications of such a task go well beyond the focus of this study. To trace back certain sounds may lead us back to extant music from medieval European and speculative citations from the music of Africa. The implication of Brackett's definition is that funkiness emerges not through any one individual stylistic identifier, but by the particular conjunction of a number of stylistic traits with the intention of creating a specific quality.

Brackett's suggestion is that the elements of Longhair's performance style come together in pieces like *Tipitina* to form a point of departure for the proto-funk style.[103] This point is also taken up by Stewart (2000) who supports the view that Longhair was an influential figure in the development of a funky, Latin-influenced style of playing rhythm 'n' blues. Other sources identify the importance of New Orleans second line drumming in informing the performance styles of drummers such as Earl Palmer.[104] We will begin out discussion of the early funk in the context of New Orleans before examining in detail the music of *Tipitina.*

2.2 New Orleans: the birthplace of funk?

New Orleans has been credited as being the 'birthplace' of a number of musical genres including ragtime and jazz.[105] Researchers in the 1990s returned to the music of New Orleans in an attempt to explore its influence on a wider range of contemporary musical genres including funk.[106] In addition to academic literature, there is a range of record compilations and instruction booklets that deal with stylistic influences relating to funk. The following discussion seeks to examine the link between the music of New Orleans and the development of proto-funk.

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[103] *Tipitina* can be hear in several versions but the one under discussion must be from the album version originally recorded on Atlantic between 1949-53. This was re-released in 1972 as *New Orleans Piano* by Rhino. The 1955 single of *Tipitina* was for solo piano and does not have drums.

[104] For a comprehensive list of drummers active in New Orleans, see Riley and Vidacovich (1995).

[105] Gridley (1988), a standard jazz history textbook used on many jazz history courses, suggests that 'Combo jazz began in New Orleans, and that city contributed seceral soloists of far-reaching significance' (*op. cit.* p. 57); Mellers (1965) suggested that, 'The flowering of instrumental jazz – notably in the various ensembles of Louis Armstrong – developed from the merging of traditions of the New Orleans band with those of the urban blues' (*op. cit.* p297). However, Schuller, (1968) suggests that 'research has shown… that early jazz in both its essential and its peripheral manifestations sprang up in many parts of the United States, not only in New Orleans' (*op. cit.* p.65). Tucker (www.grovemusic.com) suggests that 'small ensembles from New Orleans playing spirited, syncopated dance music began featuring the term – also spelled as 'jass' – in their names'. Tucker acknowledges that the 'scanty documentation' makes it difficult to produce a history of jazz prior to 1915. Aural histories may not always help: Jelly Roll Morton's proclamation that he 'invented' jazz in 1902 was a slightly disingenuous piece of self promotion given that he was 12 years old at the time. However, 'despite this uncertainty, most historians of jazz agree that New Orleans was the principal incubator of this musical tradition' (*ibid.).* See also Scott DeVeaux 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition' in *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture* (Columbia 1998).

A major source of information on proto-funk sound can be found on numerous record compilations of which "Getting Funky" (2001) is an example of this trend. Subtitled, "The Birth of New Orleans R&B", "Getting Funky" explores possible links between 'funky', 'R&B' and 'New Orleans'. The recorded material is supported by a 54 page booklet, drawing extensively on work by Broven and Hanush, outlining the development of rhythm and blues in that city. Other examples of this format include "New Orleans Funk" (2000) a similar compilation subtitled, "New Orleans: The Original Sound Of Funk 1960-75". This too has a detailed (38 page) booklet similarly drawing Broven and Hanush as well as Berry (*et. al.*), (1986).[107] The innovative styles of New Orleans' drummers have been explored on video by Tress (1993) and Payne's anthology of drummers (1996), highlights the developmental role these musicians had in creating the funky rhythms associated with James Brown in the 1960s.[108]

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[106] Stewart, A. 2000; Fiehrer, T. 1991; Johnson, H and Chernoff, J. 1991; Narváez, P. 1994; Payne, Jim. 1996; Smith, M. P. 1994; Tress, D. 1993; Tress, D. (ed.) 1995 as well as more general histories and studies.

[107] Berry, J., Foose, J. and Jones, T. *Up From The Cradle of Jazz: New Orleans music Since World War 2.* Da Capo)

[108] Payne's book is quite wide ranging but he interviews Earl Palmer and Clayton Fillyau who were influential in the early music of James Brown.

The main theme emerging from these sources is the close association with the development of funk and the performers of New Orleans. The association of certain stylistic developments and sound to geographical place is not new. In the histories of the Western European music, a number of stylistic codes emerged which are identified with particular countries and cities. In more recent times, ethnologists Finnegan (1989), Cohen (1991) and Stokes (1992) have, amongst others, been active in exploring the significance of place in the creation of musical identity. During the 1950s and 1960s Motown, Sun Records, Atlantic, Chess, Stax, and Philly International were some of the record labels that created particular, recognisable sounds and have become associated with geographical place.[109]

The idea of place, as a concept, symbolic reference, or ideology, does not come without its problems. Some writers have symbolically identified New Orleans as as 'the cradle of all black American music',[110] while others refer to New Orleans as a metaphorical 'melting-pot'[111] where new, original styles emerge from the particular socio-cultural juxtapositions of the area. Stewart (2000), in his study of rhythmic transformation in the first half of the twentieth century, supported the view that:

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[109] The labels mentioned are associated with Detroit, Memphis, New York , Chicago, and Philadelphia. See also, Doyle, P. (2004); Cunningham, M. (1996); Théberge, P. (1997) for further discussion of recording and production. The absence of homogenised, mass produced post production effects units meant that the studio environment was important for creating particular sounds associated with these studios. See Bowman, R. (1997) for an interesting discussion of the evolution of the Stax sound.

[110] Vincent, 1996: 68.

[111] Mellers writes: "Nineteenth-century New Orleans… had been a vivid, cosmopolitan city, a melting pot of the nations and races" (1965: 281).

> ….[t]he singular style of rhythm & blues (R&B) that emerged from New Orleans in the years after World War II played an important role in the development of funk (Stewart, 2000: 293).[112]

This is not the place to enter into lengthy discussion about the link between place and the creation of musical styles. At this point there is only room to problematize the issue of place in order to offer a critical perspective of the complexities involved in linking genre with geographical place.[113] The simplification of history has already been discussed earlier in this thesis, but the study of place can easily lead to another type of simplification which leads to essentialism.[114] Slobin (1993) attempts to theorise the complexity of the situation in terms of a web of activities, relationships and affiliations that are often described in terms which establish continuity between the social, the group and the individual. However symbolic New Orleans may appear, it should be remembered that its particular link with African, Spanish, Caribbean, and indigenous heritage cannot be described effectively by a simplistic, reductive model.[115] The African connection that some writers would wish to emphasise, for instance, is only a part of the historical context of a city whose history is criss-crossed by a wide range of local, national and international cultural fusions.[116]

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[112] 'Singular', is defined by the Collins Concise English Dictionary (1982) as, 'remarkable'; 'extraordinary'; 'unusual'; and 'unique'.

[113] "To pretend to a clarity of analysis of any musical grouping, moment, style or context is to bypass this complexity for the sake of oversimplification or even outright essentialism". (Slobin, 1993: 60)

[114] An interesting attempt to address the popular perceptions of New Orleans as the birthplace of jazz is provided by Thomas Fiehrer (1991) who discusses the 'vast range of public musical experiences' and musical communities to be found in the city. Johnson (2000) on the other hand, demonstrates how 'mistaken detail' and 'interpretative generalities' have contributed to the misleading assumptions surrounding New Orleans jazz. These articles seem to be a warning for the legitimisation of New Orleans as the birthplace of funk. See also Stewart (2000: 296) who provides a cautionary note on the 'sometimes exaggerated' importance of New Orleans.

[115] Congo Square is often cited as a meeting place for slaves. Smith reminds us that it was, first and foremost, a marketplace where slaves, Native Indians and Maroons could trade. (Smith, 1994: 46). For an interesting account of activities at Congo Square and other dance activities in New Orleans see Emery, (1988: 139-174).

The complexity of place and genre is further demonstrated by a brief examination of Rhino's *The Roots of Funk Vol ½* (1994). The compilation album contains a range of proto-funk songs covering a wide geographical range. Lowell Fulsom's *Tramp* (1966), for instance, emerged from the boogaloo dance associated with Chicago while Don Covay's *Snookie Snookie,* (1970) was recorded in New York. Other geographical regions represented on the album include Buffalo,[117] Philadelphia,[118] and Texas.[119] However, despite the geographical diversity, the compilers at Rhino felt that:

> ….[w]ith its extensive Afro-Caribbean rhythmic pedigree, New Orleans was a natural for protofunk, and the Meters and Lee Dorsey were there to work new variations on the second-line sound.[120]

The second-line sound comes from the parade tradition in New Orleans. Behind (or possibly in front of) the parade bands was a group of people playing instruments and dancing. Smith (1994) suggests that the etymology of the term 'second line' is obscure but as a performance practice, he suggests that behind the brass bands were dancers who moved to the 'second line beat' (Smith, 1994: 56). The importance of this occasion was therefore not just musical but an important vehicle for dancing and

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116 See Smith, M (1994: 53). Although not directly comparable, Ruth Finnegan's study of Milton Keynes highlighted the wide variety of music making which can exist in a community. Finnegan notes how effortlessly musicians move between what she describes as 'musical worlds'.

117 Dyke & the Blazers, *Funky Broadway – Part 1*, (1967).

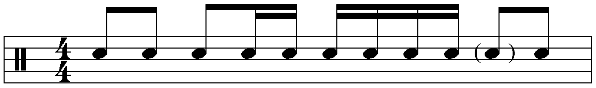
118 Soul Brothers Six, *Some Kind Of Wonderful,* (1967).

119 Archie Bell and The Drells who recorded *Tighten Up* (1968).

120 Sleeve notes to *The Roots of Funk Vol ½.* (p. 5)

other social activities. The second-line sound is sometimes referred to as the New Orleans beat or the 'street beat' and is one of the most widely discussed musical features associated with the origins of funk.[121] Riley and Vidacovich, (in Tress, 1995) also discuss the influence of the New Orleans' second line drumming in a variety of other genres including ragtime, gospel, jazz and R&B.

Ernest,[122] and Riley (see Tress 1995), suggest that an important rhythmic feature to emerge from the second line was what has come to be known as the 'street beat'[123] This rhythm comes from the marching bands and has characteristic sixteenth-note patterns. A number of variations emerge from this type of pattern including the following:



Example 1. New Orleans street beat (Tress, 1995).

This pattern was to be found in several styles of music including the march rhythm found in early New Orleans' brass bands:

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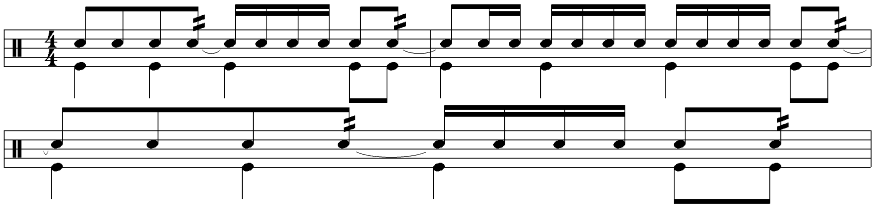
[121] See Smith (1994), Stewart (2000) and Slutsky who suggests that the syncopated lines were 'developed into an art form by R&B drummers like Ed Blackwell, Earl Palmer, Joseph Modeliste and Lewis Barbarin. (Slutsky, no date).

[122] Earnest was the drummer with the Neville Brothers. According to Larkin (ed. 1993:833), 'The Nevilles represented the essence of 40 years of New Orleans music distilled within on family unit' and played with the Hawkettes, Toussaint, Ray Charles, before the eldest (Art Neville) formed *The Meters* in 1968. The Metres *Wild Tchoupitoulas* album featured all four brothers.

[123] 'Second line rhythm'; 'street beat' and 'second line' all seem interchangeable terms for the same idea. In many ways, the terms acknowledges the specific place (outdoors) and function (celebratory gathering). The 'street beat' seems to suggest a more specific rhythmic pattern whereas 'second line' seems much more open to interpretation.



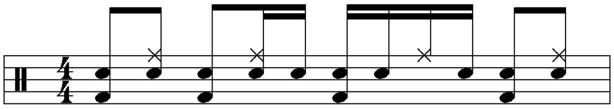
Example 2. Military march of New Orleans Brass Band (Tress, 1995).

The idea that the ‘street beat’ grew from the marching bands in New Orleans is supported by the recollections and demonstrations given by drummers interviewed by Tress and Riley (1995). Most recollections of the second line ‘street beat’ point to its use as a rhythmic ideas from the beginning of the twentieth century. Further study of the genesis of the street beat, interesting though it may be, is beyond the scope of this study. However, the ‘street beat’ remains important because of the hypothesis created by Brackett (1995), amongst others, that it was influential in developing the sound of funk.

From its beginnings in marching bands to music for second line dancing, the question arises of how this particular rhythm may have influenced the development of funk. One way is to consider the street beat to be part of the common vocabulary shared by New Orleans’ drummers. Of the many drummers working in New Orleans, two key performers emerge in writings about the development of funk. The first is Earl Palmer whose major contribution to the development of funk came through his use of the street beat in Longhair’s *Tipitina*. The second drummer is Joseph ‘Zigaboo’ Modeliste whose contribution to the development of funk comes through his association with the 1960s funk band, The Meters.

2.2.1 Earl Palmer, second line drumming and the 'Singular Style' of New Orleans R&B

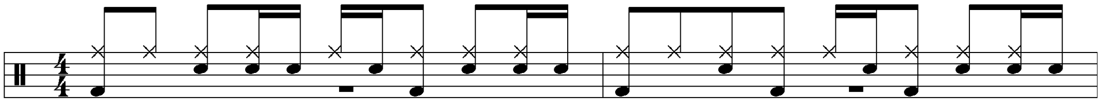
Palmer appears to have reached iconic status in the existing histories of funk. Thompson (2001: 55) for instance, claims that Palmer was 'the world's first funk drummer'. While such claims are difficult to sustain, Palmer does have an influential role as a session player in New Orleans even though he moved to Los Angeles by 1957. Palmer played on Professor Longhair's *Tipitina,* (1953) the piece that Brackett identifies as showing stylistic features of proto-funk. Palmer's influence is also discussed extensively by Stewart (2000) who identifies the drum rhythm of *Tipitina* (Example 3) as 'one of the earliest examples of [second line] drumming style on an R&B recording' (Stewart, 2000: 300).



Example 3. ***Tipitina*****, basic drum groove (1953).**

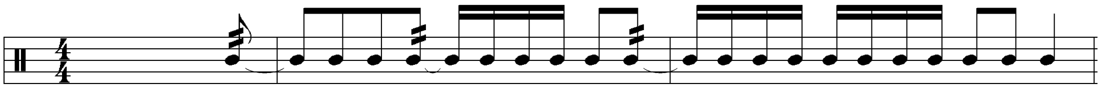
According to Stewart (2000), the inclusion of the street beat in New Orleans rhythm 'n' blues was essential for subdividing the increasingly popular straight eighth note drum patterns into sixteenth-notes. A similar sixteenth-note pattern can be found in other songs recorded between the 1960s and 1970s. One of the earliest James Brown recordings to incorporate the sixteenth-note street beat is the 1962 song, *I Got Money.*

The rhythm is played by Florida born drummer, Clayton Fillyau and, according to Payne (1996), this track could ‘arguably be called the first funk record’ (Payne, 1996:20).



Example 4. *I Got Money*, drum kit (1962).

Moving ahead to the 1970s, an example of the street beat is to be found in Earnie K. Doe’s, *Here Come The Girls.* Produced by Allan Toussaint, the house band for Doe’s song was The Meters which included drummer ‘Zigiboo’ Modeliste. The opening of the song begins with a march pattern with similar snare drum rolls to those seen in Example 2:



Example 5. *Here come the Girls*, snare drum (1972).

In the same year as *Here Comes The Girls,* Ernie and the Top Notes’ *Dap Walk,* demonstrates a different approach to the street beat.[124] The pattern for *Dap Walk* (Example 6) was described by Williams as a ‘second line rhythm’ but here the sixteenth-note rhythm shown in example 1 has been replaced by a recurring syncopated figure:

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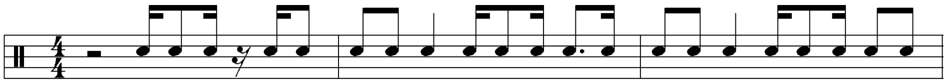
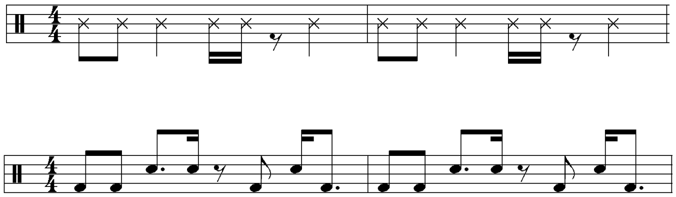
[124] Dap Walk" by Ernie and The Top Notes(BMI). Recorded early 1972, New Orleans, LA Engineer: Cossimo Matassa. Lawrence Bowie (trumpet - solo); Freddie Green (trumpet); Nathaniel Graines (saxophone); Louis Kimball (vocals); John “Dap” Peters (bass); Ernie Vincent Williams (guitar); Peter “Rooster” (drums). Produced by Albion Ford and Ernie Vincent Williams. Originally released on Fordom single FR 105 (source <http://www.stonesthrow.com/funky16/index.html> accessed 11.10.04.



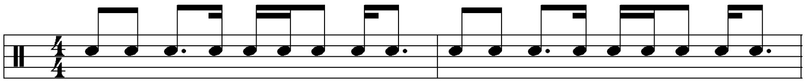
Example 6. *Dap Walk*, snare drum pattern (1972).

William's assertion that this rhythm was a 'second line rhythm' opens up the possibility of there being a number of variations of the street beat. Two further variations of second line practice will demonstrate the different ways that the 'street beat' was employed in songs of the late sixties and early seventies. *Handclapping Song* (1972) by the Meters provides an example of a composite rhythm created using snare and bass drum along with handclaps and tambourine.



Example 7. *Handclapping Song,* rhythmic patterns (1972).

The composite rhythm resulting from combining the handclaps and drum kit is shown in Example 8:

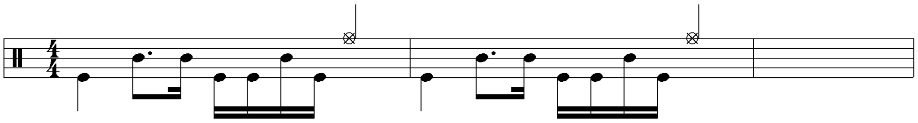


Example 8. ***Handclapping song*****, composite rhythm.**

The final example of the 'street beat' is found in The Meters' 1968 song, *Sophisticated Cissy.* According to Slutsky, *Sophisticated Cissy* is:

> ….one of the best examples of second line drumming that you'll ever hear. Listen to the conversation between the bass drum, snare, and open hi-hat in the first four measures (Slutsky, date unknown: ex 50).[125]

In *Sophisticated Cissy,* Modeliste uses the street beat but instead of playing it exclusively on the snare, he divides the rhythm between bass, snare and cymbals:



Example 9. ***Sophisticated Cissy,*** **drum kit (1968).**[126]

What emerges from this survey is that the New Orleans street beat can be identified in a number of songs from the 1950s until the 1970s. The street beat exists in a number of variant forms but is characterised by the use of sixteenth-note patterns. In the following discussion we shall address the question of how writers have considered that the street beat was an important element in creating proto-funk.

2.2.2 Discussion

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[125] There are a number of other songs which make extensive use of the snare or snare/hi-hat patterns including Live Wire (1969), Look-Ka Py Py (1969) and Just Kissed My Baby (1974) in a similar style.

[126] Notated here for Bass, snare and open hi-hat.

The influence of the second line rhythm or street beat on the development of funk has been acknowledged by a number of New Orleans musicians.[127] Anecdotal evidence, from at least three generations of New Orleans drummers, would suggest that the street beat originated from the marching brass bands and the military bands of the nineteenth century and continued to be played during the twentieth century.[128] New Orleans' drummers frequently cite the influence of the second line rhythm on their own playing style. For many drummers of the New Orleans community, the transition from marching band to the drum kit was a relatively easy one. Several drummers of the period, such as Paul Barbarin (1901-1969), played bass drum marching with the Onward Brass Band and accompanied King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Fats Pichon and Manual Perez in the evenings on drum kit.

Musicians such as Earl Palmer and Joseph Modeliste transferred the musical patterns of the street beat to the drum kit and brought them into their music through pieces such as *Tipitina* and *Here Come The Girls*. Palmer discusses this approach in Payne (1996) by describing how he arrived at this kind of beat:

> The funk thing came about because it was a street thing that we all just inherently got…. I combined what the snare drum players were playing and what the bass drum players were playing with a little more up-to-date funky thing (Payne, 1996:5).

Palmer's suggestion is that the rhythm he created, rather than having any particular connotations, military, street or otherwise, is something much more intuitive. For

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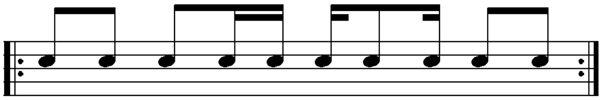
[127] Tress (1995) interviews a number of New Orleans drummers who, like Herman Riley (p. 16), Decon Lastie (p. 31), and Johnny Vidacovich (p. 76), all present variations of the street beat.

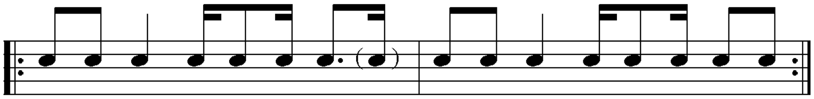
Palmer, the street beat is one of many standard 'inherent' patterns which allowed him to produce a more contemporary rhythmic feel for the song. Palmer's reason for describing this rhythm as 'funky' is not made clear but a partial answer may be found by examining the syncopated sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern of this particular groove.

Isolated from the rest of the drum kit, the snare pattern from *Tipitina* illustrates one particular variant of the 'street beat' pattern with a syncopated third beat pattern.



Example 10. *Tipitina*, snare drum rhythm (1953).

Variants of this syncopated pattern can be found in other music from New Orleans including the 1970s piece, *Dap Walk* by Earnie and the Top Notes.



Example 11. *Dap Walk*, snare drum rhythm (1972).

The leader of the band, Earnie Williams, specifically refers to this rhythmic pattern as a 'second-line strut'. The background to the recording not only reveals some interesting information about the rhythmic pattern, but also about the nature of the performance process and the contribution that individuals would make to recording a

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128 Herman Riley (Tress 1995) comments on the influence of military bands and Sousa marches which were popular with the brass bands of New Orleans. Riley mentions that the bands 'played a

song. Williams' recollects that the original drummer was unavailable so Peter 'Rooster' whose 'second-line strut fuels the track's unstoppable rhythm'.[129] If Williams' recollection is correct, then it is probable that had the original Top Note drummer played on this song, the second line influence would have been missing from the song. The influence of the Mardi Gras Indians in second line drumming has been explored by Smith (1994) and this would suggest that some influence of the second line drumming practice would be found in Rooster's playing style. While this rhythmic pattern could appear in other variations, as a part of New Orleans performance practice, it would, at the very least, seem safe to assume that this particular pattern was part of the vocabulary common to second line drumming.

Other variants of the 'street beat' are more representative of the sound of their second line origins. Earnie K. Doe's 1970s recording, *Here Comes the Girls* eschews the drum kit and returns to the military marching sound of the snare (example 5, p. 89). The drum part was performed by Meters' drummer, Joseph 'Zigaboo' Modeliste who is characterised in Payne as 'one of the best exponents' of the New Orleans sound.[130] It is difficult to fully explain the idea of a 'New Orleans' Sound' but there seems to be a consensus that there is a recognisable rhythmic style drawn from the second line experience.

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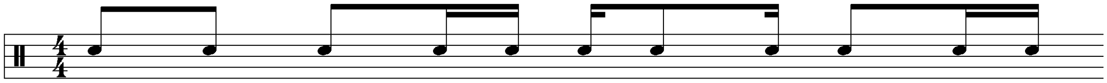
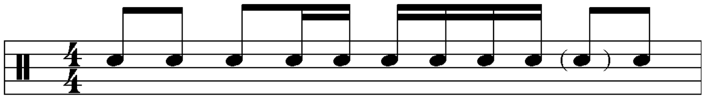
lot of marches, but they played them with a lilt' (Tress, 1995: 16).

[129] source <http://www.stonesthrow.com/funky16/index.html> This source reveals that 'Rooster' was also a Mardi Gras Indian. Williams remembered that: 'He played all types of drums – timbales, traps, etc. John Ross was our original drummer….. Peter was more rhythmic than John anyway. John was more of a commercial-type drummer'.

A hypothesis emerges at this point concerns both the versatility and adaptability of the second line rhythm. These examples have illustrated that the variants of this syncopated, sixteenth-note rhythm can be found in rhythm and blues based music in examples extending from the 1950s until the 1970s. The funkiness, described by Palmer as one of the reasons for adopting this particular pattern, could be explained by the use of sixteenth-note, syncopated patterns which appear to be a common element in this style. Two distinct ideas emerge from the example which can be categorised as follows. The first, 'Type I', heard in *Tipitina,*and *Dap Walk* has a distinctive syncopated pattern on the third beat while 'Type II' is characterised by a non-syncopated pattern.



Example 12. 'Street Beat' (Type I)



Example 13. 'Street Beat' (Type II)

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130 Modeliste played with the Neville Brothers in The Meters, as well as with Allen Toussaint and The Wild Tchoupitoulas. Palmer (interview in Payne, 1996) suggests that he 'is the best exponent of New Orleans type music playing the drums now'.

However, such an approach would seem too positivistic.[131] What cannot be effectively described here is the personal feel each performer brings to the song. Additionally, for the moment, the analytical methodology employed does not allow for close examination of the rhythms created by other instruments and their relationship to the drum kit. For the moment, what can be drawn from these examples is the use of the 'street beat' and second line sound to inject a specific feel into a song and this feel or groove, as an element of musical vocabulary, is shared locally amongst drummers from New Orleans.

The close relationship between drummers in New Orleans suggests that there was a strong network of musicians who were able to learn from one another, share experiences and utilise the common experience of the second line in their work on drum kit. In theoretical terms, it is possible to understand the 'street beat' as an intertextual element that can be traced across several styles (military, marching band, second line) and, importantly for this study, across the playing of individual performers.

An example of the intertextual process can be illustrated through the work of Clayton Fillyau who was the drummer for James Brown in the early 1960s.[132] Fillyau's work on *I Got Money* shows elements of the 'street beat'. Fillyau, unlike Palmer and

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[131] See glossary of terms.

[132] Fillyau's work can be heard on *Live at the Apollo* (1962)

Modeliste, was born in Florida and he learned what he calls the 'New Orleans groove' from the drummer, Charles 'Hungry' Willams, who played for Huey 'Piano' Smith.[133]

Fillyau did not continue as Brown's drummer after 1962 and was replaced by Clyde Stubblefield. Fillyau taught him the same patterns that he played for Brown.[134] In this way, specific patterns were transmitted between players at a local, national and international level. By the 1960s, what was the second line 'street beat' had become known as the 'New Orleans sound'. It would be easy to suggest a model where musicians from New Orleans were seen as being exclusively responsible for the 'street beat'. However such a model would fictionalise the way that musical ideas are transmitted amongst musicians. The second line 'street beat' was just part of a more extended vocabulary required to work as a drummer at this time. While Earl Palmer can be heard playing his 'street beat' on the 1953 version of *Tipitina*, he can also be heard playing a range of other rhythmic grooves during the 1950s as drummer for Little Richard between 1956 and 1958. On songs such as *Long Tall Sally* (1956), *Tutti Frutti* (1956), and *Good Golly Miss Molly* (1958), Palmer can be heard playing ride cymbal on what is essentially a shuffle rhythm. Of the time, *Lucille* (1957) is one of the few songs to use hi-hat and straight eighth rhythm. Like many musicians of his time, Palmer was able to draw on an extensive stylistic vocabulary which not only informed his own performance practice but, through his work with Longhair, Little Richard and others, influenced the playing of others.

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[133] The source for this information is Payne (1996), pp. 20-22. Fillyau does not mention the drummer's name. However, in a separate interview with Earl Palmer (Payne, 1996) the suggestion is that it was either Charles 'Hungry' Williams or Smokey Johnson.

[134] Subblefield acknowledges that Fillyau: 'taught me the show' (Payne, 1996: 62). Stubblefield, born in Tennessee (1943), joined Browns' band in November 1965.

The transfer of the street beat between a wider network of musicians and performers over a twenty year period suggests that the street beat rhythm had, and retained, meaning for both artists and audiences. Part of that meaning remained rooted in New Orleans which in itself brings about numerous connotations including associations with dancing in Congo Square or, more recently, the Mardi Gras.[135] However, at a stylistic level, second line drumming is recognised as a unique regional style.

However, although the originality of the rhythm be located in New Orleans, 'Licks' suggests that there was no formula to the sound with each artist having their own distinct groove. In this way Palmer, along with Modeliste, distilled the street sound (an improvised sound itself) of the second line drummers and incorporated it into their individual style. The second line rhythmic pattern therefore forms an important part of the repertoire of rhythms available to drummers from the late 1950s and was promoted by performers such as Palmer and Modeliste from New Orleans and adopted by performers such as Fillyau and Stubblefield who played extensively with James Brown.

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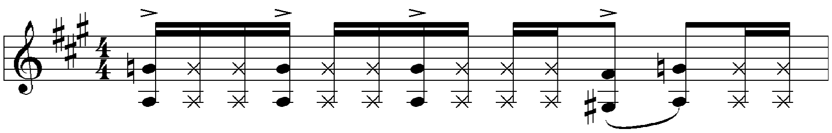
[135] The link to Congo Square could be considered as particularly tenuous but as seen in chapter 2, the politicisation of the music by authors such as Vincent (1996) does create a signification which has to considered. In essence, the music leads to other signifiers or symbols of political and cultural

The inclusion of the 'street beat' into the repertoire of patterns available to drummers over the period draws attention to its function, in common with marches and similar repetitive patterns, as a kinetic anaphone.[136] While this is not the only connotative association to be drawn from the second line rhythm, it is nevertheless an important one.[137] One of the reasons for incorporating such a pattern into the repertoire of rhythms over the period was to provide a motoric pattern for dancing. Second line practice was not just musical, it included lines of people dancing along in the parades and as such had the capacity to engender movement. Other patterns were also available for dancing but each brought its own particular 'feel' and embodied their own particular dance steps. New rhythmic patterns were emerging during this period including sixteenth-note patterns such as:



Example 14. ***Bo Diddley*****, guitar riff (1955).**

However, these patterns belong to a different musical tradition and have not been identified by any writers as being part of the funk sound. This would suggest that *Bo Diddley*, along with other driving sixteenth-note patterns, belong to a different song

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significance and this way, through a chain of siginifiers, it is possible to see how Vincent can link the music directly to Africa.

[136] See glossary for details of Tagg terms.

[137] See Tagg (200:43) for a discussion of the snare drum rhythm in Fernando. His suggestion is that the rhythm, like the bolero type figures he uses for IOCM are associated with 'military'; 'fateful

family and provide a different moment of departure for other stylistic and genre formations.

As a proto-funk sound, the second line ‘street beat’ became associated with the practices of New Orleans drummers such as Palmer and Modeliste. This practice was not, however, confined geographically as other performers assimilated the rhythmic style into their own playing. As such, the ‘street beat’ added a distinctly recognisable sound to the repertoire of patterns available at the time. Stuart has acknowledged the importance of the street beat in creating a sixteenth-note alternative to the more typical eight note patterns in use at during the time. These possibilities were further extended by the influences of other musical styles illustrating the point that these musical ideas did not exist in isolation to each other but were part of a dynamic, interactive . network of musical activity.

The way this interactive network works can be explored in the music of Professor Longhair who worked closely with Earl Palmer in the 1950s. Longhair is cited by Brackett as important in developing a proto-funk style. Longhair’s fluid approach to rhythm allowed him the opportunity to bring together Latin rhythms, Boogie, and rhythm ’n’ blues and mix them in such a way as to create a recognisable moment of departure. Longhair’s ability to distil a number of stylistic traditions, including the second line rhythm, and create a strong individual style, may be described as funky.

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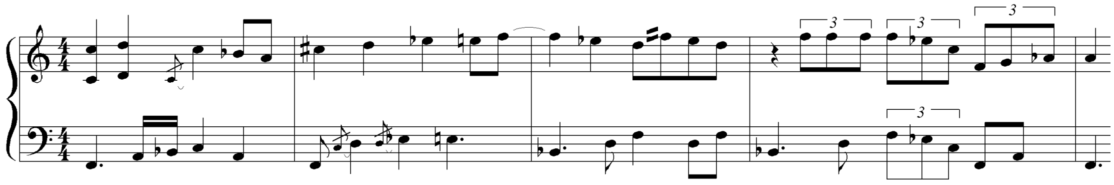
and inexorable’; and ‘Hispanic’. In this case, the geographical place associated with the Boléro are replaced by New Orleans.

However, the concept of funk that Longhair creates in 1953 is not necessarily the same concept that was to emerge in the 1960s and in the following section, I explore Longhair's contribution to the development of a proto-funk style.

2.3 *Tipitina:* boogiefication and the Afro-Caribbean musical interchange

In addition to the second line rhythm, the other musical feature highlighted by Brackett (1995) and Stewart (2000) is their discussion of the proto-funk is the Caribbean influence found in music such as Professor Longhair's *Tipitina.* Stewart discusses the distinctive percussive style of Longhair's playing which "became known locally as 'rumba-boogie'" (2000: 298) where the triplet boogie-woogie gesture is played over a left hand Latin figure as heard in the opening of *Tipitina*:



Example 15. *Tipitina*, opening (1953 version).[138]

A number of musematic ideas can be extracted from the introduction to *Tipitina*, but three in particular will concern us here. The first, described by Stewart as a 'habanera-like figure', is heard in the left hand bass part of the piano:[139]

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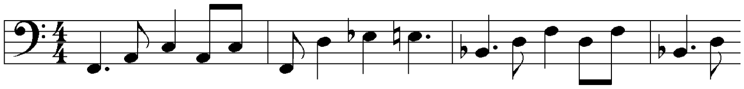
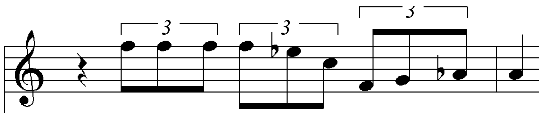
[138] The issue concerning transcriptions has been discussed in the introduction. This is, of necessity, a sketch of the piece with some ornamentation and rhythmic inflection absent.

[139] See glossary for Habanera.



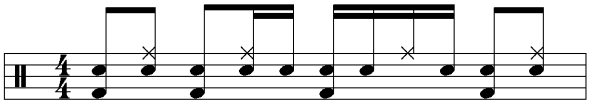
Example 16. *Tipitina*, bass line.

The second significant museme for consideration is the triplet, boogie-woogie pattern of the right hand piano:



Example 17. *Tipitina*, boogie figure.

The final museme is the rhythmic groove of *Tipitina* played by Earl Palmer. This example has already been discussed in the section on second line drumming and the 'street beat'. Its inclusion here is to place the groove in the specific context of *Tipitina*:

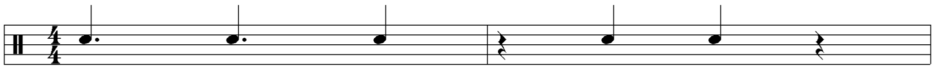


***Ex.3. Tipitina,* basic drum groove.**

2.3.1 Discussion

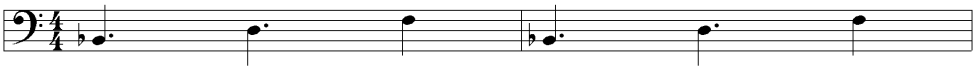
The individual musematic material identified in *Tipitina* could be understood as style indicators signifying 'Latin', 'boogie' and 'second line' elements into one song. Tagg (1992) defines style indicators in his *Introduction to Semiotics* as a musical sign that can act as a genre synecdoche which are acquired through acculturation.[140] In this particular case, the ‘home style’ might be identified as both the rhythm ’n’ blues style of New Orleans in the 1950s, but also as the individual style of Professor Longhair. As such, the style of *Tipitina* is eclectic and it is this characteristic that may give a clue to the association of this music with the development of a proto-funk style.

The use of Latin rhythms in popular music of the time has been examined by Narváez (1964) as well as Johnson and Chernoff (1991). Stewart (2000) suggests that *Tipitina* was not an isolated example of Afro-Caribbean derived rhythms and a similar stylistic approach can be heard in Longhair’s *Mardi Gras in New Orleans* (1949) and in *Longhair’s Blues-Rhumba* (1949).[141] Both songs are built around the characteristic 3:2 clave rhythm:



Example 18. Clave rhythm.

Mardi Gras Mambo emphasises this particular approach by using the same beat in the bass line:



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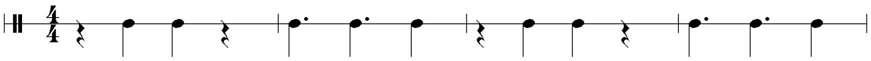
[140] Tagg, P. (1992) “Towards a Sign Typology of Music” in *Secondo convegno europeo di analisi musicale,* ed. R. Dalmonte M. Baroni. Trento: Universià degli studi di Trento, 1992, pp. 369-378.

[141] “Getting’ Funky: The Birth Of New Orleans R&B”. 2001. CD1 ‘Piano Power’. (Proper Records, London)

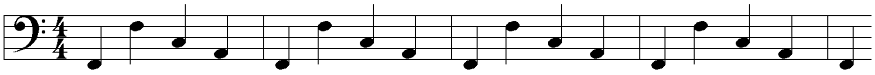
Example 19. *Mardi Gras Mambo*, bass line.

In *Blues Rhumba,* Longhair reverses the clave rhythm of *Mardi Gras Mambo*:



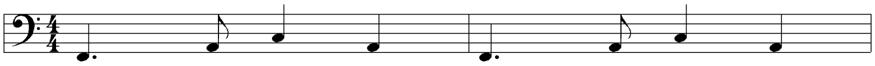
Example 20. Clave rhythm, reversed.

While the shift in accent is not uncharacteristic of Latin rhythms, as a feature of Longhair's personal style it suggests an eclectic, flexible approach to rhumba style. Further evidence of this flexibility is to be found in the merging of other stylisitic indicators such as boogie-woogie. In *Tipitina,* the typical right-hand boogie triplet patterns are played against rhumba rhythms in the left hand. The juxtaposition of the stylistic norms of Latin and boogie are also to be found in Longhair's *Blues Rhumba.* *Blues Rhumba* changes bass pattern several times beginning with a quarter note figure in straight eighths played at approximately 213 bpm:



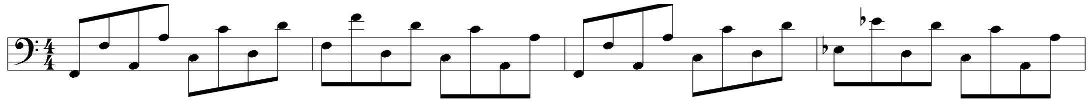
Example 21. *Blues Rhumba*, opening bass line.

before abruptly changing to a rhumba pattern:



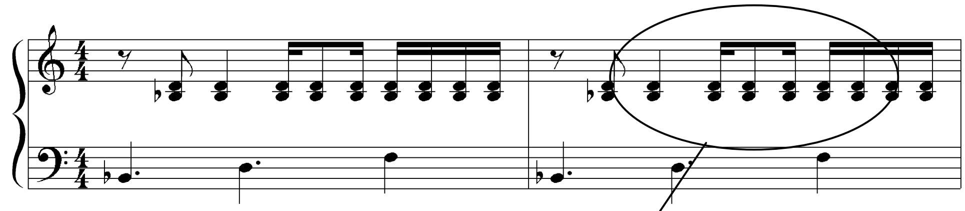
Example 22. *Blues Rhumba*, second bass line.

An alternative bass pattern used within *Blues Rhumba* is a typical boogie, split octave figure, eight to the bar (example 23). Unlike Example 23, Example 24 uses straight eighths instead of a shuffle feel and provides an accompaniment figure for the wailing saxophone so prominent in that style of R&B.[142]

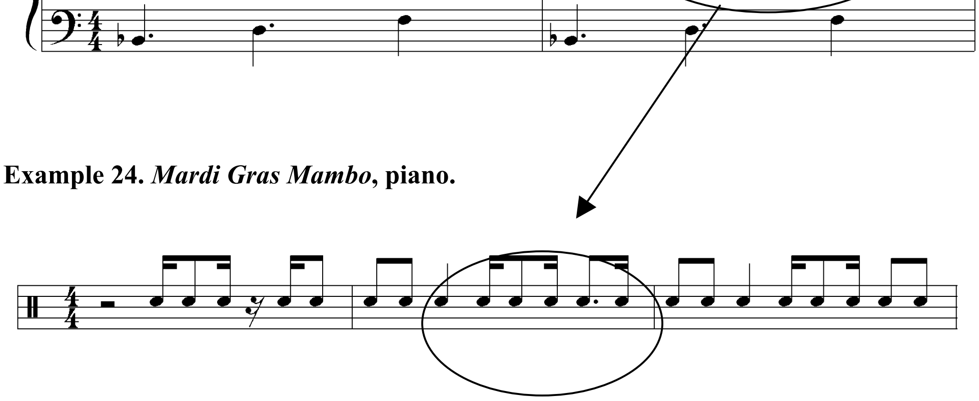


Example 23. *Blues Rhumba*, bass line 3.

Further rhythmic possibilities are explored by Longhair in the accompaniment to *Mardi Gras Mambo.* While the left hand keeps a fairly conventional 3 + 3 + 2 clave pattern, the right hand figure produces a sixteenth-note rhythm shown in Example 24 which reminds us of the street beat (Example 25):



Example 24. *Mardi Gras Mambo*, piano.



Example 25. *Dap Walk*, snare drum pattern.

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[142] For a more detailed discussion of the saxophone sound in R&B see Miller, 1985.

While it could be argued that the inclusion on a sixteenth-note syncopated pattern in *Mardi Gras Mambo* does not in itself substantiate a direct link to the street beat, the sharing of rhythmic material with songs such as *Dap Walk* by Ernie and the Top Notes requires further discussion.[143] Although *Mardi Gras Mambo* and *Dap Walk* are separated by some eighteen years the repetitive rhythm could easily be understood to have derived from the street beat.

Such a practice would seem to support the idea that intertextual exchange not only extended between drummers, but also between New Orleans' instrumentalists. According to Williams:

> When you're playing in New Orleans, you have to play on a second line. But also the old blues thing. And also the jazz influence…. As a drummer you have to play all those different rhythms. You have to know those different rhythms. So when you have a funk jam, it's a fusion.[144]

Following Tagg's nomenclature, these independent elements in an acculturation or 'fusion' can be understood as genre synecdoches for a number of different ideas. According to Narváez, this fusion of Latin, Afro-Cuban, and American styles was unique to New Orleans:

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[143] Dap Walk" by Ernie and The Top Notes(BMI). Recorded early 1972, New Orleans, LA Engineer: Cossimo Matassa. Lawrence Bowie (trumpet - solo); Freddie Green (trumpet); Nathaniel Graines (saxophone); Louis Kimball (vocals); John "Dap" Peters (bass); Ernie Vincent Williams (guitar); Peter "Rooster" (drums). Produced by Albion Ford and Ernie Vincent Williams. Originally released on Fordom single FR 105 (source <http://www.stonesthrow.com/funky16/index.html> accessed 11.10.04.

[144] Ernie Vincent Williams interview on <http://www.stonesthrow.com/funky16/index.html> accessed 11.10.04.

> What is so remarkable about Spanish-tinged New Orleans blues is its *sense of place*. From the title of Jelly Roll Morton's "New Orleans Joys," to Professor Longhair's "Mardi Gras in New Orleans" and "Big Chief," to Dave Bartholomew's "Carnival Day" and the Hawkettes' "Mardi Gras Mambo," it is clear that New Orleans blues musicians have often been inclined to use the Spanish tinge when musically identifying their home city (Narváez, 1994: 220).

The focus of Narváez's study was in the musical interaction between African-American blues musicians and Hispanic musicians. New Orleans was of particular interest to Narváez because, 'the Cuban rhythms particularly affected a school of blues pianists who develop the New Orleans 'sound' of rhythm and blues'(Narváez, 1994: 203). For Narváez, Longhair was a 'musician's musician' and a 'mentor' for many post-war artists. His influences were varied and he was able to familiarise himself with Latin rhythms during the time he spent in the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937. Stationed in Texas, he was also able to access Latin sounds on Mexican radio stations. Narváez adds one more important point which he calls community aesthetics: 'It was commonality rather than idiosyncrasy that made Longhair's music regionally appealing' (ibid: 216).

The significance of Longhair as a proto-funk performer was in his ability to bring these different styles together in his own playing style during the 1950s. From an analytical viewpoint it is easy to deconstruct the identifiable elements of Longhair's music and isolate them as genre synecdoches for blues, Latin, boogie and other Latin styles. However, the layering of second line drum rhythms with rumba patterns, boogie licks and rhythm 'n' blues through the process of jamming also led to the creation of a recognisable regional and individual style.[145] In this way, the music of Longhair signifies at a number of different levels, one of these levels is as a stylistic influence that is understood as protofunk. The Hawkette's *Mardi Gras Mambo,* unlike *Tipitina,* seems little more than a Latin tinged standard. However, the Neville Brothers influence on forming The Meters may be a factor in including them in histories.[146]

Identifying Longhair's style as proto-funk may raise a number of issues. At the time Longhair's contribution was understood as 'funky' and the idea of a 'funky jam' seems to be a practice acknowledged by performers of the era. Longhair's music demonstrates a flexible and eclectic approach to style by drawing on so many elements of the period. Longhair's ability to create a polyrhythmic groove in a linear way, by combining several rhythmic layers together, is a feature that was to become associated with funk during the 1960s. However, Longhair's approach was not unique for the time and other songs included a synthesis of Latin rhythms in a rhythm 'n' blues context. Clyde McPhatter's *Honey Love* (1954) for example, uses the sound of the congas and, in the same year, The Hawkettes' *Mardi Gras Mambo* (1954) also shows a strong influence of Latin instruments and rhythmic ideas but without demonstrating the wider stylistic borrowing that Longhair's music exhibits.[147]

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[145] Songs like *Mardi Gras Rhumba*, and *Longhair Stomp* were both music for performing and for dancing to. Longhair had a highly energetic performance style which apparently involved kicking the front of the piano with his foot to add to the rhythmic intensity of his songs.

[146] In the end, it is difficult to say more about pieces such as *Mardi Gras Mambo* as there is very little said about the music to make it clear why such a piece should be included in the history.

This discussion of the influence of New Orleans on the development of funk began with statements from Brackett and Stewart who suggested that elements of funk can be heard in *Tipitina* and other blues influenced New Orleans fusion sounds. Above all, Brackett emphasises the importance of the intensification of polyrhythmic possibilities which emerged from this fusion. The discussion has pointed towards a localised form of rhythm 'n' blues which are the result of a fusion of styles and Narváez (1994) reminds us that Longhair's music was very much a product of the locality. Strong influential ideas come from the second line rhythms as well as Afro-Cuban influences and other more commercial sounds of boogie woogie.

What emerges from this discussion is a way of understanding the significance of fusing styles together to create a moment of departure. This moment of departure may be identified as a new stylistic configuration which, in turn, influences others. *Tipitina* demonstrates the potential for synthesising a range of musical ideas through a particular collaborative musical practice, to create a individual style and a particular funky aesthetic which can be found in the polyrhythmic interplay of the different musical strands. Longhair represents a particular person/style/musical figure which synthesises in order to create something new. Putting these ideas together, a number of stylistic indicators begin to emerge which are related to a proto-funk aesthetic. These include:

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[147] The popularity of Latin music was a cross genre phenomenon and found in the music of Horace Silver and Dizzy Gillespie amongst other Jazz musicians. It is worth considering the resurgence in Latin influenced music during the late 1990s. Ricky Martin's *Livin' La Vida Loca* set off a stream of Latin influenced songs and brought new stars to the charts such as Enrique Inglesias. Among Ricky's numerous awards, he won 5 MTV Music Awards in 1999 and was named World's Best-selling Pop Male Artist and World's Best-selling Latin Artist at the 12th Annual World Music Awards in 2001. Gerri Halliwell at this time was undergoing a serious image change from plumpish Ginger Spice Girl to skinny blond jumped on the Latin bandwagon with *Mi Chico Loco* which appeared in the charts in August 1999 and stayed in the top 20 for 5 weeks.

- A contrapuntal approach[148]
- A synthesis or distillation of styles to fashion something new although still firmly in a blues based idiom
- A collaborative performance practice based around 'funky jam'
- A recognition or awareness that a significant new aesthetic was developing
- A retrospective understanding of an emerging style.

However, there may be other reasons for including Longhair and Palmer in funk's pre-history and there may be other reasons why both musicians seem to be firmly entrenched in the funk mythology. Narváez (1994) describes Longhair as a 'musician's musician' a status which may explain why his particular music has been held up as an example of a developing proto-funk style. Vincent suggests that 'Earl Palmer is regularly given credit for being…the first funk drummer' (Vincent, 1995: 69) and in part this is the result of musicians such as Dr. John who writes in his autobiography that the drummer 'lays down the foundation for what New Orleans music is all about: The Funk (sic)' (Rebenak, 1994:186).[149] That others retrospectively desire to ascribe the proto-funk to New Orleans as well as to specific musicians may suggest, from examination of the music, that the influence was less stylistic than a desire to create a origin for funk. To see if Longhair and Palmer acted as a point of departure in that they had any residual effect on musicians that came after them will be explored in the next section.

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[148] There is a tendency in writing to equate 'polyrhythmic' approach with African rhythms (see Vincent, 1996:2) but such an approach ignores the wider role that polyrhythms have had in different cultures and different styles. Polyrhythmic, like many musical terms, can be problematic because of the inaccuracy created through lack of definition. Contrapuntal (point against point) is the most useful term indicating independent linear approach to rhythm.

2.4 Early James Brown Funk (1960-65)

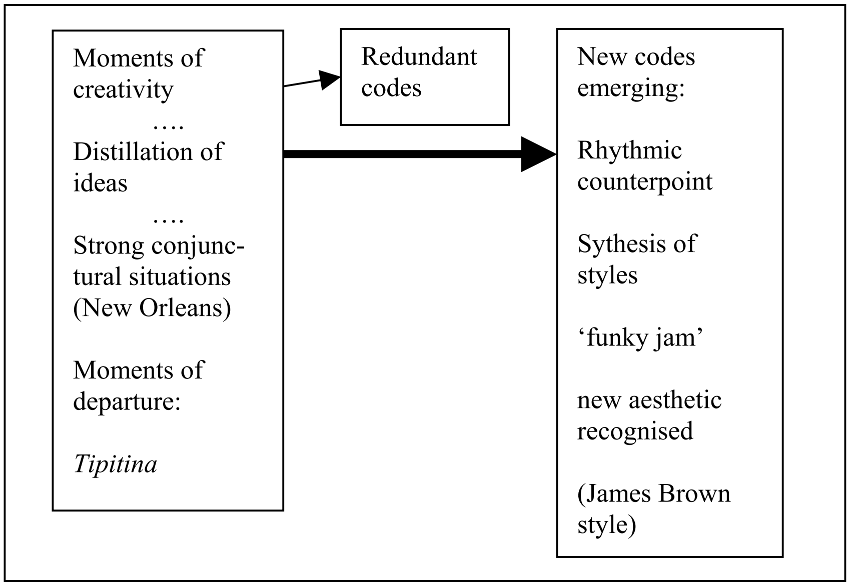
Moments of creativity
….
Distillation of ideas
….
Strong conjunctural situations (New Orleans)
Moments of departure:
Tipitina
Redundant codes
New codes emerging:
Rhythmic counterpoint
Sythesis of styles
'funky jam'
new aesthetic recognised
(James Brown style)

Figure 3. Diagram to illustrate emerging codes.

From the model created in Figure 3, it would be possible to assume if Longhair and Palmer presented a particular point of departure for the proto-funk style, then it would be possible to trace elements of this development in the music of others. By exploring the links between musical ideas from New Orleans, it may be possible to create links to future experiments in funk which substantiate the claim that New Orleans was important in developing a proto-funk sound.

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[149] Rebenak was similarly complementary about Professor Longhair.

One figure to emerge in histories of funk is James Brown who was to become known as the 'Godfather' of funk. Brown's output during the 1950s were generally 12/8 ballads, shuffles and jump blues which 'were the steady diet of R&B acts on the Chitlin' Circuit' (Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 10).[150] Two songs from the 1960s, *I Got Money,* and *Think,* have become associated with the development of funk with *I Got Money* described by Payne as 'arguably the first funk record'.[151] Part of the rationale for this claim is the somewhat unique rhythmic approach taken on these tracks.

Think was recorded with Nat Kendrick on drums while *I Got Money* was performed by Clayton Fillyau. Each drummer produced a groove which was quite distinct from most of the R 'n' B playing of the time. The rhythmic pattern for *Think* is, in notational representation at least, [152] a basic eighth note rhythm illustrated in Example 26. However, in performance Kendrick created a groove that Slutsky and Silverman call ‘schizophrenic’. The eighth notes are:

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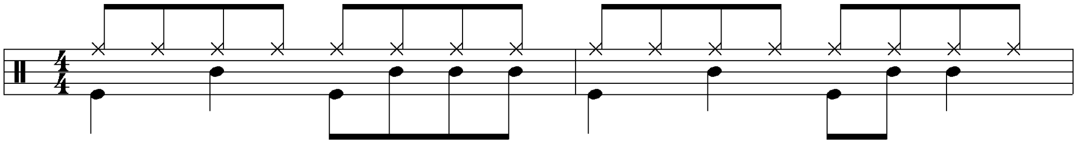
[150] The Chitlin' Circuit is a string of small, Black nightclubs and "honky tonks" that are spread throughout the U.S., with the majority of them being in the South. Chitlin was also the fried intestine of a pig and was an ingredient of 'soul food'. According to the OED, Chitlin (or Chitterling) was also a well known ingredient of food in England during the late 1800s. (accessed 16.02.2005 < http://dictionary.oed.com>)

[151] *I Got Money* is discussed extensively by Stewart (2000) who draws on Payne (1996) in discussing the contribution of New Orleans drummer, Clayton Fillyau in creating a sixteenth-note patterns for the song. *Think* is discussed in Slutsky and Silverman (1997).

> ….not quite swung but they’re not exactly straight either. The time is also caught between two dimensions as his snare drum is constantly pushing the beat while the hi-hat is pulling back (Slutsky and Silverman, 1997:13).



Example 26. *Think,* Nat Kendrick’s opening rhythm (1960).

The music for *Think* is developed from the same improvisational basis explored in Longhair’s *Tipitina.* Playing alongside Kendrick were Bernard Odum (bass) and Bobby Roach (guitar). The three performers had been playing together for some while but, in Slutsky and Silverman’s view, *Think* is a defining moment in the Kendrick-

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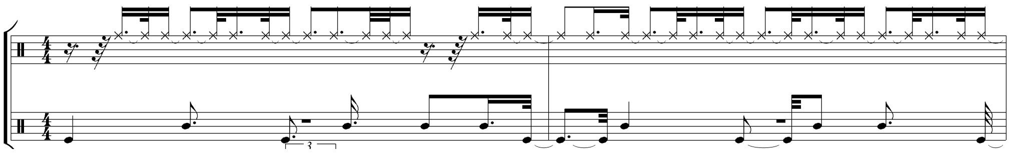
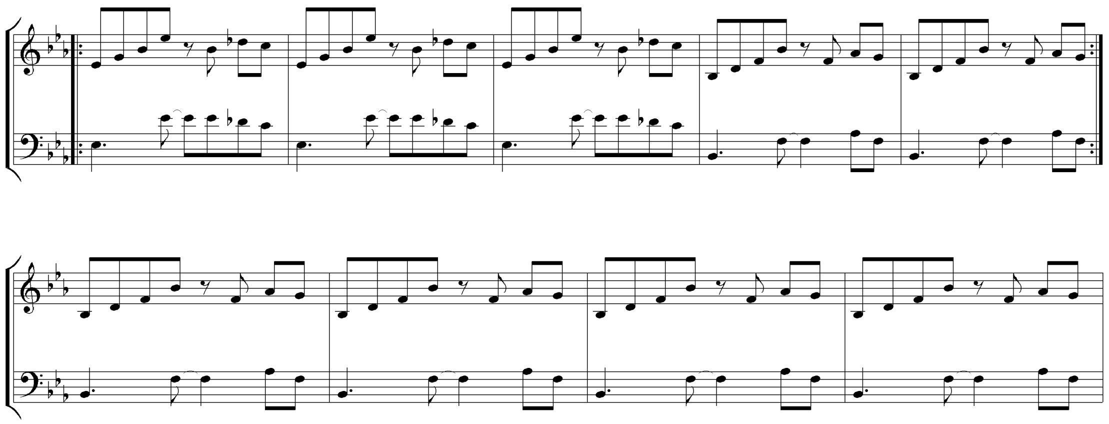
[152] A study by Huang and Huang (1994-5) on tempo rubato used by Billie Holliday tries to cover similar ground by using notation as a means to charting the ‘drift’ of the beat. However, the whole study seems to miss the point that (a) there was never any intention to lock into a mechanical beat during the performance; (b) as performers we are not machines; and (c) notation was never intended to facilitate this kind of study. In short, why use a digital, finite mathematical system (and tedious arithmetic) to describe something which is expressive. Using sequencer technology to replicate the opening of Think as accurately as possible, the following rhythm, quantized to 64th notes, was produced.



Clearly, this is an unsatisfactory method for analysis that offers little in the way of useful material for discussion, except perhaps on the inadequacy of notation. Recent work by Rob Bowman on the song *Try a Little Tenderness* examines the different approaches by a number of singers. He notes that the: ‘African-American expressive culture…has long exhibited little interest in fixed of set

Odum-Roach collaboration that comes through working together over time. In the chorus of the song, the guitar and bass merely accentuate the first beat, but in the verse they create an open textured, arpeggio figure riff.



Example 27. ***Think*****, guitar and bass (verse).**

Think create a linear texture around a largely static E♭^{7} riff. The guitar part has a muted single note arpeggio figure while the bass emphasises an underlying 3+3+2 rhythm. This pattern is accentuated in the last four bars of the verse on the change to a B♭^{7} chord. Combined with the half-shuffle feel a particular groove emerges which gives an insight into the range of patterns available other than swung or straight eighths. As a snapshot of a particular group of performers, it offers an opportunity to recognise the experimental approach that Brown and his musicians were willing to take.[153]

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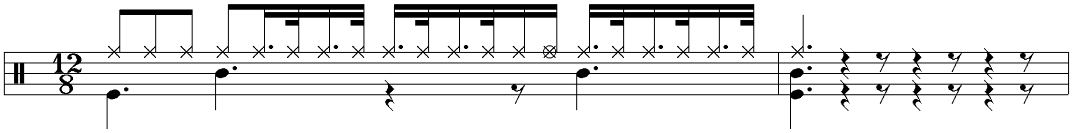
expressive objects. Rather the emphasis is placed upon fluidity, individual interpretation, collective effort, improvisation, the moment and process over product' (2003:128).

[153] One of the criticisms often used to evaluate music of the period is that is 'all sounds the same'. While it is true that there was a great deal of formulaic playing, there was also the opportunity to develop quite distinctive grooves in songs.

As if to confirm this approach to the period, Brown's *I Know It's True* recorded with Kendrick, Roach and Odum contains an interesting variant on the popular 12/8 meter used at that time. The rhythm has a prominent part in the text and is characterised by an unevenness which, like *Think,* may sit between our conventional ideas about triplets and duplets. The opening rhythm is notated here:[154]



Example 28. *I Know it's True,* opening.

A common conception of James Brown is that much of his rhythmic innovation came during the mid 1960s. Typical of this view is the approach taken by Palmer in magazines such as *Rolling Stone* where he proposes that, 'in 1965 James Brown altered the role of the rhythm section in black popular music radically and irrevocably'.[155] Much of the writing on funk (Vincent, 1996; Thompson, 2000) sees 1965 as a watershed in the development of funk and the importance of *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* as a 'seminal' work in the creation of the James Brown funk sound. However, such an approach undervalues the process of experimentation during the early 1960s which underpinned Brown's new musical direction. *Think* and *I Got You* are, like Longhair's *Tipitina,* too early to be considered as funk or proto-funk. These pieces were experimental ideas which, retrospectively, can be attributed elements of the funk style once it began to formulate during the late 1960s. The lasting influence of these works is difficult to gauge but they are representative of the experimentation with groove that existed in the pre-funk era.

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[154] I confess to having had great difficulty with this rhythm, especially the open hi-hat which briefly interrupts the dotted de-di, de-di de-di rhythm.

Acknowledging the experimental nature of pieces such as *I Got Money* and the search for a funky sound represented by *Tipitina,* suggests that there was an awareness of the potential of rhythm in rhythm 'n' blues to produce a funky quality in the music which extended beyond the typical backbeat. However, a systematic exploration of the musical attributes which could be identified as proto-funk does not appear in Brown until 1964. Between 1964 and 1967 Brown created a group of related pieces that included *Out Of Sight* (May, 1964) and *I Got You* (May, 1965) and *Brand New Bag* (Feb 1965). These pieces can be seen as part of a consistent experimental approach which consolidated itself in 1967 with the innovative song, *Cold Sweat.*

Brown began a concentrated period of experimentation during 1964 beginning with the song, *Out Of Sight.* While it should be acknowledged that Brown produced many songs during this period, for some *Out Of Sight* held a particular significance in terms of his artistic development. Slutsky and Silverman describe *Out Of Sight* as:

> a time portal – a gateway from which you can see both the past and the future…new developments began to show up: the emergence of modality in his vocal parts, the ending tag with chromatically ascending dominant 7th chords, and the quirky, four bar saxophone interlude are all elements that would be echoed in his arrangements for the next decade (Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 21).

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155 Bob Palmer, http://www.rollingstone.com

As a ‘gateway’, these three songs, *Out Of Sight, Brand New Bag* and *I Got You (I Feel Good)* are ‘essentially the same tune’ (Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 21). The three songs come from a period where the JB band, led by Nat Jones, was relatively stable and introduced the Parker brothers who were to be closely associated with Brown in the future. The key personnel for the recording sessions are outlined in below:

	Out Of Sight (5/1964)	**Brand New Bag (2/1965)**	**I Got You (I Feel Good) (5/1965)**
Saxophones	Nat Jones, Eldee Eilliams, Maceo Parker, St. Claire Pinckney, Al Clark	As *Out Of Sight*	As *Out Of Sight*
Brass	McKinley Cohnson, Ron Tooley, Teddy Washington, Joe Dupars	Ron Tuooley, Joe Dupars, Rasbury	As *Brand New Bag*
Organ	Alvin Gonder or Bobby Byrd		
Guitar	Les Buie	Jimmy Nolen	As *Brand New Bag*
Bass	Sam Thomas	David Williams or Sam Thomas	David (Hooks) Williams
Drums	Melvin Parker	As *Out Of Sight*	As *Out Of Sight*

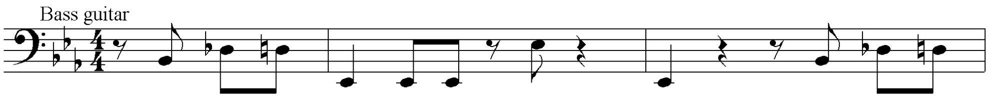
Table 2. Key personnel James Brown, 1964-5.

Any period of stability in a backing band allows for the development of a musical identity which may facilitate the development or consolidation of a style. In the following section, I will look at the musical elements to emerge from *Out Of Sight, Papa’s Got A Brand New Bag* and *I Got You (I Feel Good)* and consider their significance to the development of funk.

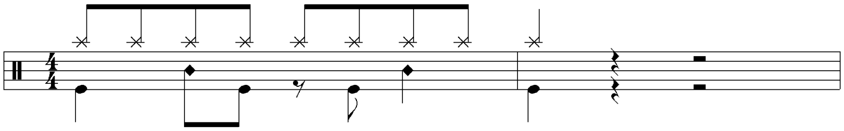
2.4.1 Out Of Sight (1964) [156]

One aspect of analysing pieces such as *Out Of Sight* is that the constituent musemes are relatively easy to identify because the compositional style revolves around the riff.

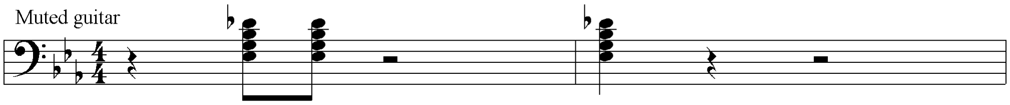
These riffs form the main museme stack which act as the main structural basis for the song.[157] The opening to *Out Of Sight* consists of three musemes including the bass guitar, drums and chopped guitar sound.



Example 29. *Out Of Sight,* bass opening.



Example 30. *Out Of Sight*, drum opening.



Example 31. *Out of Sight*, guitar chop.

After a stop time in the second bar, the opening riff of the song begins. This forms the fundamental rhythmic lock which underpins most of the song.

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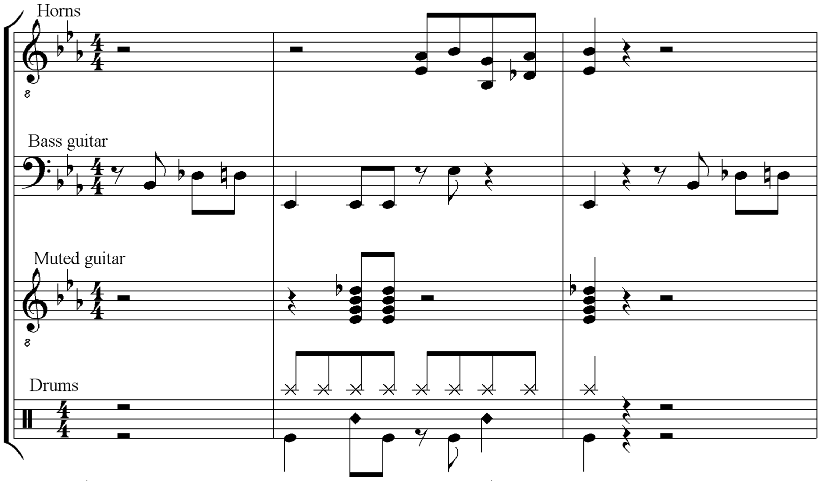
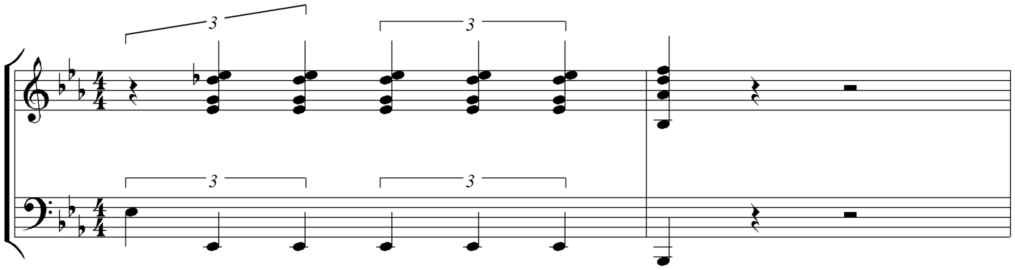
[156] *Out Of Sight* was recorded on Smash (S1919) in 1964 because Brown was in dispute with his label, King.

[157] The idea of a museme stack is discussed in Tagg (2003) where he notes from his own research that 'listener connotations tended to correspond much more to identifiable *combinations* if musical structures… than to the individual constituent parts of these combinations' (2003: 94).


Horns
Bass guitar
Muted guitar
Drums

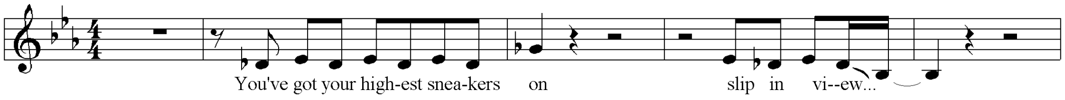
Example 32. ***Out Of Sight*****, rhythmic 'lock'.**

The final musematic idea to be explored is the turnaround figure heard at the end of each chorus played by brass and bass:



Example 33. ***Out Of Sight*****, brass stabs with bass.**

The final museme to be discussed in *Out Of Sight* is the main vocal melody, an alternating modal pattern with a flattened third :

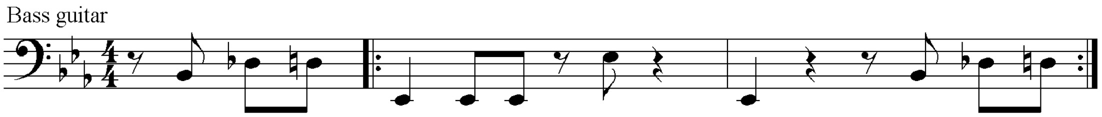

You've got your high-est snea-kers on
slip in vi--ew...

Example 34. ***Out Of Sight*****, vocal melody.**

2.4.2 Out Of Sight and the proto-funk.

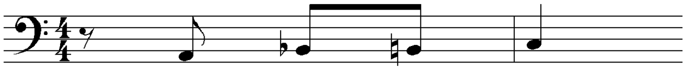
One of the main tasks involved in analysis of *Out Of Sight* and the other tunes from this period is to identify those aspects of the song which could be identified as proto-funk. Some of the features in the song will be found in other rhythm 'n' blues songs of the period whereas others may be more innovative. Separating the proto-funk from the established stylistic vocabulary used by Brown during the early1960s reveals an interesting experimental approach where Brown actively encouraged his band personnel to develop an individual approach. Brown did not always have a fixed band and because of the demanding nature of his schedule, he would sometimes have more than one bass player or drummer at his disposal. This approach allowed for experimentation to take place as each performer added his particular style to the music as a whole.

The opening section of the song consists of three chromatic notes leading to the tonic of the song, in this case E♭. However, rather than approaching the E♭ by step, the note drops to a lower octave adding additional depth to the song as well as creating a distinctive textural layer:



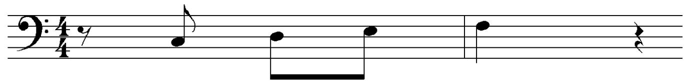
Example 35. *Out Of Sight*, bass introduction.

This museme acts as an episodic marker by introducing the song. Variants of this particular museme are to be found in introductions to a number of songs from the period. However, none of the songs, which act as intertextual comparisons, have the same octave displacement shown in Example 35. Jerry Lee Lewis' *Great Balls of Fire* (1957), for instance, also uses a chromatic opening but in this case, there is no fall to the lower octave and the tonic is approached by step:



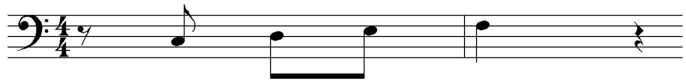
Example 36. *Great Balls Of Fire*, bass introduction.

Diatonic variants of this museme include the dominant to tonic openings found in songs such as Brown' s, *I'll Never, Never Let You Go* (1960) which moves to the tonic by ascending diatonic steps:



Example 37. *I'll Never, Never Let You Go*, bass introduction.

This episodic marker can also be found in *Twist and Shout* by the Isley Brothers (1962) and covered by the Beatles in 1963:



Example 38. *Twist and Shout*, bass introduction.

The introduction to *Out Of Sight* may appear to be no more than a variant of a relatively common episodic marker of the early 1960s. However, there are aspects of this museme that demonstrates a new approach to bass playing in Brown's music, especially the contrast of higher and lower registers. The use of the higher register was pioneered by Bernard Odum in *Think.* Following Odum's lead, Sam Thomas uses a high register in *Out Of Sight* but varies it by adding the leap between registers. One aspect of this low E♭ was the accent it created on the first beat of the bar. An important aspect of the funk style has been encapsulated in the idea of 'the one'. Rubin (2000) suggests that the bassist on *Out Of Sight* 'insistently highlights the "one"'.[158]

The importance of this lower bass note on 'the one' is given greater emphasis because it synchronises with the bass drum accents in a new way for James Brown. Working closely together, this approach brings about a level of continuity in playing styles, but also offers opportunities for innovation. The level of instrumental synchronisation, or rhythmic lock, brought what Slutsky and Silverman called, 'an unprecedented level of precision and tightness in the rhythm section' (1997:24), a feature which will be explored in the following section.

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[158] A difficulty with Rubin (2000) is, aside from his insistence on 'hip' hyperbole, is his failure to fully research his ideas. In this particular quotation, the bass playing of *Out Of Sight* is attributed to Bernard Odum whereas in Slutsky and Silverman (1997) the bass player is cited as Sam Thomas.

2.4.3 The rhythmic lock

The rhythmic lock is a term used to indicate that the composite rhythm, created by individual instrumentalists, works in such a way that a distinct, interlocking groove results. The process of developing the rhythmic lock is a result of the musicians working on rhythmic structures using a method of collective improvising otherwise referred to s 'the jam'. In his interviews, James Brown always kept the 'ingredients' of his particular grooves secret but in reality, they result from the interplay of the musicians and the secret, if there is one, rests with the ability of his backing group to be able to interpret and develop a particular groove. If Brown had a secret, it was his ability to realise his particular musical vision through the members of his bands.

The creation of a groove was part of a deliberate attempt by the musicians to create a distinctive sound through their ability to jam.[159] In an interview with Payne, drummer Melvin Parker indicate that the 'tightening up' process was not just a rhythmic feature, but also a feature emerging in the overall sound.[160] He used closed hi-hats at a time when most drummers were using the ride cymbal:

> In everything prior to 'Out Of Sight,' the chord structure had been somewhat muddy, in my opinion. Not only did the chords contain dissonance but the sound of the drum and everything else was sort of muddy. It wasn't a clean

---

[159] 'Jam' or improvise is an important factor in the process of creating a groove. The term jam in this context has a significance which goes beyond improvising which had more meaning in jazz circles. Whereas in jazz you might improvise around a tune or 'head', a jam does not necessarily have the same structure. This is one reason that the blues sequence remained popular, but in later Brown 'jams', a one chord jam was to become important.

[160] The idea of a tight groove was also taken up in many of the phrases that Brown called out over the music, it is also to be found in Archie Bell and the Drells 1968 hit, *Tighten Up.*

> sound that James had gotten…I was trying to be different. Clean, funky and different…That's why I did a rim click, because a rim click is always clean. [161]

The use of a click on the snare not only provided a clean sound, it took the emphasis away from the backbeat[162] and placed it on the first beat of the bar. The emphasis on 'the one' has already been discussed as a feature of the bass museme. However, this additional emphasis on 'the one' comes, according to Slutsky and Silverman, from an 'unprecedented level of precision' which represented:

> ….the first important marriage of the kick drum to a bass part on a James Brown recording… During the bands early period, this relationship was minimal, as each instrument basically pursued its own pattern… [here] we see a more inter-dependent relationship between the two instruments (Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 24).

One way of examining this 'inter-dependent relationship' further would be to utilise Tagg's method of hypothetical substitution (commutation) to investigate the effect of the lock. Hypothetical substitution of various parts would provide an opportunity to explore the exact nature of the groove in *Out Of Sight* including the emphasis on the first beat of the bar and the interdependency of the bass and drums. The following example shows the main groove of the song. By examining the interdependence of the instruments and looking closely at the rhythmic accents generated, it is possible to construct a syncopated composite rhythm shown in Example 39:

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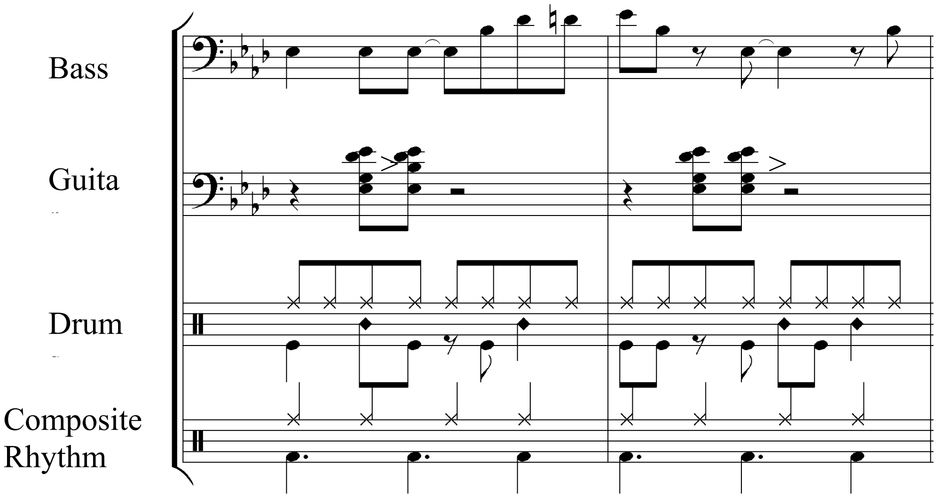
[161] Interviewed in *Give the Drummers Some,* (Payne, 1996: 39)

[162] See glossary for discussion of 'backbeat'.



Example 39. *Out Of Sight*: rhythmic 'lock'.

There are a number of possible interpretations of the rhythmic lock for *Out Of Sight*. The way you listen to this particular groove will have a bearing on your interpretation of the syncopated effect. This ambiguity or flexibility means that the lock can be heard as 2+2+2+2 pattern or as a 3+3+2 pattern which largely depends on your focus. The groove consists of different registers and listening closely to the higher instruments (cymbals) will produce a different effect to concentrating on the bass. Alternatively, it is possible to perceive the cross rhythmic feel which comes from combining these two rhythmic patterns. The irony here is that the process of 'tightening up' may in fact be creating greater ambiguity, a 'flexing up' in the mind of the listener which, in turn, brings about a funky feel.

Three levels of hearing can then be defined as follows (Table 3):

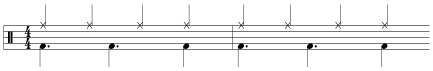
Auditory focus	Rhythm	Instruments
R&B straight eights	2+2+2+2 (4+4)	Snare backbeat, hi-hat, guitar
Rumba rhythm (1 bar pattern)	3+3+2	Kick drum, bass guitar, accented guitar,
Combined two bar pattern with shifting instrumental focus.	Combined cross-rhythmic ‘feel’ 	The polyrhythmic feel generated across the instrumental registers and timbres

Table 3 Aural reception possibilities of *I Got You*.

This particular approach is a feature which Brackett possibly identified with in Longhair’s *Tipitina* where a variety of rhythmic patterns were reworked into a distinctive individual style. As with *Tipitina,* it is possible to separate out the constituent parts of the rhythm but in the combination of these parts, a feel emerges which may be more difficult to describe on paper. In addition, the feel may be more difficult to define because our auditory focus is constantly changing as it filters out sounds and tunes into others.[163]

Hypothetical substitution may reveal something of this ambiguity. Removing the cross rhythmic accents would produce straight eights (R&B style) would produce the following effect:

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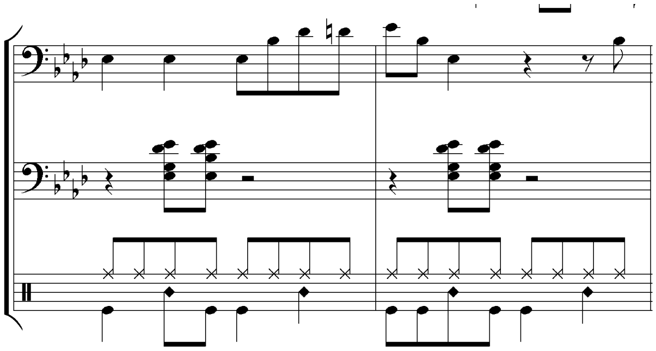
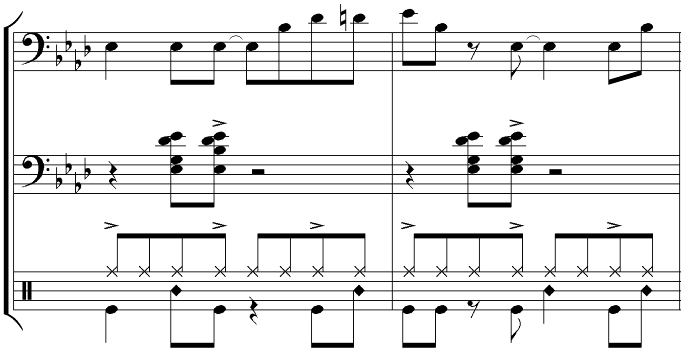
[163] The nearest analogous approximation I can think of is the kind of visual illusions where if you stare long enough, the image changes. The one I have in mind is the image of a butterfly which, if you stare long enough become two heads. The trick is to change your focus, almost staring beyond the page. A favourite of mine is the ‘sausage’ illusion where you move (slowly) your index fingers together until they touch, about 8-10cm from your nose. By changing the focus of your eye you will see different things.



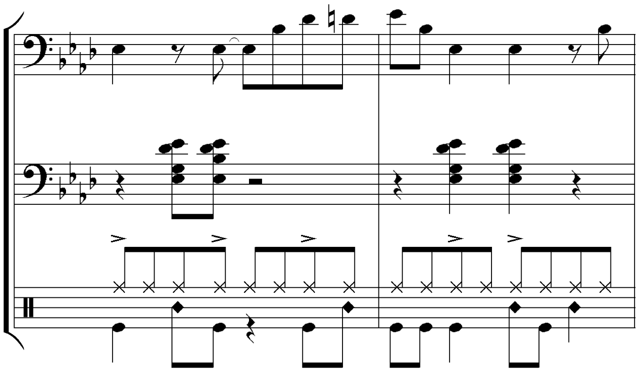
Example 40. ***Out Of Sight,*** **2+2+2+2 (HS1)**

By emphasising the 3+3+2 pattern, the effect would be as follows:



Example 41. ***Out Of Sight*****, 3+3+2 (HS2).**

By examining the hypothetical substitutions it is possible to consider in greater detail the rhythmic feel of the original version. Hypothetical substitutions have been achieved by making minor alterations to the original either by moving a beat to emphasise the rhythmic pattern or adding accents to emphasise the 3+3+2 pattern. This polarises the pattern in one way or another reducing the flexible effect created in the ambiguity of the original. In the 2+2+2+2 version, the ‘lock’ cannot be found at the polyrhythmic level and so the ‘feel’ becomes similar to so many backbeat rhythms. In (HS2), the 3+3+2 version, the effect is to create a Latin feel which shifts the meaning of the groove considerably from a genre synecdoche to a connotative meaning. By displacing the guitar chords in the second bar, it would be easy to take the Latin effect be taken a stage closer to the 3:2 clave rhythm.

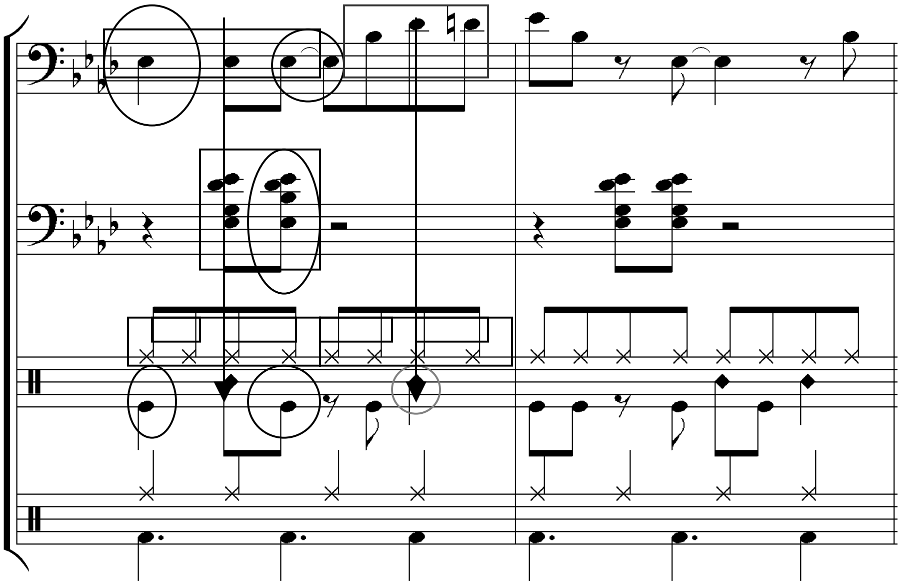


Example 42. ***Out Of Sight*****, 3:2clave (HS3).**

The final example outlines the some of the aural possibilities that exist within one bar of the *Out Of Sight* groove. The areas of rhythmic ambiguity are indicated by overlapping shapes and where rectangles and circles overlap, the listener may be drawn to either 2+2+2+2 or the 3+3+2 pattern or both at once. It may also be of interest to note that the weakest beat of the first bar is the third quarter note beat which is represented by the closed high-hat alone:

○	3+3+2 patterns
▭	2+2+2+2 or 4+4 patterns
↓	Backbeat

Table 4. Key to Example 43.



Example 43. ***Out Of Sight*****, ambiguity in the rhythmic 'lock'.**

Further hypothetical substitution, although possible, would seem unnecessary as there is sufficient evidence to acknowledge that the original version of this groove sits between two rhythmic styles. Despite the apparent rhythmic ambiguity, the interlocking rhythms and the interdependency of each instrument on the other, creates a tight rhythmic feel. The combined effect of rhythmic ambiguity, feel and precision points to a new stylistic direction for Brown. This direction comes as through an experimental approach with both the music and the musicians. Using different musicians on different recordings created a different musical approach which Brown, and the musicians themselves, were able to exploit. By encouraging musical experimentation through the medium of the jam session, Brown began to synthesize a new personal style which he would work to refine over the next few years.

The contribution each instrumentalist makes to this collaborative compositional process is not simply related to technical expertise. Each member of the session brings a wealth of vocabulary and stylistic influences which can contribute to the session. In this way, the 'store of musical sounds'[164] available becomes quite extensive and through the selection process which develops in a jam session, new ideas can emerge. Sometimes this process may be transparent, but at other times, the links to other styles may not be clear. By examining two other musemes from Out Of Sight we may begin to understand more of this process of composition.

The first museme to consider in terms of compositional process is the horn riff. This is a simple phrase which acts as an anticipation of the first beat of the bar:

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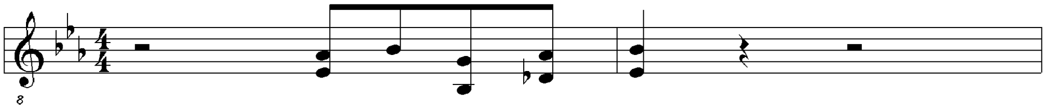
[164] This idea relates directly to the idea of a 'store of symbols' in semiotics. Tagg (1979/2000) uses this term in his communication model. The term provides an interesting metaphor for understanding the possible exchange of ideas in a jam session.



Example 44. *Out Of Sight*, horn riff.

As a short fragmentary riff, this museme sits comfortably in the R&B style of the time but its musical significance stretches further back. The short phrases are characteristic of the kind of horn writing found on Count Basie pieces of the 1930s.[165] Traditionally the instruments of Brown's horn section are associated with the jazz band and most of Brown's backing instrumentalists came from this musical background. The ability of these musicians to move from jazz bands, to jump bands to R&B raises the possibility of theorising about the intertextual relationships that developed between these genres. The mobility of the musicians and the likelihood that they transferred musical ideas from one genre to another places the transitional context of much of the proto-funk discussed so far in a much wider musical framework.

The second museme to consider as an intertextual borrowing is the turnaround museme which is reminiscent of a characteristic triplet boogie figure (see Example 15, bar 4) or may be related to the 12/8 patterns found in examples like Fat Waller's *Blueberry Hill* or a triplet-feel blues such as Muddy Water's *Hoochie Coochie Man*:[166]

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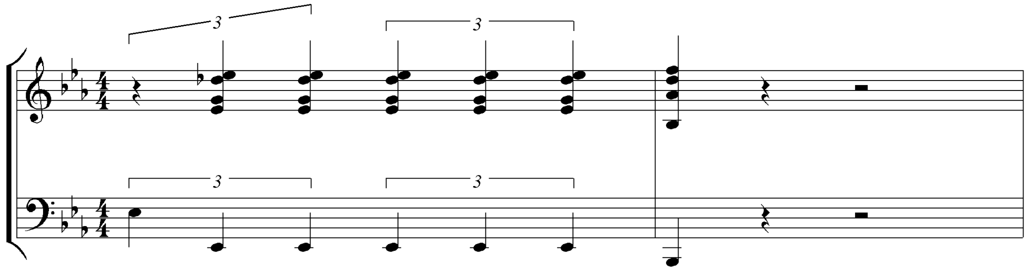
165 Examples can be found on Count Bassie tunes such as 'Pound Cake' and 'Lonesome Miss Pretty'.

166 See Stewart (2000) for a discussion of the triplet figure in Boogie-woogie (2000, p. 299). Listen also to Robert Johnson's *Crossroads* for the use of triplet chords. Louis Jordan's *Caladonia Boogie* is another song in the boogie style dating from the 1940s.



Example 45. ***Out Of Sight*****, turnaround.**

The function of this museme is to act as an episodic marker indicating a return to the beginning of the sequence and in this way, is a standard feature of rhythm 'n' blues. A similar turnaround figure can be found in Brown's earlier repertoire including *I'll Go Crazy* (1959); *Bewildered* (1959); *You Got the Power* (1960) and *This Old Heart* (1960). Placed in the wider context of Brown's work, the triplet turnaround figure would seem to be part of his 'common store' of musical material. Set in the wider context, both the horn riff and the triplet figure are shared in the wider musical community.

The extended discussion of *Out Of Sight* serves as a reference point for the development of Brown's proto-funk style. The distinction has to be drawn here between a more generic view of the proto-funk and, as is the case here, a more individual style. The development of the proto-funk as a genre or group style was a long process developing over a number of years which involved many musicians in what might be described as a negotiated process. For the moment we will continue to concentrate on the development of Brown's own proto-funk style by looking closely at *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* (1965). Recorded in February 1965, some 10 months after *Out Of Sight, Brand New Bag* is seen as important step in the development of Brown's proto-funk style sitting between *Out Of Sight* and *I Got You (I Feel Good)*, recorded in 1965. As such, the spacing between these pieces extends over 18 months which demonstrates something of the time span involved in the process of creating a proto-funk style.

2.4.4 Papa's Got a Brand New Bag[167]

Recorded in February 1965, *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* has a number of similarities to *Out Of Sight*. According to Slutsky and Silverman (1997: 26), the original key was E♭ but this became E as the tape speed was increased because the song was felt to be too slow. In its original version, the studio jam lasted for seven minutes before being edited into its final form for release as a single. While there are similarities between *Out Of Sight* and *Brand New Bag,* there are also differences which point to a development in Brown's conception of the proto-funk sound he is experimenting with. These similarities and differences are discussed in the analysis which follows.

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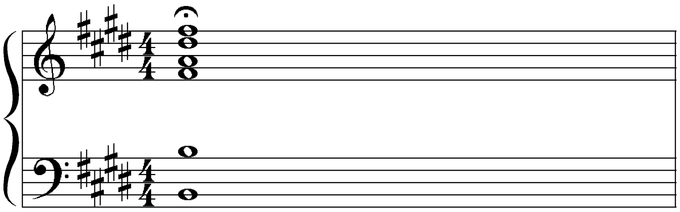
[167] The *OED* give Bag as related to 'Groovy' which has double significance being at once a particular groove (as in swing) or equivalent to 'Bag', a noun used to describe something excellent or very satisfying. *slang* orig. *U.S.*). More to be found on etymology in Chapter 6. (Source, *OED* online). In this instance, we could interpret it as 'Papa's got a brand new groove (and its really good)' although admittedly, this rather archaic English version looses a lot in the translation.

Museme 1: V^7 introductory opening chord

The V^7 introductory anacrusis of *Out Of Sight* is replaced in *Brand New Bag* by the single statement of the V^7 chord played loudly by the band:

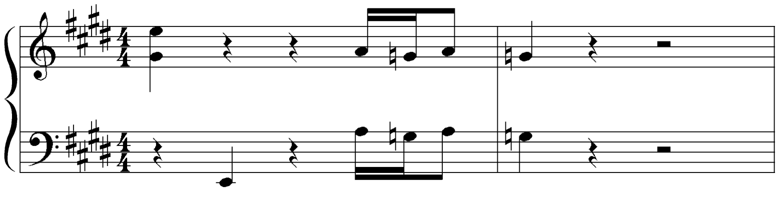


Example 46. *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*, opening chord.

Museme 2a, b, c, d. *New Bag*, groove

In both *Out Of Sight* and *Brand New Bag,* the initial museme stack is important as it contains the main musical material for the jam session. This riff-based compositional process was to become important in the development of his proto-funk style. While the process may be similar to *Out Of Sight,* the museme stack in *Brand New Bag* creates a different groove feel. There is a much simpler approach to the rhythm in *Brand New Bag* and the rhythmic ambiguity found in *Out Of Sight* is replaced by an insistent backbeat rhythm.

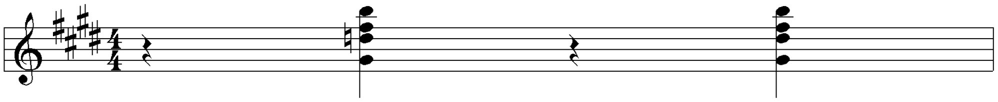
M2a shows the horn part with an interesting use of a low E played by the baritone.



Example 47. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*****, museme 2a.**

Museme 2b. Chopped Guitar Sound.

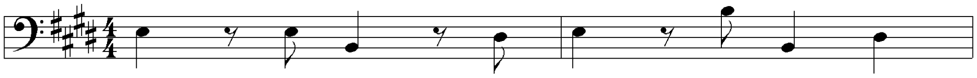
The second part of the museme stack is created by Jimmy Nolen's clipped guitar sound:



Example 48. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,*** **museme 2b, guitar riff.**

Museme 2c. Bass Riff.

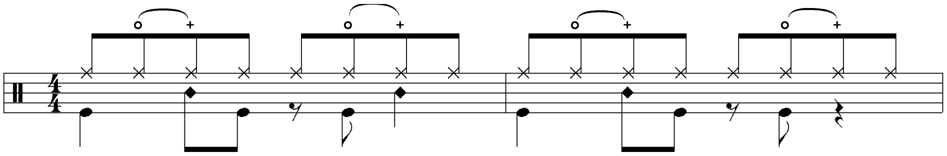
The bass forms a straightforward line which emphasises the first and third beat of the bar:



Example 49. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*****, museme 2c, bass riff.**

Museme 2d. Open hi-hat.

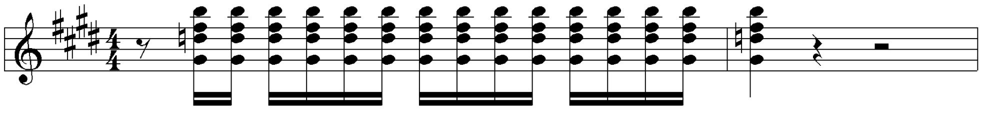
While Parker continues to use the rim click on the snare drum he introduces an open hi-hat sound for his drum pattern:



Example 50. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*****, museme 2d, drum riff.**

Museme 3. Guitar chords/episodic marker.

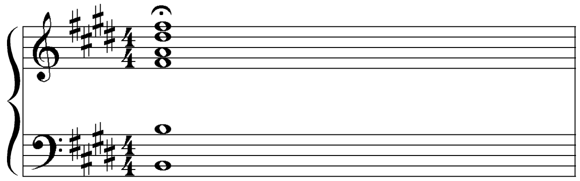
As with many of Brown's pieces, there was a change of personnel in a comparatively short space of time. The guitarist on *Brand New Bag was* Jimmy Nolen who, like Parker before him, made an interesting contribution to the James Brown sound in this turnaround figure:



Example 51. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*****. museme 3, Guitar turnaround.**

2.4.5 Discussion

M1, V^7 introductory opening chord: déclenchement.[168]



Example 52. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,*** **opening chord.**

The V^7 anacrusis figure requires no real discussion as it is found in many tonal pieces by composers who use it functionally to approach the tonic chord. While the harmonic function of the chord may be clear, the way that the chord is performed is of interest. The opening chord is played loudly and harshly and sustained for almost 5 beats. Over this idea comes Brown's harsh cry 'Come here sis-ter' with 'ter' coming on the first beat of the next bar (the one) and emphasised by the downbeat chord of M2a and M2c.

A number of questions arise from this deceptively simple, one chord opening. The use of a harsh timbre, the delayed arrival of the downbeat, the emphasis on 'the one' of the bar and the call to 'come here' all collide in the first four seconds of the song to form a richly layered and compressed introduction; it is a dramatic, attention grabbing

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[168] Déclenchement (fr) is translated by Collins-Robert French Dictionary (2000) as 'release; setting off; starting point; triggering off; inducement; opening; launching'. My thanks to the Julie Fortier,

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Agente de communication, Faculté de Musique at UdM for suggesting this most appropriate word which English could not provide.

moment. Many songs of the period begin either with vocals alone, in tempo, as if entering part way through the song.[169] Other introductions of the period generally set a few bars of the rhythm or use a short melodic fragment in the manner found in *Out Of Sight*.

Understood as dominant chord, there are numerous examples of songs which have the same functional episodic marker. A generation of Tin Pan Alley songs, at least in their written arrangements, have short introductions which use the paused V^7 as a lead in to the chorus. Examples of this include 1929 Noel Coward song, *I'll See You Again.* There are numerous examples of dominant anacrusis in Mozart (the piano sonata in D: K. 576), and in Chopin,(Preludes number 4 in E minor and 7 in A major), along with a number of other Western European classical works which make use of the introductory chord sound including Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante,* Beethoven's *Eroica,* and Stravinsky's *Violin Concerto.*[170] However, these examples illustrate the functional use of the chord rather than the overall meaning which comes from songs like *Brand New Bag*. To understand the use of this type of introductory explanation, a different approach has to be taken.

A comparable introduction to *Brand New Bag* comes from the Beatles' 1964 hit, *Hard Day's Night.* The introduction to a *Hard Day's Night* consists of a single, sustained chord dramatically paused before the singing begins.[171] The open sounding chord has a dominant feel creating a sense of harmonic expectancy. Whatever the apparent function of the chord in *Hard Day's Night,* the opening begins with the distinctive tone of the newly created Rickenbacker twelve string guitar.[172] Both *A Hard Day's Night* and *Brand New Bag* not only provide an introduction to the song, but they create a distinctive aural signature which make their respective songs immediately identifiable to their audience. This suggests something different is happening which cannot be explained in terms of harmony alone; the sound itself has to be taken into account.

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[169] *Tutti Frutti*, 1956/7; Fats Domino, *Ain't That A Shame;* Elvis's *Good Rocking Tonight,* and Brown's 1960 song *So Long,* all share this type of vocal introduction.

[170] There may be other examples of the 'déclenchement' including the work siren, the school bell, and the referee's whistle (football) which act as an introduction to a new event or activity.

For listeners to both James Brown and to the Beatles, these were sounds that were, or became, instantly recognisable through the experience of other songs of these artists. The opening chords are specific components announcing not only the songs themselves, but the arrival of a particular sound associated with these artists. In both cases, the confidence of the chord suggests a change in direction, an triggering off, a launch or, in French, a *déclenchement*.

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171 The chord has an open fourths feel and is complicated by the quality of the mix. There may be a piano in the background providing additional notes but it is difficult to tell exactly. Moreover, there seems to be much concern over what exactly to call the chord (see http://www.answers.com/topic/a-hard-day-s-night-song for further discussion.

172Rickenbacker developed an electric twelve-string guitar in the same year that *Hard Day's Night* was recorded. The instrument was important in establishing the Beatles' sound at that time. See http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery?method=4&dsid=2222&dekey=Rickenbacker&gwp=8&curtab=2222_1 for further details. The development of new instruments had a notable effect on the timbres of popular music and would be an area for further research.

The use of a sustained, paused declamatory chord is not new – the practice extends back to Baroque opera where the recitative was announced by a chord.[173] As a musical gesture, as a dramatic pause, the practice of using a single chord as an episodic marker has a long historical precedent. However, in the case of *Brand New Bag* and *Hard Days Night* the episodic marker can be understood as being more than an introduction to a song, the meaning in both these songs would seem much more symbolic, perhaps providing some kind of recognition to the beginnings of a new era.

The practice of *déclenchement* to introduce songs in popular music can be found in many pieces where a significant sound – often no more than a brief burst of energy – provides a signature not only to a song, but encapsulates in condensed form the sound-world of the performer or performers. These special episodic markers enter our store of symbols to provide a reference not only to the song that they introduce, but to a style, genre and aesthetic which extends beyond any harmonic function alone. As such, it would be possible to argue that the *déclenchement* is a synecdoche and as such, has special status in our symbolic structures.[174] The study of *déclenchement* is under-represented in musicological literature because of the difficulty in dealing with timbral signifiers through the tradition of the discursive text.

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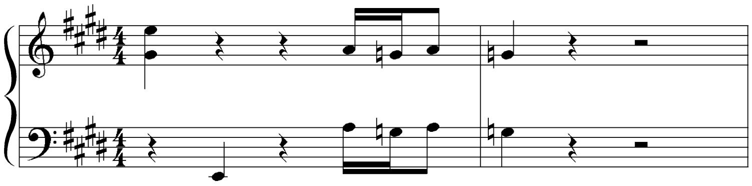
[173] Numerous examples exist in Monteverdi's *L'incoraonazione di Poppea;* Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas;* Handel's opera, *Acis and Galatea* (rect: *Ye Verdant Plains);* and in Bach's choral music. A single chord, often in first inversion, paused is used in a declamatory style.

[174] The idea of *déclenchement* is important in a number of other situations including meeting people (informally or in interviews) and in presenting work. It is often quite important to create the appropriate referencing framework within the few short seconds you have in meeting people as this establishes the essential interpretative 'schemas' which will be used to evaluate a situation.

M2a, b, c, d. *New Bag* Groove –the rhythmic lock

The museme stack which creates the groove for *Brand New Bag* is considerably different to *Out Of Sight.* The approach developed by the band replaces the rhythmic ambiguity of *Out Of Sight* with a steady backbeat rhythm. The approach to the rhythmic lock is to create a sparse texture allowing timbral variation to create an additional rhythmic dimension. M2a shows the horn part with the baritone saxophone playing on the second beat in a manner typical of the horn parts found in contemporary R&B music.



Example 53. *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,* horn riff.

The element of contrast between upper parts and low, growling timbres of the baritone saxophone were not uncommon. The baritone pickup can be heard on Solomon Burke's 1964 song, *Everybody Needs Somebody To Love.* A similar figure can be found on the Mar-Keys' 1965 song *Grab This Thing.*[175] The rhythmic emphasis is different, almost reversed, but the song makes use of the baritone saxophone as a solo bass part:

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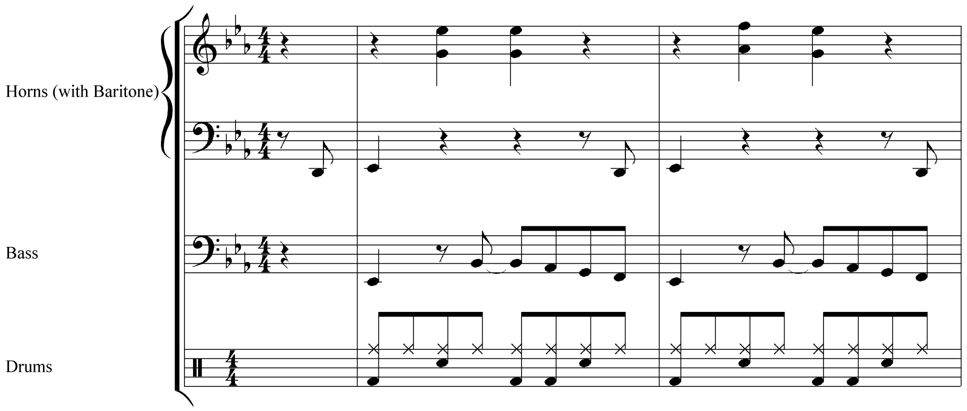
[175] The Mar-Keys *The Great Memphis Sound,* Atlantic 7567-82339-2 and recorded in October 1965. This version should not be confused with the Bar-Kay's 1969 version of the song which does not use baritone sax.



Example 54. ***Grab This Thing,*** **Mar Keys.**

A brief comparison between *Grab This Thing* and *Brand New Bag* illustrates the different stylistic approaches involved in creating a groove. The Memphis style of the Mar-Keys is centred on even eighths with no sixteenth-notes subdivision, and emphasises the first beat of the bar whereas *Brand New Bag* uses sixteenth notes and the second beat is accented by the baritone saxophone. This would seem to suggest that Brown was extending his vocabulary to introduce an innovative rhythmic element to his proto-funk sound. A further example of this innovative approach to timbre is found in the muted rhythm guitar of *Brand New Bag.*

2.4.6 The chopped guitar sound.

The guitar sound created by Jimmy Nolen's clipped guitar sound was originally developed while playing with Johnny Otis. According to Slutsky and Silverman this style of playing requires precision in timing as well as a technique capable of instantly dampening the string by removing the pressure on the left hand chord shape.[176] The chopped or dampened guitar sound was not original in itself, but its inclusion in the developing sound of Brown's proto-funk style at this time was to reappear in other songs including *Out Of Sight* and *Cold Sweat*.

The use of dampened guitar is not a new phenomenon and examples of dampened sounds from this period can be found in the following songs. To illustrate the difference between the sounds, a phonetic approximation of the dampened sound has been suggested:

Date	Artist	Song	Comments
1960	Everly Brothers	*Cathy's Clown*	Dampened 'chank' [tʃɑːnk] offbeat chord (on 2 + 4)
1961	Chuck Berry	*Route 66*	Dampended 'bapt' [bæpt] sound but with no 'scratch'
1961	The Shirelles	*Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow*	Dampened quaver – crotchet offbeat
1962	Isley Brothers	*Twist and Shout*	Quaver pattern 'cha-ka' [tʃækɑ] on offbeat
1962	Booker T and the MGs	*Green Onions*	Steve Cropper 'chiack' [tʃɪæk] in first chorus
1964	James Brown	*Out Of Sight*	Dampened 'cha-ke' [tʃækɛ] sound
1964	Dionne Warwick	*Walk on By*	Tight Nolen-like 'tch' [tʃ] scratch with heavy reverb.
1964	Otis Redding	*Your One and Only Man*	Best heard at beginning of the track, tight scratched

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[176] Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 30

			chord
1964	The Drifters	*Under the Boardwalk*	Dampened 'chack' [tʃæk] quarter note on 2 + 4
1965	James Brown	*Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*	Tightly dampened 'tch' [t] sound
1965	The Mar-Keys	*Grab This Thing*	Variety of rhythmic ideas used with inventive range of sounds including including a 'chik-chik' [tʃɪk] chord

Table 5. Chopped guitar sound as phonetic.

What is apparent when listening to these sounds is that each one is quite individual with one guitarist allowing more attack and another allowing more release.[177] Each guitarist brings his own particular interpretation of the dampened, chopped chord to the song with a deliberate approach to dampening suggesting that from a common technique, the guitarists are able to develop their own individual expression.

Looking at the envelope for these chopped guitar sounds, Nolen's technique produces a tightly damped sound with very little release. Closer analysis reveals that he is using a slapback echo effect which was popular at the time. This produces a very specific effect and is unlike the tighter guitar sound of Dianne Warwick's *Walk on By* (1964). The difference between the sounds, and the slapback echo, can be seen in the following waveform images.[178] While the dampened guitar sound for *Walk on By* is a single, crisp sound, the image for *Brand New Bag* shows a single decayed reflection. The effect does provide a subtle undertone which is perceptible on some beats in the track adding yet another rhythmic layer to the texture:

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[177] Release is, in synthesis, the decay rate of the sustained sound. In this case, there is no sustained sound, only a release to silence. In *Walk on By* the release is extremely fast whereas some of the string is allowed to resonate before the dampening takes full effect.

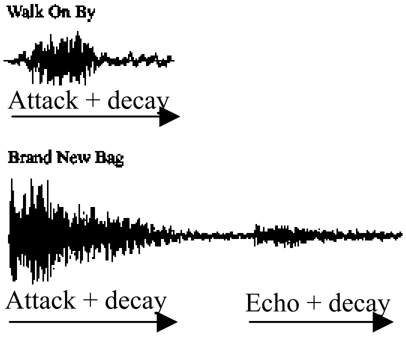
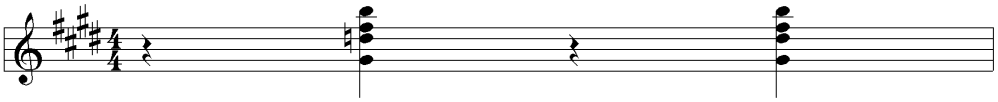


Figure 4. Waveform representations of dampened guitar.

The guitar part is played in an inversion which allows a higher sound to be produced which dovetails into the overall texture. An additional feature of this accompaniment is the lack of variation.



Example 55. *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,* guitar riff.

In *Green Onions,* guitarist Cropper can be heard to utilise a wide variety of dampened and open sounds to create his rhythmic texture, whereas Nolen produces no variation in his performance other than in the final bar where the sound opens up. Because of the sparse texture, the clipped, dampened sound stands out in the overall texture in a way that was unusual for the period. In this way, Nolen makes what Slutsky and Silverman call a ‘unique rhythmic concept’ (Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 30). The prominence of the guitar sound is unusual as is the restriction to the backbeat. It, intentionally or otherwise, forms a sparser, tighter and more concentrated sound than was found in *Out Of Sight*. There is no indication that Nolen modelled his sound on *Out Of Sight* but the clipped, staccato has been taken further in *Brand New Bag.* Furthermore, its integration into the texture and its contribution to the rhythmic lock suggest that the ‘new bag’ may be just that: a deliberate attempt to create a distinctive James Brown sound.

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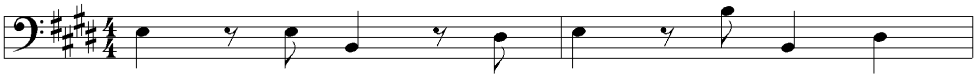
[178] The images were created by recording the sounds into Audition and then edited using a graphic editor. Care was taken to choose a moment where the guitar sound cuts through the overall texture. However, the waveforms do contain information about other instruments playing on the song.

M2c Bass

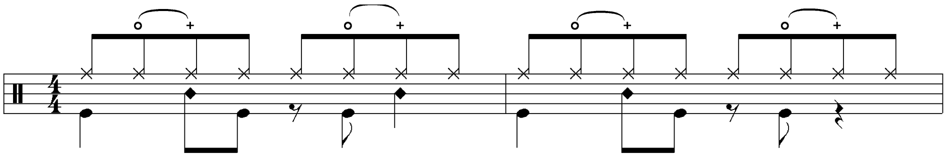
The bass forms a relatively unexceptional line but as with other bass parts, allows a breathing space for other instruments to cut through the texture.



Example 56. ***Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag,*** **bass riff.**

M2d Open hi-hat

M2d is an open hi-hat rhythm which Slutsky and Silverman view, along with the straight eighths rhythm in *Out Of Sight,* as another pioneering rhythm from Melvin Parker.[179] On most of Brown's earlier pieces which used the hi-hat, the cymbals were closed. However, in *Brand New Bag,* the following pattern appears:



Example 57. *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,* drum riff.

There is a similarity between the rhythmic figure of *Brand New Bag* and that found in *Out Of Sight* (Example 39). *Out Of Sight* has already been discussed as a result of a more independent, linear approach to the drum kit. The open and closed hi-hat sound of *Brand New Bag* could be considered as an additional rhythmic layer and as such, could be an essential link to understanding the contribution it makes to Brown's proto-funk sound. Parker used this rhythm consistently in *Brand New Bag* and in doing so opened up the possibility of a further timbre to be added to the overall rhythmic texture.

What Parker did manage to achieve was twofold. Firstly, he contributed a specific timbre, that of the open and closed hi-hat, which was to be developed in many pieces from this date. The open hi-hat idea develops in a number of ways but from a retrospective viewpoint is perhaps best associated with the theme music From Shaft (1971) and became essential for many post 1974 disco beats.[180] Parker's second contribution is that of expanding the rhythmic possibilities of the kit by adding a distinct layer and using the open and closed hi-hat sound. Traditionally, the open/closed hi-hat sound was associated with swing with the back beat emphasised from the open and closing of the hi-hat rather than using the snare. Parker's use of the technique does mark the backbeat but also creates a distinctly syncopated idea which was essentially part of the new bag of sounds highlighted by this particular song.

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[179] Slutsky and Silverman, 1997: 28

It has been necessary to break down the rhythmic lock to examine the constituent parts not only to explore the emerging vocabulary of sounds which are developing in Brown's music, but also to acknowledge the individual contribution made by each performer as part of the collaborative process involved in the groove jam. Whereas the groove in *Out Of Sight* develops as the musicians create a rhythmic lock which exploits the ambiguity of the piece, *Brand New Bag* explores a textural lock where each instrument contributes an individual sound in a very precise way. What seems to be emerging here is a use of hocket where the rhythmic texture emerges from the contribution of individual instrumental sounds to the whole.

The ability to isolate different sounds at the listening stage demonstrates the more linear, independent approach that Brown's musicians were taking. With each instrument having a clearly defined but interdependent role within the overall texture, the potential is there for the rhythmic lock to be played in a much more precise way. As a performance technique, the linear texture suggests similarities to a hocket where ‘individual notes or chords within musical phrases…are alternated between different voices, instruments or recorded tracks’.[181] The technique is associated with a wide range of music and cultures from mediaeval French motets to traditional African and South American music. While the use of the technique in popular music should not come as a surprise, it is interesting to consider the adoption of this style within the framework of a jam session. As a way of creating a rhythmic lock, it suggests a considered and disciplined approach to the improvisation.

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[180] The use of open hi-hat sounds in disco will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

There is a preconceived idea, supported by authors such as Thompson (2000), that these jam sessions were a spontaneous event. According to Nolen, while spontaneity was one aspect of the process, there was also a strong element of preparation:

> Mostly all of [Brown’s] bit records, he's thought up in his mind, as far as lyrics and a general idea of how he wants his rhythm to go. To put the tune together, it's not written or anything. You just get there and you strike a groove and you go from there. Sometimes you might work half a night on one tune until you get it the way you want it, and you record it, and most of the time it's a bit. I’ve been on 40 or 45 bit records with James.[182]

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[181] The definition is from the Hocket entry for EPMOW by Philip Tagg. See, http://www.tagg.org/articles/epmow/hocket.html. Tagg cites a number of examples including the Ba-Benzélé music featured in Herbie Hancock’s *Water Melon Man* (1974) as well as the pan-pipe techniques used in Andean performance practice.

[182] http://www.funky-stuff.com/Wesley/index.htm

Nolen's recollection raises questions around the issue of spontaneity. A carefully arranged hocket technique is unlikely to be arrived at through spontaneity alone.[183] While the hocket technique was not an isolated occurrence in Brown's music, it did not reoccur frequently with the next example of a hocket occurring in two years latter in *Cold Sweat* (1967).

As a technique, the hocket provides an interesting method for creating a rhythmic lock relying as it does on the precise interplay of musicians. This interplay raises an issue of how social interaction might affect the creation of the rhythmic lock as each player locks to another to create a unique rhythmic timeframe. The importance of interaction becomes apparent when a musician begins to play out of phase and the rhythmic lock becomes unstable. The success of the rhythmic lock, in this case developed through a hocket technique, is as much a social as a musical event as it depends on the musicians being able to inter-relate with one another. [184]

In an attempt to theorise this interaction between musicians, Keil describes groove as a 'participatory discrepancy' (Keil, 1994). Similar studies by Bengstsson (1969) have

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183 There are examples of alternative takes on Brown tunes which demonstrate something of this process (post-rehearsal). The album "Foundations of Funk" (PolyGram Records 531 165-2) contains two alternative takes of *Cold Sweat.*

184 Many of Brown's backing musicians worked together for many years (or in the case of the Parkers were related) and this leads to an intimate understanding of the musical capabilities. The DVD "In the Shadows of Motown" is a study of the Motown studio band, The Funk Brothers. What emerges from this documentary are the warm friendships that emerged during their years in the 'snake pit' of the Motown Studios. In addition to their work for Motown, the 'brothers' were active as musicians in Detroit playing frequently together. The social aspect of musicians lives can easily be ignored in musical analysis.

developed a similar concept of ‘systematic variation’ (SYVAR) to theorise the participatory nature of musical performance. The theories of Keil and Bengtsson have been recently been critiqued by Kvifte (2004) who suggests that by focusing on ‘discrepancy’ and ‘variation’ both groups focus on ‘deviation’ from some kind of norm. Keil, for instance, talks of creating participatory discrepancy but he is unable to explain the nature of the discrepant relationships or how to measure these discrepancies. There is insufficient space to discuss the issues that arise from these participatory theories except to highlight the difficulty they presents. Taking a more holistic approach would require some consideration that the ability to create a rhythmic lock such as the hocket groove of *Brand New Bag*, is not just a matter of temporal relationships but an outcome of the specific social conditions that arise when musicians play together. In the case of Brown and his musicians, they were continually working together in close proximity and were able to develop and intimate understanding of each others abilities and this has to be a factor in understanding the creation of the groove using hocket and other techniques.[185]

M3, Guitar chords/episodic marker.

The episodic turnaround figure of *Out Of Sight* has been discussed as part of the vocabulary commonly found in the piano boogie style. *Brand New Bag* also uses the guitar on a V^9 chord, but by 1965, the triplet rhythm had been transformed into equal sixteenth-notes:

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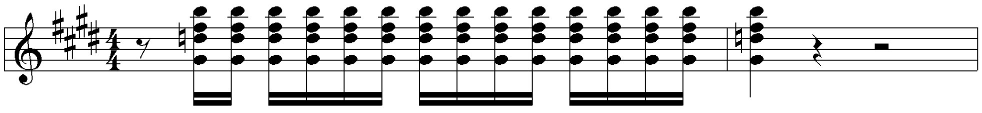
[185] Parker, Nolen and other musicians continued to work together even when not backing Brown.



Example 58. ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,*** **guitar turnaround.**

Nolen's figure contributes two significant aspects of the proto-funk sound. Firstly, he divides the beat into sixteenth-notes thereby contributing the rhythmic transition from triplets to sixteenths discussed by Stewart (2000). Secondly, Nolen contributes a specific harmonic sound, the ninth chord which replaces the V7 sound. Vincent, and others,[186] agree that:

> Jimmy Nolen's chopping guitar break was something never heard before, yet the wicked tension was unmistakably familiar. It was a song that changed soul music forever. "New Bag" paved the way for the funk era (Vincent, 1996: 74).

2.4.7 Conclusions.

This analysis has suggested that there are examples of innovatory ideas that, along with the title 'New Bag' suggest that this was a significant proto-funk recording. It would be easy at this point to take the contributions of Parker and Nolen and put them out of perspective, similarly it would be easy to undervalue the significance of both instrumentalists, along with band leader Maceo Parker, in defining the proto-funk style of James Brown in 1965.[187] In trying to put the innovations into perspective it would be useful to reiterate two points. Firstly, *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* was just that, a new direction, but one which builds on the stylistic experimentation of *Out Of Sight* and was the centrepiece of a trio of pieces which included *I Got You* written in the same year. Secondly, in terms of Funk being a transformational style, the influence of two musicians – Parker and Nolen – as part of this particular James Brown line-up was significant in that each brought their own musical contribution to the style.

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[186] Thompson (2001), Rubins (2000), Slutsky and Silverman (1997).

[187] For Nolen, it was the turning point. He says, "Brown's previous tunes were more or less a lot of blues and stuff like that… That was the first tune that he ever just dropped back with it and set it in

The individual contributions made by the musicians, including Brown, were developed in the context of the period. Palmer raises the point that some of the sounds found in *Brand New Bag* were well known:

> … the components of Brown's new bag had long been a part of their aural environment. The chunky, broken-up bass patterns, sprung against the downbeats, had been common currency in Latin music since the Forties and had turned up in jazz classics such as Dizzy Gillespie's "Night In Tunisia." The trebly, insistent chicken-scratch guitars were a legacy of Fifties R&B as played by Mickey "Guitar" Baker and by Brown's own Jimmy Nolen,[188] who had served his apprentice-ship with Johnny Otis. [189] The tight staccato horn bursts were prominent on soul records coming out of Stax studios in

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the pocket. He came up with that style of laid-back music, and that started a whole lot of different groups and musicians going in that vein" <http://www.funky-stuff.com/Wesley/index.htm>

[188] Micky Baker (b. 1925) played on hundreds of session accompanying Ray Charles, the Coasters, Ruth Brown and Screaming Jay Hawkins. Equally at home in the jazz world as he was in R&B. According to Bave Rubin (2000) 'the historical significance of his Atlantic years where he defined fifties R&B guitar, cannot be overstated. One of his earliest contributions was to Ray Charles' first session for Atlantic which included The Midnight Hour"…on September 11, 1952" (Rubin, 2000: 27) He can be found on Charles' *Funny,* and *Losing Hand* as well as *Mess Around.* Other contributions in clued the drifters *Money Honey*, Big Joe turner's *Shake, Rattle and Roll,* Ruth Brown's *Mama, He treats Your Daughter Mean.*

[189] Nolen recollects, "I started developing that during the Johnny Otis days. It used to be that with so many different drummers some of them were good, but some were just lazy-I used to just try to play and keep my rhythm going as much like a drum as I possibly could. So many times I had to just play guitar and drums all at the same time. You know what I mean? By keeping that rhythm going, it kind of keeps the drummer straight". (http://www.funky-stuff.com/Wesley/index.htm). It is interesting that the same motivation also inspired Larry Graham's unique influential style.

> Memphis, where Al Jackson was already a past master of hustling, dynamically understated, excruciatingly even drumming (Bob Palmer, http://www.rollingstone.com). [190]

While Palmer's observations would benefit closer investigation to validate the musical connection he makes, his observations suggest that *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* arrives at a particular conjunction in both the development of a funk style and the development of Brown's personal style. The intersection of styles can be identified at various levels. While on the surface, Palmer's ideas may be useful it should also be remembered that each musician brings his own musical background and experience to the group. These musicians had considerable playing experience and brought with them a wide repertoire of techniques. Each musician brings his own intertextual network to the band drawn from a variety of listening and playing experiences. The way that musicians develop is illustrated by Jimmy Nolen who reflects that:

> My first recording with Brown was "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," and somehow or another those licks that I hit in there were ringing out and a lot of guitar players are using them nowadays. One way or the other they connect it up-a little bit of their style and a little bit of my style-which I borrowed a few styles from some of the guitar players coming up myself, like Pete Lewis with Johnny Otis. Wayne Bennett [guitar player with Bobby Blue Bland and others] was one of my idols. You know, it all started with B.B. King.[191]

Brown's ability to establish a creative environment for his songs along with his ability to exploit the talents of new members of his band should be acknowledged. The individual contribution made to the collective ensemble in pieces such as *Brand New Bag* is symbolically represented by the hocket texture. The importance of the individual line to the collective texture recognises the interplay that exists between individual style, group style and the wider, collective genre.

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[190] This paragraph raises a number of issues, not least of which is the discussion which centres around black/white music which has little real validity in the context of musical style where the Beatles and Rolling Stones might be described as derivative rather than innovative.

[191] Nolen's discussion was taken from http://www.funky-stuff.com/Wesley/index.htm. For further discussion of how musicians learn from one another, along with specific case studies, see Lucy

Brand New Bag was a successful hit in 1965 staying in the American Charts for six weeks and gaining Brown a Grammy award for Best R&B performance. For Brown, the charts were an important catalyst for his work and a motivational force for his continual reinvention of himself. Slutsky and Silverman suggest that Brown's next contribution to the proto-funk sound was *I Got You (I Feel Good)* coming from the same song family as *Brand New Bag.*[192] In the following section, we will investigate this contribution through an analysis of *I Got You.*

2.4.8 I Got You (I Feel Good)

From the discussion of *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag,* it can be seen that the song contained several innovative features. *I Got You* is much more of a consolidation of the stylistic approach taken by its predecessor. *I Got You* contains many of the structural features found in the earlier songs with the musem stacks built in similar way through the combination of individual riffs in such a way as to create a distinctive groove which Brown felt would support his particular vision of an emerging proto-funk. Although the song is based on a 12 bar blues sequence, *I Got*

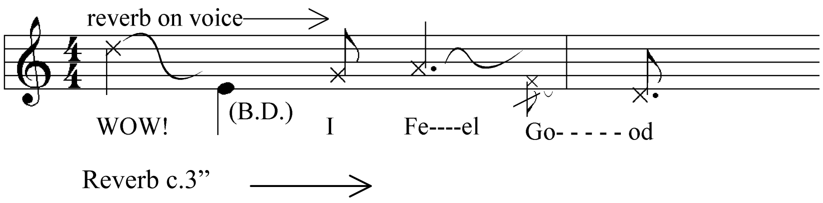
Green's *How Musicians Learn* (2001) These studies would indicate that Nolan's experiences were not unique.

You also contains an alternating D^7 - G^7 middle section which may reflect that fact that the song developed from two earlier recordings, *Devil's Den* (1964) and *I Found You* (1962).[193]

The analysis of this song will continue in the format developed above and begin with an outline of the main musematic material followed by a more detailed discussion of the song and its contribution to the development of a funk sound.

Museme 1: Déclenchement (shout)

The song begins with a scream, a bass drum beat and then Brown's screaming, proclaiming voice shouting, "I fe---el good!".



Example 59. ***I Got You*****, déclenchement.**

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192 Brown would rework earlier song structures at different times in his career. *Brand New Bag*, *I Got You* and *Out Of Sight* are all built around the same blues based sequence.

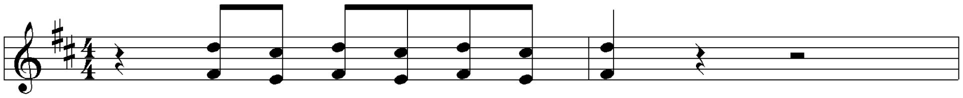
[193] See Slutsky and Silverman (1997:31) for more information on the background to the song.

Museme stack 2a,b,c,d: *I got you,* rhythmic lock.

The main museme stack for the song *I Got You* consists of 4 independent parts performed on horns (2a), bass guitar (2b), drums (2c) and guitar (2d) which combine to form the rhythmic lock.

M2a Horn riff

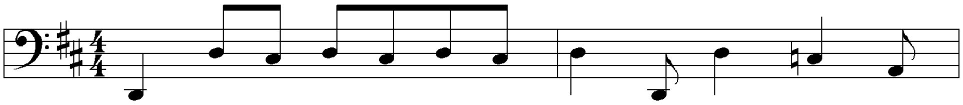
This simple oscillating pattern was to become a feature of many similar riffs in the funk not only for the horn section but also for guitar and, vocals:



Example 60. *I Got You*, horn riff.

M2b. Bass Riff

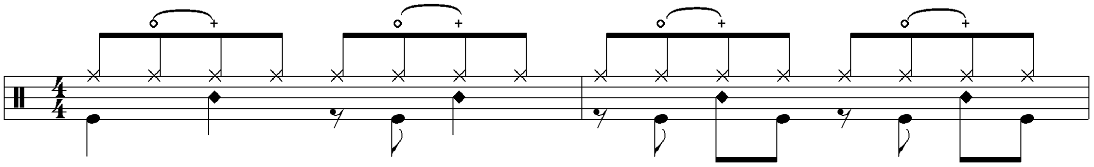
The bass riff was provided by David 'hooks' Williams who joined James Brown just before *I Got You* was recorded and left the band in 1966:



Example 61. *I Got You*, bass riff.

M2c. Drum riff.

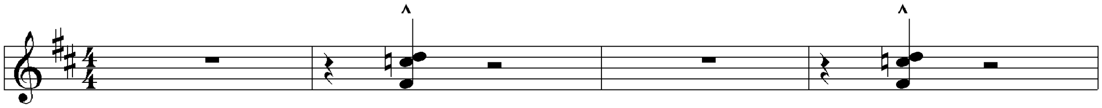
The drummer on *I Got You* was Melvin Parker and this was the last recording he made with Brown before he left the band. M2c utilises a similar open hi-hat pattern to *Brand New Bag:*



Example 62. *I Got You*, drum riff.

M2d. Guitar chord.

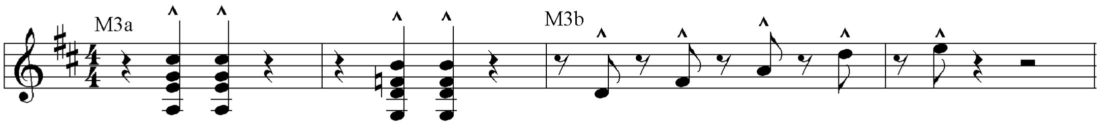
Jimmy Nolen remained with James Brown for most of his playing career. In M2d Nolen creates a chopped guitar sound played on the backbeat but spaced over two bars:



Example 63. *I Got You*, chopped guitar sound.

M3a and M3b. Turnaround

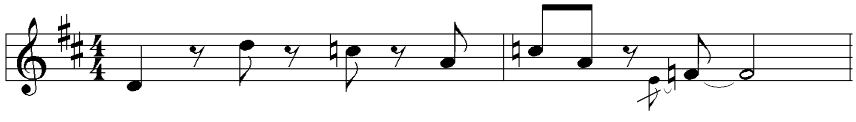
The episodic marker for *I Got You* begins with a change in the rhythm (M3a) on the A^7 chord before the D^9 arpeggio figure (M3b).



Example 64. ***I Got You*****, turnaround.**

M4a. Sax solo: 4 bar break.

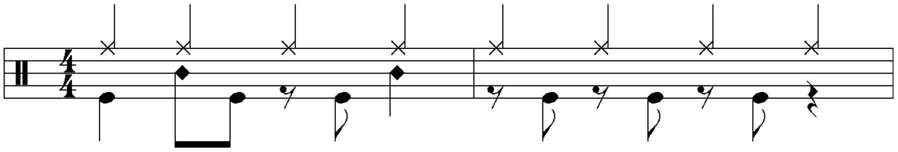
A short tenor saxophone solo enters at the start of the third section of the song indicating a change in the feel of the song. The break lasts 4 bars:



Exampl e 65. ***I Got You*****, sax solo (beginning).**

M4b. drum accompaniment.

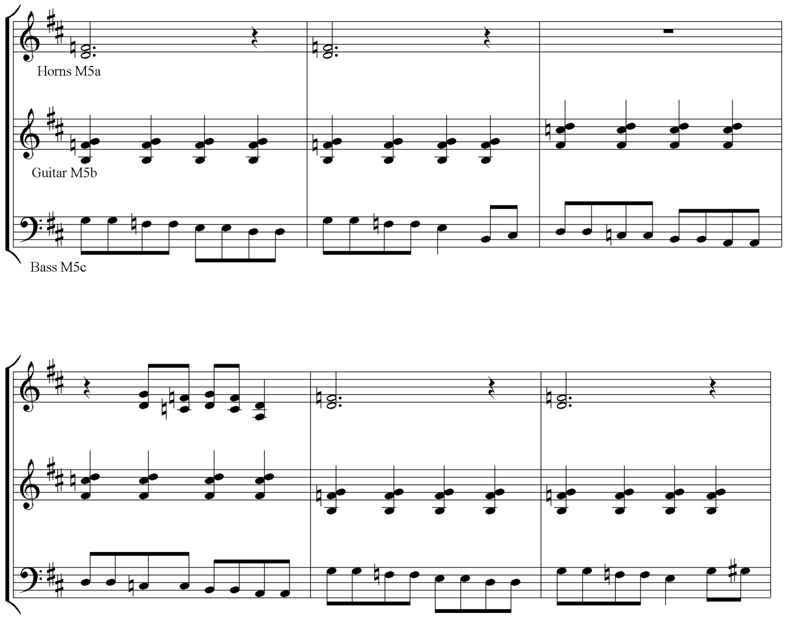
The saxophone solo (M4a) marks the beginning of a new structural episode in the song. The drum rhythm changes but so too does the sound of the drum as ride cymbal replaces the tight hi-hat sound:



Example 66. ***I Got You*****, drum part for sax solo.**

M5a, b and c. Middle 8, change of groove.

M5a, b and c represent an episodic change in the song as the earlier groove is displaced by this example:



Example 67. *I Got You,* middle eight.

2.4.9 Discussion

The opening of *I Got You* provides one the most dramatic 'déclenchement' heard in the analysis pieces examined so far. While the beginning of *Out Of Sight* was characterized by a smooth, rather soft, chromatic bass pick-up and *New Bag* had a strong, harsh dominant chord, the intensity and energy of *I Got You* reaches new heights. In addition to Brown's vocal pyrotechnics, the production is framed within a 3 second reverberation. In comparison to the other pieces studied to date, this adds a significant new quality to the recording.

In his analysis of Brown's *Superbad* Brackett (1992), notes that those pitches which sound like yells or 'gestures without pitch' are not only in pitch, but on time. The same is true of this 'I Feel Good' gesture outlined above. The pitches are clear and distinct and the rhythmic characteristics are not as spontaneous as they might sound. Indeed, a comparison with *Superbad,* which was to be recorded in 1970 some five years later, suggests a remarkable consistency in Brown's approach to vocal performance:

> ….the tessitura of the voice plays an important role in the formation of Brown's vocal timbre, described as 'one of the harshest in rhythm and blues' (Palmer 1980, p. 139). Brown takes care to choose the key of a song so that it places his voice in the uppermost portion of this range…songs that centre around the pitch D are exceedingly common in Brown's output… Brown exploits this consistency of tessitura by recycling many vocal cells at identical pitch levels from song to song, thereby implementing another variant of the first form of 'intertextuality' mentioned earlier (Brackett, 1992: 318).[194]

That Brown should recycle vocal cells should not necessarily surprise us as a similar feature can be generally found not only in vocalists, but also in instrumentalists, as a characteristic of the physicality of musical performance. Brown was not the only artist from the R&B tradition to exploit a high tessitura or a rasping vocal.[195] Indeed, parallels in sound were to be found elsewhere in R&B in the honking and screaming saxophone style which had been introduced during the 1940s and had developed into a mature style by the 1960s.[196] These harsh saxophone sounds parallel the harsh vocalisations drawn from gospel and blues traditions.[197] Similar opening cries are to be found on other Brown songs including, *Get it Together* (1967); *Give it Up Or Turn It Loose* (1968), *Brother Rapp* (1969) and were a feature of his live performances with some songs (*Sex Machine*, 1970, *Get Up I Feel Like Being A Sex Machine*, 1970) having lengthy spoken vocal introductions. These shouting features largely replaced an earlier introductory feature used in the early 1960s where the first notes of the songs such as *Bewildered* (1959) and *So Long* (1960) would be extended but firmly vocal-melodic in style. The changing characteristics, over time, denote a change in stylistic approach which, it could be argued, are evident through the development of a different vocal tone for a new, emerging genre.[198]

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[194] The key of D is also a crucial part of the song *The Grunt* (1970) where Brown sings 'In order for me to get down I gotta be in D,' at which point, the music modulates down into D.

[195] Other performers coming from the R&B and R&R traditions made use of vocal gestures in their performance. The high energy of Little Richard (*Lucille, Tutti Frutti*) contrasts with the semi-yodel of ex-country singer Jerry Lee Lewis. Resting at both ends of the spectrum, one is very much in a shouters tradition whereas the other in a heightened singing style.

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[196] See Miller, D. (1995) who suggests that this style was first heard in the tenor saxophone playing of Jean Illinois Battiste Jacquet who played in the Lionel Hampton Big Band (listen to *Flying Home,* 1945).

[197] Other parallels can be drawn in rock where the distorted voice and distorted guitar play a significant role in establishing the sound of that genre. This reflective relationship between instrument and vocal styles in a genre may be worthy of further research. Similarities found in folk traditions (Pìobaireachd and mouth music of the Western Isles off Scotland are a illustrative example).

[198] The fragmented approach given to the vocalist has the potential for a more sustained discussion. Moore (1993), Frith (1996) and Lacasse (2000b) have all contributed to an increasing discussion on vocal sounds. Earlier authors to address the voice include Lomax, A. (1968) *Folk Song Style and Culture*; Potter, J. (1998) *Vocal Authority:Singing Style and Ideology;* and Barthes (1990) *The Grain of the Voice.* Moore emphasises four characteristics of the voice including register, range, resonance, pitch and rhythm. Frith on the other hand, chooses different categories of analysis where the voice is considered as *a musical instrument*; as *a body*; as *a person;* and as a *character*' (Frith 1996:187). Lacasse's approach centres around the use of studio effects to change the vocal characteristics presented to us. Each offers a different view of the performing voice and through their different approaches, find meaning in the vocal performances they analyse and discuss. It is interesting to note that in examining the pop voice, immediate contrasts are usually with the classical voice (See Frith, 1996 p 186), which may be useful but in the context of recorded resources available of music from around the world, perhaps perpetuates aesthetic values which have characterised musicological discussion on popular music for so long.

Further analysis of the vocal déclenchement of *I Got You* (Example 59) allows us to consider the meaning and function of this phrase. The shout can be understood primarily as a dramatic 'call to attention'. However, any vocal utterance contains other information as it also embodies Brown's stage persona transmitting information both about him as a performer and about the performance situation. Brown's yelp creates a performance context that could be described as excited, elated, energetic, and bold. In addition, the shout reflects individual stylistic characteristics relating to rhythm 'n' blues as well as Brown's personal style. Similar use of shouts and yells are to be found in Sly and the Family Stone's *I Want To Take You Higher* (1969)*,* and *Dance To The Music* (1969) where a rasping vocal shout implores people to 'dance to the music'. While it would be too convenient to link create an etymophonic link between these shouts, there is a case for identifying the shout as part of a performance style of the period.

As a performance tradition, the shout could be considered as genre synecdoche linking the blues and gospel traditions possibly with the African-American tradition of shouters.[199] Gospel vocalisations can be found in other Brown songs including, *She's The One* (1969) and *Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved* (1970) which indicates the influence of specific performance practices coming together to inform his personal style. The shouts and cries in these African-American styles are an important part of live performance delivery and in *I Got You,* Brown transfers the physicality of the live performance into the recorded version evoking a mood or feeling which connects with the audience.[200] Just as Brown continually connects with members of his band on record, ('take it to the bridge', 'come on now', 'blow Maceo'), using the shout, he is able to address his audience (at home) as directly as if on stage.

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[199] From an ethnomusicological perspective, Merriam (1964) supports the view that 'vocal technique does provide an important criterion for differentiating music styles, [however] the problem is to find more precise terminology or more precise measurements which can be used in place of terms

In his discussion of the saxophone solos in rhythm 'n' blues songs, Miller (1995) suggests that these often very dramatic solos were 'used to whip up teenagers to a frenzy with repetitive riffs often played in the very upper and lower registers of the instrument' (Miller, 1995: 155). Miller theorises that the 'honking and screaming' can not be considered simply as an element of performance technique, but part of a wider set of cultural values shared by the audience:

> Maultsby [1985:45] has outlined four key cultural components prevalent in live black musical performances.[201] Firstly, there is a *common set of values* regulating the behaviour of the community. Secondly, there is a high regard for *freedom of expression.* Thirdly, *audience participation* becomes a measurement of the extent of approval of the performance. Finally, musical events act as a *stimulus for group cohesion and mass communication* (Millar, 1995:166).

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as 'tense', 'more tense', and the like. (Merriam, 1964: 105) In the same way, there are different types of shouts or hollers and context plays an important part in looking at function and meaning.

[200] The shout could be interpreted as 'I feel good…well not just good, but good enough to scream and shout! So, how does that make you feel now?'

[201] It could well be argued that theres are cultural components prevalent to any musical performance. Even in the Western Classical Tradition where approval and participation means sitting in silence, there is still a stimulus for group cohesion.

Miller’s suggestion is that the aim of dramatic musical display was to ensure ‘maximum audience identification and ultimately participation in the event’ (*ibid.* 167). The term he uses to describe this and similar events is ‘audience getting’ and this would seem to be precisely what Brown is trying to achieve in his recording. Video recordings available of Brown’s shows demonstrate the importance of ‘audience getting’ and the use of dramatic gestures (including ‘collapsing on stage’) is an important part of his success. On the recording itself, the audience is unable to witness the visual spectacle, but perhaps the screams and shouts provide a way of staging the show. The idea of ‘staging’ the performance may also explain the heavy use of reverberation on the opening of the song to create the image of an auditorium or large space in which these sounds are located.[202]

The use of reverberation was not unique to Brown and similar reverberation times can be heard on Bill Haley’s *Rock Around The Clock* (1955) and *See You Later Alligator*(1956). *Rock Around The Clock* opens with a snare drum introduction which gains significant resonance because of the added reverberation. The use of reverberation had, by the 1960s, become a familiar addition to recorded music and was first used on Patti Page’s *Confess* (1948).[203] Lacasse theorises that any approach to recording technology can be placed on a scale which ranges between a naturalistic on the one hand to a technological aesthetic on the other and that by the 1950s, 'the whole of the popular music recording industry had generally adopted an artistic-technological aesthetic, most often tending toward the full-technological pole'(Lacasse, 2000 : 122).[204]

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[202] There is no specific source to support the idea that this was intended. However, our auditory systems are able to determine the size of a space based on the reverberation patterns we perceive. Whether the reverberation was intuitive, deliberate or accidental, a 3 second reverberation creates the sense of a large space. See Lacasse, 2000 for further discussion the use of reverberation on the voice.

The use of technology on Haley's *Rock Around The Clock* tends towards the 'naturalistic' in the sense that the reverberation effect is a constant during the piece and could easily be the result of the recording environment. Brown's use of reverberation seems much more of a technological intervention adding to the dramatic impact by altering the texture of the voice and creating an illusion of space. As an 'audience getter' this is a powerful moment which works on a number of interpretative levels. It is also interesting that at the end of the song this particular sound returns as a single reverberant snare drum beat, followed by a final 'Hey!', precedes the final chord of the piece in effect, bringing back the opening sound at the end of the piece in a deliberate way.

Museme 1 (page 157) of *I Got You* is a good example of the compacted meaning which exists within a short phrase or bar of music. At the sonic level, it is clear that

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[203] Shea (1990) reports that, 'Page's vocal signal was transported via audio cable to a loudspeaker in the studio's very reverberant men's room. There a microphone picked up the reverberated sound' (Quoted in Lacasse, 2000: 118).

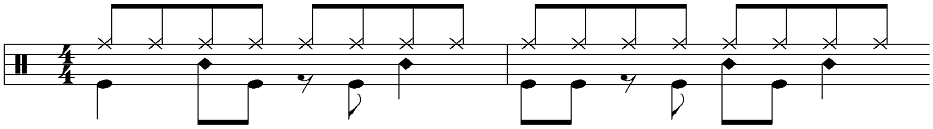
[204] Hodge and Kress (1988:142) suggest that 'different genres, whether classified by medium (e.g. comic, cartoon, film, TV, painting) or by content (e.g. western, Science Fiction, Romance, news) establish sets of modality markers, and an overall value which acts as a baseline for the genre'. The interaction and interpretation of these 'modality markers' bring about a sense of realism which is reflected in an aesthetic code which has become naturalised. See Chandler 2002 p64 for further discussion of reality, modality and conventions of the natural.

within this phrase much is said about James Brown's personal style and also his performance characteristics. His use of a tonal centre of D, his tight phrasing, his pitched vocalisms and his gospel-derived screams tell us a great deal about this particular moment in Brown's personal stylistic development. Structurally, as part of a set of three pieces along with *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* and *Out Of Sight* there is a change to be heard in the approach Brown takes to the opening episodic marker. The conventional chromatic lead in of *Out Of Sight* becomes a harsh V^7 chord in *Brand New Bag* and by *Out Of Sight,* only the shout will enable the level of 'audience getting' that he is looking for. Finally, there is the creative use of contemporary recording technology to create a dramatic presence in performance.

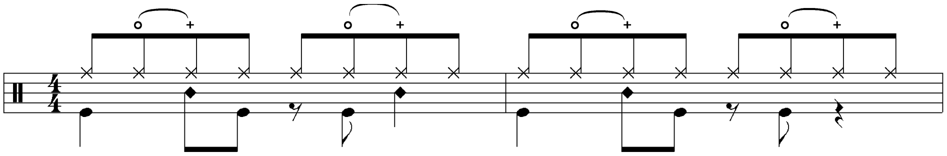
Rhythmic lock: Museme stack 2a,b,c,d

Discussion of museme 1 has allowed us to reflect on the development of Brown's personal style but also, indirectly, of the collaborative role that others have in creating a song like *I Got You.* Museme 1 is the result of an interaction between Brown, drummer Melvin Parker and the recording engineer for the song. The collaborative network extends further in museme 2 as other members of the band work together to create the instrumental backing for the song. The contribution of these musicians can be understood as a blend of both individual and group style. Individual style can be measured in terms of those elements that individual players bring to the recording such as the tight sound of Melvin Parker's drums and the dampened sound of Jimmy Nolen's guitar. Bringing these elements together creates a sense of group style and by analysing the changes in sound between 1964 and 1965 we gain an insight not only to the performance style, but to the musicians' approach to proto-funk.

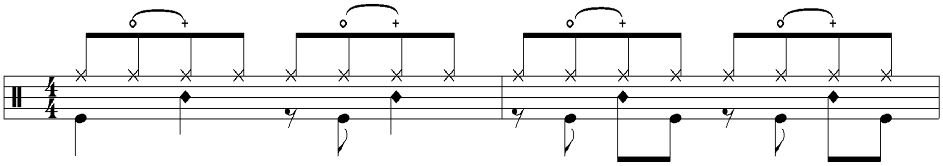
The significant development in Parker's drum sound from *Out Of Sight* to *Brand New Bag* was heard in the addition of the open hi-hat, a sound that I have discussed in terms of adding a distinct timbral layer to the drum sound. Understood as a development over the period 1964 to 1965, *I Got You* opens up the texture, especially in the second bar where the off-beat bass drum adds to the proto-funk sound. The following three examples demonstrate this change over time. Example 68 shows the basic eighth note rhythm used in *Out Of Sight.* Example 69 shows a variant to this rhythm but with the open-closed hi-hat and Example 70 shows a final variation which by creating less emphasis on the first and third beats on the bass drum opens up the texture:



Example 68. *Out Of Sight,* drum riff.

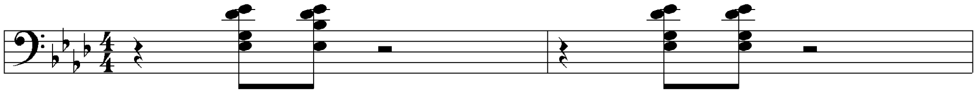


Example 69. *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,* drum riff.

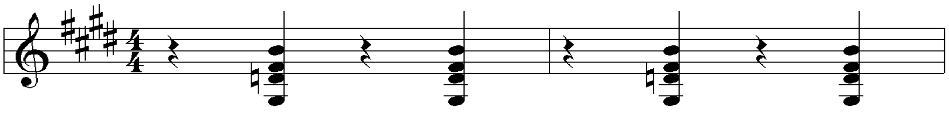


Example 70. ***I Got You*****, drum riff.**

The open textural space is something that is heard by comparing the guitar parts of the three pieces. Whereas *Out Of Sight* contains a repetitive rhythm in each bar (ex. 72), *Brand New Bag* reinforcing the backbeat rhythm (ex. 73):

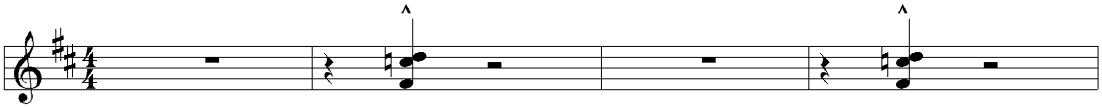


Example 71. ***Out Of Sight,*** **guitar.**



Example 72. ***Brand New Bag*****, guitar rhythm.**

The approach in *I Got You* opens the texture by providing a deliberately placed dampened sound every two bars:



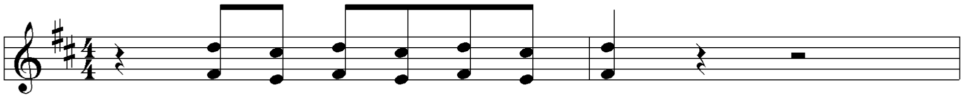
Example 73. ***I Got You*****, guitar rhythm.**

In order to develop the rhythmic lock for these three songs, three distinct conceptual frameworks were used including the ambiguity of *Out Of Sight,* the hocket of *Brand*

New Bag, and the open texture of *I Got You*. The similarity of these approaches creates a sense of continuity which could be a contributory factor in establishing a distinct proto-funk identity.

Museme 2a. Horn riff

One of the reasons for creating such an open rhythmic texture in *I Got You* may have been to accommodate the horn and bass into the texture. While the horn riff may at first seem extremely simple both harmonically and melodically, the feel of the horn part contributes significantly to the particular groove of *I Got You.* While it would be difficult to capture the rhythmic nuance of this phrase, in its simplest notational form the idea can be transcribed as follows:



Example 74. *I Got You*, horn riff.

One way to explore the contribution that this particular idea makes to the overall rhythmic lock would be to make a number of hypothetical substitutions.[205] The following examples show possible hypothetical substitutions (HS) for the horn riff, each varies from the original (Example 74) by changing from a triplet feel (Example 75) or by altering the phrasing as in examples 76-79:

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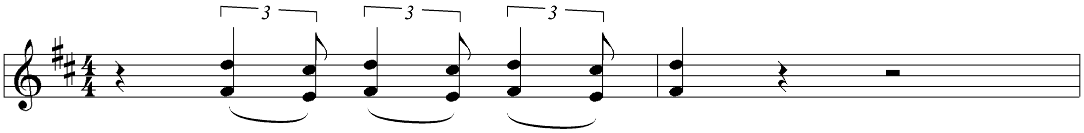
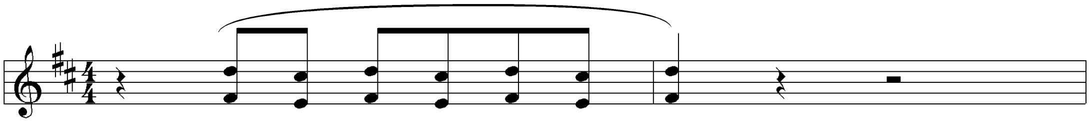
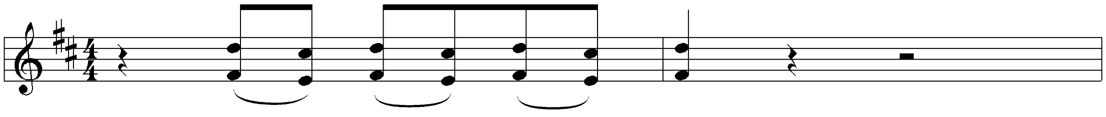
[205] See glossary. See also, Tagg, 1987.



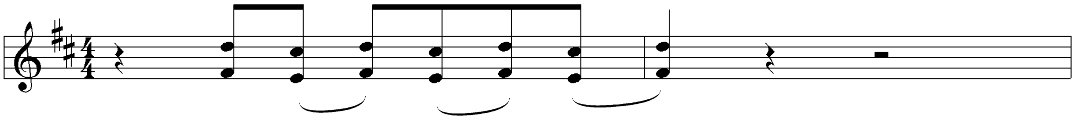
Example 75. ***I Got You*, HS for horn riff.**



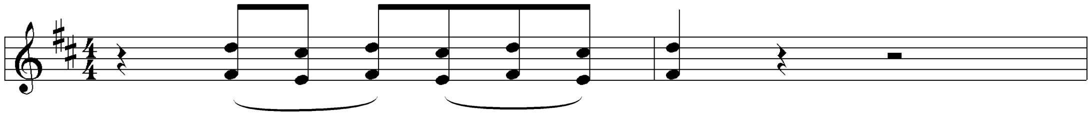
Example 76. ***I Got You*, HS 1 for horn riff.**



Example 77. ***I Got You*, HS 2 for horn riff.**



Example 78. ***I Got You*, HS 3 for horn riff.**



Example 79. ***I Got You*, HS 4 for horn riff.**

Other methods used to analyse this groove include the use of the groove analysis tools in modern sequencers. This strategy was employed by Millward (2001) in an attempt to explain the way that timing can affect groove. Millward produced a number of graphs and diagrams to explain the tempo variation but at best these calculations simply map the audio wave to a fictional tempo line.[206] In general, musicians do not work to the micro-chronological of the midi sequencer. However, the data produced by Millward does make a number of useful points in interpreting the hypothetical substitutions.

Millward's observations suggest that in general, the snare drum tends to be earlier than the kick drum, and other eighth notes tend to come later than the kick and snare beats. In addition, Millward detects a fluctuation in tempo through the middle parts of the bars which generates a small acceleration and deceleration. Millward's suggestion is that this 'micro-level view of *I Feel Good* shows how a complete groove is built from a number of different large-scale and small-scale grooves occurring within individual parts' (2001). Millward's analysis alerts us to the micro-level timing variations of individual players and the fluctuation of tempo throughout the song. These fluctuations have already been discussed in the 'déclenchement', but they are also to be found in the tempo changes between the different sections (break and middle eight) as well as in individual phrases.[207]

These micro-level timing variations or fluctuations are an important part of the groove. In highlighting the hypothetical substitutions for *I Got You,* we see a number of interpretations and on close listening may find that some of the substitutions explain the rhythm better than others. These fluctuations might be considered as 'participatory discrepancies' described by Keil (1985). To measure these 'discrepancies' against Millward's midi timeframe may provide useful information about how musicians create rhythm. The midi-timeframe is, however, simply a measure but one which was not used in the original creation of the groove. The participatory discrepancies suggested by Keil will arise from within the rhythmic lock itself.[208] Close listening suggests that, against the drum part, the horn riff has a slight shuffle feel, similar to example 75 but clearly it is not a swing. This creates a problem for analysis as it would seem to suggest some ambiguity between shuffle rhythms, even eighth notes and cross phrasing between the instrumentalists. However, the tension that arises, even if we cannot fully analyse it in scientific terms, has to be in part responsible for the groove created on *I Got You.*

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[206] The full article can be found at <http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/jul01/articles/grove1.asp>

[207] Millward suggests that the tempo accelerates in the saxophone bridge and middle eight. He also suggests that 'the range of tempos within the last two verses is significantly less than that within

Examination of the hypothetical substitutions outline several possibilities in this seemingly simple riff but the effect is more complex and several of the hypothetical substitutions may be working at once. The irregularity in rhythm, at the micro-level create a number of internal stress patterns in the bar which, when contrasted against similar performance practices in the other instruments, creates the specific, and perhaps unique, groove of *I Got You.*

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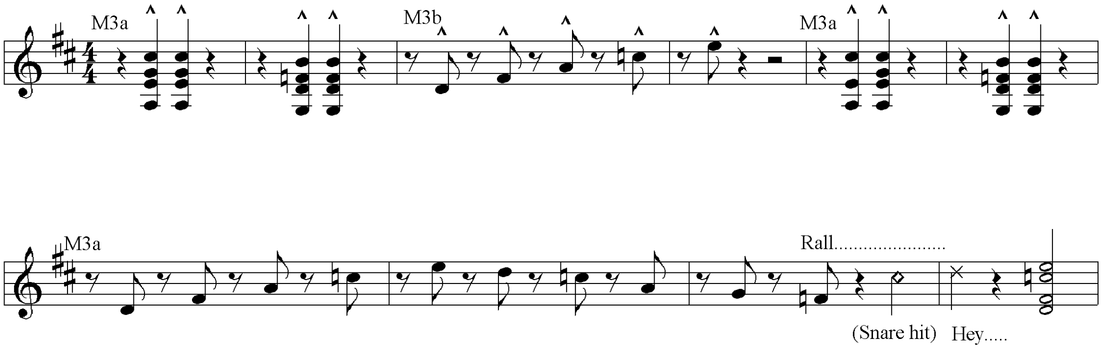
the first two verses. This gives the impression that the musicians are settling into the main groove the more times they play it'. (Millward, 2001).

[208] The idea of participatory discrepancies has been critiqued by Kivfte (2004).

V^9 Turnaround

The final turnaround has been a significant moment in both *Out Of Sight,* and *Brand New Bag,* with each of these songs ending on a chord V^7 in a conventional turnaround. *I Got You* takes a different approach, not only is the idea more linear, but the final note of the D^9 chord (E) leaves the harmonic implications of the chord unresolved. Moreover, the ninth chord was possibly a chord more frequently associated with jazz than with rhythm 'n' blues. This is a difficult association to make as ninth chords alone do not denote a particular style nor is it used exclusively within this piece as it remains part of the standard harmonic practice of the time. The appearance of the ninth chord in *I Got You,* considered as part of a trilogy of pieces, does mark a significant departure from *Out Of Sight* and *Brand New Bag*:



Example 80. *I Got You,* ending.

Rubin (2000) discusses the V^9 as the 'funky chord' in his guitar tutor and a strong association seems to have developed between funk and the V^9 chord.[209] From an etymophonic view, the relationship between V^9 and funk would have to be traced in further detail. For the moment, in terms of chronology, it will be necessary to acknowledge the appearance of the V^9 chord in the proto-funk.

Instrumental Break (M4) and middle eight (M5)

After two choruses, the song changes groove and tempo. The break is introduced by a saxophone solo (M4a, Example 65) accompanied by the drums (M4b, Example 66). The solo acts as a short transition between the rhythmic lock of M2 and the new grove, M5. The move from one rhythmic lock to a second one is, for the proto-funk pieces under discussion here, new. Unlike the first rhythmic lock, M5 is built on even eighth notes and as a strong sense of unity in the ensemble.

The use of M5 establishes the possibility of creating a song around a number of grooves. While this practice was located in *I Got You,* it establishes the possibility of using contrasting grooves to express different ideas. This is a compositional technique that will be explored later in the etymophony.[210] For the moment, it is sufficient to note the change in rhythmic groove from the idea in M2 to the $G^7 - D^7$ chord with a descending bass figure shown in M5 above.

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[209] See the guitar page on about.com: http://guitar.about.com/library/weekly/aa091701b.htm (accessed 12.4.05)

2.4.10 Summary conclusion

Out Of Sight, Brand New Bag, and *I Got You* represent a significant era in the development of both James Brown's personal style and of groove-based proto-funk styles. From the analysis of Brown's music, and from exploration of Longhair, Palmer and the New Orleans street beat, a number of stylistic ideas begin to circulate. These ideas represent musical elements in the proto-funk which could be heard by musicians through commercial distribution of records, listening to radio or by interacting together as musicians. Although the etymophony began with Tipitina in 1953, the elements that emerged during this time were of a general nature and did not necessarily contribute to the performance style of Brown. Brown's style began to consolidate over a period of 18 months and does so through an element of continuity.

By 1965, the elements of proto-funk included:

- Blues-based jam as an essential part of the (collective) creative process
- Sixteenth-note rhythmic framework replacing (or modifying) shuffles and even eighths note rhythms
- A move towards an open contrapuntal texture of ensemble playing which includes the use of hocket techniques
- A development of blues-based harmonies to include V^9 chords
- Prominent use of open hi-hat cymbals adding to the linear texture

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210 See discussion of *Cloud Nine* (1968) by the Temptations (section 2.9).

- Prominent use of the dampened or scratch guitar sound as part of the rhythmic texture
- Possibility of changing the groove within a song

Several of these stylistic features are described in Stewart (2000) who lists a number of other additional stylistic features. Unlike Stewart, the list is chronologically specific and draws on the analysis pieces considered in the discussion. As a result, generalisations can easily be mapped to specific pieces. Several of these stylistic features emerged as the result of the performance practice of individual musicians who brought to the proto-funk specific instrumental sounds or ways of playing. In addition to these stylistic features, the development of the proto-funk in Brown's style seems to be related to a focus on groove as a central aesthetic of these pieces. Brown's willingness to experiment with new rhythmic ideas and to explore ideas of hocket and rhythmic ambiguity suggests a growing awareness of the importance of the groove in developing his music.

As a proto-style, these features can be considered as 'under development' which could mean that some features will consolidate into a strong style whereas others will not. Part of the success of these codes depends on the ability to transfer to other musicians and to be assimilated into other performance styles. Just as the contribution of individual musicians has been important to developing the proto-funk in Brown's music, it will be equally important for other musicians in other bands to create some continuity if a proto-funk style is to be consolidated in any way. These issues of assimilation and consolidation will be explored further in the next section which traces developments in the funk sound after 1965. The discussion will concentrate on a range of musicians who contributed to the proto-funk between 1967 and 1969 beginning with the release of Dyke and the Blazers' *Funky Broadway,* which is acknowledged as the first song to include funky in its title.[211]

2.5 Funky Broadway: diffusing the proto-funk[212]

Dyke and the Blazers' *Funky Broadway* was released on Original in January 1967 and Vincent (1996) suggests that *Funky Broadway* 'kicked off' the funky dance fad of the time.[213] The song was originally written for a dance that lead singer Christian had created.[214] For the purposes of developing an etymophony, the song provides a useful starting point as it captures a number of stylistic features including the use of one single chord to create the rhythmic lock, along with an extended funky drum solo in the final section of the song. The song therefore breaks down into three sections: the introduction, main section and final section.

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[211] Originally released on the Phoenix indie label, Artco in 1966 the song did not prove to be a success until it's re-release on Original in 1967. The success of the 1967 release suggest that this had a wider circulation and possibly a wider influence so for the purposes of the discussion, the Original release will be the focus of the discussion.

[212] Broadway is not New York, but Phoenix Arizona. Vincent (1996) suggests that 'Dyke's scratch lyrics celebrated the ubiquity of Broadways everywhere, as the gritty grimy feel of night life on the boulevard came to life' (1996: 63). It introduces the idea of 'street funk' which was to remain a popular theme in funk lyrics (see the Crusaders *Street Life*). Members of the band included: Rodney Brown (drums); Alvester 'Pig' Jacobs (guitar); Bernard williamson (sax); J.V. Hunt (sax); Alvin Battle (bass) and Richard Cason (organ); and Arlester 'Dyke' Christian.

[213] *Funky Broadway* had its own steps which can be heard briefly at the end of the song. Other songs of this kind appear with the most brazen exponent being Rufus Thomas who produced a series of dances in the 1970s including *Funky Penguin* and *Funky Chicken.*

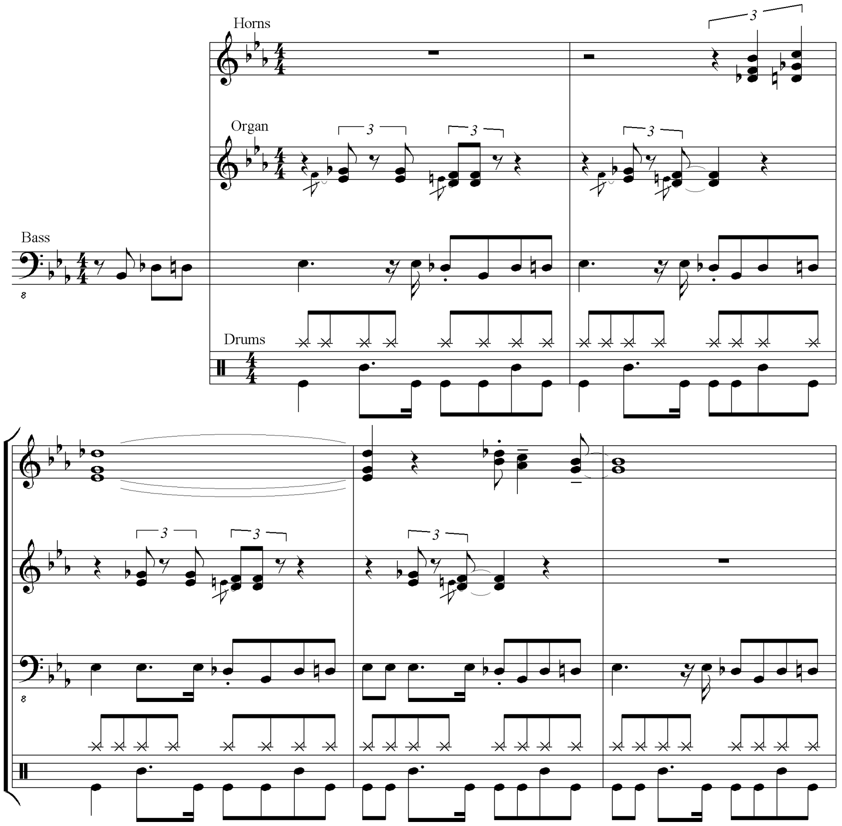
[214] The dance can be heard in the final section of the song where Christian sings out the instructions.

Introduction	Main section	Final section
10 bars intro	56 bars rhythmic lock (one chord)	drum solo (c. 19 bars)

Table 6. *Funky Broadway,* structure.

Introduction: MS1

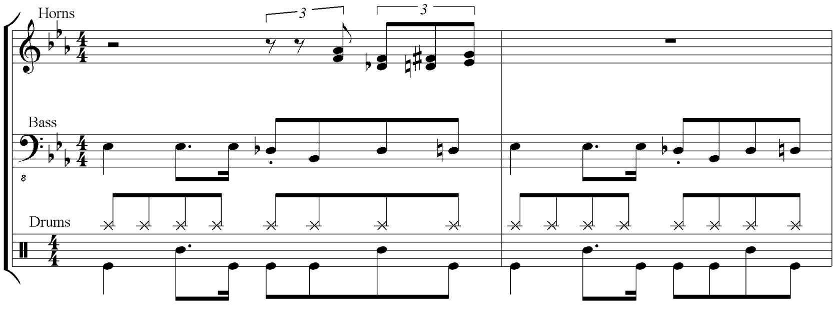
The 10 bar introduction forms the museme stack for the first section is played by drums, bass, organ and horns:



Example 81. *Funky Broadway*, opening section.

Main section: rhythmic lock MS2

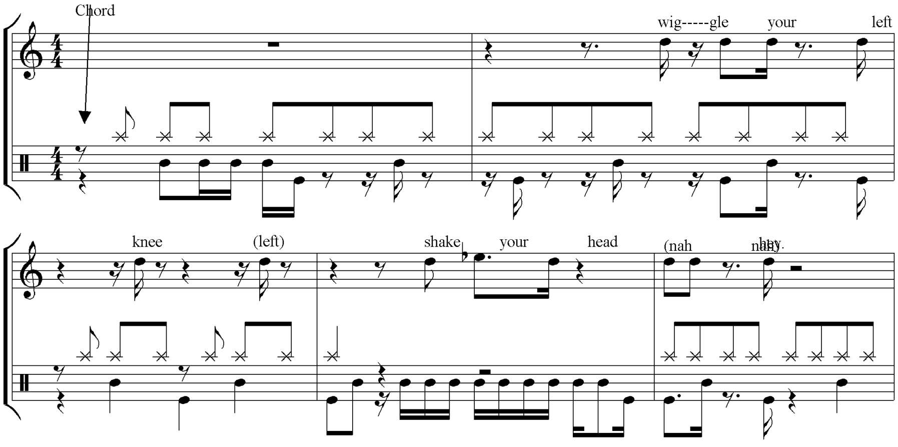
The second section begins in bar 11 and is the rhythmic lock for the piece lasting some 54 bars in total.


Horns
3
3
Bass
Drums

Example 82. ***Funky Broadway,*** **main riff.**

Final section: drum solo (c. 2'05")

The final section of the song is dominated by a distinctly off-beat drum solo against which Dyke sings .


Chord
wig-----gle
your
left
knee
(left)
shake
your
head
(nah
nah)

Example 83. ***Funky Broadway,*** **drum solo.**[215]

2.5.1 Discussion

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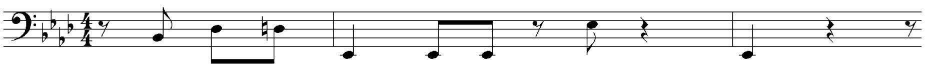
[215] This part proved almost impossible to transcribe. While part of this rests with my own failings in transcription, the beat soon becomes unclear.

Funky Broadway provides a snapshot of the funk style during the late 1966 and beginning of 1967. As such, it provides a point of reference for our etymophony demonstrating how the sound of funk was beginning to develop. In contributing to the funk genre, the piece also serves to reference the development of the 'store of musical codes' which was available to the listening public at the time. Given the success of the song in both the pop and rhythm 'n' blues charts during 1967, it could be assumed that a significant number of the record buying public in America were now fully attuned to the musical codes of funk.

There are a number of these musical ideas that were found in Brown. The three note bass motive which opens *Funky Broadway,* is the same idea played by Sam Thomas in Brown's 1964 song, *Out Of Sight* (see Example 39) which also shares the same key centre of E♭.[216]



Example 84. *Out Of Sight*, bass intro.

It is here that the similarity between Funky Broadway and *Out Of Sight* ends. The octave leap which provides a funky opening to *Out Of Sight* is replaced by an E♭ below middle C. The distinctive sound of *Out Of Sight* has been replaced by a more conventional rhythm 'n' blues organ and horns sound. Brown's focus in the band was to concentrating on the rhythmic lock of the instruments. Dyke and the Blazers take a very different approach which seems much more in the spirit of Professor Longhair's *Tipitina.* By combining a range of material from different genres, *Funky Broadway* fuses a number of stylistic influences in a self-proclaimed funky way. The effect of straight eights against triplet blues-inflected ideas on the organ and saxophones create a rhythmic tension which Longhair explored through the combination of boogie and rumba. As a snapshot of the proto-funk style in 1966/7 *Funky Broadway* suggests that the some of the proto-funk elements established by Brown had begun to be assimilated by musicians from across the United States. As a proto-style, songwriters like Dyke were able to take element of the funk style and integrate them into their own work. In this way, the proto-funk proved to be a flexible and fluid framework for other bands to experiment with and introduce new ideas, the most important of these being the introduction of the one chord jam.

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[216] For ease of transcription, the notation of *Out Of Sight* shows 4 flats which takes into account the blues orientated flat fifth.

Funky Broadway may have set a precedent for the single chord composition but it was not so unusual at the time. In the world of jazz, Miles Davis had begun experimenting with modal chord sequences on his album "Kind Of Blue". One of the best known pieces to emerge from that album was the composition *So What?* (1959) which uses two chords with each chord held for eight or sixteen bars. Earlier examples of one-chord structures also exist as part of the blues repertoires including John Lee Hooker's 1948 song, *Boogie Chillun.*[217]

Although these examples demonstrate that one chord songs or compositions existed before *Funky Broadway,* the examples mentioned are found outside of the rhythm 'n' blues repertoire and did not necessarily have an influence on Dyke and the Blazers. It would therefore, be inappropriate to make too much of the link between such diverse styles as *Boogie Chillun*, *So What?* and *Funky Broadway.* However Dyke acquired this compositional structure, what it did allow him to do was to concentrate on the rhythmic groove.

The final section of *Funky Broadway* is constructed around a 19 bar drum solo. Over the solo, Dyke intones the steps for the dance, inviting his audience to 'wiggle your left knee… shake your head'. In describing this drum solo as funky, some consideration of the performance practice might be taken into consideration. The solo has an off-beat feel which could be interpreted in a number of ways. The most obvious way is to consider the bass drum to be 'on the beat'. However, it soon becomes clear that the metric timing of this solo may not be totally accurate in terms of four equal quarter beats in a bar.

---

[217] *Boogie Chillun* is found on Original Folk Blues (United) and a version of this song can be heard on Singing Fish: http://search.singingfish.com/sfw/home.jsp. *Boogie Chillun* is also interesting as an example of a using open guitar tuning to produce a percussive, slap string sound.

One way of investigating the feel of this piece was to examine the beats as a graphic waveform using the lead-in to the solo to establish the tempo. From the diagram (fig. 2) is easy to see how the drum beat quickly deviates from any tempo that might have been established earlier in the song. Figure 5 shows the main beats in graphic form with the beats of the first bar marked above the waveform:

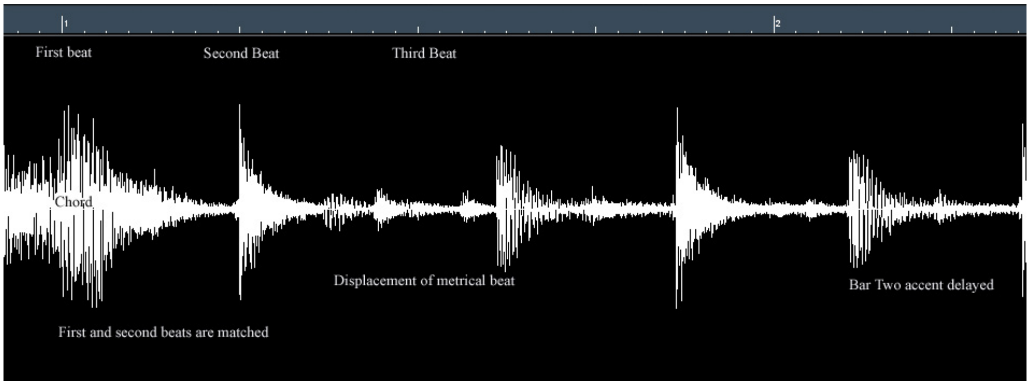

Figure 5. Tempo mapping.

In terms of notation the rhythm was mapped as follows:[218]

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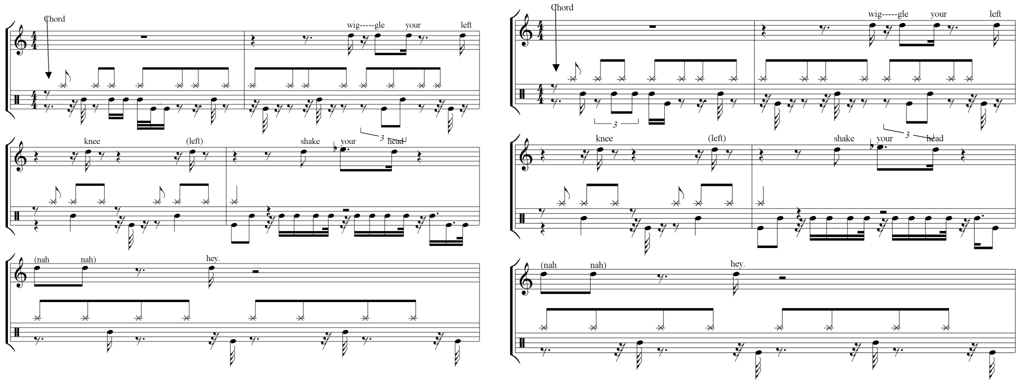
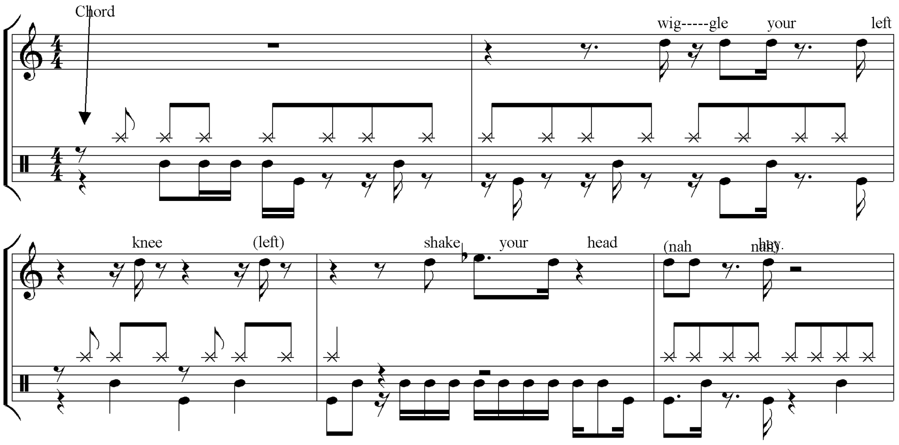
[218] The example shown has several variants each quantised at a different point either using 32nd notes or a mixed quantise. For the purposes of reading a score, although more accurate, these seemed less useful. Drummer Pete Fairclough drew out the beat placing the bass drum on even eighth notes explaining this was how he thought about these rhythms on paper at least.


Chord
wig-----gle
your
left
knee
(left)
shake
your
3
head
(nah
nah)
hey.
Chord
wig-----gle
your
left
3
knee
(left)
shake
your
3
head
(nah
nah)
hey.



Example 85. ***Funky Broadway,*** **solo drum section.**

Assuming that (i) you predict a tempo in your mind from the first two beats of the first bar, and (ii), you perceive the kick drum as the strong part of the beat, the listener soon finds it difficult to tap along with the beat. The consequence of this is to either continually adjust the predictive time span (by mentally locking on the kick drum as the first beat of the bar) or by focusing in on the vocal part which, at least aurally, gives the impression of being in time because of the accents Dyke makes on key words.[219]

There are significant problems with this approach, not least of which are the interpretative decisions I have made in mapping the tempo to the first two beats of the bar,[220] and in quantising the notated piece to 16th notes for convenience. Despite these limitations in technique, the examples serves to demonstrate how drummer Rodney Brown managed to shift metrical time and play outside of the normal predictive timeframe.[221] This kind of flexible time pattern can be found in some jazz drum solos where the solo section moves from a regular metrical time in the ensemble to a free time in the solo and back to the original tempo for the closing section of the piece. In terms of dance, this kind of pattern presents numerous problems in finding the beat, but this is clearly central to the idea of the *Funky Broadway*.

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[219] To test this, I have listened and counted, moved and sung along with the part. It feels in time comared to the drum part.

[220] The tempo mapped at 125bpm. An alternative approach was to map the tempo across four bars but this meant guessing where the main beat of the bar was supposed to be.

Funky Broadway represents an important point in the development of funk. [222] By 1966/7, other artists were beginning to become aware of both the musical and commercial potential of funk. The commercial success of *Funky Broadway* is only one marker of its appeal. A further marker is the number of artists who covered the song. Wilson Pickett did his own cover of the song in the autumn of 1967 and other versions are to be found by Diana Ross (1968) and Steve Cropper (1970).[223] There is insufficient space to make any comparisons between the two versions in this discussion but as Pickett's version was released in September 1967, some ten months after the original release of the song, its contribution to the development of funk could be considered minimal. Such a practice does serve to demonstrate the continued intertextual journey that the musical codes take in the assimilation of these new stylistic features and in the embedding of these codes into the public consciousness.

---

[221] Pressing, 2002, worked on groove patterns and discussed our predictive ability to anticipate the next beat of a bar once the metre had been established. He considered this feature of our minds important for establishing and holding onto some sense of groove.

[222] It is worth mentioning works such as Lowell Fulsom's *Tramp* also released in 1966. *Tramp* has the dampened guitar sound and a drum pattern with syncopated beats on the snare drum. However, the overall effect is very bluesy including the guitar solo. *Tramp* was covered in 1967 by Otis Reading who retained some of the original proto-funk features seen in the earlier work of James Brown.

2.6 May 1967: James Brown's *Cold Sweat*

The contribution of artists such as Dyke and the Blazers produced a different style of funk which is often described as 'raw'. Internet fan sites create a clear distinction between the tightly controlled sound of Brown, and the 'raw energy' of bands like Dyke and the Blazers. A brief survey of fanzine sites demonstrates an aesthetic schism which *Funky Broadway*, perhaps inadvertently, created:

> Dyke & The Blazers may lack the polish of James Brown's bands of the time, but I think the sound better for it. No-one could touch JB's groups for that total finesse thing, but by being down and **nasty**, (sic) Dyke & Co held their own. Make no mistake, this is hard funk.[224]

As a further contribution to the 'total finesse thing', James Brown released *Cold Sweat* in May 1967 and, in doing so, further refined his tightly controlled rhythmic proto-funk sound. Slutsky and Silverman speculate that the song was possibly:

> ….written in response to Wilson Pickett and Dyke and the Blazers producing versions of 'Funky Broadway', Brown introduced Cold Sweat which knocked them from the charts in 1967. It was the first of several modal tunes which reduced the importance of pitch and raised the status of rhythm (1997:39).

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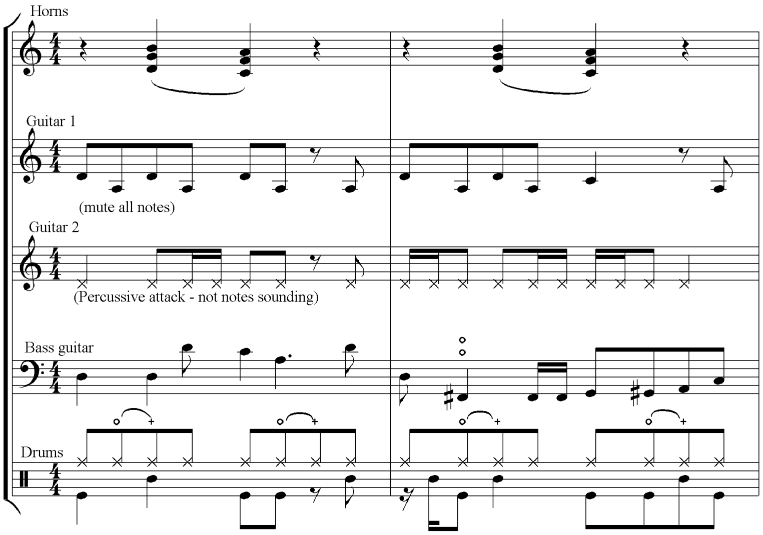
223 Steve Cropper, *With A Little Help From My Friends* (Volt 6006: 1970);*Diana Ross and the Supremes Joins The Temptations* (Motown, Nov. 1968).

224 Found on <http://www.boogalooinvestigators.co.uk/totm3.htm> accessed 13.4.05 and one of the many fanzine sites which exist to discuss funk and rhythm 'n' blues.

Slutsky and Silverman may have ignored the fact that Wilson Pickett's version of *Funky Broadway* was not released until September, four months after *Cold Sweat.* However, they do make some useful points concerning the development of the use of static, modal harmonies adopted by Brown. The main museme stack of *Cold Sweat* is outlined below:

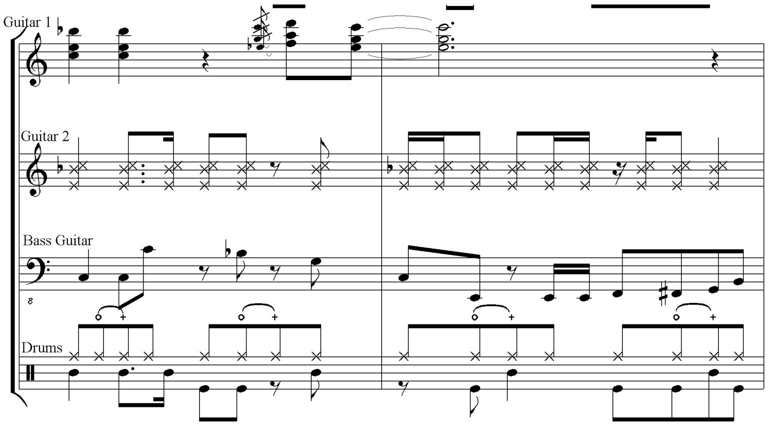
MS1: funky so what?

The first museme provides the rhythmic lock for the verse of the song:


Horns
Guitar 1
(mute all notes)
Guitar 2
(Percussive attack - not notes sounding)
Bass guitar
Drums

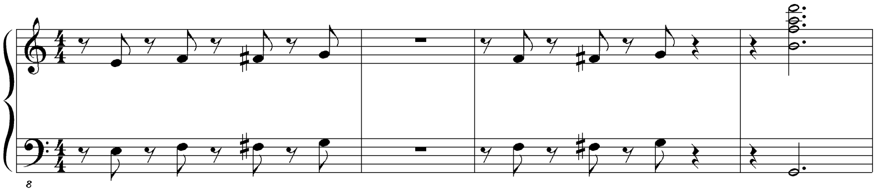
Example 86. *Cold Sweat,* museme stack 1.

MS2: middle eight



Example 87. *Cold Sweat*, museme stack 2.

MS3: Turnaround.



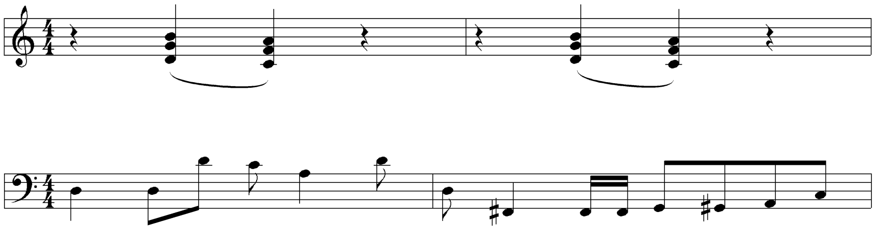
Example 88. *Cold Sweat*, turnaround.

2.6.1 Discussion

James Brown's approach to funk has been to tighten the sound to produce a clear, precise texture in which the contribution of individual instruments make to the whole is very carefully placed. Brown's approach has been to focus on the rhythmic possibilities of the instrumental ensemble. One way of achieving this particular goal was to take a similar approach to *Funky Broadway* and use a static, modal harmony to underpin the rhythmic lock. The rhythmic lock in *Cold Sweat* is held together by using a tonal centre of D.

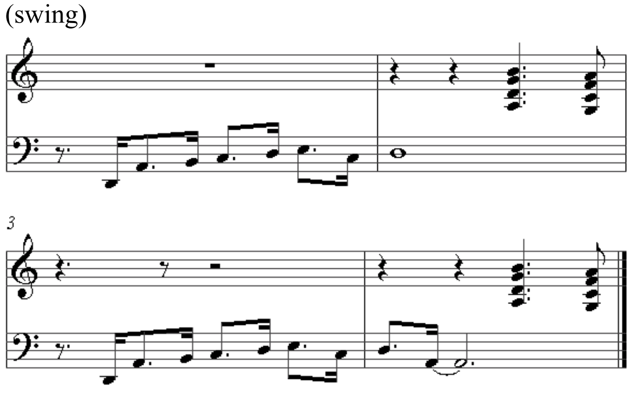
M1a and M1b: harmonic ambiguity and *So What?* chords.

Unlike previous pieces in the proto-funk style, the guitar part in MS1 has no chord, but instead outlines the chord using D and A in the guitar and a bass part which suggests an harmonic ambiguity in its use of F♯ while the horn part sounds an E minor seventh to D minor seventh:



Example 89. *Cold Sweat,* chords and bass.

The descending chords are almost identical to those used in the Miles Davis composition, *So What?*:



Example 90. *So What?* riff and chords.

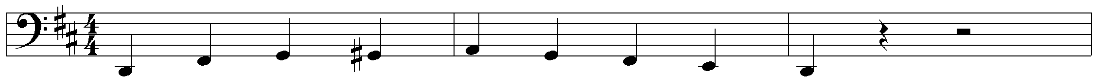
The use of a modal harmony has already been discussed in *Funky Broadway* as part of the one-chord jam. The similarity of the chords of *Cold Sweat* to Miles Davis' *So What?* appears too obvious to ignore even through the laid-back tempo of *So What?* is replaced by a faster speed in *Cold Sweat.* The same effect of creating harmonic tension and release can be heard on *Cold Sweat* but within a different musical context. Not only has the tempo changed, but Brown's version deliberately emphasises the backbeat.

Cold Sweat leaves behind the blues influenced sequences found in Brown's earlier style and moves in a more rhythmic, linear approach to composition. The apparent simplicity in harmonic approach is, however, balanced by the way that individual parts create passing harmonic relationships. An example of this is in the bass line which uses chromatic passing notes and, as a result, creates a false relationships between F and F♯ and perhaps blurs the modality of the section. This kind of writing was, in Western Classical Music at least, found in the Tudor madrigals of William Byrd, where the harmonic ambiguity results from the importance given to individual melodic lines.[225]

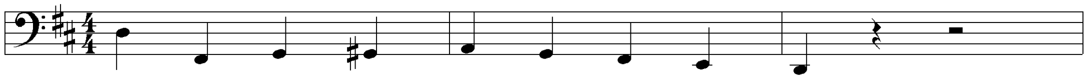
The chromatic passing notes outlining the D^7 chord are a standard feature in many bass lines. Example 92 shows a standard, walking boogie line with Example 93 showing the displacement of the first note as found in *Cold Sweat*:

---

[225] Fellows (1948) suggests that 'such dissonances are undoubtedly harsh and even intolerable to most modern ears… The explanation of these discords is usually to be found by viewing the individual voice-parts horizontally rather than by analysing the chords perpendicularly (1948:171).

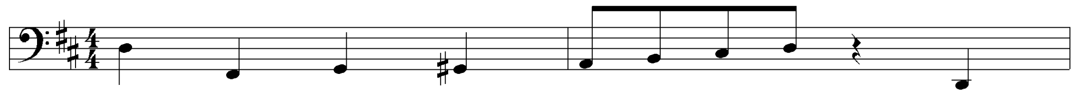


Example 91. Walking bass pattern.



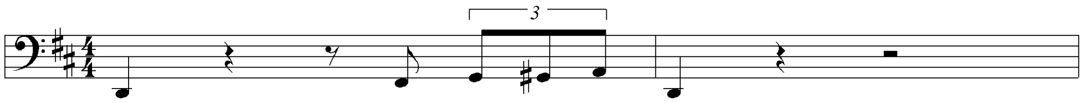
Example 92. Walking bass with octave displacement.

These are common sounds of the bass which can include chromatic passing notes to which keep the rhythmic momentum while ensuring the chord note is on the first beat of the bar:



Example 93. Walking bass with chromatic variation.

These bass figures are not, of course, purely hypothetical as can be seen in the Charles Mingus bass line for *Prayer for Passive Resistance*:



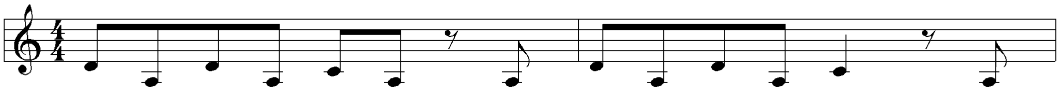
Example 94. ***Prayer for Passive Resistance*** **(b. 13-14)**

This linear, chromatic approach has been well known in jazz playing for some time and its transfer to the proto-funk of Brown should not necessarily come as a surprise. However, the emphasis on the bass line which was seen in *Funky Broadway,* is further developed in *Cold Sweat* with the introduction of the fall of the sixth onto the low F# adding an additional dimension to the sound.

Museme 1c and 1d: Chop and scratch guitar

One of the defining sounds of funk to emerge in *Cold Sweat* was the use of the dampened guitar sound. This particular sound had already entered the vocabulary of Brown in earlier songs such as *Out Of Sight* and *I Got You.* However, the dampened rhythmic guitar was taken to new levels in *Cold Sweat* with the combination of two particular sounds. The first is the single note, muted guitar sound which had become a feature of Jimmy Nolen's playing with Brown.

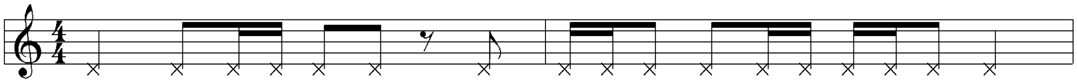
M1c, single note muted guitar.



Example 95. Muted guitar

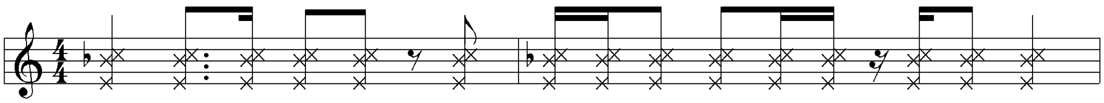
The second defining sound was the scratch guitar sound played by Alfonzo 'Country' Kellum. Scratch guitar, as a particular sound, was not new but it's inclusion in proto-funk in *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* and its continued use in *Cold Sweat* firmly established the rhythmic scratch in the vocabulary of funk guitar techniques. In *Cold Sweat,* the rhythm adds to the overall rhythmic texture of muted guitar and drums.

M1d, scratch guitar



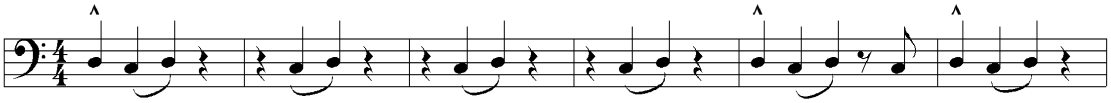
Example 96. Scratch guitar M1d.

The scratch feature was to be developed further in the second section of the song moving from a D based harmony to C^7.



Example 97. Scratch guitar MS2.

On the *Foundations of Funk* album, there are two alternative takes of *Cold Sweat* which reveals a different concept to the final version being analysed here. In the original two cuts, a baritone saxophone is prominent and the scratch guitar is absent. The missing baritone part was clearly crucial in the original concept:



Example 98. ***Cold Sweat,*** **baritone (Sax part, alternative take 2).**

Two other pieces of evidence give an indication how these parts were developed in the studio. The first is in alternative take 1 which stops after the fourth bar. When the musicians stop playing James Brown can be heard to say:

> Ok, lets get that ‘bop, day-yup, bap dap-u (indistinct rhythm)… (clap)’, that’s a pop, get-it?

Interviews by Clyde Stubblefield suggest that there was no pre-arranged way to play these songs, they were:

> …. right off the top of my head. I just sat down and started playing. If they had some music, I would just start playing the beat against it. It was just a feeling I had – a thought. It wasn't anything I practised. That's the way I heard it (Payne, 1996:64).

There is no record of how many alternative takes exist, but these provide an indication of how the song developed from a baritone saxophone idea, perhaps along the idea of *Brand New Bag*, but then transformed into something quite distinct.

The second museme stack (Example 88, p. 190) continues to develop ideas found in the first museme stack with similar patterns or sounds but this time on a C7 chord. Two significant features emerge during this part of the song. The first is the extended saxophone solo and the second is the extended drum solo. *Cold Sweat* is unusual because it contains an extended drum solo lasting over a minute. It would be possible to speculate that Brown was reacting to the drum solo on *Funky Broadway.* While there is no tangible evidence to support this view, the final version of the song does last for over seven minutes and represents a first move into the extended jam which was to feature in post sixties funk:

> The long-playing dance single was an innovation that should be credited to James Brown. His bands performed in the ageless African tradition of extended dance workouts, improvising along the simplest of patterns and filling up the space with lively rhythmic interplay. Brown's courageous impulse to record his songs as long dance cuts – seven minutes of "cold Sweat," ten minutes of "Sex Machine," thirteen minutes of "Papa don't Take No Mess" – were copied by funk bands initially, and then by disco producers (Vincent, 1996: 208).

Although Vincent's writing is coloured by his particular political viewpoint, his idea regarding the introduction of the extended dance track is well put. Brown appears, once again, to be an innovator but at the same time, it is possible to see how he and his fellow musicians were aware of the wider musical developments that existed. *Funky Broadway* may have made a significant impact in the latter part of 1967, but it was clear that Brown was able to reach into a rich reservoir of material which extended back in his personal style from the 1960s to further develop his particular style of funk.

2.7 Alternative directions: diversification and symbiosis.[226]

From 1966 until the end of that decade, a number of artists made their own contribution to the development of the funk style. Table 7 illustrates some of the songs and artists who were experimenting with proto-funk ideas. While James Brown continued to develop his personal style of funk through *Cold Sweat, Licking Stick, Mother Popcorn, Funky Drummer* and eventually the Bootsy Collins-influenced *Sex Machine,* other artists were developing there own approach by drawing on their own musical backgrounds as well as the influence of Brown.

As funk began to emerge as a distinct genre during this period, its musical and cultural identity began to be established, mainly around dance trends. *Funky Broadway, Soul*

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[226] Roget's Thesaurus (2005) suggests the following synonyms for symbiosis (merger): amalgamation, combination, coming together, conjunction, consolidation, fusion, juncture,

Dance Number Three, Boogaloo Down Broadway, Dance to the Music, Cissy Strut and *Cold Sweat* all identify themselves with movement on the dance floor. In addition, a number of songs such as *Say It Loud* and *Cloud Nine* which pointed to a more political use of funk. By developing an audience for the music, the wider adoption of proto-funk sounds began to create a distinct identity which could be understood and identified by audiences. This process of identification would continue into the 1970s, sometimes to excessive levels as in the funk worlds created by George Clinton.

In terms of style, what emerges is a process of symbiosis where the recognisable but still developing proto-funk style continues to develop and refine itself as artists bring their particular musical influences and backgrounds to the developing funk aesthetic. Much of the music is stylistically grounded in those elements developed by Brown including the sixteenth-note linear approach to rhythm, the increasing use of modality to build longer structures and the creative collectivity of the jam. The retention of some of these features in the music of other artists, combined with stylistic juxtapositions from their own styles, formed the basis for late sixties proto-funk.

To outline the continued development of the proto-funk sound, it will be necessary to select from a growing repertoire of songs, those which made some contribution to the genre as a whole. To do this I have continued to use a wide variety of secondary sources to establish those pieces and those artists which have, retrospectively at least,

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unanimity, unification, unison, uniting, unity all of which seem to capture the change in direction during the late 1960s.

been recognised as making a contribution to funk. These songs have been cited in existing histories of funk or, in several cases, been included in historical recording anthologies. In this way, the songs chosen become representative of the period as it is beyond the scope of this study to include an exhaustive study of all songs released at the time.

The selection of songs are representative of the expanding directions that proto-funk began to take towards the end of the 1960s. The following table shows a comparison between the songs so far discussed and other songs selected as part of the study:

Year	**James Brown**	**Songs**	**Artists**
1964	Out Of Sight		
1965	I got you (I feel good) Papa's Got A Brand New Bag		
1966		*Funky Broadway* *Tramp*	Dyke and the Blazers Lowell Fulsom
1967	Cold Sweat	*Soul Dance No. 3* *I Want to Take You Higher* *Boogaloo down Broadway* *Spreadin' Honey*	Wilson Pickett Sly and the Family Stone The Fantastic Johnny C Watts 103rd St Rhythm Band
1968	Licking Stick Say It loud	*Tighten Up (ABATD)* *Dance to the Music* *Dr. John Gris Gris* *Cloud Nine*	Archie Bell and the Drells Sly and the Family Stone Dr. John The Temptations
1969	Mother Popcorn	*Cissy Strut (T Meters)* *Everything I do Gohn Be funky from now on* *Stand Album*	The Meters Lowell Fulsom Sly and the Family Stone
1970	Funky Drummer Sex Machine	*Hand Clapping Song (T Meters)* *Thank you falettinme be mice elf again*	The Meters Sly and the Family Stone

Table 7. Representative sample and comparison with James Brown releases.

These songs will form the basis for the discussion of funk during 1967 to 1969. It should be emphasised that they are representative and at some point, selection must take place otherwise the study becomes too diffuse. In selecting the pieces, it has been important to balance a number of considerations including the use of secondary sources to guide selections,[227] the geographical spread, message and musical criteria developed through the study of early funk pieces.

2.8 Wilson Pickett: Soul Dance Number Three[228]

Recorded in May 1967, Wilson Pickett's *Soul Dance Number Three* contributes to the dance movement which informed the creation of other proto-funk songs. The first verse sets out the premise of the song:

> Everybody's talking about all them brand new dances
> Well, I got 3 (huh) that I'm gonna do for you
> Lord have Mercy
> I'm gonna start with a dance now baby
> Called the boogaloo
> (you know that one don't you)
> Everybody's gooving baby
>
> Its gonna move you too
> Lord have mercy
> (Scream), hitit-hitit-hitit

After the first dance of the 'boogaloo', the other dances mentioned in *Soul Dance Number Three* is the 'the skate' and 'the shing-a-ling'. The music begins with a one bar drum fill followed by the main riff for the song.

Museme 1: Drum intro/déclenchement

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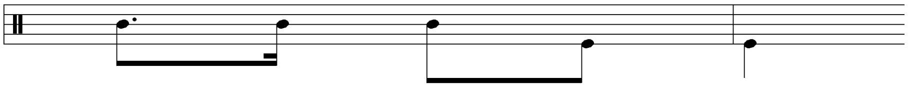
[227] Secondary sources include Vincent (1996), Thompson (2001), and compilation CDs referenced in the discography.

[228] Recorded in May 1967 (Atlantic #2412)

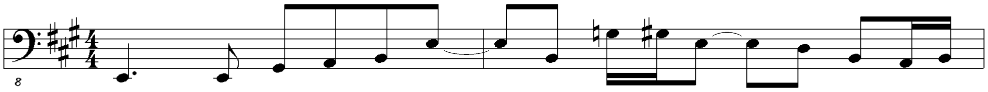


Example 99. ***Soul Dance Number Three,*** **drum intro.**

Museme stack: main riff

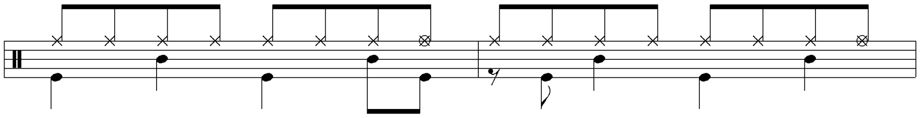
The main groove is created by bass, drums, guitars and horns and is the primary groove for the song. In the following section, the musemes have been isolated for the purposes of identification and discussion.

M2a.



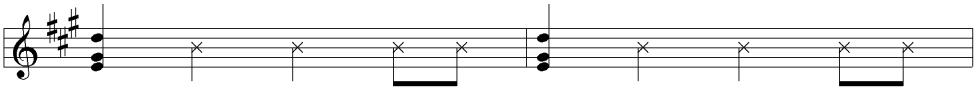
Example 100. ***Soul Dance Number Three*****, bass riff.**

M2b.



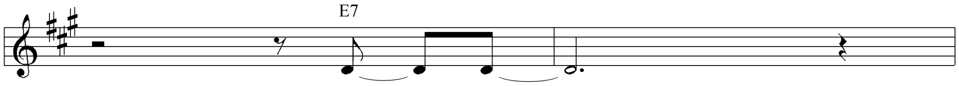
Example 101. ***Soul Dance Number Three,*** **drum kit.**

M2c.



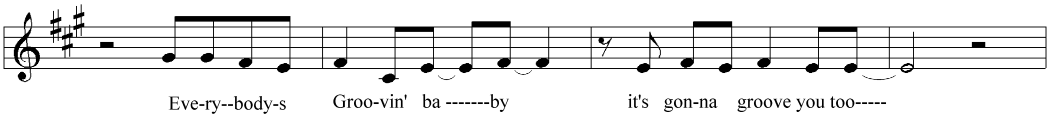
Example 102. ***Soul Dance Number Three*, dampened guitar**

M2d.



Example 103. ***Soul Dance Number Three,* horn.**

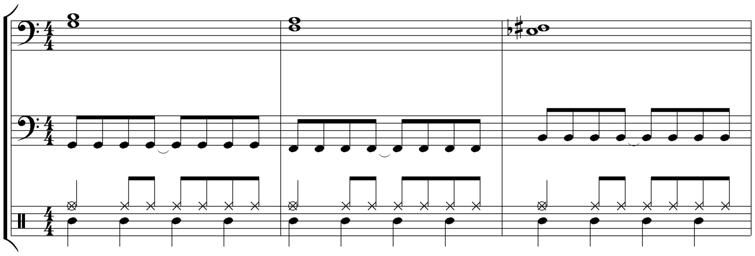
M2e. (30")


Eve-ry--body-s
Groo-vin' ba -------by
it's gon-na groove you too-----

Example 104. ***Soul Dance Number Three,* vocal extract**

Museme 3: Brass chords (42")

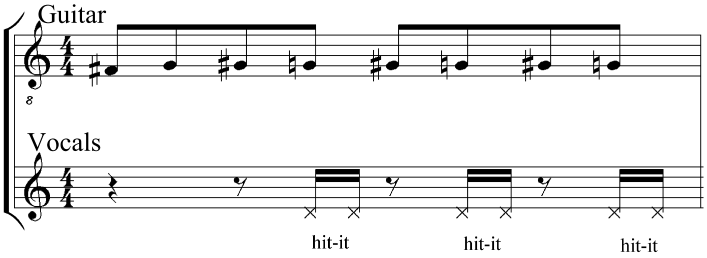
The sustained brass chords act as the end of the phrase:



Example 105. ***Soul Dance Number Three*, brass chords, bass and drums.**

Museme Four: 'hit-it' and scream (48")

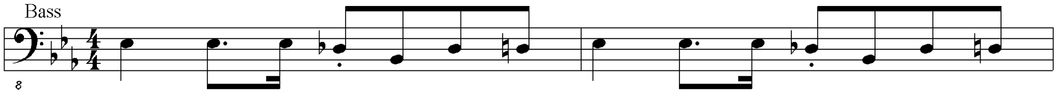
Short, punctuated riff on a E7 chord with the excited "hit-it" on the off-beat which functions as a turnaround back to the riff (M2). The guitar plays a chromatic part while the Pickett sings (or says) 'hit-it':



Example 106. *Soul Dance Number Three*, vocal 'hit-it'.

2.8.1 Discussion.

There are a number of identifiable features in Pickett's style which demonstrate how proto-funk ideas were influencing his own songs. Firstly there is the dominant bass riff which drives the piece. With mixolydian flattened sevenths, chromatic passing notes, use of sixteenth-note patterns, syncopation and octave or more range, *Soul Dance Number Three* displays some similarities between the earlier *Funky Broadway,* and two other songs released in May 1967: *Cold Sweat;* and Johnny C's *Boogaloo Down Broadway:*



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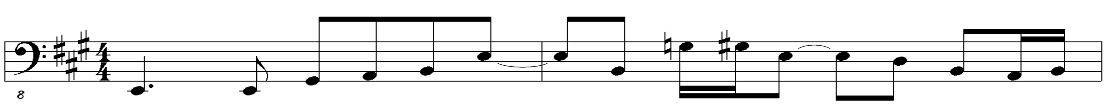
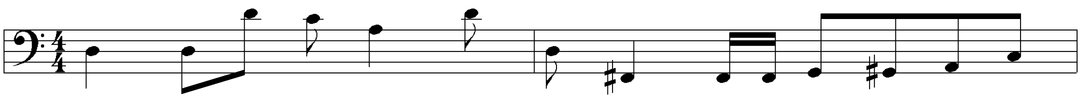
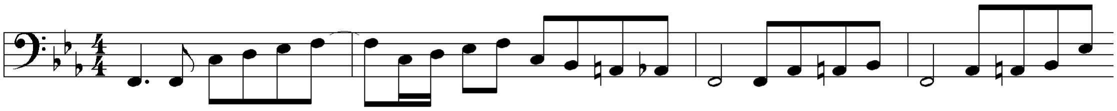
Example 107. *Funky Broadway,* bass riff



Example 108. ***Soul Dance Number Three*** **bass riff.**



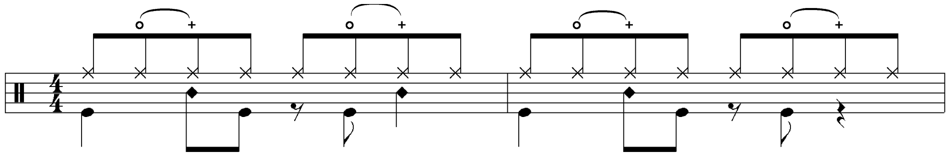
Example 109. ***Cold Sweat,*** **bass riff.**



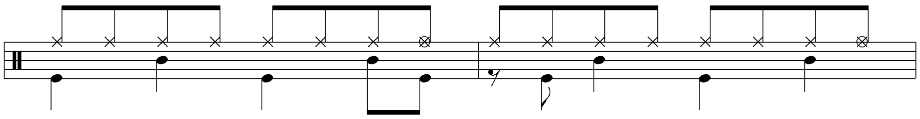
Example 110. ***Boogaloo Down Broadway*** **bass riff**

The development of two bar riffs with a strong melodic content seems to have found a moment to come together in May 1967 which may be no more than a coincidence. However, at the same time, these examples would suggest an awareness of the capabilities of the instrument to produce a more linear contribution to the overall texture rather than maintaining the chord notes alone.

In addition to the bass line, *Soul Dance Number Three* uses the open hi-hat pattern introduced by Parker in James Brown's *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*.



Example 111. ***Papa's Got A Brand New Bag,*** **drums.**



Example 112. ***Soul Dance Number Three*****, drum kit.**

The drum part for *Soul Dance Number Three* has a different emphasis to *Brand New Bag,* but the residual sound of the open hi-hat may suggest the influence of Parker. However, Pickett's previous material from 1966 included the song *Mustang Sally* which contains the open hi-hat sound and the dampened guitar playing single notes.[229] Brown may have taken the dampened guitar sound and raised it to a higher level of significance, but the FAME rhythm section, possibly with Jimmy Johnson on guitar, made use of the same technique.[230]

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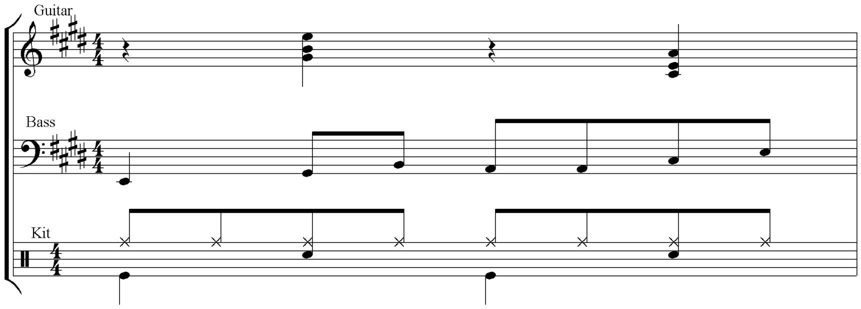
[229] Mustang Sally was written by Detroit vocalist and composer, Sir Mack Rice. Rice was a member of the Five Scalders vocal group in 1956 and then joined the Falcons from 1957 to 1963. Rice has written several songs, the most famous being Mustang Sally in 1965, a number that has been recorded by many artists, including Wilson Pickett and the then Young Rascals. Rice's version reached number 15 on the R&B charts in 1965.

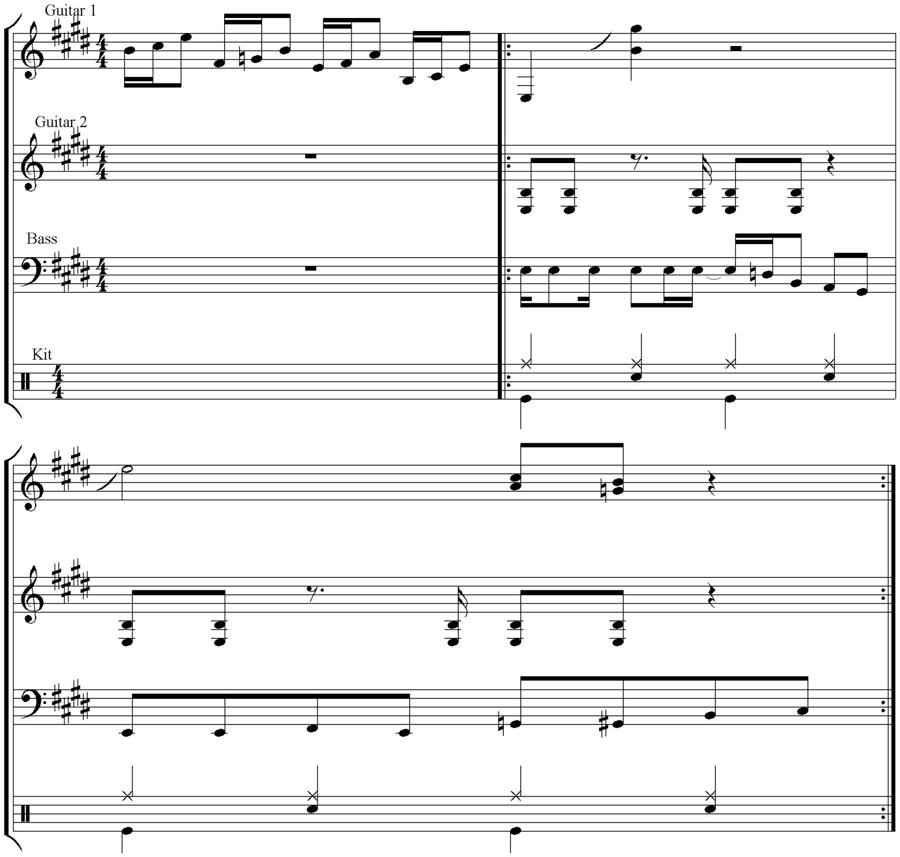
[230] Wexler chose the Fame Studios to record *Mustang Sally*, *Night of 1000 Dances* and *Soul Dance Number Three* after Percy Sledge recorded *When a Man Loves a Woman* in 1966. At the time, the Fame Studios rhythm section comprised of Jimmy Johnson, guitar; Roger Hawkins, drums; David Hood, bass; and Barry Beckett, keyboards. The Rhythm Section was formed in 1967 although Johnson was one of the first employees of FAME which opened in 1962.

Using the same techniques as Brown does not necessarily mean that *Mustang Sally* or even Pickett's riff-based song *Land of 1000 Dances,* can be considered as proto-funk. Both *Mustang Sally* and *Land of 1000 Dances* belong to the soul/R &B genre in that they use a different concept of the rhythmic lock; in both cases the band works in a single timeframe, dominated by the backbeat, which undermines the linear approach of Brown. This can be demonstrated by looking back at Pickett's stylistic development. *In the Midnight Hour* (1965) has an individual bass line, but the rhythmic lock lacks the independence that Brown was able to develop in pieces such as *Brand New Bag*, or even *Out Of Sight* which comes from the same year. *Midnight Hour* contains a strong backbeat rhythm on alternating chords, E and A:



Example 113. ***In The Midnight Hour,*** **main riff.**

This approach to the rhythmic lock shows little independence of parts even though the bass part has a distinct melodic line. Contrast this approach with Pickett's 1967 version of Dyke and the Blazers' *Funky Broadway* which makes use of a strongly syncopated, sixteenth-note rhythm in the bass:



Example 114. ***Funky Broadway,*** **opening and riff.**

These musical elements, linked to the static harmony suggest that the elements of funk found in Brown had now entered the vocabulary of other creative teams such as Muscle Shoals where Pickett recorded Soul Dance Number Three. According to the sleeve notes of "The Roots Of Funk" album:

> "Soul Dance Number Three", basically a bass/guitar riff with a guitar fill, was cooked up by him and producer Jerry Wexler with the untouchable Muscle Shoals house band (Sleeve notes, Rhino records: "The Roots of Funk, vol ½").

As such the Muscle Shoals band bring their own particular influences to the music of *Soul Dance Number Three* just as the James Brown band brought their own influences. The change in style from the eight note synchronicity of *Mustang Sally* to the independence of *Funky Broadway* and *Soul Dance Number Three* is a significant shift in the way Pickett's songs are created. Perhaps the most noticeable sound to change from Brown's concept of funk is the open sounding guitar 'twang' which is most noticeable in the 'hit-it' turnaround section (Example 106).

In addition to the twang of the blues guitar, another sound is introduced here which to some degree replicates the James Brown sound. In most of Pickett's songs, the scream can be heard largely as part of the episodic marker signifying the turnaround of the song. In addition to the normal stylistic screams used by Pickett, several other screams, hollers and shouts can be heard in *Soul Dance* and *Funky Broadway* which are reminiscent of James Brown. It would appear that these shouts and screams have gone beyond an episodic marker and become a much more integral part of the song.

Soul Dance Number Three would seem to represent an important transitional piece in the work of Wilson Pickett and his Muscle Shoals instrumentalists. Like many songs of the proto-funk period, *Soul Dance Number Three* is very much a transitional piece with elements of past styles and new influences to be found in different measures. While Pickett was able to introduce elements of the proto-funk style into his music during 1966, it is clear that certain elements including the sixteenth-note rhythmic patterns, independent instrumental parts and the independent rhythmic counterpoint were not found in Pickett until 1967. The use of dampened guitar, open hi-hat pattern and the screams and shouts would however suggest the influence of Brown although as these stylistic elements are also part of the wider vocabulary of rhythm 'n' blues , it is possible they came from other musical sources.

By the middle of the 1960s the US record industry had developed in such a way that, in the genre of rhythm 'n' blues at least, a number of geographical regions had established themselves around distinct sounds created through a mixture of recording technology, production teams and house rhythm bands. These regions were, as we have seen in the case of Wilson Pickett, seen as important by the multinational corporations and by pop-rock groups who recorded in studios such as Chess, FAME, and Stax.[231]

In 1968, Motown released *Cloud Nine* by The Temptations. The producer for *Cloud Nine* was Norman Whitfield who worked closely with The Temptations from 1966 until 1975. According to Larkin this was an important collaboration which:

> reflected the increasing use of illegal drugs among young people, and shocked some listeners with its lyrical ambiguity. Whitfield created the music to match, breaking down the traditional barriers between lead and backing singers and giving each of the Tempatations a recognizable role in the group (Larkin, 1993:1096-7).[232]

For some writers, 1968 represented a watershed era in popular music as new recording technology introduced new approaches to record production. It would be easy to condense this time into a number of generalizations which include the creation of what Wicke (1987), saw as a 'sharp dividing line' between rock and pop.[233] Gillett (1983), sees the period as a more self-conscious time for musician:

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[231] Rob Bowman's work on Stax is particularly relevant in demonstrating not only how these studios became established, but how they operated on a daily basis and how the particular sound was created using the natural acoustics of the buildings. See Bowman, R. 1997. *Soulsville, USA.* (New York: Schirmer Trade Books).

[232] (Larkin, C. (Ed.) 1993. The Guinness Encyclopaedia of Popular Music, Concise Edition. (Guinness). (pp 1096-7)

> The Temptations' "Cloud Nine" (1968) and "Runaway Chile, Running Wild" (1969) with themes comparable to "Up on the Roof" and "Spanish Harlem" , sounded unduly contrived, but served the growing market for more self-conscious forms of music (Gillett, 1983: 215).

Chambers (1983), saw the changes in musical styles, especially in the 'soul community' as a reflection on the socio-political upheavals of the time:

> Black urban riots in Harlem (1964) , Watts (Los Angeles) the following year, and Detroit and Newark in 1967, were the 'long hot summers' when the pressure in the black ghettoes irreversibly spilled over into violent carnivals of the oppressed. By the end of the decade, the universal adoption of the more abrupt adjective 'black' in place of 'coloured' signalled the principled dramaticity of accelerated change (1983: 147).

These different viewpoints reflect an important moment of socio-political as well as change which began to be reflected in the music of a number of artists and acts. While the political and sociological changes will be the discussion of a later chapter, the development of new ideas began to emerge in the proto-funk sounds of bands such as The Temptations and their song, *Cloud Nine*.

2.9 The Temptations, Cloud Nine (1968)

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[233] See Wicke, 1987: 93.

Cloud Nine was the result of a collaboration between producer Norman Whitfield and Motown group, The Temptations. Gillett's assessment of the song being a more 'self-conscious' musical form may be well grounded as Whitfield, aware of the success of Sly and the Family Stone and the new psychedelic sounds emerging from the rock world, wanted to create something new. Whitfield was to produce an important track which not only reflected a move away from the theme of love and relationships which permeated Motown lyrics during the 1960s, but also by introducing a number of new sounds into the production such as the wah-wah pedal and a strong, sixteenth-note hi-hat sound.

The lyrics of *Cloud Nine* reflect the struggles of living an impoverished live in the American city:

> Childhood part of my life it wasn't very pretty
> I was born and raised in the slums of the city
> It was a one room shack that slept ten other children besides me
> We hardly had enough food or room to sleep
>
> It was hard times
> Needed something to ease my troubled mind.

The lyrics also acknowledged the drug culture which was a part of some parts of society:

> Depressed and down hearted I took to cloud nine.

Other aspects of society are painted in the song, including the type of world that the song's character lives in:

> But the world of reality is a rat race where only the strongest survive
> It's a dog eat dog world, that ain't no lie,
> It ain't even safe no more, to walk the streets at night.

The song speaks of the euphoria of taking 'cloud nine' which has been an euphemistic term for a variety of chemical intoxicants:

> You can be who you wanna be
> You ain't got no responsibility,
> And every man, every man is free,
> And you're a million miles, from reality.

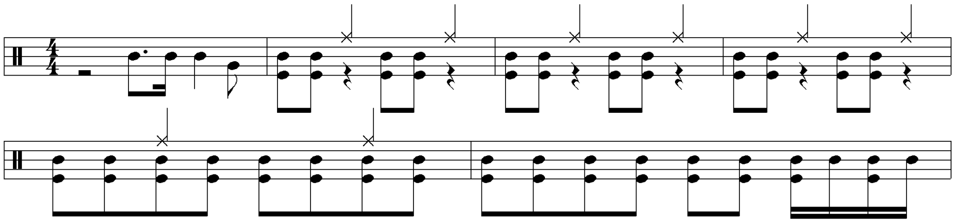
The combination of social, political messages in the context of soul music is not new but the idea of black politics and social conditions being reflected on the Motown label, was a significant departure from the normal practice of that company.

Musemes.

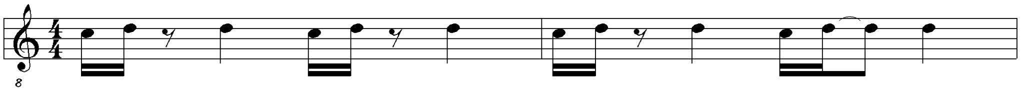
Cloud Nine falls into a number of distinct sections which are essentially riff based. These include the introduction, verse, chorus, middle 8, a call and response section and a rock-influenced ending.

Museme Stack One: Introduction

The opening section contains two main riffs: drums and guitar riff with wah-wah effect:



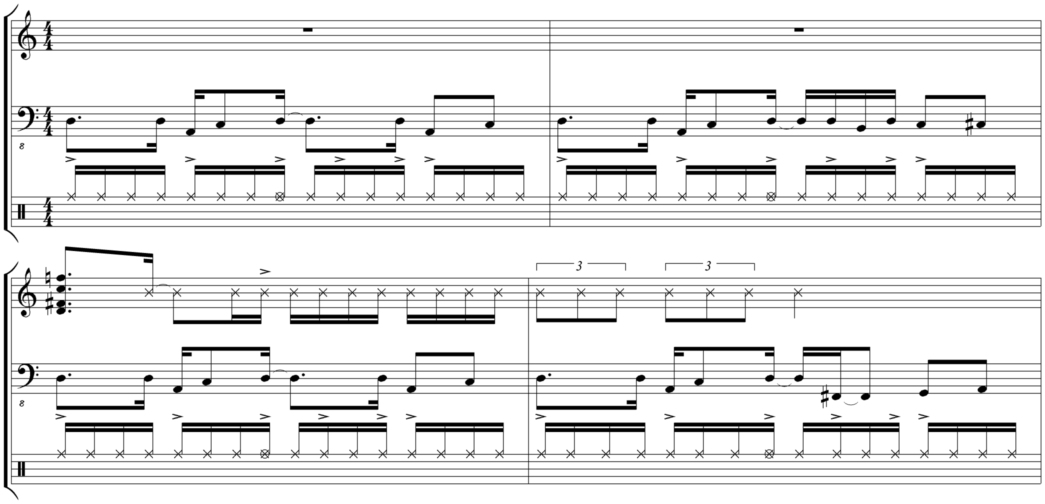
Example 115. ***Cloud Nine*****, introduction: drum part.**



Example 116. ***Cloud Nine*****, introduction, wah-wah guitar part.**

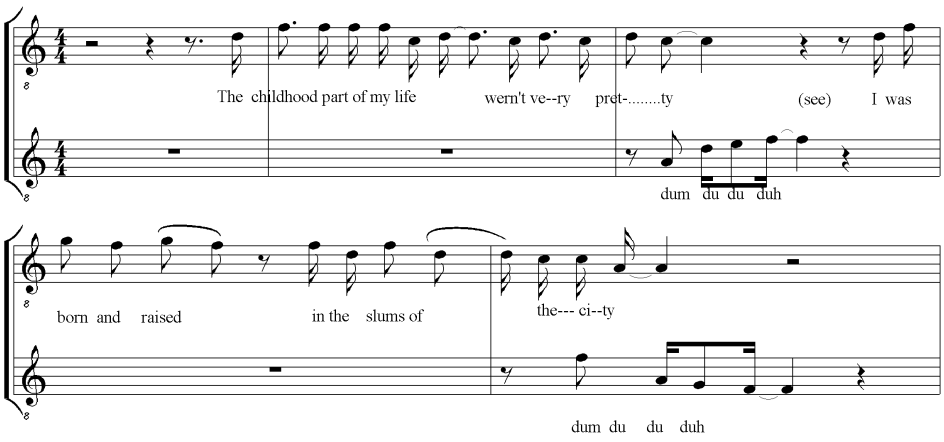
Museme stack 2: verse (12”)

The main elements of the verse include bass, drums and guitar:



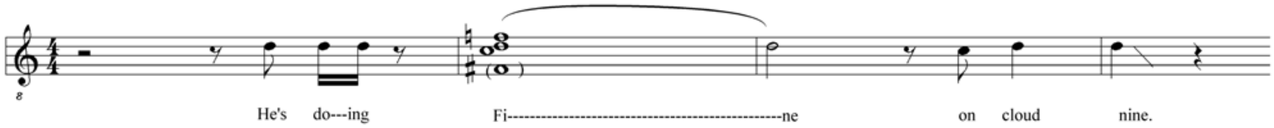
Example 117. ***Cloud Nine*****, verse.**

Museme 2a: vocals (24")


The childhood part of my life wern't ve--ry pret-........ty (see) I was
dum du du duh
born and raised in the slums of the--- ci--ty
dum du du duh

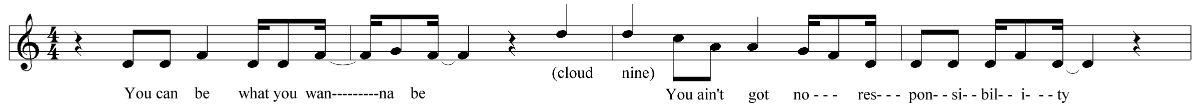
Example 118. ***Cloud nine*, vocals.**

Museme 3: 'Cloud nine' chord (1' 04")


He's do---ing Fi---ne on cloud nine.

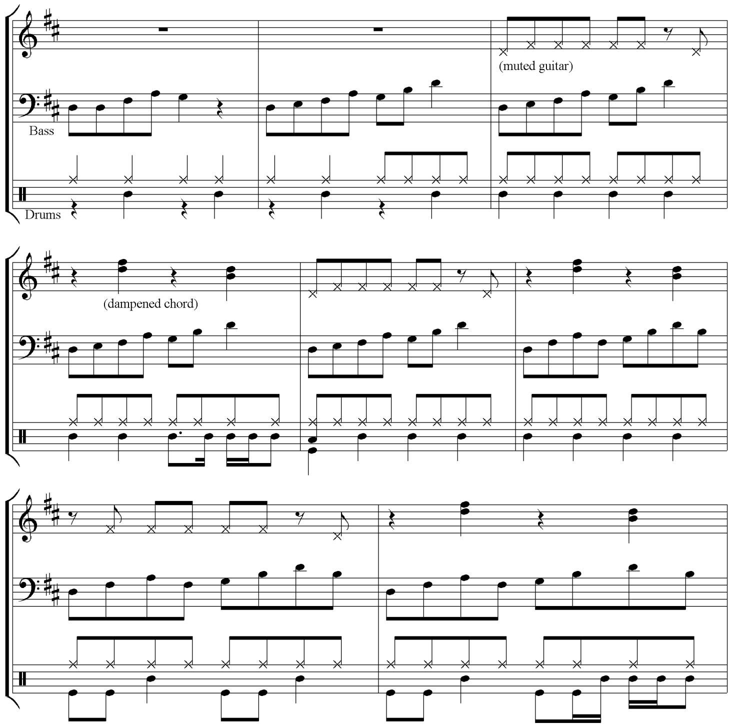
Example 119. ***Cloud nine*, chorus.**

Museme 4: Call and response (1' 44")


You can be what you wan---------na be (cloud nine) You ain't got no - - - res- - - pon- - si- - bil- - i- - - ty

Example 120. ***Cloud Nine*, vocal response.**

Museme Stack :Riff change upbeat feel: 'take you higher' (2' 07")

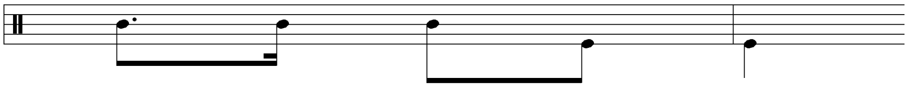


Example 121. *Cloud Nine,* change of groove.

2.9.1 Discussion

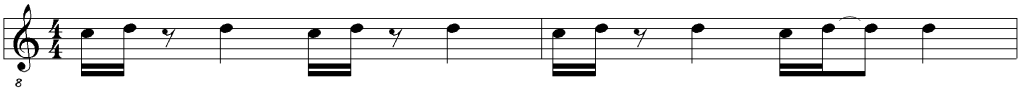
Cloud Nine represents a significant and conscious moment that marks change in the production style of Motown. Until this time, Motown had been established to create a tightly controlled commercial sound. The change in style represented by *Cloud Nine* comes at a particular conjunction of events, both political and musical, which producers such as Whitfield felt that they could no longer ignore. *Cloud Nine* sought to create something new and drew on a number of influences from the time developing them in such a way as to contribute to the proto-funk sound.

The opening figure, a short drum fill typical of the déclenchement discussed in the previous piece, contains exactly the same rhythm as that found on Pickett's *Soul Dance Number Three* although substituting the bass drum for the tom:



Example 122. ***Soul Dance Number Three,*** **drum intro.**

What follows this is a straight eighth beat on the hi-hat which is much more a rock/pop style than a funk style. However, the main interest to the development of the proto-funk sound is the inclusion of the guitar playing a very simple two note riff with wah-wah pedal effect:[234]



Example 123. ***Cloud Nine,*** **wah-wah guitar part.**

The addition of wah-wah into proto-funk was a sound that probably came from rock/blues guitarists of the time such as Hendrix and Clapton. The wah-wah sound itself was not new and had been popularised by brass players in the 1920s. Examples of the use of wah-wah include *Wawawa* by 'King' Oliver, the jungle sounds of the Duke Ellington band, and the vocal style of Fats Domino whose 1950 song *The Fat Man* makes a feature of this sound. As a dedicated effect on guitar the wah-wah pedal was not developed until 1967 when VOX introduced the ‘Clyde McCoy wah-wah pedal’ named after the trumpet player of the same name.[235]

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[234] There remains no effective way of notating the wah-wah pedal using conventional notation.

Early pieces which use the wah-wah effect include Hendrix’s *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* and Clapton’s guitar solo in Cream’s *White Room. Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* is an adventurous, creative and exploratory way of using the wah-wah sound. The opening of *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* demonstrates the percussive effect that the pedal can achieve when used with dampened strings. This rhythm is enhanced by the wah-wah pedal’s ability to enhance the range of frequencies to create a human ‘wah’ sound, or in the case of Voodoo Child, a ‘wicka-wacka’ sound as the muted strings are made to resonate across the frequency spectrum. Other artists were making use of the wah-wah sound at the time included Archie Bell and the Drells’ *Tighten Up.*[236] By 1968 the extensive us of the effect and its use both within and outside of the USA, indicate how ideas were being transmitted in the world of popular music.

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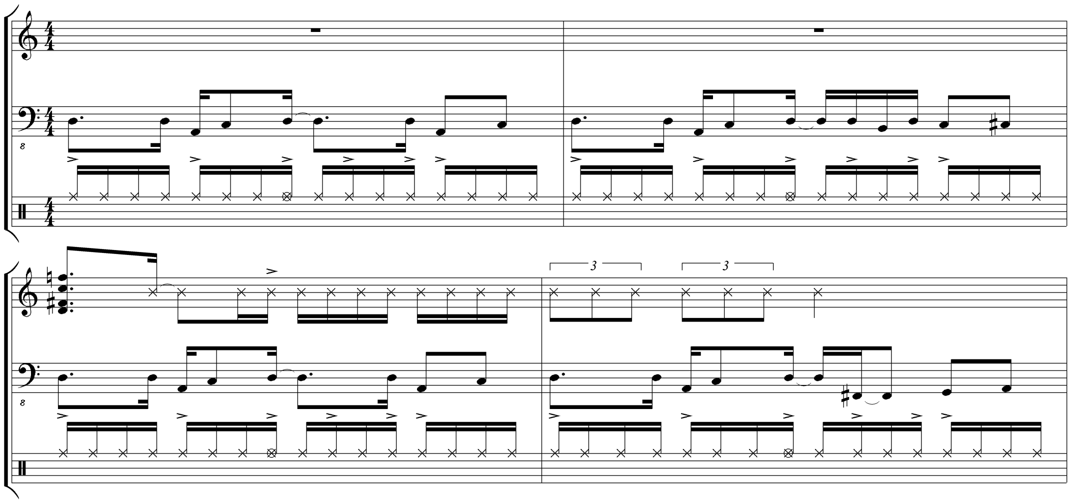
[235] Clyde McCoy had a hit in the 1930s called *Sugar Blues* which featured the wah-wah sound. A useful site for wah-wah, which also includes recoded examples, is to be found at: http://www.betterguitar.com/Equipment/Effects/WahTechniques/WahTechniques.htm

[236] This was one of several ‘recipe’ tunes which provided solo introductions for members of the band as the groove is gradually built up during the song. King Curtis’ *Memphis Soul Stew* (1967) is a good example of this kind of dance tune and Sly Stone’s *Dance To The Music* (1968) also follows in this tradition. *Tighten Up* has importance in the proto-funk development partly because it uses an extended groove as a basis for the song and partly because it demonstrates how the proto-funk styles had influenced bands working in Texas.

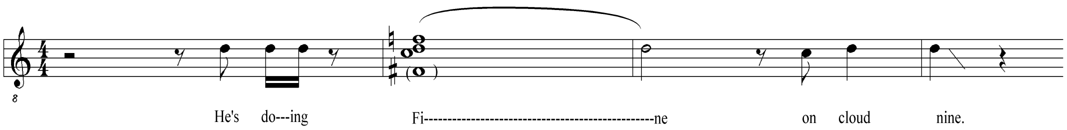
Museme stack 2: verse

The verse of the song is accompanied by a strong, syncopated bass line in an ambiguous tonality centred around D. This characteristic has already been discussed in Soul Dance Number Three along with the use of modality to create an extended jam on which to base the proto-funk groove:



Example 124. *Cloud Nine*, verse.

The modal ambiguity is complicated further by the use of the $D^{7(\sharp 9)}$ chord which appears later in the chorus on the words ‘cloud nine’ suggesting that the chord has been given a special significance within the song:[237]



Example 125. *Cloud Nine*, chorus.

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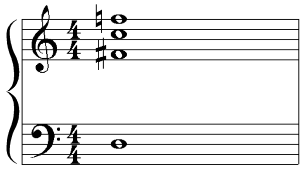
[237] Technically, the notated chord in example 126 is a $D^{(\flat 10)}$ and a sharp nine would need to have an E♯ in the chord. However, the ♯9 concept has been retained.

It would be easy to discuss the idea further in terms of its harmonic identity, however care must be taken to contextualise the use of the chord rather than over-theorise either its tonality or modal ambiguity. Such phrases which utilise both minor and major third are common within the context of the blues progression and many riffs will make expressive use of the 'blues note'. Complications emerge when we try to place the chord into a theoretical straightjacket provided by current interpretation of major an minor as the dominant Western modalities. In these terms, by exhibiting both the major third and the minor third, an ambiguity does emerge.



Example 126. *Cloud nine*: D$^{7(\#9)}$ chord.[238]

In the more contextual setting of 1967-8, the D7$^{\#9}$ chord rose to prominence through the work of Jimi Hendrix who used the chord as a central idea in his instrumental, *Purple Haze* (1967).[239] Hearing the chord used in such a prominent way in *Cloud Nine* not only suggests an influence of *Purple Haze* but perhaps, because of the ambiguity of Hendrix's lyrics, could be associated with drug culture much in the same way as *Cloud Nine:*

> Purple haze all in my brain
> Lately things just don't seem the same

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[238] See footnote 234.
[239] A 'haze' is a form of 'cloud'.

Actin' funny, but I don't know why
'scuse me while I kiss the sky.
Purple haze all around
Don't know if I'm comin' up or down
Am I happy or in misery?

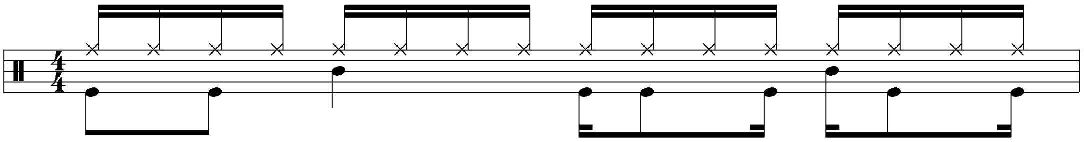
There are overlapping ideas in these lyrics but *Cloud Nine* remains grounded in a social reality while *Purple Haze* focus on the self. The way that these themes and the musical sound differ may be an area for further research and in particular the way that social, political and personal identity expressed in the lyrics is articulated in the musical sound.

In addition to the features already discussed as part of museme stack 2, the sixteenth-note hi-hat rhythm is a prominent feature of the overall sound which also includes the use of congas and what might be a delayed, rhythmic effect on muted guitar.[240] For the time, these sounds appear to be quite original and part of Whitfield's desire to create a new, original sound.

Hi-hat sixteenth-notes

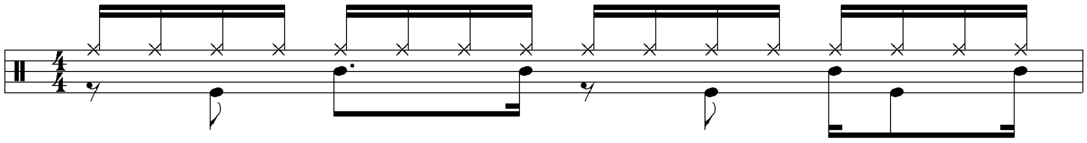
The sixteenth-note hi-hat patterns are of particular interest to this study because of their increasing use in funk and later disco during the 1970s. Sixteenth-note patterns have already been discussed in the context of New Orleans drumming and the contribution that the second line sound made to the rhythmic vocabulary of funk. In

Cloud Nine, the motoric sixteenth-note pattern is transferred from the snare to the hi-hat. This was not an isolated phenomenon because in the same year as *Cloud Nine,* Clive Stubblefield created the following sixteenth-note pattern on Brown's *The Chicken*:



Example 127. *The Chicken*, sixteenth-note drum pattern.

To understand the importance of the sixteenth-note figure, it will be necessary to discuss the use of the pattern in other songs outside of the 1968 time period. The use of sixteenth-notes by Stubblefield on *The Chicken*, and the introduction of the pattern in *Cloud Nine* produced the first songs which promoted this particular feature. While *The Chicken* seems to have almost fallen into obscurity,[241] the sixteenth-note pattern created by Stubblefield would be revived in *Funky Drummer* (1969). There are a number of variants to the sixteenth-note pattern created for *Funky Drummer,* but the basic pattern is as shown:



Example 128. *Funky Drummer*, sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern.

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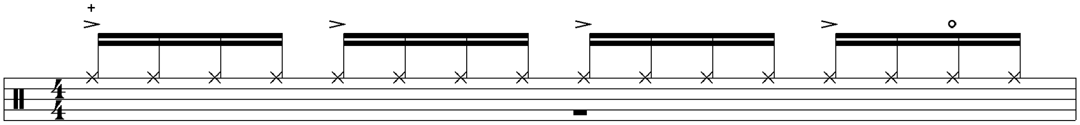
[240] I take the sound to be some kind of treated sound, probably a guitar string, which adds this additional rhythmic layer.

[241] Compilation albums containing *The Chicken* were not to be found, nor was it to be found on internet download services. The song appears to be fading into obscurity.

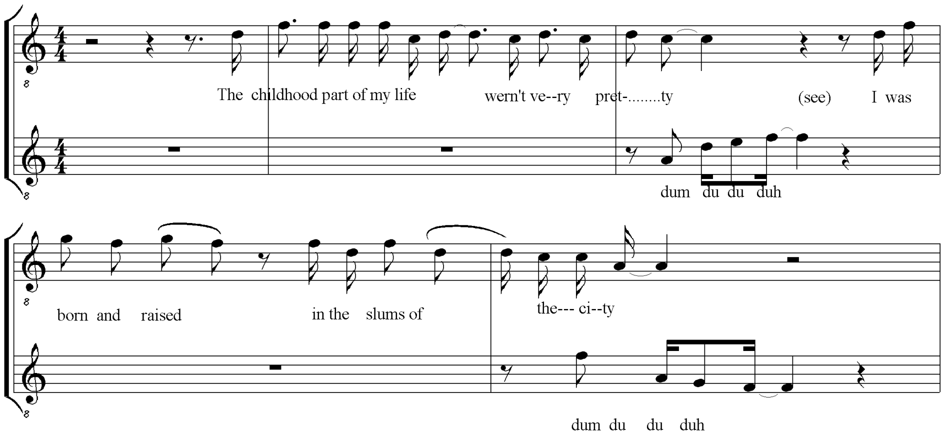
In addition to using the sixteenth-notes extensively throughout the piece, Brown seems to have cemented their association with funk by using the title *Funky Drummer.* The acceptance of this pattern as an important element of funk was further cemented by 1971 when it appeared in the opening bars of the soundtrack to the film *Shaft:*



Example 129. *Theme From Shaft*, hi-hats.

Sixteenth-note, double time rhythmic patterns were not altogether new in 1968 but it is difficult to find examples of hi-hat patterns before this time. An example of the sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern can be found in the final section of Redding's 1966 version of *Try a Little Tenderness* which was arranged by Isaac Hayes. Examples of the sixteenth-note pattern seem, by 1967, relatively isolated. A more consistent use of the sixteenth-note rhythm can be found on the tambourine parts on songs such as *Reflections* (Dianna Ross, 1967). The transfer of sixteenth-note motoric patterns to the hi-hat took some time to complete and perhaps indicates that change in a developing style is a process which can take place at a relatively slow pace. As part of this process of change, *Cloud Nine* marks a significant moment of departure for a the funk style in elevating the sixteenth-note motoric rhythm to such a position of importance within the rhythmic texture.[242]

Museme 2a: vocals.


The childhood part of my life wern't ve--ry pret-........ty (see) I was
dum du du duh
born and raised in the slums of the--- ci--ty
dum du du duh

Example 130. ***Cloud Nine,*** **vocal introduction.**

Using a declamatory style, the narrative of the lyrics are punctuated by interjections from the backing singers. The high tessitura of the voices suggest a different vocal influence to the gospel – or rhythm 'n' blues inspired sounds of Brown, Dyke, Pickett, Bell and Johnny C whose music has been discussed so far in the proto-funk and is perhaps influenced by styles like doo-wop.

Cloud Nine has a sectional structure and the first major change in the song comes when the effects of cloud nine are described. Against the sixteenth-note hi-hat figure and congas, the separate voices of the Temptations enter in turn with a different vocal phrase sung in a slightly different way from a harsher tone to a high falsetto voice and eventually a *basso profondo* voice as the different singers alternate the lead:

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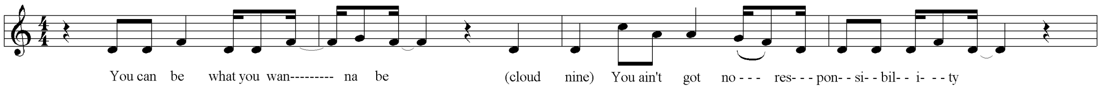
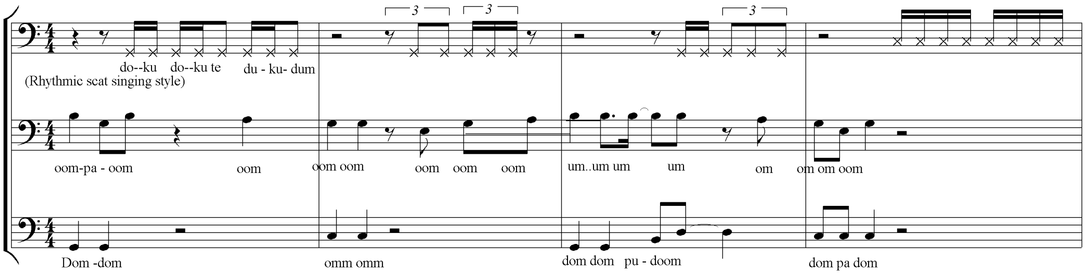
[242] The recording of *Cloud Nine* involved two drummers, Ureil Jones and a younger drummer called 'Spider' Turner. Turner was responsible for the hi-hat rhythm with Jones playing the snare, bass and fills. Motown recording practice required several drummers, each with their own speciality groove. This was not dissimilar to James Brown's stage shows where different drummers would be used.


You can be what you wan--------- na be
(cloud nine) You ain't got no - - - res- - - pon- - si- - bil- - i- - - ty

Example 131. ***Cloud Nine,*** **(actual pitch).**

This kind of approach borrows from other vocal styles and was found in the work of Sly Stone whose *Dance to the Music* (March 1968) predated *Cloud Nine* by some eight months. In this song, different voices and styles can be clearly heard including some close, doo-wop inspired textures accompanied, in this case, only by tambourine:


3
3
3
do--ku do--ku te du - ku- dum
(Rhythmic scat singing style)
oom-pa - oom oom oom oom oom oom oom um..um um um om om om oom
Dom -dom omm omm dom dom pu - doom dom pa dom

Example 132. ***Dance to the Music*** **a cappella section.**

The range of vocal sounds, registers and styles to be included in this period mark a shift in the previously heard sounds of proto-funk.

Further additions to the proto-funk vocabulary can also be found in *Cloud Nine.* We have seen that in Brown's *Cold Sweat,* the possibility of changing grooves become a

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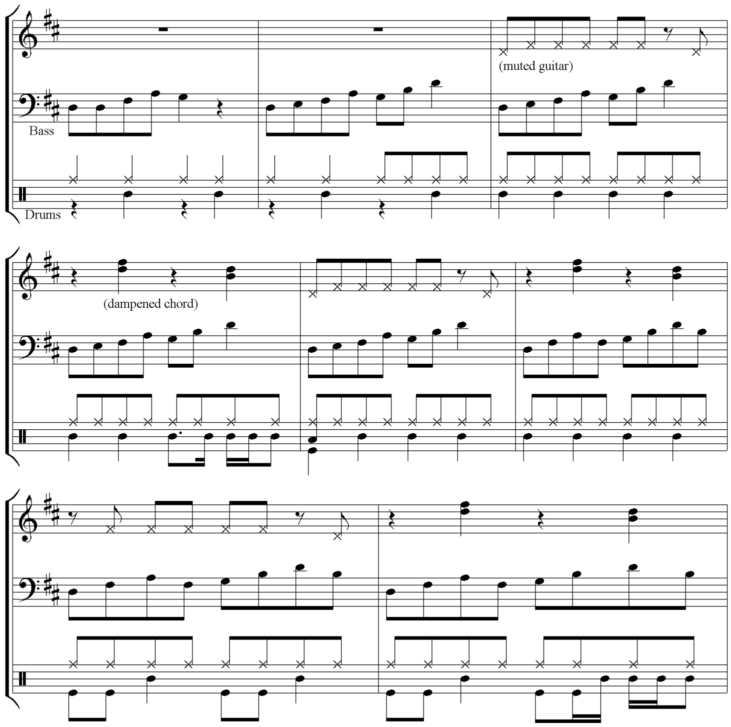
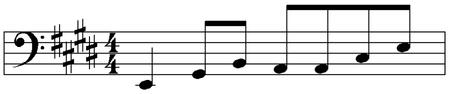
possibility, especially where there are extended instrumental sections and the possibilities of changing the groove are also to be found in *Cloud Nine*. The shift in groove comes on the words, 'take you higher'. In this section, the sixteenth-note pattern changes to eighths and a more straightforward rhythm emerges:

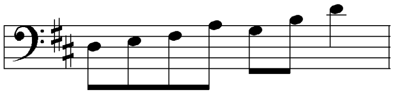


Example 133. *Cloud Nine*, middle section.

The museme stack for this particular section is reminiscent of Wilson Pickett's *In the Midnight Hour* as the bass arpeggio figure alternates between chords I and IV in a clearly major tonality:



Example 134. *In the Midnight Hour*, bass



Example 135. *Cloud Nine*, bass.

In the context of the late 1960s, Whitfield's desire to create something new generates something of a musical combination, which, as we have seen in the music of Longhair and Brown, brings together ideas from other styles and genres. Whitfield's intervention as a producer was a departure in the process of creating funk and until this point, songs had been written by the singer in collaboration with the band. In addition, the produced sound of The Temptations moved further away from the 'raw funk' sound that was an important part of the aesthetic of Dyke and the Blazer's *Funky Broadway.*

The contribution that *Cloud Nine* makes to the development of the funk style can be summarised as:

- An innovative use of wah-wah pedal on guitar which adds to the rhythmic texture
- The foregrounding of the sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern
- The use of vocal close harmonic singing in a funk context
- The use of the smooth falsetto male voice
- Commenting on social problems in the song lyrics
- The preference for studio production techniques over live performance practice

In terms of the flow of musical ideas first outlined in Figure 1 (page 35), *Cloud Nine* represents a particular point of departure where proto-funk ideas such as the use of the ninth chord, tempo (groove) changes within a piece, sixteenth-note rhythmic patterns, the use of single chord riffs and the muted guitar, were consciously used to create a contemporary sound for The Temptations. The creative process involved in *Cloud Nine* suggests a new confidence in working these proto-funk ideas and, with that confidence, an ability to integrate new ideas such as the wah-wah guitar, the sixteenth-note hi-hat rhythms, and close harmony singing as well as focusing on production techniques.

The growing confidence in proto-funk style was reflected by a number of other bands playing in a funky style towards the end of the 1960s. New Orleans group, The Meters, was one such group who were to become influential in their approach to funk. During 1968 and 1969 they recorded *Sophisticated Cissy* and *Cissy Strut* along with other songs such as *Look-a Py-Py* (1969) and *Tippi Toes* (1970) all of which included elements of the emerging funk style. What they were able to do, as Whitfield had done with The Temptations, was to synthesise elements of proto-funk in a conscious way and create a significant point of departure. In the following section we will explore their contribution to the development of funk between 1968-9.

2.10 The Meters

The Meters formed in 1967 and are described by Thompson as 'the ultimate New Orleans funk combo' (2001: 164).[243] The Meters were earlier known as The Hawketts producing *Mardi Gras Mambo* in 1954 which has been cited by Brackett as an early example of funk along with Professor Longhair's *Tipitina*. From these early beginnings the Meters were able to contribute to the proto-funk from early instrumentals such as *Sophisticated Cissy* (1968) and *Cissy Strut* (1969). The Meters also acted as house band for New Orleans' producer, Allen Toussaint. In this way, the Meters take credit for the music behind many other artists including Lee Dorsey's *Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky From Now On* and Ernie K Doe's *Here Come the Girls.*

I have already discussed the work of Meters' drummer Zigaboo Modeliste in relation to the use of second line drumming patterns in proto-funk. However, it will be useful to examine the combination of instruments which contribute to the Meters' sound.

Sophisticated Cissy was released, along with *Cissy Strut*, in 1969. *Sophisticated Cissy* begins with guitar and drums:

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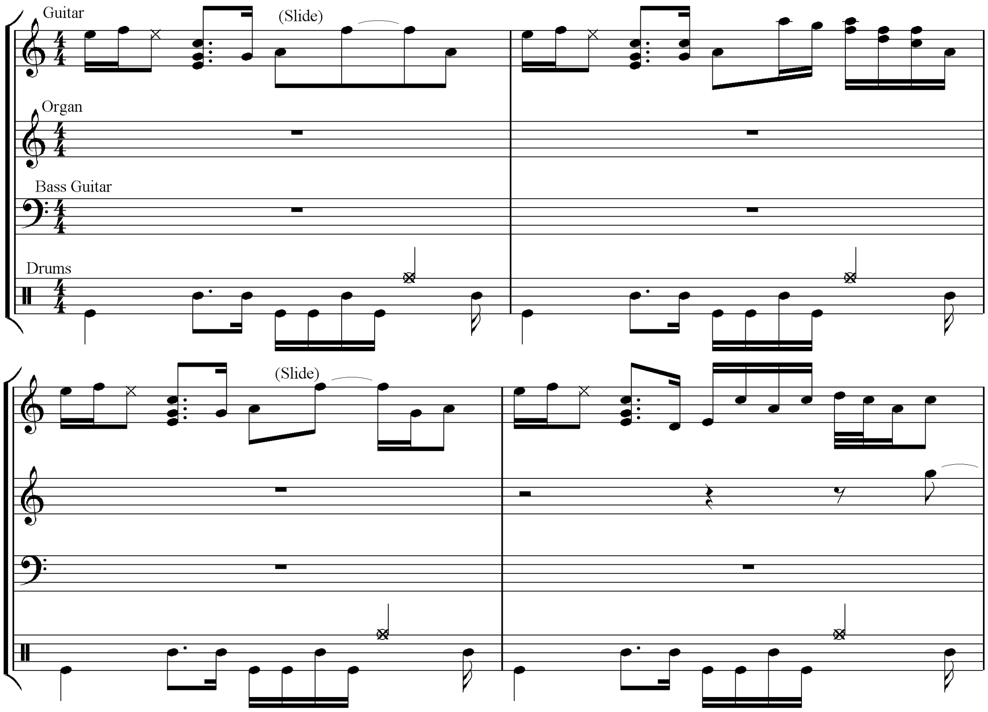
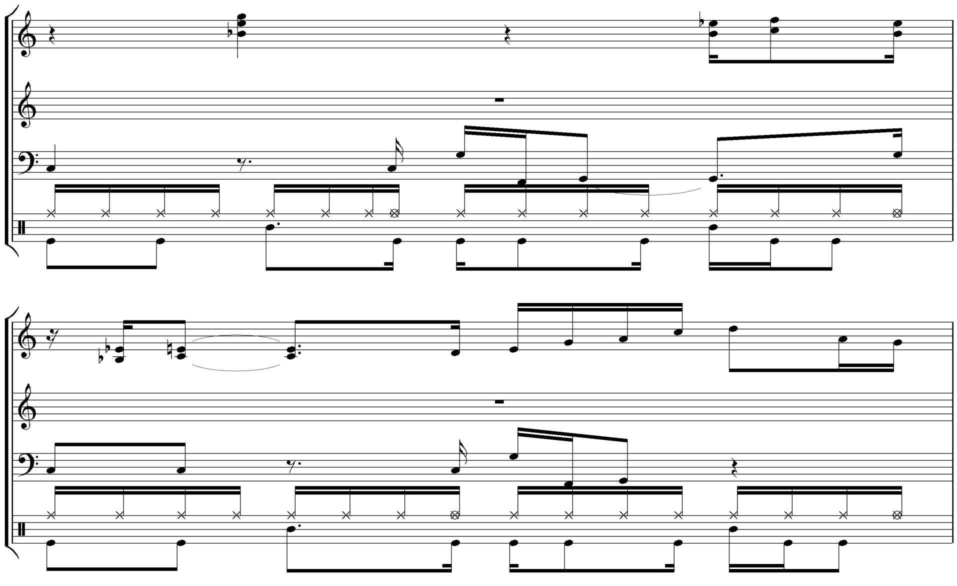
[243] As with many bands, there are various incarnations. Although the name of the meters dates back to the early sixties, the band as an instrumental combo incorporating drummer Zigaboo Modeliste and bassist George Porter.


Guitar
(Slide)
Organ
Bass Guitar
Drums
(Slide)

Example 136. ***Sophisticated Cissy*****, opening bars.**

After this opening, a new riff begins:

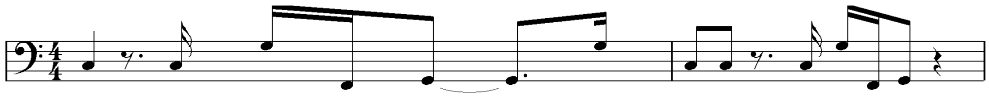


Example 137. ***Sophisticated Cissy*****, (b. 5-6).**

2.10.1 Discussion.

The opening of *Sophisticated Cissy* has a contrapuntal texture with drums, guitar, and bass working independently to each other. Within each of the instrumental parts, there are a number of techniques which add to this contrapuntal texture. The guitar part, for instance, combines a number of technical elements including the use of chords, 'hammer-ons', 'pull-offs' and muted strings to create an intricate part.[244] The drums show a use of the New Orleans street beat, with the original snare drum pattern split across the drum kit. [245]

The second part of the song, shown as bars 5-6, is a new riff which includes the sixteenth-note hi-hat idea discussed in the previous second as *Cloud Nine.* In *Sophisticated Cissy*, the addition of the open hi-hat on the last sixteenth-note division, adds to the overall rhythmic texture. In addition to the guitar, the bass has a strongly syncopated, leaping part:



Example 138. ***Sophisticated Cissy,*** **bass part.**

The contrapuntal approach of *Sophisticated Cissy* follows in the New Orleans tradition discussed in the analysis of Professor Longhair's *Tipitina* and also found as a hocket texture in pieces such as Brown's *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* and *Cold Sweat.* In these pieces, the funk groove comes as a result of the interplay between the instruments. However, unlike earlier contrapuntal pieces, *Sophisticated Cissy* establishes its groove using a single chord. As the chord changes, so does the groove thereby structuring the textures around the harmony. Thompson (2001) suggests that the Nevilles' sound was strongly influenced by Booker T and the MGs and the organ-guitar dialogue of *Sophisticated Cissy* would seem to support this view. While the rhythm 'n' blues roots of the Meters seems to be clear, the main difference comes in the use of the drum kit and the contrapuntal texture used to creating the underlying groove.

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[244] 'Hammer-ons' indicate where the string is struck by the fingers on the fretboard, 'pull-offs' are where the fretted note is sounded by pulling away from the string. In both cases, the strumming hand is not used.

By 1969 the funk style was being used by a wide range of musicians and there was a growing recognition of its commercial viability. Although artists such as James Brown, Dyke and the Blazers, and groups such as The Meters were experimenting with elements of funk, each group interpreted these elements in a different way. One further group to experiment with funk was Sly and the Family Stone. Their song, *Dance To The Music* (1968) integrated a number of stylistic elements to produce a commercially successful dance record. Stone's ability to integrate different stylistic elements into his music will be discussed first using *Dance To The Music* as an example. This will be followed by an examination of Stone's ability to assimilate and develop funk in what Thompson calls a 'revolutionary fusion of psychedelic soul and rock-shocked funk'.

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245 The drum part of Sophisticated Cissy has already been discussed, see p. 130§

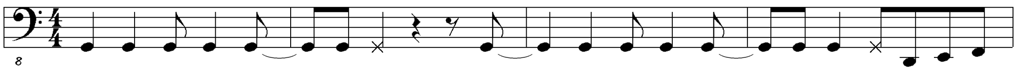
2.11 Sly and the Family Stone: Dance to the Music

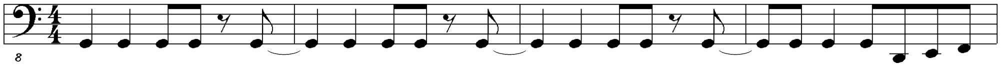
The first important commercial success for Stone came in 1968 with *Dance to The Music,* a dance track which brought together a number of stylistic influences including doo-wop, soul, rock and rhythm 'n' blues. The song was a 'recipe' song in the same vein as King Curtis' *Memphis Stew* where each instrument is literally introduced one after another: drums; guitar; bass; organ; horns; and the gospel-soul voice of Stone himself. In addition to the overall band sound, Stone also drew on the doo-wop style and integrated moments of a cappella singing into the song.

In addition to the musical influences that can be heard in the music, Stone gathered together musicians who would continue to be influential in developing funk during the 1970s. Two musicians in particular deserve mention in this respect, Larry Graham on bass guitar and Greg Errico. Errico, aware of the range of musical influences available at the time noted that:

> There were all these traditional influences that came to an intersection all of a sudden. You had R&B, you had white pop, you had the psychedelic thing, the English thing. For the first time ever they all came to an intersection and you had this mix of stuff that was developing (Payne: 1996: 144).

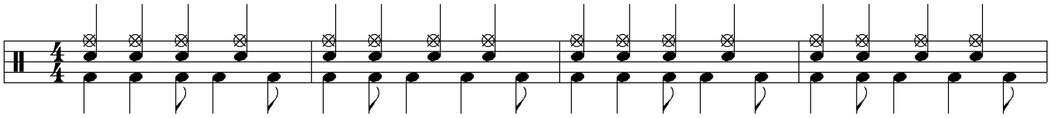
Dance to the Music is an example this stylistic 'intersection' driven by a rock inspired 'four on the floor' rhythm with a syncopated bass line played by Larry Graham:





Example 139. ***Dance to the Music*****, bass riff.**

Graham's bass was a leading part of this rhythm because of his use of the fuzz bass effect to produce a distinctive, powerful bass sound. Against this heavy bass sound, the drum part provides an uncomplicated 'four on the floor' dance beat:

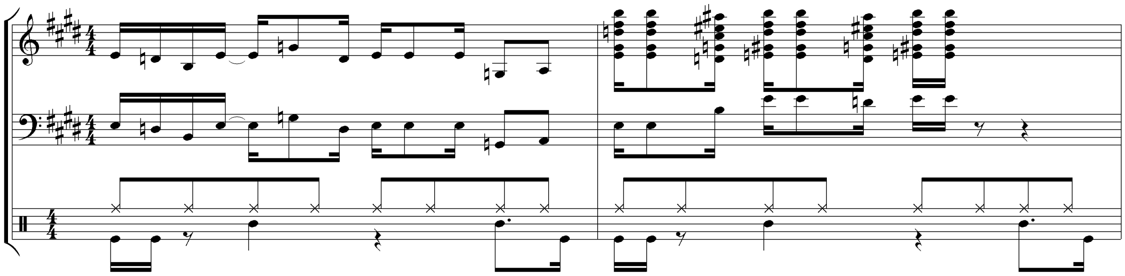


Example 140. ***Dance to the Music*****, drum riff.**

It is difficult to imagine that the musicians that created the driving, episodic *Dance To The Music* would be the same people who would also produce funk inspired pieces such as *Sing a Simple Song.* The ability of Stone's group to create music on the 'intersection' of several styles demonstrates something of their eclectic nature. Figure 1, the flow of musical ideas, recognises that this 'intersection' can also be an important point of departure for creating new codes and ideas. The point of departure acknowledges a consolidation of stylistic elements evidenced by the increasing confidence musicians such as Sly and the Family stone had in integrating elements of the funk style into their music.

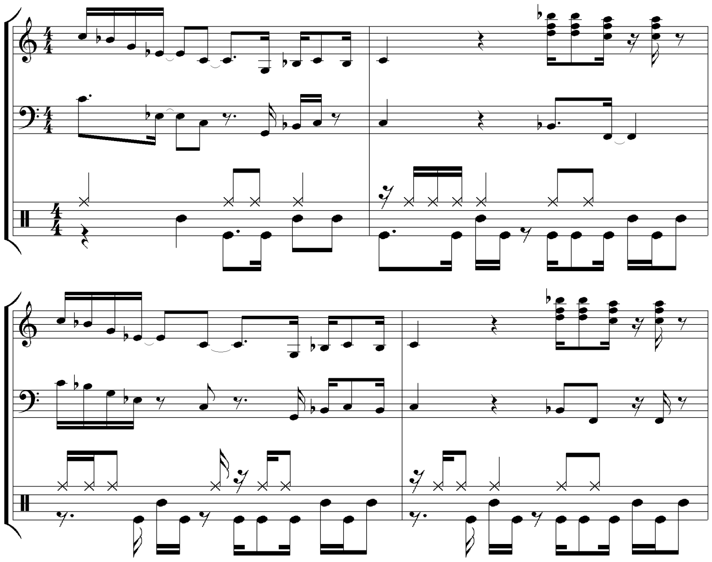
2.11.1 Sing A Simple Song

The rhythmic lock of *Sing a Simple Song* contains three main elements: the unison guitar, (with organ) and bass riff, the guitar chords of the second bar and the drum riff. The sixteenth note subdivision, the use of syncopated patterns and a riff based around a single chord are stylistic elements that have been discussed extensively in the emerging funk style:



Example 141. ***Sing a Simple Song*, rhythmic lock.**

Overall, these elements contribute very little to the development of funk in 1969 but instead demonstrate the ability of musicians to absorb and integrate elements of an emerging musical style into the group style. In addition to the stylistic elements found in the rhythmic lock, two other proto-funk ideas are to be found in *Sing A Simple Song.* The first is the distribution of the vocals amongst the band members is similar to the use of voices in *Cloud Nine* and the second is the use of syncopated baritone saxophone sounds on the single chord rhythm. Stylistic similarities also exist between *Sing a Simple Song* and the Meters' *Cissy Strut,* both pieces beginning with guitar and bass melody answered by a syncopated chord:



Example 142. ***Cissy Strut,*** **introduction.**

Sing a Simple Song has a strong bass sound with a heavy kick drum which, along with the dominant guitar riff, might reflect the sound of the emerging rock world. At the same time, the organ sounds and the off-beat baritone link it to the rhythm 'n' blues tradition of Stax with further stylistic confusion coming from the soul and gospel vocals of both Sly and Rose Stone.

Stone retained creative control of his songs and although songs were developed around jamming sessions, he was able to add ideas using new eight track recording technology that had become available. According to Errico:

> We just went in with just an idea and cut the tracks. Then Sly would change parts and the song would metamorphose to something different. On all the famous singles I would go in and redo the drum parts last, after everything was done and the voices were on. I'd recut the drums with the new feel and the new direction of the song (Payne, 1996: 150).

This 'metamorphosis' developed in the studio and was largely Sly Stone's responsibility. Stone appears to have a clear understanding of the creative possibilities that studio technology allowed as *Sing A Simple Song* adds delayed effects on the voice. In addition to the delayed sounds, the song ends with a 'live' fade out where the instrumental stops abruptly leaving only the pre-production tracks and Stone saying 'OK, fade out'.

Sing a Simple Song provides a snapshot of the funk style at the end of the 1960s. The ability of bands such as Sly and the Family Stone to integrate elements of funk into there playing style indicates the increasing influence that funk was beginning to have on some bands. In the two year period 1968-69 a increasingly wide range of performers included funk songs in their output but for reasons of space, these have had to be omitted in the present etymophony. Such a strategy omits songs such as Brown's *Lickin' Stick* and *Funky Drummer,* Lee Dorsey's *Everything I Do Gonh Be Funky (From Now On)* and Archie Drell's *Tighten Up.* With the increasing number of bands involved in funk comes the ability to bring together elements of the style to express social and political concerns. We have noted how the lyrics of *Cloud Nine* are a social commentary and the recognition that funk could deal with difficult socio-political issues can be seen in songs such as James Brown's *Say It Loud I'm Black and Proud,* and Sly Stone's, *Don't Call Me Nigger Whitey.* The ability of funk to express political messages as well as reflect trends on the dance floor or in the 'street' is an important part of its cultural development and its ability to empathise and reflect socio-political concerns may be one reason for its increasing popularity.

2.12 Socio-political considerations

Politically and socially, the late 1960s were an important time for a racially segregated America. The history of this period generally focuses on the polarisation of views represented by Martin Luther King, Malcom X and the emerging presence of more radical factions such as the Black Power Movement.[246] The assassination of Malcom X in 1965 and Luther King in 1968 marked a period of social and political unrest which, over a period of several years, coincided with and were reflected in the development of funk. Artists such as James Brown were important for articulating the search for a political identity in songs such as *Say it Loud I'm Black and Proud* (1969). *S*ly Stone contributed his own version of this in songs such as *Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey* (1969) and the more anthemic song, *Stand!* (1969).

Sly Stone and the Family developed as a multi-racial band and songs such as *Stand!* appear to reflect a mood of the time by telling people to take a more active role in their lives.[247] *Stand!* is described by Vincent (1996) as a 'biting black pride anthem' and emphasises this point by suggesting that this was first funk album:

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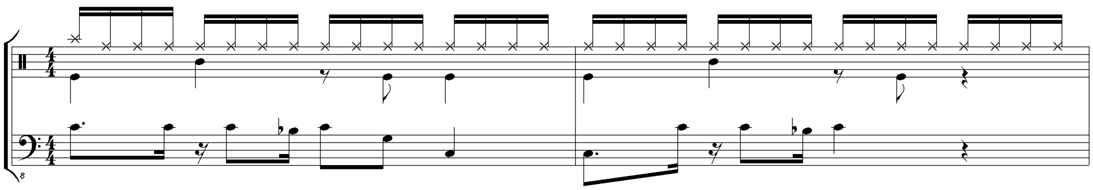
[246] See Haralambos (1974) for a more extended discussion of this. Haralambos also discusses the riots in black communities starting with Harlem in 1964, Watts in 1965 and Detroit in 1967.

[247] The opening line begins: 'Stand! You've been sitting for much too long'.

> The album seemed to encompass the entire landscape of the black experience. It was broad in scope, yet intimate. It was joyous, but it had a dead-serious sensibility to it. It was too hot and too black to be rock, too positive to be blues, and too wild to be soul. Sly had given birth to the funk album (1996: 93-4).

While it would be possible to criticize Vincent in his use of adjectival descriptors of mood, the general view presented was that the funk album, and by implication the song, reflected the 'black' experience. In many ways the song *Stand!* appears to be a simple pop song with acoustic guitars strumming along, straight eights beat on the drums, backing singers and a mainly pop vocal delivery by Stone. However, for the last 45 seconds of the song, the message becomes musically quite clear as the pop style juxtaposes with a strong syncopated bass and guitar riff, an emphasis on the first beat of the bar, screaming vocals and the sixteenth-note hi-hat rhythm, all of which, by 1969, were consolidated into the funk style:



Example 143. *Stand!*, funky outro.

The musical codes and the meanings of proto-funk used by musicians such as Stone developed in a much more conscious way during the late 1960s. Deliberate attempts by Motown producer Norman Whitfield to explore new ideas and to associate the sounds of *Cloud Nine* with ghetto culture and the social conditions found within the ghetto are important in extending the identity and meanings of funk. Baraka (1963), was aware of the close link that people create between musical style and cultural representation:

> The negro’s music changed as he changed, reflecting shifting attitudes or consistent attitudes within changed context. And it is why the music changed that seems most important to me (Baraka, 1963: 153).

Baraka was able to focus his ideas on the music of jazz which, through its difference to what he saw as white cultural traits, represented a black identity. There are many difficulties with this type of thinking and these have been discussed by Hatch and Millward as a form of ‘inverted racism’:

> As any student of American history will know, delineation of people in terms of black and white has always been enormously complex in both theoretical and practical terms. The traditional dichotomous distinction in fact belies these complexities (Hatch and Millward, 1987: 117).

The problematics of ‘Black’, ‘African-American’ and ‘European’ has been discussed extensively by Tagg (1989) who effectively demonstrates that those musical elements which have become associated with the term ‘black music’ are to be found in musical styles throughout the world. Importantly, Tagg recognises that ‘music develops within and between people and groups of people, with their conditions of life and with their position in the productive forces of society’.[248] By concentrating on people, personalities, and politics, many histories of music have ignored the importance of these collective processes which contribute to the development of a style. The process of making music involves significant interaction between a wide community of musicians who reflect a much wider and complex set of values than can be represented effectively by ‘black’ or ‘white’.

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[248] (Tagg, 1989:293)

In developing an etymophony of funk it has been essential to examine the range of styles and the contributions made by individual musicians which is part of this productive force. The particular conditions of society of the time allowed rhythm and blues, soul and eventually funk, to become identified with the politics of that society. Haralambos (1974) suggests that the development of a metaphysical concept such as ‘soul’ was an ‘important psychological component of the black struggle…Its diffuseness allows all black Americans to identify and associate with it and so with each other’ (1974:145). This diffuseness has been reflected in the increasing diversity of the proto-funk style as it developed during the late 1960s. From 1966 proto-funk became increasingly widespread in the USA which suggests that its development was linked to social developments. *Say It Loud* provides a clear link between the black power movement and music, but perhaps one of the clearest changes comes from *Cloud Nine.* In *Cloud Nine,* Whitfield made a conscious effort to change the sound of Motown steering it away from the suited and manicured groups which had ensured its wider commercial success in order to explore what Morse (1971) referred to as ‘a greater concern with black identity’ (1971:37).

By bringing together a range of diverse musical styles and interests, musicians of the time were somehow able to create a sense of unity through the sharing of musical practices and the filtering of particular musical elements within that process. I have tried to demonstrate that the music of funk developed through cultural fusion, through the assimilation and reworking of a diverse range of musical codes by an equally diverse range of people. It is this fusion, musical, cultural, social and political, which gave rise to new identities and meanings in proto-funk styles.[249] The plurality of styles, the appropriation of musical ideas and the constant reworking of the proto-funk music reflects a similar process in the creation of a socio-political identity. The discussion of the music of this period has demonstrated to a certain extent the plastic nature of proto-funk and its willingness to take on new ideas such as the sixteenth-note figures.

2.13 Conclusions.

The period 1967 to 1969 has been presented as a time of consolidation and of diversification of the proto-funk sounds developed in the first half of the 1960s. The pace of development, and the increasing number of artists who reworked funk during these years added to the range of codes which identified the emerging style. Some of the most important ideas to crystallize during this period included:

- Sixteenth-note hi-hat patterns become more frequent
- Introduction of wah-wah guitar

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249 Some of these issues are explored in a different context in Lipsitz (1990) Lipsitz discusses the plurality of styles which were to be found in the Mexican music of Los Angeles in the 1970s through a postmodern framework. His suggestion is that ‘Chicano musicians and artists could incorporate white rockabilly or black rhythm-and-blues music into theire songs because they recognised similarities in form and content that transcended surface differences. Yet while drawing

- Modality and one-chord jams
- V^{9th} chord becomes established as a stylistic identifier
- Continuation of scratch guitar rhythmic layer
- Changes of grooves within songs for expressive purposes
- Influence of studio production techniques on the timbre
- Social conditions and political overtones reflected in the lyrics[250]

The jam remained, for most artists, the main creative tool for constructing their songs. One influential addition to the creative team was the producer who, certainly in the case of Motown, began to influence the sound of proto-funk. As an increasing range of musicians became involved with proto-funk, the vocabulary of ideas available began to increase. The introduction of the wah-wah pedal represents one clearly identifiable innovation which was also shared with rock music. From the jam session, ideas could be tested and rejected or accepted and reworked into the emerging proto-funk aesthetic.

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upon families of resemblance, Mexican-American musicians in Los Angeles never lost sight of the singular historical realities shaping them and their community (1990:150).

[250] See ‘further research’ in the conclusion of this thesis.

Part 3. Confluence: refining funk in the early 1970s

The previous chapters have outlined a more or less chronological development of proto-funk from the early 1950s until 1969. This chapter continues this approach concentrating specifically on the years 1970 and 1971 but, because of the nature of these developments, includes related developments during 1972. During this time a number of significant changes began to shape the development of funk. These changes included the increasingly important role placed by the bass guitar, the introduction of new electronic sounds and the new role that film played in disseminating funk to a wider, international audience primarily through the success of the soundtrack to *Shaft* (1971).

During the proto-funk years it was possible to see how stylistic elements of funk began to emerge through the work of a number of musicians most notably, but not exclusively, centred around the nucleus of James Brown. Funk emerged from the rhythm ’n’ blues, soul and gospel styles of the early 1960s but in order to establish itself as a recognisable, independent genre, the emergent style had to gain currency not only with a wider range of musicians but also with a larger audience. In this respect the 1970s proved to be a watershed and the change in political direction taken by the black community was marked by a increasing confidence in using funk to express political and social changes at the end of the 1960s. Songs such as *Say It*

Loud, I'm Black and Proud and *Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey,* articulate a new confidence in African-American politics.

The relevance of funk was not only political and social as it continued to be in considerable demand on the dance floor. During the 1970s, funk continued to develop into film and TV, on the dance floor, and in socio-political context. The wider use of funk not only brought an increasing awareness that funk could articulate the politics of the time, but it would lead to a consolidation of the funk style.

3.1 Sample of songs, 1970-71

The proliferation of artists and the increasing number of songs in funk style presents a problem in terms of creating an etymophony of funk. In the previous discussion it was possible to create a chronological framework for tracing the development of funk by identifying particular songs that emerged in a particular year. The number of songs that could be included in the funk genre expanded during the 1970s partly as a result of the wider range of musicians becoming involved in funk between 1970 and 1971.

Using a number of sources including Vincent, Thompson, Slutsky and Silverman, Stuart as well as CD collections such as *The Roots of Funk* it has been possible to identify a number of artists and songs who were influential in developing funk during these years. These artists have been presented in Table 8 below:

Date	Artist	Album (where applicable)	Song title	Chart[251]
1970	Gil Scott Heron		*Pieces Of A man*	
1970	Charles Wright and the Watts 104th street band		*Express Yourself*	3 RnB 12 pop
1970	James Brown		*Get Up I Feel Like Being A Sex Machine* *Superbad* *Talking Loud & Saying Nothing*	2 RnB 15 pop
1970	Sly and the Family Stone		*Thank You (falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)*	1 RnB 1 pop
1970	Funkadelic	Funadelic		No entry
1970	Tower of Power	East Bay Grease	*Back On The Streets Again*	106 RnB
1971	Curtis Mayfiled	Curtis!	*If There's A Hell Below We're All Going To Go.*	3 RnB 29 pop
1971	War		*Spill The Wine* *Slippin' Into Darkness*	0 RnB 3 pop
1970/69	Bar Kays	Gotta Groove	*Gotta Groove*	40 RnB 0 pop
1971	Last Poets	The Last Poets This is Madness		No entry
1971	Mandrill	Mandrill		No entry
1971	Earth Wind and Fire	Earth Wind and Fire		24 RnB 172 Pop
1971	James Brown		*Make It Funky (Pt. 1)* *Hot Pants* *Soul Power*	Unknown 18 pop unknown
1971	Temptations		*Psychedelic Shack*	7 pop
1971	Donny Hathaway		*The Ghetto*	
1971	Ohio Players	Pain	*Pain*	35/0
1971	Kool and the gang	Live at the Sex Machine	*Inc. Funky Man and Stone's 'I want to Take You higher'.*	6/122
1970	Meters		*Hand Clapping Song* *Chicken Strut* *Tippi-Toes*	26/0
1971	Isaac Hayes	Shaft (soundtrack)	*Theme From Shaft*	2/1
1971	Funkadelic	Maggot Brain		-
1971	Paul Humphrey & His Cool Aide Chemists		*Funky LA*	45/109
1971	The JBs	Food for Thought	*The Grunt* *Pass The Peas*	7/77
1971	Marvin Gaye		*Inner City Blues (Make Me Want To Holler)*	?/9

Table 8. Representative sample of funk pieces, 1970-'71.

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[251] The chart listing indicates rhythm 'n' blues chart as the first number and pop charts as the second. 3/12 indicates that the highest entry in the rhythm and blues charts was 3 whereas pop charts was 12. Where data could not be found this has been indicated as unknown. A no entry is also shown.

The table also includes information concerning the chart positions of the songs and albums released by artists. While there are difficulties with interpreting chart listings, it is useful to include this raw data as an indicator of the total sales. In the absence of more detailed statistics, the chart figures act as an indicator of the distribution that funk was able to achieve at this time. From a commercial standpoint, James Brown and Sly Stone were significant figures in the 1970s along with Curtis Mayfield and Charles Wright. Tower of Power, who were to achieve greater fame later in the decade, were not able to make the same claim to commercial success during this period. A similar picture emerges in 1971 when acts such as Kool and the Gang, a significant band during the 1980s, were relatively obscure in the pop charts and therefore unable to reach a wider audience. The chart also includes listings for Funkadelic who were just beginning their recording career in 1970.

To analyse each song in turn is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the pieces will be discussed in relation to a number of themes which not only has the advantage of making the discussion more manageable, but focuses on important developments during the early seventies. The three themes discussed in this section include:

1. Songs which foreground the bass guitar including *Sex Machine*, and *Than You Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin* and *Sex Machine*
2. The aesthetic of ‘the one’
3. Songs from the media: *Theme From Shaft.*

3.2 Innovations: The bass connection (1970)

In his discussion of funk music and funk bands, Vincent suggests that, 'the bass guitar was key, and with the popularity of Larry Graham and Bootsy Collins, the bassist was free to pursue any number of influences and was expected to provide rhythmic direction, either from percussive thumps or entire melodic phrases' (1996:16). The role of the bass by the 1970s was beginning to change and both Graham and Collins made a significant contribution to the development of the bass sound of funk. The bass had always been crucial but until 1970, the bass player had always been very much in the background. However, the percussive slapping style of Graham and the extrovert, driving playing of Collins, were to have an influence not only on their own music but on the role that the bass guitar would have in funk and funk related styles.

The release of Sly Stone's *Thank You (Falettin Me Be Mice Elf Agin)*[252] in 1970 might appear, with hindsight, to have been a defining moment in the development of funk. For many people, the post 1970s funk sound was synonymous with the slap bass guitar sound and *Thank You* is often cited as the first time this sound was used. While *Thank You* was the first time that the slap sound had been used on a number one single it is interesting to note that the technique was not immediately copied.

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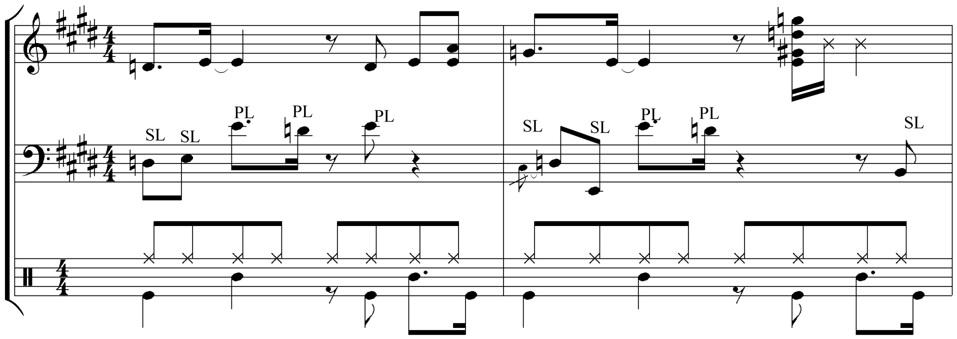
[252] Referred to as *Thank You* in the text.

Thank You is based around one two-bar riff that combines guitar, bass and drums:



Example 144. *Thank You*, main riff.

There are features of this museme stack which will be instantly recognisable including he use of single line, syncopated guitar and muted chords and the syncopated kick drum. Texturally there is a relatively high level of linear independence between the parts. The new element to funk is the slap bass sound which is created by using the thumb to hit the lower strings (slap) and pulling the upper strings with the fingers (pop). The techniques produces a highly percussive sound which, when combined with a mid to high boost EQ,[253] creates a sound which cuts through the texture.

3.2.1 Discussion.

The museme stack for *Thank You* contains a number of musemes which have already received attention in the past. As the focus of this discussion is on the sound of the slap bass, it will not be necessary to discuss the guitar sounds or the drum sound at this point. The interest in the slap sound is that, as with the use of wah-wah pedal, the introduction of the sound can be traced to a specific time and, in this case, a specific performer, bassist Larry Graham. In presenting an etymophony this is clearly an advantage to have such a definite appearance of a sound which becomes closely associated with funk. However, in tracing the use of the sound it becomes clear that while the slap technique may be a novel idea in the context of the 1970s, it is not a new idea in a wider historical context.

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[253] Equalisation: the facility to boost or cut defined frequency bands on an amplifier or mixing desk.

The idea of the bass instrument adding to the rhythmic texture by slapping the string against the fingerboard of the instrument in popular music can be found in music of New Orleans jazz.[254] New Orleans jazz included a number of exponents of the slap technique and a number of bass players including Bill Johnson (1873-1975) were well known for their slap style. The difficulties involved with analysing and authenticating the slap technique arise because the emerging recording technologies of the time make the double bass virtually inaudible. According to Mayer,[255] Johnson:

> …. led bands in California around 1910, and was a co-leader of the Original Creole Band with Freddie Keppard. This important New Orleans style band toured vaudeville in the mid teens, giving the nation an early sample of that music which was not yet known as "Jazz". . Johnson mentioned that when the band arrived at New York City's Winter Garden, the northern musicians stared at him uncomprehendingly while he drove the band with his fancy slapping.

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[254] Slapping is the term adopted by electric bass players. The term ‘snap’ is often used by other string players from the violin family to indicate a violent or extreme pizzicato effect where the string is plucked in such a way as to snap against the fingerboard. The ‘slap’ is effected by banging the string against the fingerboard. On electric bass this is effected by the use of the thumb whereas on double bass, the whole hand may be used.

[255] Mayer, Daniel. ‘Slap That Bass’ article published online (accessed June 24 2005). Much of Mayer’s evidence comes from contemporary accounts rather from any recordings of the music itself.

While in some ways, this is an historical digression from the style of Larry Graham, it points firmly to an early precedent for the slap sound to be incorporated into a performance style. Johnson was also one of the first bass players to travel extensively with his jazz band, the Original Creole Orchestra and then with King Oliver. In this way, the slap technique was widely disseminated in early jazz and became an important part of the bass players technique.[256] The slap technique was also established in other genres of music. In blues music, it can be heard played by Ernst Crawford on *I Can't Be Satisfied* (1948); Willie Dixon's *Big 3 Stomp*; *Hard Notch Boogie Beat*; and *88 Boogie*.[257] The slap bass style of the 1950s rockabilly can be heard on Elvis's 1954 debut, *That's Alright Mama*; on Carl Perkins' *Blue Suede Shoes* (1956); and Sonny Burgess' *Red Headed Woman* (1956).

Although the slap technique had been frequently used on double bass, the technique did not automatically transfer itself to the electric bass guitar. While the 'slap' sound of the bass has a longer history, the 'pop', created by pulling the higher strings on the electric bass, had no real precedent as a similar sound cannot be created on double bass. Thank You is in E which allowed Graham to make use of the sustain on the lowest string on the bass highlighted in the fourth bar of the riff:

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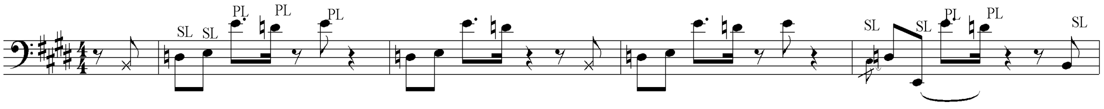
[256] At some point, every bass player using pizzicato technique must experience the slap of the strings hitting the finger board. Even in my own limited playing experience, the slap sound was fun to play and provided the opportunity to make an additional contribution to the sound in various bands.



Example 145. ***Thank You,*** **bass part.**

As with many instrumental techniques, it can be assumed that the slap technique was being used by performers like Graham for some time but it was not until Thank You that it entered the vocabulary of funk. With large record sales and with radio airplay, the innovative bass guitar technique was given unprecedented exposure. This type of exposure does not necessarily mean that a particular sound or instrumental technique will be immediately adopted by other performers. Although *Thank You* reached number one in the US charts in 1970, it was a considerable time before other recording artists adopted the technique. Of the songs in the current analysis sample, there are no other examples of the slap-pop technique and it was not until 1974 that the technique became to be used in any significant way.258 By 1974 the slap bass technique was being used by a number of players in songs such as *Hair* (Larry Graham, 1974); *Soul Power* (Maceo and the Macks,1974); *Vulcan Worlds* (Chick Corea with Stanley Clarke on Bass, 1974); *I Feel Sanctified*, (The Commodores,1974); and *Up For the Down Stroke* (Parliament, 1974).

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257 Willie Dixon (1915-1992) was bassist for Chess label 1952-56 and worked on other Chicago labels until the 1960s. He composed *Hoochie Coochie Man*, *Little Red Rooster*, and *I Just Want To Make Love To You*. *88 Boogie* contains an excellent slap bass solo.

258 Although the techniques seems to have taken some time to disseminate, the sound was favoured by other performers such as Stevie Wonder. However, the sound was recreated by Clavichord rather than bass guitar (listen to Wonder's *Superstition* (1972)).

From a modern day perspective, the slap bass sound is closely associated with funk yet it seems to have taken over three years to establish itself as part of the wider repertoire. From 1974 onwards, the slap bass had become associated with a number of players and their bands as a strong signifier of funk. The following list gives some examples of songs using slap technique post 1974:[259]

Stanley Clarke	*Silly Putty* (bass by Stanley Clarke)	*Journey to Love* (1975)
Michael Jackson	*Get On The Floor* (bass by Louis Johnson)	"Off The Wall" (1979)
David Sanborn	*Run for Cover* (bass by Marcus Miller)	"Voyeur" (1981)
Sugarhill Gang	*Funk Box* (bass by Doug Wimbish)	"8th Wonder" (1982)
Red Hot Chilli Peppers	*Higher Ground* (bass by Flea)	"Mother´s Milk" (1989)
Primus	*Pudding Time* (bass by Les Claypool)	"Hallucino-Genetics Live" (DVD, 2004).[260]

Figure 6: Slap technique players, post 1974.

There are no clear reasons for this delay in adopting this important funk signifier but the following possibilities arise by way of explanation:

1. The slap sound was regarded as a novelty song and therefore too unique to Graham to be adopted by other players
2. Bass players lacked the necessary technique to adopt the style

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[259] The list demonstrates the use of the technique over a thirty year period and as such cannot presume to be in any way comprehensive. These players, among many others, are representative and many excellent exponents of the slap bass are omitted for reasons of space. The use of slap technique in funk and jazz and its subsequent assimilation by the rock community would be an interesting subject for future research.

[260] 'Pudding Time' can be seen on <www.primusville.com/hg/> (accessed July 16, 2005)

3. There was competition from the developing range of electronic keyboard instruments such as the Clavinet which was used to play slap like bass lines on Bill Withers 1972 song, *Use Me* and Stevie Wonder's 1972 song, *Superstition)*

4. Many bands were happy reworking older, tried and tested formulas (Joe Tex,[261] *I Gottcha* (1972) and the Meters continue to develop the muted guitar and hocket style which had become an important feature of the proto-funk style).

A number of these ideas are difficult to sustain. It would, for instance, be difficult to conclude that the slap sound was so unique that it was avoided by other players. It would also be difficult to speculate that bass players did not have the necessary technique without undertaking substantial research into individual players of that era. The absence of the slap bass on recordings was not just an omission of other funk-style players, it was a sound absent in Graham's own playing at this time. In this way, the sound could have been regarded largely as a unique event but of no further consequence. Whatever the reasons that bass players had for avoiding the slap sound in commercial recordings, the delay suggests that the slap-pop sound was not immediately associated with funk. For the slap-pop bass sound to become associated with funk, there had to be a number of other songs which exploited its potential in order that it became part of the common store of musical codes for funk.

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[261] "I Gotcha" took demonstrates the 'preacher' sound of Joe Tex – a spoken, gritty sound which he used to great effect in 1977 when he produced the hilarious "Ain't Gonna Bump No More (With No Big Fat Woman)," his last Top Ten R&B hit (number 12 on the pop chart).

One way that the slap sound was associated with funk was through the introduction of a new generation of electronic instruments such as the Clavinet in recordings by musicians such as Stevie Wonder and Bill Withers. Both singers made use of the new repertoire of sounds available through the electronic instruments which were developing, and exploited the potential of the clavinet for creating funky bass lines. The appearance of the clavinet as a distinct voice in music is in 1972 and can be heard on Stevie Wonder's *Superstition* and Bill Wither's, *Use Me.* The decision to use of the clavinet could be for a number of reasons including the attraction that new technology and new sounds have for some musicians. Its acceptance as an instrument of the early seventies seems to have made more impact than the slap bass method explored by Graham. However, the two sounds are closely related both in sound and melodically and the percussive harpsichord-like sound of the clavinet serves as a useful substitute for the slap bass technique.

By using the clavinet, Stevie Wonder was able to explore a similar sound to the slap bass of *Thank You* but from the more accessible keyboard. Despite the use of the keyboard to play the clavinet, the melodic line of *Superstition* contains a number of similarities to *Thank You* including the use of octave leaps and flattened fifths which, in this context, are more idiomatic of the bass guitar than of the keyboard.[262]

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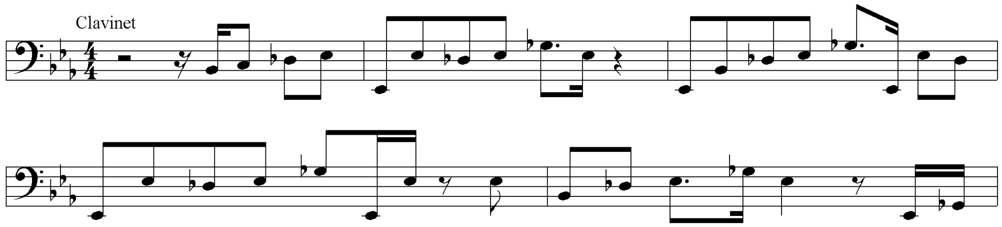
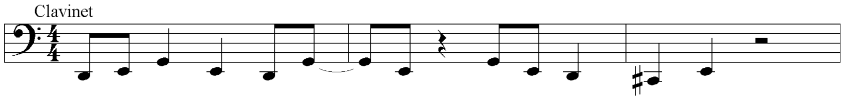
[262] On bass guitar, the fretting system allows the root, octave, fifth and flat seventh to be played with ease using only first and third finger. No adjustment to fret position is required. The minor eleventh (octave + minor third) is also easy to play if the root of the chord is played on the lowest string. This makes the R – 5 – 8 – b11 sequence idiomatic.



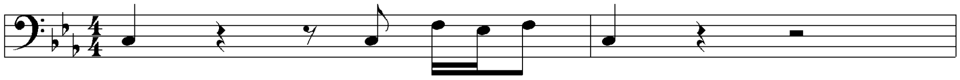
Example 146. *Superstition,* clavinet riff.

It is important to note that this was not the first time that the clavinet had been used in popular music. There are examples of the instrument being used in Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* (1970). There are also examples of its use in funk related styles. Bill Withers used the clavinet sound in his 1972 song, *Use Me* (1972) but this clearly shows not influence of the octave leaps seen in *Superstition*.



Example 147, *Use me*, bass riff.

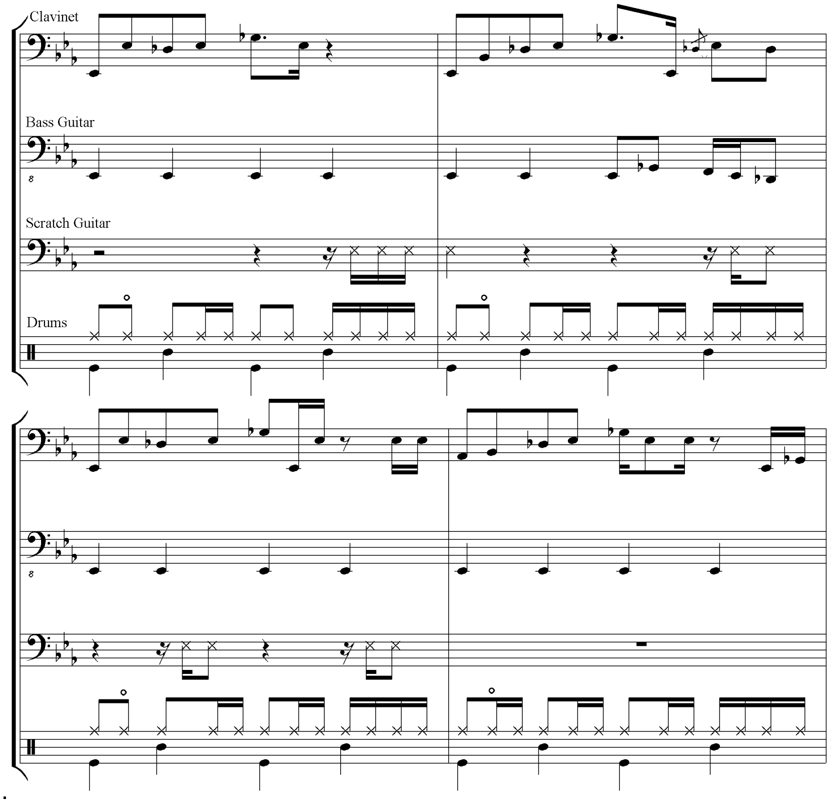
An earlier example from the funk genre *Psychedelic Shack* (1970) has a clavinet sound as part of the opening. As with *Use Me,* this does not attempt to create the idiomatic feel of the bass guitar:



Example 148. *Psychedelic Shack,* bass riff.

Superstition appears to offer something new to the funk genre and uses the clavinet as if a bass guitar. The total effect of the clavinet comes from the textural complexity emerging from the collective ensemble.[263] By adding bass guitar, scratch guitar, drums, and horns, *Superstition* was able to exploit the linear textures of funk to develop an innovative sound. Although *Superstition* lies outside of the 1970-71 era being considered, its relationship to the development of the funk bass sound is of interest. The following section will therefore look at the musematic material and how it relates to the newly developing bass sound.

3.3 Superstition, museme stack.



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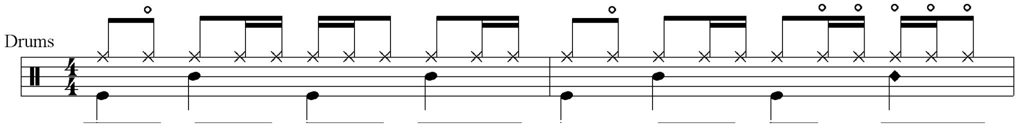
[263] It may be worth noting that although the collective ensemble was seen as essential to the development of funk, the concept of a 'jam' was changing as recording technology made multi-tracking easy and effective. For the first time, the creative dynamics of funk may have been changing.

Example 149. ***Superstition,*** **museme stack (rhythm section)**

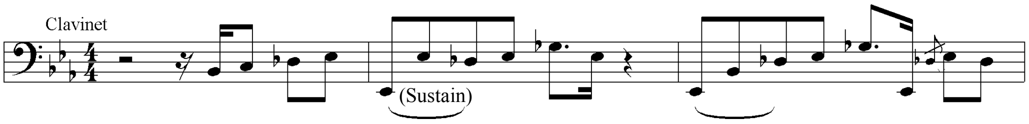
3.3.1 Superstition: table of musemes

M1 sixteenth-note drum pattern



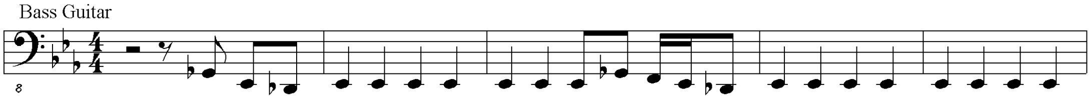
Example 150. ***Superstition,*** **drum kit.**

M2 Clavinet



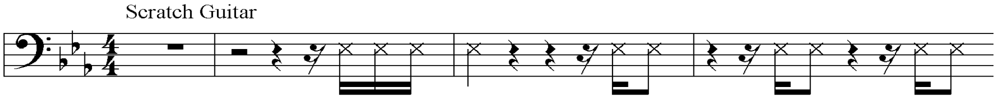
Example 151. ***Superstition,*** **clavinet.**

M3 bass guitar.



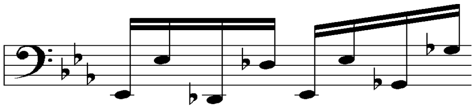
Example 152. ***Superstition,*** **bass guitar.**

M4 Scratch Guitar



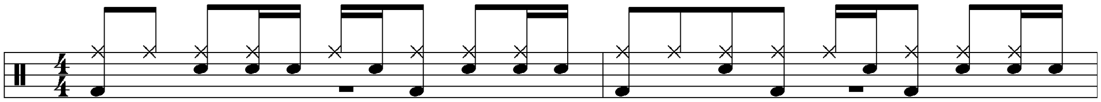
Example 153. ***Superstition,*** **scratch guitar.**

M5 Clavinet Octave division



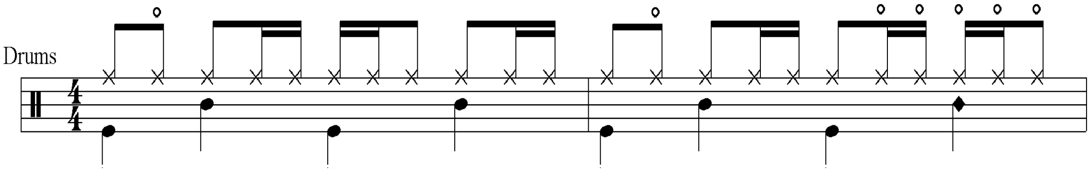
Example 154. ***Superstition,*** **clavinet octave division.**

Analysis of the museme stack reveals a number of musemes which have a relationship to funk codes examined in the discussion of the proto-funk period. Museme 1, for instance, contains the sixteenth-note pattern that became essential to funk. In 1962 we have seen how the sixteenth-note pattern had been distributed around the drum kit in pieces such as *I Got Money:*



Example 155. *I Got Money*, drum pattern.

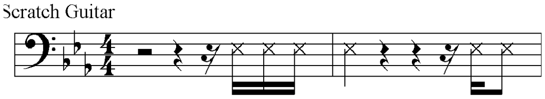
This rhythm, derived from the sixteenth-note New Orleans 'street beat' had, by 1972, been transferred from the snare drum to the hi-hat. *Superstition* incorporates the sixteenth-note rhythms of the street beat, but also the open closed hi-hat sound first introduced by Melvin Parker:



Example 156. *Superstition,* drum pattern.

What becomes apparent from this example is that the distribution of the sixteenth-note pattern across the drum kit has changed with the rhythmic idea now firmly placed on the hi-hat. The bass and snare pattern, by comparison to the proto-funk, is a much simpler rhythmic idea which marks the beat. Theoretically, it could be that these rhythms belong to the same 'family' of rhythms that have appeared consistently in the funk style since the 1950s. The continued use of the sixteenth-note pattern and its sonic transformation from snare to hi-hat indicates the importance that this rhythmic idea had acquired as a style indicator.[264]

In addition to the drum patterns, other features of funk continue to be recycled in *Superstition* including the scratch guitar. The transitory scratch sound (M4) fills out the texture at a moment where the clavinet stops. This interplay of instruments was also very much a feature of the hocket texture found in proto-funk:



Example 157. *Superstition,* scratch guitar.

The reuse of these codes over a ten year period between *I Got Money* and *Superstition,* suggests that he musical codes of funk have become established. Through a process of transformation, some of the codes have changed, but there rhythmic outline remain recognisable or, in the case of the guitar, the sound remains an integral feature of the rhythmic texture. Building on this basis, including the funk bass lines of Graham, *Superstition* was able to develop a sound that has established itself as a funk 'classic'. Vincent, not without some exaggeration, suggest that:

> The clavinet became the staple of funk music, as it often accompanied the bass line, making the bass bottom sound thicker…Funk musicians were paying attention (Vincent, 1996: 132).

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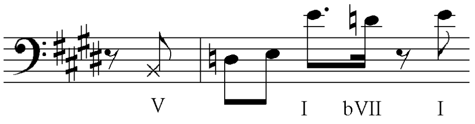
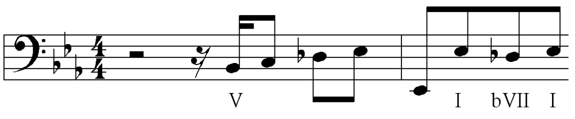
[264] It may be useful to note that by 1973, the sixteenth note rhythm had also found its way into rock. Deep Purple's *My Woman From Tokyo* begins with a sixteenth-note pattern on hi-hats until 43" into the song where it returns to an eighth not pattern. The sixteenth-note pattern was, therefore, not unique to funk.

The clavinet museme (M2) has strong melodic similarities to *Thank You* sharing a similar intervallic vocabulary. The following comparison shows a dominant anacrusis, the use of octave leap, and the same melodic I – bVII – I pattern.[265]

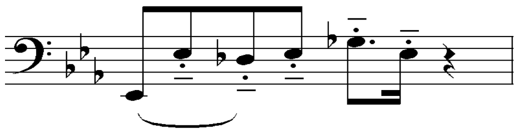


Example 158. *Thank You,* bass.

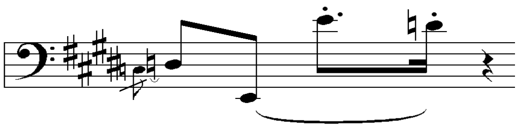


Example 159. *Superstition,* bass.

In addition to the intervallic similarity between *Thank You* and *Superstition,* there are other textural similarities. The use of a sustained low root note in *Superstition* is similar to the use of the sustained string used in *Thank You..*

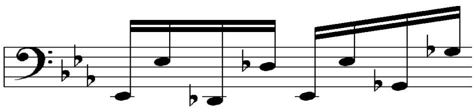


Example 160. *Superstition,* bass.



Example 161. *Thank You,* bass.

These examples demonstrate idiomatic borrowings from Graham's bass guitar technique. However, musemes such as M5 is idiomatic of the keyboard containing octave divisions:



Example 162. *Superstition,* Clavinet octave division (M5)

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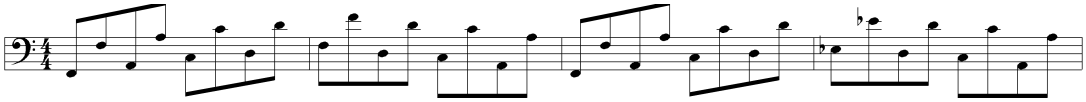
[265] See Tagg, 1979/2000 p. 154 for discussion of electric bass and its meaning as North American urban.

This is a similar figure to the boogie patterns we have already experience in our discussion of the piano style of Professor Longhair:



Example 163. ***Blues Rhumba, third bass line.***

Taken as a whole, *Superstition* contains very little that does not have a clear etymophonic link to musemes discussed in the proto-funk. The intertextual relationship between the proto-funk and Wonder's music may suggest that *Superstition* becomes something of a jigsaw drawn from many different sources. While the reworking of proto-funk musematic material suggests a strong element of pastiche or perhaps a musician working in a formulaic way, Wonder was able to create something new and innovative.

In part, the innovation was related to the studio process which created *Superstition.* Unlike much of the music of the proto-funk, *Superstition* was created in the studio. While Brown and Stone created their records in the studio, their recordings were very much a reflection of the live sound they created on stage. By 1972, Wonder had access to a wide range of studio equipment which allowed the opportunity to create, modify, refine and develop sounds in a way that Brown, for instance, would never have considered. By 1972 the studio had become a creative tool for composition. Wonder's approach in all this should not surprise us. Wonder was a childhood star of Motown studios and as such would have an intimate knowledge of working in the studio in the way that Norman Whitfield worked with The Temptations on *Cloud*

Nine. Whitfield's production of *Cloud Nine* made extensive use of the studio musicians available at Motown and, in addition, the concept that it was possible to create the right sound in the studio.[266]

The clavinet sound on *Superstition* is thought to be the result of multi-tracking and possibly includes other studio effects such as echo to achieve the final sound.[267] In the context of the mix the clavinet takes a central place in the stereo image and is clearly at the front of the mix. While it would be possible to speculate on the process involved in creating the sound image of *Superstition,* it is difficult to say exactly what we are hearing. As an etymophony what becomes important here is to acknowledge that why the musical codes generated in the recording can be traced to the proto-funk while the creation of a studio produced instrumental sound was a relatively new feature of funk.

The result of this experimentation is to create an image of a performance that may never have happened but was built up using various layers on a multi-track tape recorder. The difference between James Brown's approach is that he would bring a skeleton idea to the studio and develop the song as a head arrangement perhaps doing several takes of the same song. Working in a multi-track studio environment may mean that a solo musician can build up several layers of music without interacting with an ensemble. Working in the studio would suggest the need for a strong stylistic framework from which the musicians could develop songs. The studio was also a place to create and develop new instruments, new combinations and new textures. In part, the clavinet part of *Superstition* represents a new textural combination. While the part is in the bass register Wonder still retains the bass guitar to provide a rich bass sound. The combination of the repeated E♭ in the bass guitar (M3) and the leaping of the clavinet along with its individual timbral colour, created a new richness in the lower register of the song and in doing so, shifted the focus of funk into the bass.

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[266] An example of this has been discussed: the kit sound on *Cloud Nine* was the result of two drummers not one as you might expect. For the listener, the illusion is that there is one drummer, but in the studio it required two to realise the production sound.

[267] The source for this is www.gti.net/junebug/**clavinet**/clavfaq.pdf and as such is potentially an unreliable source. However, listening to the samples of the clavinet on this site and comparing them with Superstition suggests that the sound you hear has been modified.

While bass players may have been reluctant to engage with new slap techniques, there were others like Wonder, who had developed sufficient enthusiasm for the slap sound to incorporate it on his solo album, *Talking Book*. The delay in the acceptance of the slap technique may then give us an indication of how time plays an important part in the way that funk is understood and codified. While some musicians were developing the slap bass style in their own way, the majority of bass players continued to develop their playing style around syncopated sixteenth-note patterns. Some bass players would never actually use the slap technique in their playing.[268] Even without the use of the slap technique, the electric bass was beginning to establish itself as the foundation of the funk style mainly through the work of Bootsy Collins.

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[268] Jaco Patorius for instance, and Rocca Prestia of Tower of Power are two examples of bass players who never exploited the slap sound.

3.4 Sex Machine: Bootsy Collins

The slap bass sound of Larry Graham represents one strand of innovation in bass guitar technique. A second strand develops through the work of Bootsy Collins and his association with James Brown in 1970. The story of how Brown's band went on strike is well known in the history of funk. Brown, unable to give in to the demands of his backing band which included Maceo Parker, sacked the band on the night of a concert and flew in a completely new group of musicians to perform the same evening. We have seen through the discussion of Brown's early funk music that an important feature of song writing was to utilise the individual talents of his backing group. Faced with new, younger players but retaining the same approach, Brown was able to bring a new set of musical influences to his work.

At the forefront of this new period in his music was the extrovert bassist Bootsy Collins who with his brother 'Phelps' led a much more streamlined band of three horn players, bass, drums and guitar. The first recording made by this band was *Get Up (I Feel Like Being A Sex Machine).*[269] Recorded in April 1970, *Sex Machine* proved to be as innovative as *Thank You Fallettin Me Be Mice Elf Agin.*

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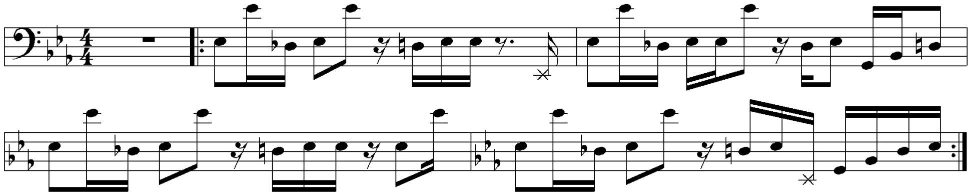
[269] From this point referred to as, *Sex Machine*.

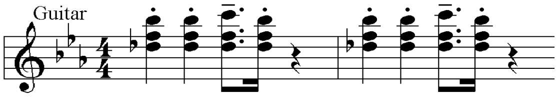
3.4.1 Sex machine: table of musemes.

Museme 1.



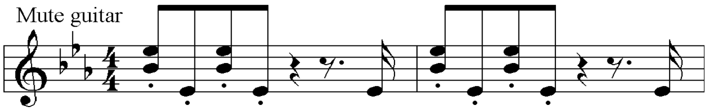
Example 164. ***Sex Machine*, verse (bass).**

Museme 2.

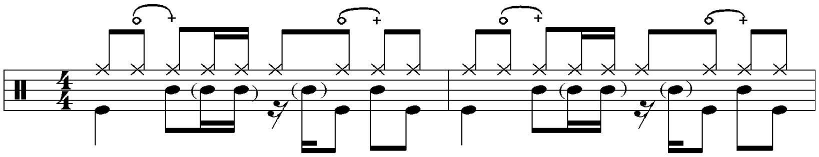


Example 165. Sex Machine, verse (guitar).

Museme 3.

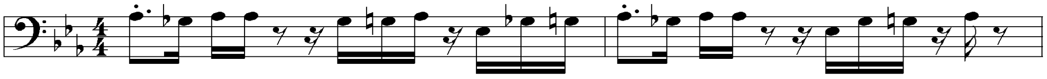


Example 166. ***Sex Machine*, verse (muted guitar).**



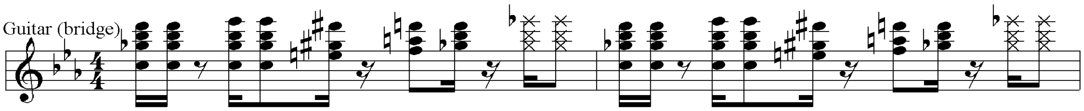
Example 167. ***Sex Machine*, verse (drum kit).**

Museme 6.



Example 168. *Sex Machine*, bridge (bass riff).

Museme 7.



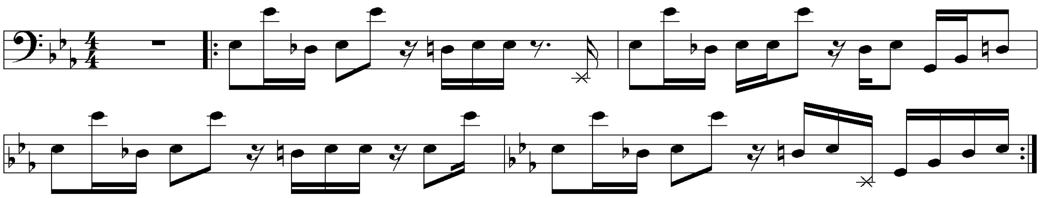
Example 169. *Sex Machine*, bridge, (guitar).

3.4.2 Discussion

In April 1970 when *Sex Machine* was recorded, the song represented both the end of an era of development for James Brown but also a new beginning as his attitude to funk solidified. *Sex Machine* was followed by a number of other songs including *Super Bad* (1970); *Give it Up or Turn it Loose* (1970); *Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved* (1970); and *Make it Funky* (1971). In the last of these songs, *Make it Funky,* the introduction begins with a dialogue between Brown and Bobby Byrd. The dialogue between the two could easily have been Brown's mission for the period:

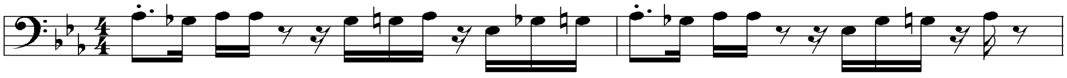
> Bobby: What you gon' play now?
>
> Brown: Bobby, I don't know. But what's'ever I play, its got t' be funky.

Collins remained with Brown for just over a year before eventually leaving in a dispute over wages. During this period his influence can be hear on the Brown sound primarily by playing with a greater energy and, at times, leading the band. An examination of museme 1 (bass guitar) shows that Collins has a similar approach to Larry Graham building riffs around the octave and flat seventh. The sound of these two players was considerably different. Graham had emphasised the rhythmic possibilities of the bass by extending the rhythmic capabilities through an extended performance technique. Collins played using the traditional finger style approach but developed a driving, high energy, syncopated sixteenth-note approach. Unlike the distinct percussive quality of Graham's bass, Collins' sound did not use any additional effect at this time:



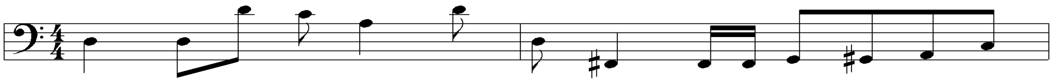
Example 170. ***Sex Machine*****, (bass M1).**

Museme 1 shows clear sixteenth-note subdivision which generally emphasises the first beat of the bar but avoids the third and fourth beat. This approach can be seen in the bridge section where the drive of the sixteenth-note becomes even more apparent:



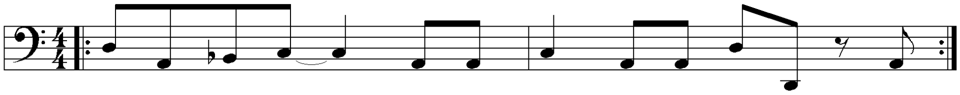
Example 171. ***Sex Machine*****, bridge (M6).**

Museme 6 works within a narrow intervallic range and makes use of tonic, flat seventh and chromatic passing notes while still working within a sixteenth-note timeframe. The use of chromatic passing notes was a feature of earlier playing found in Bernard Odum's bass riff for *Cold Sweat*:



Example 172. *Cold Sweat,* bass.

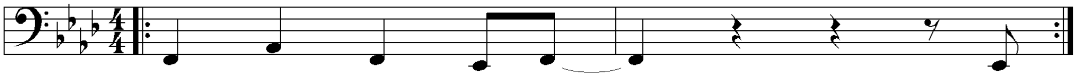
While chromaticism is a recurrent feature of this type of bass playing, the major change between *Cold Sweat* and *Sex Machine* is the shift from eighth note as the main time frame to the highly syncopated sixteenth-note. The subdivision of the metric unit was an important feature of Stewart's analysis of rhythm in early funk and the shift in rhythmic approach has also been seen in the rhythm guitar. The shift in rhythmic emphasis in the bass becomes clearer when Collins' approach in *Sex Machine* is compared with contemporary bass lines which retain an eighth note framework. The Meter's *Tippi-Toes* (1970) uses sixteenth-notes in the muted guitar part which leads the instrumental. Against this sixteenth-note pattern, the bass part maintains an eighth note rhythmic framework:



Example 173. *Tippi Toes*, bass.

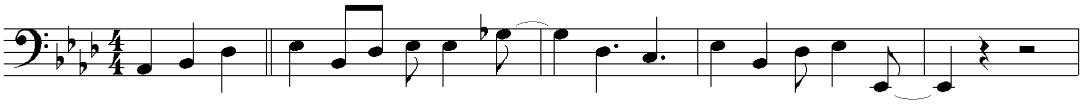
Tammi Lynn's 1971 song, *Mojo Hanna* also retains the eighth note framework in a song which mixes funk, soul blues and gospel. Found on Rhino's "The Roots Of

Funk, Vol ½”*, Mojo Hanna* reflects a funky use of syncopated rhythm guitar. The bass line in the verse remains fundamentally simple with a mixture of quarter and eighth notes:



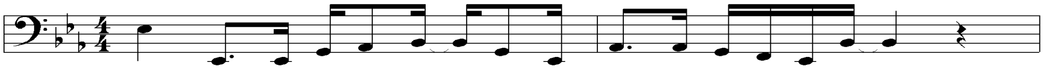
Example 174. *Mojo Hanna*, bass.

Marvin Gaye’s *Inner City Blues (Make Me Want To Holler)* provides an example of a syncopated eighth note bass line:



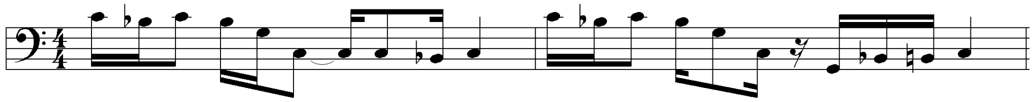
Example 175. *Inner City Blues,* bass.

These examples provide a small sample of the possibilities created by bass players during 1970. They do, however, provide a small representative sample of the kind of eighth note bass lines that circulated in and around the funk style. At the same time that these eighth note patterns were being developed, other performers were beginning to explore the sixteenth-note timeframe on the bass. Examples of sixteenth-note subdivisions include Charles Wright’s, *Express Yourself*:

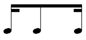


Example 176. *Express Yourself,* bass.

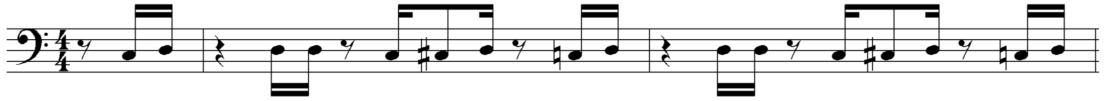
Stewart (2000) sees the change from eighth notes to sixteenth-notes as a fundamental element in establishing early funk. In taking this approach, Stewart neglects a similar, if later, development in the bass guitar as the eighth note patterns subdivides into sixteenth-notes. As the bass and kick drum often work together, it is understandable that bass players would begin to exploit the sixteenth-note patterns explored by proto-funk drummers. By 1970, the sixteenth-note subdivision was a characteristic feature of players such as James Brown bassist, Bernard Odum. After Odum's exit from the James Brown band in 1970, he recorded *Got To Getcha* (1970) with Maceo and The King's Men. The result of this session was a bass line that exploited the sixteenth-note rhythmic subdivision:



Example 177. *Got to Getcha*, bass part.

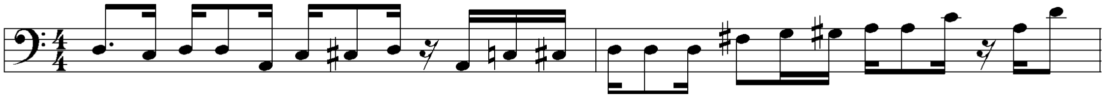
While Larry Graham's slap bass seems to be an isolated, individual contribution, the sixteenth-note subdivision seems to have captured the imagination of several bass players other than Bootsy Collins. The combination of a syncopated sixteenth-note rhythm  ; the use of the minor seventh; arpeggios; octave leaps; and chromatic passing notes are a common feature of the melodic style of the bass at this time. Collin's particular contribution to the performing style of the bass during 1970 is best illustrated by the recording of *Give It Up Or Turnit Loose* (1970).

The original version of *Give It Up* appeared in 1968 and was played by Charles Sherrell and resulted in a highly syncopated, fragmented, sixteenth-note figure:



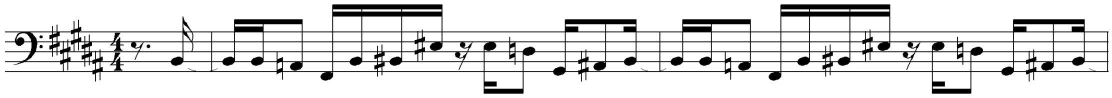
Example 178. *Give it Up or Turn It Loose*, bass.

Give it Up or Turn It Loose (1968) has a similar approach to museme 6 of *Sex Machine* working, as it does, within a narrow intervallic range. The main difference is that Sherrell consistently avoids the first beat of the bar to create a very open texture. Collin's version of *Give It Up Or Turn It Loose,* recorded two years later, replaced the fragmented, open texture of Sherrell with a driving, syncopated sixteenth-note bass riff which emphasised the first beat of the bar and utilised a much wider intervallic range:



Example 179. *Give it Up or Turn it Loose,*1970 bass part.

Although these two bass players used the sixteenth-note figure in their playing a distinct difference in approach emerges which not only reflects the personal style of the performers, but also the way that the bass line begins to lead the rhythm section in Brown's songs by 1970. Collins' approach to performance seems to be much more aggressive perhaps partly because of the absence of a horn section in the 1970s James Brown band. The prominence of the bass could also be explained by Collins' extrovert character. The extrovert quality is a much more difficult discussion to sustain but listening to the music suggests a considerable shift in approach. Sherrell was to play a fuller sixteenth-note bass part on Brown's 1969 song, *Funky Drummer*. Examining the transcript of the song suggests a very different approach to *Give It Up of Turn It Loose* with very little space in the line:



Example 180. ***Funky Drummer,*** **bass.**

Unfortunately, transcriptions do not indicate the sonic effect of the bass part which on *Funky Drummer* is extremely soft and sits in the background. Collins' approach was considerably different and he approached his performances with a drive that led the rhythmic groove. It is this shift in the bass from backing instrument to rhythmic lead that marks a change in approach. Together, Graham and Collins mark a shift in the way that the bass was understood in funk. Traditionally, the bass had laid down the harmonic foundation for a song but now it took on a new role by providing the rhythmic foundation.

By 1972, three influential styles of bass playing had emerged which would continue to develop during the 1970s. The first style is represented by Larry Graham whose innovative style of playing emphasises the rhythmic texture of funk. His ideas would eventually make a larger contribution to the sound of funk from the mid 1970s. A further aspect of funk comes from the combined clavinet and bass guitar arrangement of Stevie Wonder's *Superstition* which emphasises the importance of the bass part in funk.[270] Although *Superstition* is not an instrumental performance style, the combination of bass and clavinet works in much the same way as other parts of the rhythmic lock in funk. The final consolidation in performance style comes from the work of Bootsy Collins. Collins had the possible advantage of being in a stable band environment which performed and recorded extensively during 1970 and 1971. This allowed Collins to consolidate his playing style and in the process, consolidate a particular approach to funk. In their different ways, both Graham and Collins made an important contribution to bass performance not only in their individual playing style, but also in their ability to lead the ensemble from the bass. By foregrounding the bass guitar, they created a situation where the bass became a driving force in funk music.

3.5 Make it Funky: on the one.

The elevation of the bass part to be a leading instrument in the funk ensemble had an additional role in developing the significance of 'the one' into a new rhythmic aesthetic. The linear approach to rhythm which emerged from the collaborative compositional style of funk has been discussed extensively in the context of creating the groove. Part of this new aesthetic has been explained as a rhythmic development which utilised a sixteenth-note rhythmic framework. The variables presented by this rhythmic framework allowed for a wide range of approaches to the funk groove and these possibilities were further extended by differences in the use of tempo, texture, instrumentation, and the personal style of the drummer who would bring his own individual style and attitude to the performance.

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[270] *Superstition* was not the first to use the clavinet bass part, but it was one of the first records to make the sound such an important feature.

Part of the rhythmic approach that developed during this time was to emphasise ‘the one’ which can be understood as a rhythmic reference point normally corresponding to the first beat of the bar. In addition to rhythmic or metrical meaning, ‘the one’ also took on another more metaphorical significance:

> Ultimately, to be “on the one”, the musical performance is not only emphasizing an ancient rhythmic pattern, it is emphasizing the essential openness towards all participants to the groove. Locked, yet fluid, when everything is “on the one”, a harmony among all people is achieved (Vincent, 1995: 37).

Ideas of the one therefore become part of the complex meanings that surround funk and the idea of ‘the one’.

Musically, the idea of the rhythmic counterpoint coming together on the first beat of the bar needs some investigation. As an aesthetic concept it is often traced to James Brown who, it is suggested, emphasised the first beat of the bar as part of his changing approach to rhythm. At first it would appear to be a relatively straightforward process to identify those songs which accentuate the first beat of the bar and compare them

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with other songs which emphasise other beats. The complexity of the situation is that any linear rhythmic approach brings with it a number of levels on which to find rhythmic accent. This layered approach has already been discussed with reference to Earl Palmer and Professor Longhair. To find the one depends on your ability to find and respond to the one.

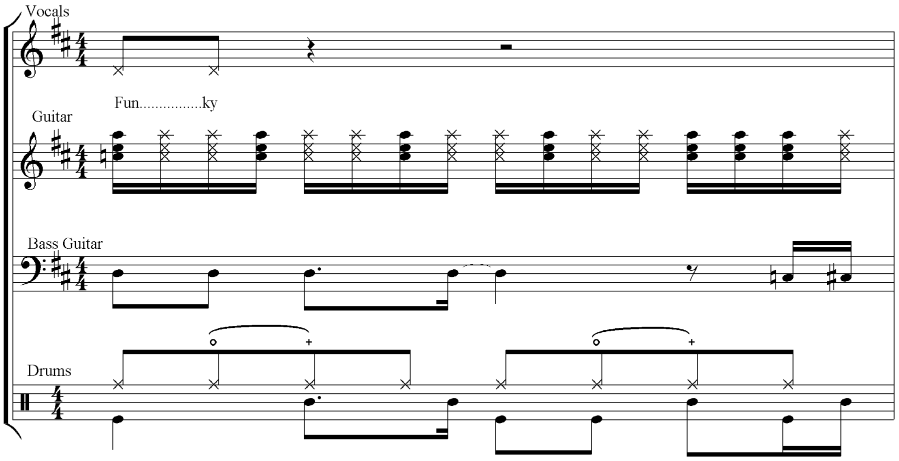
There are a number of James Brown songs that emphasise the first beat of the bar. These songs include:

- 1964 *Out Of Sight* (Emphasised by using stop rhythm on the first beat as well as the bass introduction).
- 1965 *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* (Bass guitar strong on the first beat, strong 2nd beat)
- 1967 *Cold Sweat* (Strong horn emphasis)
- 1969 *Ain't It Funky Now* (Bass)
- 1970 *Sex Machine* (Emphasis in the bass,drums, and guitar).
- 1970 *Super Bad* (Strong Bass with horns or/and guitar).
- 1970 *Give It Up or Turn It Loose*
- 1971 *Soul Power* (bass and drums)
- 1971 *Make it Funky* (Strong, emphatic first beat on bass, drums and guitar).

Aside from Brown, a number of other songs also emphasise the first beat of the bar , including:

- 1966, Lowell Fulsom: *Tramp* (Bass, guitar)
- 1968 Sly Stone: *Dance to the Music* (Sly)
- 1969 The Meters: *Cissy Strut*
- 1969 The Meters: *Look-Ka-Py-Py*
- 1970 Sly Stone: *Thank You Falettinme be Mice Elf Agin*
- 1971 Isaac Hayes: *Theme From Shaft*
- 1971 Jean Knight: *Mr Big Stuff*
- 1971 Marvin Gaye: *Inner City Blues*

From these pieces, a number of general points can be found in the identification of 'the one'. The use of bass guitar, drum and often cymbal all serve to emphasise the first beat of the bar. Other instruments including guitar and horns can be either on the beat or following the beat. The first beat is often emphasised further by singing the vocal part on the first beat of the bar as in Brown's 1971 song, *Make It Funky.* The song begins by Brown counting, 1, 2, 3 and saying 'make it' on the fourth beat before the instruments begin as follows:



Example 181. ***Make it funky.***

With a strong first beat, *Make it Funky* is a good example of 'the one' in action. Key to the success of this particular riff, is the bass guitar part which, with its anacrusic pattern, emphasises the first beat of the bar. This emphasis is made stronger by the elements of the rhythm section combining on the first beat of the bar.

It would be possible to contrast a number of pieces which do not share this characteristic of coming together on the first beat of the bar. Such an exercise would include early pieces such as Booker T and the MGs *Green Onions* (1964) and Wilson Pickett's *In the Midnight Hour* (1965). Such a survey would offer little to the musical identification of funk except to say that there were pieces which audiences moved to in different ways. Adding to the 'not one' list would be a number of proto-funk pieces which have already been discussed. These pieces generally emphasise the backbeat rather than the first beat:

- 1967, Dyke and the Blazers: *Funky Broadway*
- 1967, Wilson Pickett: *Funky Broadway* (backbeat, 2+4 emphasised)
- 1967, Wilson Pickett: *Soul Dance Number Three*
- 1969, The Meters: *Sophisticated Cissy* (backbeat, 2 + 4 on guitar)
- 1968, Archie Bell and the Drells: *Tighten up*
- 1967 Spreadin' Honey Watts 103rd St Rhythm Band
- 1971, Marvin Gaye: *What's going on ?*

The difficulty with such a generalization is that the linear nature of some of these pieces allows for different interpretations of the strong rhythmic beat. However, the emphasis for most of these songs is not on the first beat. The suggestion here is that although the aesthetic of 'the one' was beginning to develop, it had not become a universal feature of funk by the early seventies although many songs were beginning to use this pulse in favour of the backbeat rhythm.

3.6 Music in the mass media: funk and film

Up to this point I have outlined the development of proto-funk during the 1960s and the contributions that individuals made to its progress as an independent genre. While a number of sub-genres were beginning to emerge, the final pieces of the musical jigsaw began to be put into place at the beginning of the seventies with the foregrounding of the bass part in the overall musical texture. For the most part, those pieces which could be identified as funk emerged though the performances and recordings of individuals such as Brown, Stone, Wright, Dyke and Gaye as well as the contributions of bands such as The Meters. By the early seventies, the list of performers had begun to expand as new artists and bands began to make their own contribution to the development of funk.

In general, those artists involved in funk had a number of outlets for their music either in live performance, through record sales, monitored by the charts, or through radio and TV. 1971 saw the development of a new outlet for funk through the film soundtrack when Isaac Hayes recorded the music to *Shaft.* The importance of *Shaft*, along with other Blaxploitation films such as *Superfly* with music by Curtis Mayfield (1972) was to open up the music and culture of funk to a different and more diverse audience not normally reached by live performance, radio, records or TV in America.[271] For Vincent this association of film and funk:

> allowed the artist to explore – and reflect – the diverse moods of the film and thus the diverse moods o*f their people.* Soundtrack albums.. brought the [funk] jams to an audience of millions (Vincent, 1995: 173).

For Vincent, *Shaft* allowed audiences to access a different ‘people’ other than the typically white or stereotypically black people that were normally portrayed in film. There are many aspects to so called ‘blaxploitation movies’ which lie beyond the scope of this study however it seems important to understand that the musical score for the so called blaxploitation film was provided by established funk and soul musicians rather than studio composers. This represented a unique opportunity for composers like Curtis and Hayes to address their music to a different audience as well as providing an opportunity to experiment with other musical styles.

3.6.1 Isaac Hayes: Theme From Shaft (1971)

To illustrate how elements of funk play a part in the music of blaxploitation the following section will focus on the title theme from the film *Shaft.* The discussion will also examine how elements of funk changed to accommodate the needs of the cinematic medium rather than the dance floor. The changes that occur are, it could be argued, a significant point of departure for the style as Hayes responded to his brief to write a theme tune for *Shaft.* The discussion begins with an outline of the main musematic material of the theme followed by a discussion of the theme.

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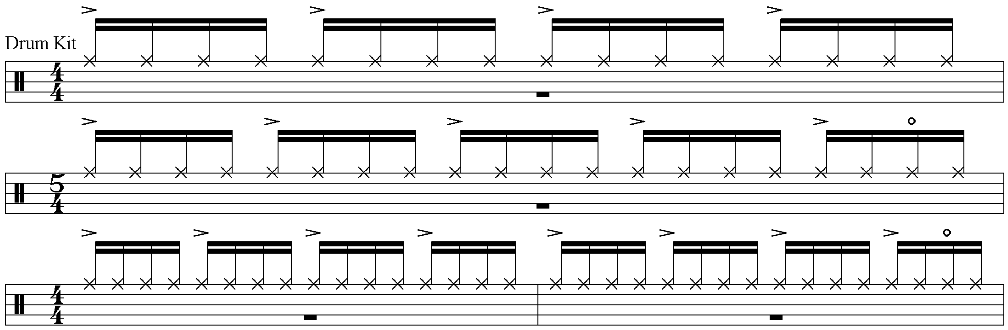
271 There are many examples of what has become known as blaxploitation movies which include soundtracks by a number of funk and soul artists. *Trouble Man,* (Marvin Gaye); *Across 110th Street,* (Bobby Womack); *Black Ceasar,* (James Brown) represent some of the films of this period.

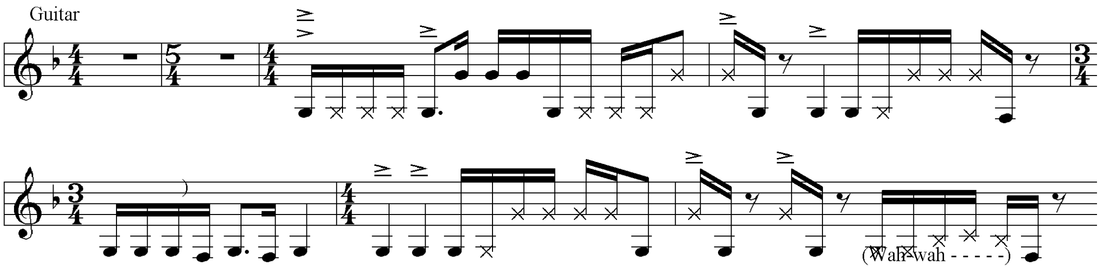
3.6.2 Shaft: table of musemes.[272]

M1: sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern



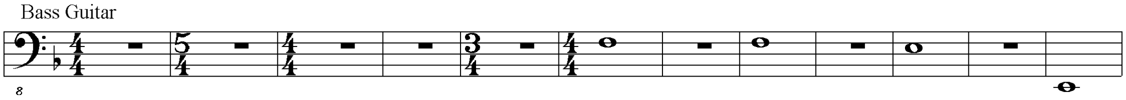
Example 182. *Theme From Shaft*, hi-hat.

M2: Wah-wah guitar


Guitar
(Wah-wah - - - - -)

Example 183. *Theme From Shaft*, wah wah guitar.

M3: Bass guitar


Bass Guitar
8

Example 184. *Theme From Shaft*, bass guitar (opening).

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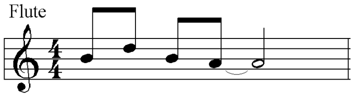
[272] The musemes are based on the album *Shaft* rather than the film soundtrack.

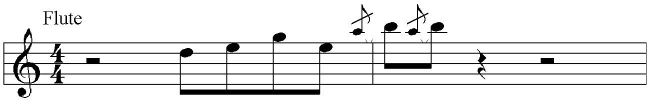
M4: Flute melodic fragments

M4a.



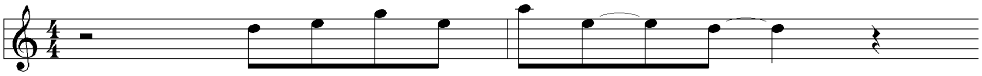
Example 185. ***Theme From Shaft*****, flute (M4a).**

M4b.



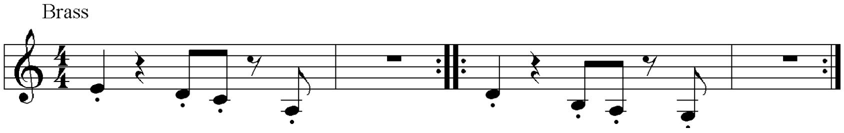
Example 186. ***Theme From Shaft*****, flute (M4b).**

M4c.



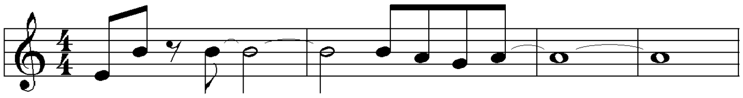
Example 187. ***Theme From Shaft*****, flute (M4c)**

M5: Brass riff



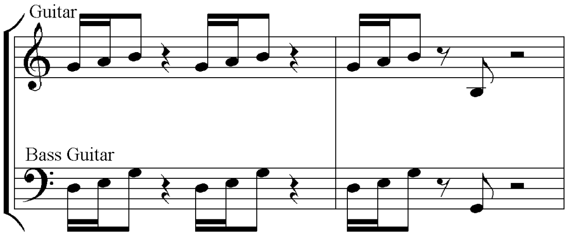
Example 188. ***Theme From Shaft*****, brass.**

M6: horn theme



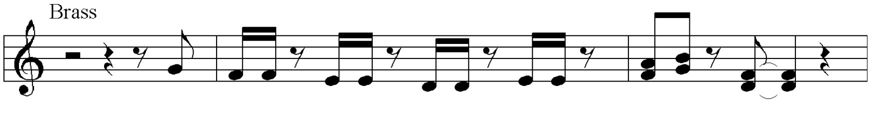
Example 189. ***Theme From Shaft*****, horns.**

Museme 7: Bass and guitar riff



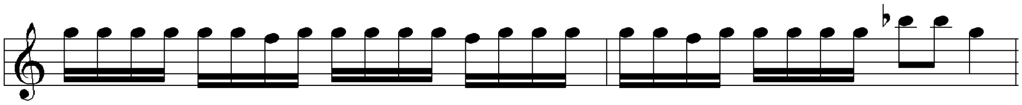
Example 190. ***Theme From Shaft*****, bass and guitar.**

Museme 8: Trumpet theme



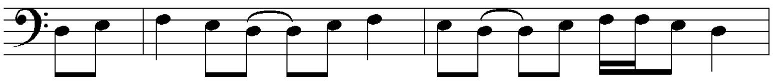
Example 191. ***Theme From Shaft*****, brass.**

Museme 9: Strings and flute



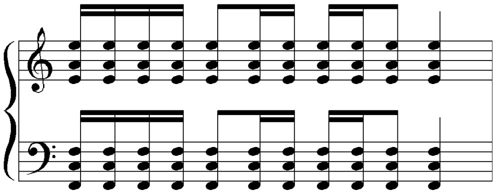
Example 192. ***Theme From Shaft*****, strings.**

Museme 10: Trombone theme



Example 193. ***Theme From Shaft*****, trombone.**

Museme 11: Orchestral chords



Example 194. ***Theme From Shaft*****, orchestral chords.**

3.6.3 Discussion

Isaac Hayes was a staff writer for Stax during the 1960s co-writing hits such as Sam and Dave's *Soul Man*.[273] Hayes's importance as a performer developed in 1969 with the release of *Hot Buttered Soul* (1969) which reflected an increasing trend to move from short, radio format songs to extended compositions. For Stax it demonstrated a willingness to move away from the traditional singles market and develop the album format.[274] The original soundtrack recording for *Shaft* was recorded at the MGM studios with the album version recorded shortly afterwards at Stax.[275]

The majority of pieces used in the soundtrack to *Shaft* were a mixture of soul (*Soulville)*; rock (*Shaft's Cab ride, Be Yourself*); Latin (*Walk from Regio's*, *Café Regio's*); slow ballads (*Ellie's Love Theme*); and blues (*Bumpy's Blues*). The only track to show a significant influence of funk was the title theme, *Theme From Shaft.* The opening section is of the *Theme From Shaft* is, perhaps, the most well known part of the title tune and it is used to introduce the character of John Shaft (Richard Roundtree) as he walks out of the subway and makes his way through the streets.

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[273] More details of the background to *Shaft* and to Isaac Hayes can be found in Bowman, 1977. Bowman's chapter 'Shaft: 1971' provides interesting details on the creation of *Shaft* and the business conditions and marketing strategy that influenced the release of the soundtrack LP.

[274] See Bowman, 1977: 181-185 for further details of *Hot Buttered Soul.* Writing some 35 years after the release of *Hot Buttered Soul* it is interesting to see how the record buying public were still differentiated by race at that time.

Theme From Shaft draws together several features found in the proto-funk including the sixteenth-note hi-hat figure and wah-wah guitar:

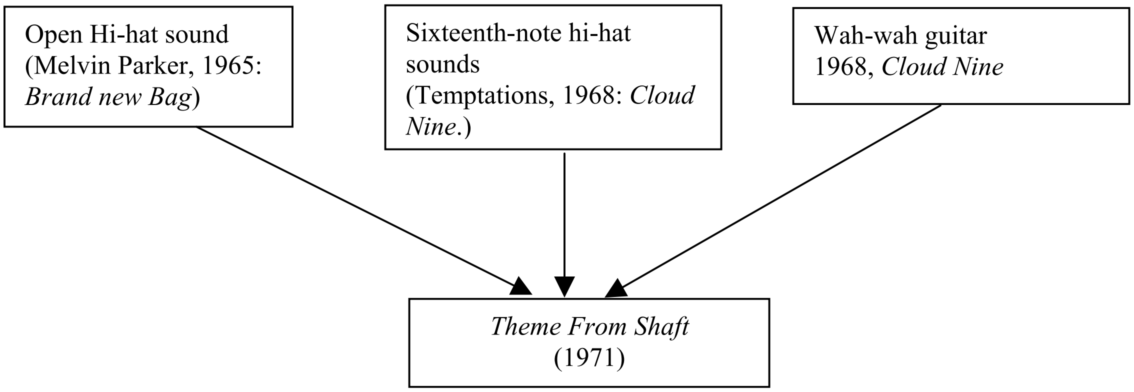
Open Hi-hat sound (Melvin Parker, 1965: *Brand new Bag*)
Sixteenth-note hi-hat sounds (Temptations, 1968: *Cloud Nine.*)
Wah-wah guitar 1968, *Cloud Nine*
Theme From Shaft (1971)

Figure 7. *Theme From Shaft*: influences.

What Hayes was able to do was rework a number of stylistic elements that had, by the early 1970s, become clear style identifiers for funk. The sixteenth-note figure on hi-hat is recognisable as an important element of funk through its association with *Cloud Nine, Sophisticated Cissy* and *Funky Drummer.* The major difference in *Theme From Shaft* to earlier pieces is that the musical focus is on the open-closed hi-hat which is heard throughout the track as a single rhythmic layer rather than as part of a composite drum sound.

The second idea found in the opening to *Theme From Shaft* is the wah-wah guitar which had also acquired an association with funk through its inclusion in *Cloud Nine.*

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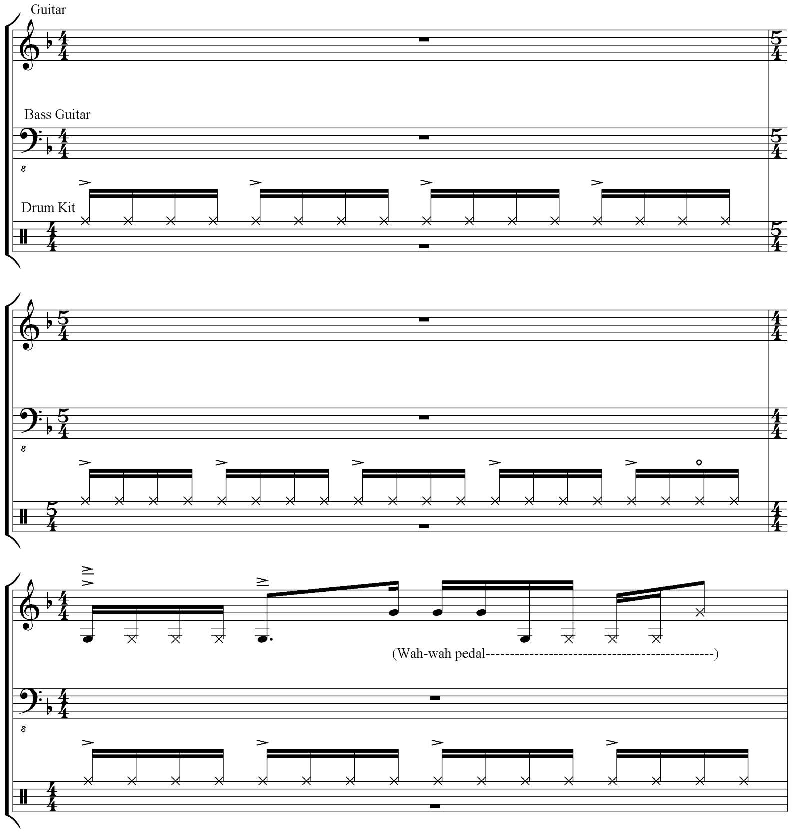
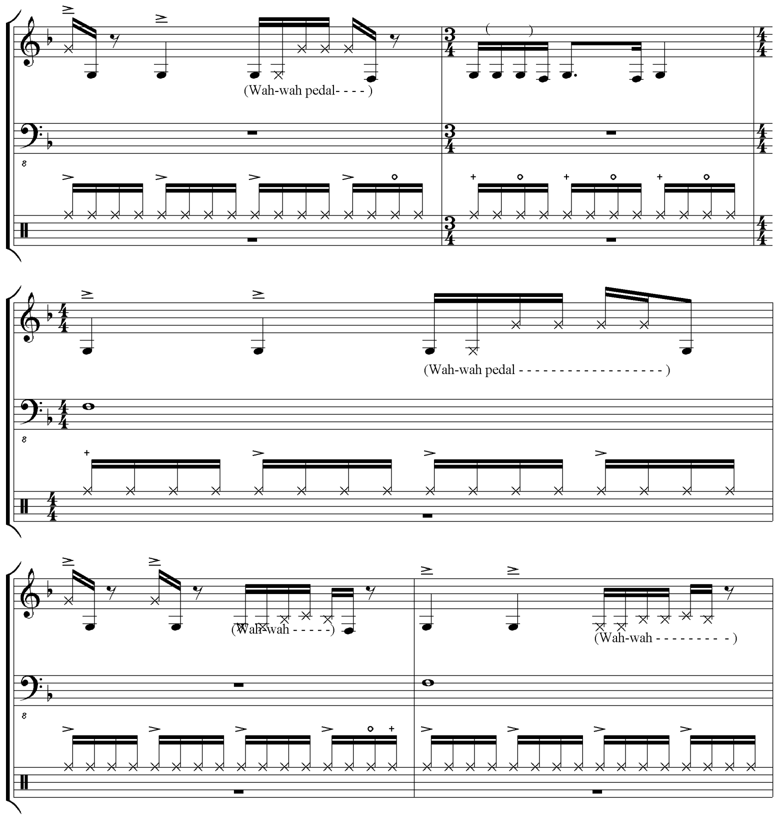
275 The album went to number one in the pop and R&B charts and remained in the pop charts for 60 weeks.

The wah-wah guitar appears hear in the opening bars before a simple, sustained bass sound. This paring of ideas, created a simple, distinctive and original opening theme:


Guitar
Bass Guitar
Drum Kit
(Wah-wah pedal--)


(Wah-wah pedal- - - -)
(Wah-wah pedal - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -)
(Wah-wah - - - - -)
(Wah-wah - - - - - - - - -)

Example 195. *Theme From Shaft*, opening.

The wah-wah guitar was played by guitarist Charles 'Skip' Pitts and was based on an idea that had been worked out for an earlier Hayes song that had never been released. According to Hayes:

> It was just one continuous thing that never went anywhere… When it was time to do the 'Theme,' I was told Shaft was a relentless character, always moving all the time, never stopping. I said, 'Hmm, what can we do? The hi-hat could be the underlying thing but I need some other thing.' I went back and pulled that tape out and said, 'Skip, come here a minute. Play this lick.' He played that lick and it fit so perfectly.[276]

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[276] Quotation is found in Bowman, 1997: 231.

The idea of relentlessness, motion, urgency, excitement, is a subject which has already been discussed extensively in Tagg (1979/2000:229-239) and Tagg and Clarida (2003: 487-498). As the unifying idea of *Theme From Shaft*, the hi-hat idea continues relentlessly from the opening bars with an accent placed on the quarter note beat. Sixteenth-note patterns have been used in film and TV since the 1960s to signify unrest and can be heard in themes such as *Riviera Police* (Laurie Johnson, 1965); *The Green Hornet* (Billy May, 1966), Mission Impossible (Lalo Schifrin, 1966), and *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* (Jerry Goldsmith, 1964).[277] The *Green Hornet* represents its restlessness using the *Flight of the Bumble Bee* (Rimsky-Korsakov, 1901) whereas *Mission Impossible* and *Riviera Police* create unrest using Latin instruments especially the bongo and maracas. *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* contains overtones of the Latin clave 3+3+2 rhythm and the sound of bongos playing sixteenth-notes.

The reiteration of the metallic cymbal in *Shaft* has, in semiotic terms, an iconic association with the sound of a steam train in motion.[278] As a film, Shaft has no particular relationship to trains themselves, but the rhythmic propulsion of the hi-hat sound provides a strong connotation with restless movement, an affect established in many of the TV theme tunes cited as examples. The image of the train representing relentless motion has been an important symbol in many American songs and is especially prevalent in the genre of country music.[279] Different genres have also utilised similar imagery. Lonnie Donegan's *Rock Island Line* (1956), for instance, uses brushes on the snare to suggest trains, [280] and similar use of the snare drum is found in Little Eva's *The Loco-motion* (1962).[281]

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[277] Goldsmiths theme was modified over the years as each series introduced a different arrangement including arrangements by Huge Montenegro.

[278] There are various recordings of steam trains available which demonstrate this similarity. Examples can be found on line at http://www.steamsounds.org.uk/ (audio0509/cd19_146.mp3 and half way through: audio0509/cd19_148.mp3). Alternative sites can be found including http://www.vintagetrains.co.uk. On the internet at least, Americans do not seem to be as well served by recordings of the trains themselves but there does seem to be a fascination with the sound of the railway whistle. What this tells us may be an area for further research.

In semiotic terms, the hi-hat of *Theme From Shaft* may loose its iconic significance, but it retains, through a process of modulation, a feeling of unrest, of movement and of 'going somewhere'. These ideas are all potential referents in discussing the use of hi-hats at this stage in the development of funk. While this has been an extensive digression, it is important to building an etymophony since 'Shaft' is one of the earliest examples of a detective film genre to use funk as an underscore. The film's opening footage of character John Shaft leaving the subway and making his way though traffic congested New York streets added a further layer of signification to the hi-hat sound. While the same sound had been used to propel people on the dance floor, this was the first significant occasion where the sound had been used to mark the directional movement of an on-screen character. Sitting in our seats in the cinema we are unable to move our bodies and instead are invited to 'feel' the movement of the street and of the character which is embodied in the themes' portrayal of restlessness.

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[279] For more details of music connected to the railway, see: http://www.uclan.ac.uk/library/musrail.htm#1960

[280] This song, though probably a good deal older, was twice recorded from groups of convicts in Arkansas during 1934 by John Lomax. The text 'presents a train both impossibly fast and excruciatingly slow. Lomax was almost certainly assisted by Hoddie Ledbetter, who as 'Leadbelly' frequently performed and several times recorded this song between 1937 and 1949.

The convention in film music of the late 1960s was to use Latin rhythms to convey unrest, and propulsive movement was often conveyed by the use of bongos. Hayes's decision not to follow convention may be explained by the fact that unlike many composers involved in writing TV and film themes, Hayes did not come from the world of jazz or big band. Consequently, his symbolic language would be different from more established composers such as Goldberg, Shifrin and May. For Hayes, restlessness and movement was a meaningful characteristic of funk and motoric sixteenth-note hi-hat patterns had been used since the late 1960s. A further explanation for this departure may be explained by considering the cultural situation of 'Shaft' as one of the earliest films to portray a black character in a positive role. 'Shaft' was directed and made by a largely African-American crew and Hayes was able to reflect this cultural shift by creating a musical underscore which reflected the African-American culture of the characters in the film.

There was, by 1970, a growing confidence in the African-American communities in parts of Amercia and, according to Haralambos:

> black mayors were installed in Cleveland, Newark, Washington, D.C., Gary, Indiana, and in the small town of Fayette, Mississippi. An opinion poll conducted in 1970 showed by 41% to 38% that blacks could 'forsee themselves taking real control of their local government in the next few years' (*Time* 6 April 1970: 19). The largely pessimistic 1971 'State of the Cities' report by the National Urban Coalition has one hopeful note, a 'new tough pride, self-confidence and determination' of minority groups to build up their own self-help organisations and reach 'for the levers of power' (Haralambos, 1974: 143).

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[281] Direct links to the train in the funk genre are made by BT Express in their 1975 song, *Express* which uses sixteenth-note hi-hat sounds and recorded train sounds alongside each other.

Haralambos held the view that the political and social improvements were reflected in the music of the time. The rise of Black Power reflected a new confidence or determination and the rise of this political movement coincided with the development of funk.[282] The view that the music reflects something of the society and politics of the time may not be the entire picture, but it remains a persuasive one. If the film *Shaft* reflects something of the situational change that was part of the early 1970s, then it makes sense to consider the *Theme From Shaft* to be part of an articulation of the mood of hopefulness, determination and self-confidence in the African-American community.

The introduction of the wah-wah guitar sound has been discussed as part of the etymophony of 1968 as an important museme in the Temptation's *Cloud Nine*. *Theme From Shaft* brings together the same the hi-hat wah-wah guitar combination. From the analysis sample, this is the only song to have clearly fused these two ideas together since *Cloud Nine.* Hayes had clearly been experimenting with these sounds in his own arrangements but as with many experiments, the move from the studio environment to a widely distributed piece.[283] Just as the slap-bass idea of Graham seemed to take some time to establish itself amongst the wider musical community, so too did the wah-wah as a signifier of the funk style.

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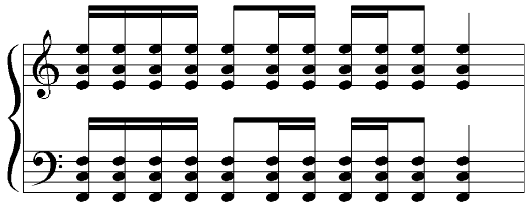
[282] See Haralambos 1974 for a discussion of the decline of the blues and removal of Jim Crow laws and the rise of soul music through the 1960s (1974: 152-6).

[283] Hayes' use of the sixteenth-note pattern in Otis Reading's *Try a Little Tenderness* (1966) has already been discussed.

It seems important to the idea of an etymophony that in Hayes' mind, the wah-wah sound not only belonged to one of his own pieces, but was associated with the guitarist who created the original sound in the STAX studio. This would suggest that the collaborative process discussed as an essential part of the proto-funk, still had its place. The role of the individual cannot be underestimated as specific people act as carriers of specific sounds. While Brown, Stone, Wonder, and Hayes may be the 'face' of funk, behind the scenes, the session musician or band member still plays a significant role in the collective team.

The meanings associated in *Theme From Shaft* are related to restlessness but as Tagg and Clarida (2003) remind us in their analysis of *Sportsnight,* these themes have a variety of meanings for listeners. One of the ideas mentioned as an ITCM is the orchestral chords in Shaft:



Example 196. *Theme From Shaft*, telegraphy idea.

The suggestion is that this idea is related to the telegraphy idea that is discussed as part of their analysis of meaning in *Sportsnight* (1974).[284] Part of this discussion concentrates on the repeated, syncopated note which is, in many ways, similar to the rhythmic character of the wah-wah pedal and emphasised in the use of M11 in *Theme From Shaft*. For the listener, associations with the telegraphy theme suggested 'immediacy, urgency, comprehensiveness and credibility' (Tagg and Clarida, 2003:491). Listeners to *Sportsnight* also created associations with the sounds of the street or city, cars, driving, walking and traffic. Whether all these ideas are present in *Theme From Shaft* would be difficult to determine in the present study, but there seems enough similarity to draw on this research to provide appropriate comparative meanings.

Written in 1974, *Sportsnight* clearly draws on stock ideas that had a currency in the visual media of the time. The urgency of telegraphy was to be replaced in many theme tunes by the more contemporary sounding wah-wah pedal. By the mid seventies, the wah-wah sound was to become a stock sound for the TV detective and its use can be heard in theme tunes of the seventies including: British TV series, *The Sweeney*, (Harry South, 1975); *The New Avengers* (Laurie Johnson, 1976); *The Professionals,* (Laurie Johnson, 1977).[285] The use of wah-wah was also to be heard outside of English speaking TV/film such as *Mark Il Poliziotto* (Stelvio Cipriani, 1975) and *Hum Kisse* (Ram Gopal, 1977).[286] *The Professionals* (1977)*,* contains strong overtones of

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284 *Sportsnight* was broadcast in the 1970s as a late night review of sport. The theme was written by Tony Hatch, 1974. For analysis , see Tagg and Clarida, 2003, chapter 5.

285 A number of arrangements of early theme tunes such as *The Streets of San Francisco* (Patrick Williams, 1972); and *Get Carter* (Roy Budd, 1971) can be heard with wah-wah guitar. In the original arrangements, both these tunes have harpsichord sounds.

286 *Mark Il Poliziotto* is an Italian film and the music can be heard on the original soundtrack as *Bambole di Drouga* (Cinevox). *Hum Kisse* is a Bollywood action movie and more can be heard on the album *Funky Bollywood.* A usful source of albums and film themes, some available as downloadable excerpts, can be heard on <www.moviegrooves.com>.

the *Theme From Shaft,* as it includes fast moving wah-wah guitar and open-closed hi-hat cymbals. The *Professionals* up-tempo theme accompanies a rapidly edited, split screen title sequence containing action shots of the main characters. The popularity of the funk sound and its identity with the street, with movement and its new association with detectives and action seemed assured throughout the 1970s. *Theme From Shaft* had a significant role in creating the link between detectives and the sound of funk. Several Blaxploitation movies that followed *Shaft* including *Across 110th Street* (1972) and *Cleopatra Jones* (1973) contain strong funk ideas including the use of wah-wah.[287] That this link between detective and funk sounds should prove so appealing is partly explained through the relationship between the wah-wah guitar rhythm and telegraphy. The other aspect creating the link was the placement of the wah-wah sound in *Shaft* which, as a successful film, created a strong link between the meanings of funk and the meanings seen in the opening credits of the film. Somewhere at the time of *Shaft,* a new set of codes were created that created new referents linking wah-wah in particular to the detective film/TV genre. The use of wah-wah in 1968 on *Cloud Nine* has no particular link to detective, this association comes much later through the juxtaposition of musical and visual codes which were built on or replaced older, more established meanings.[288]

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[287] Other funk sounds can be heard in these soundtracks including strong clavinette bass lines (*Harlem Clavinette).*

[288] In examples such as the New Avengers, the wah-wah guitar was a later addition and the early episodes used a clean guitar. The vehicle for most of the music mentioned remained largely big-band and orchestral. Laurie Johnson, composer of *The Professionals* was originally an arranger with Ted Heath, a big-band leader during the 60s in the UK. The Latin sounds remained important alongside the wah-wah and hi-hat sounds.

In terms of stylistic development, *Shaft* presents an important moment of departure as a result of the conjuncture between film and music. In one sense, *Theme From Shaft* looses much of the funk aesthetic that was represented by other songs discussed in this study. As a theme tune, Hayes could explore other instrumental resources other than the conventional vocals, horns and rhythm section. However, in removing the instrumental combinations and the voice, Hayes creates a new context for funk. As such, this represents a significant moment of departure but at the same time, it has to be recognised that what was funky in James Brown is not the same sense of funkyness found in *Theme From Shaft.* Hayes was able to frame existing musical ideas to develop new connotative associations and in doing so, he created new meanings for funk music. The association with restlessness, movement and the detective clearly had a resonance with composers and with audiences and over time, funk elements were incorporated into the stock signifying phrases used in the media.

It could be argued that in recycling existing ideas such as the sixteenth hi-hat pattern and the wah-wah guitar, rather than being understood as a point of departure for the funk style, *Theme From Shaft* was a move away from the funk aesthetic and into a new style or genre. While this point may be a subject for further discussion, the creation of *Theme From Shaft* does demonstrate that elements of funk were capable of being absorbed into new musical contexts and, as a consequence, the same elements can develop new meanings. In using funk ideas to signify restlessness and motion, Hayes creates something of a paradox. Where funk was originally used to make the

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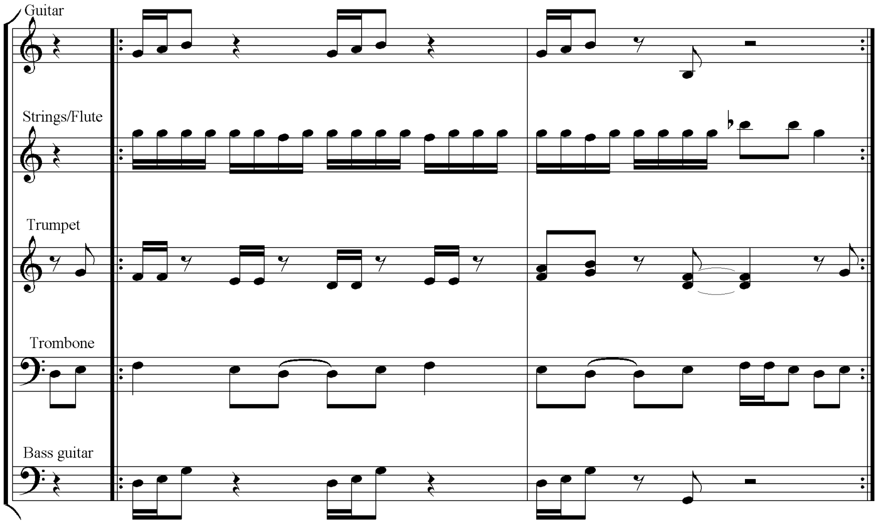
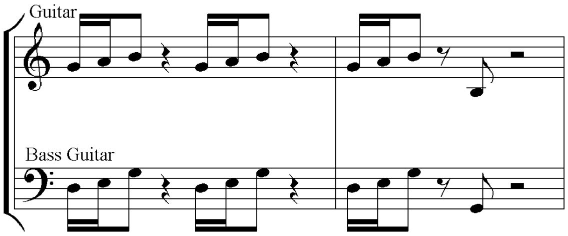
audience move, here it is used to represent movement in others on screen. *Theme From Shaft* represents a subtle, but at the same time dramatic shift in the way that funk ideas were used. Hayes extracted the essential components from funk, reduced the jam to a smaller texture, added the ‘cool’ sound of flutes (M4) and transferred the sense of movement and restlessness from our bodies to the body of the main character of the film. One of the important characteristics of funk was its ability to interpreted and understood by the body through translating sound into movement. By stripping the funk formula down and removing important elements such as the syncopated bass, the voice, the interplay between the different sounds of the kit and the dance floor context, it would be possible to conclude that the ‘raw funk’ expressed in *Funky Broadway* had now been replaced by a tight, mechanical, motoric energy.

Thinking along these lines would suggest that the funk aesthetic could be considered as a continuum between ‘raw’ funk and ‘tight’ rhythms of *Shaft*. The middle section of *Shaft* is constructed around musemes 7, 8, 9 and 10, with most parts falling on the beat and only the trombone adding any syncopation:


Guitar
Strings/Flute
Trumpet
Trombone
Bass guitar

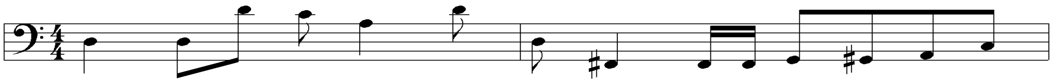
Example 197. *Theme From Shaft*, middle section.

Theme to Shaft appears to adapts the funk aesthetic by removing many of the contrapuntal elements found in the emerging funk style. The bass line in *Shaft* is significantly different to the work of other bass players of the time and consists of one three note rising figure doubled by the guitar:


Guitar
Bass Guitar

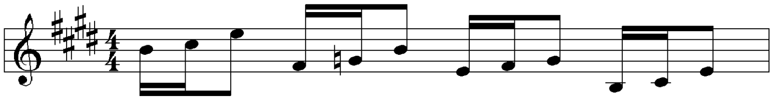
Example 198. *Theme From Shaft,* bass and guitar.

Compared to the bass themes that have been discussed in the period before 1970, the characteristic funk ingredients of octave leap, chromatic passing notes and syncopated rhythms found on *Cold Sweat* are absent:



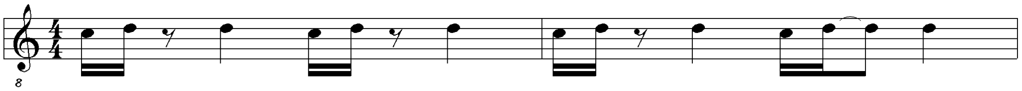
Example 199. ***Cold Sweat,*** **bass.**

While the three note idea is not related to typical bass lines of the period, the sixteenth-note-eighth note figure does appear in other forms. The ascending figure is similar to the guitar introduction to Funky Broadway:



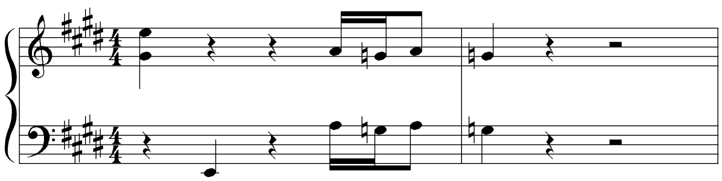
Example 200. ***Funky Broadway,*** **introduction.**

The sixteenth-note pattern was important for developing funk rhythms. The guitar introduction to *Cloud Nine* is a rhythmically syncopated variant of a different fragmented riff using two notes instead of three:



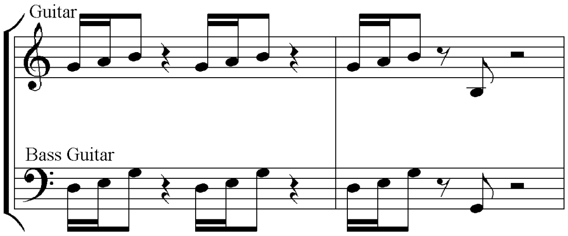
Example 201. ***Cloud Nine,*** **guitar (with wah-wah**).

Other variations of this rhythm are to be found in the horn section of James Brown's *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag:*



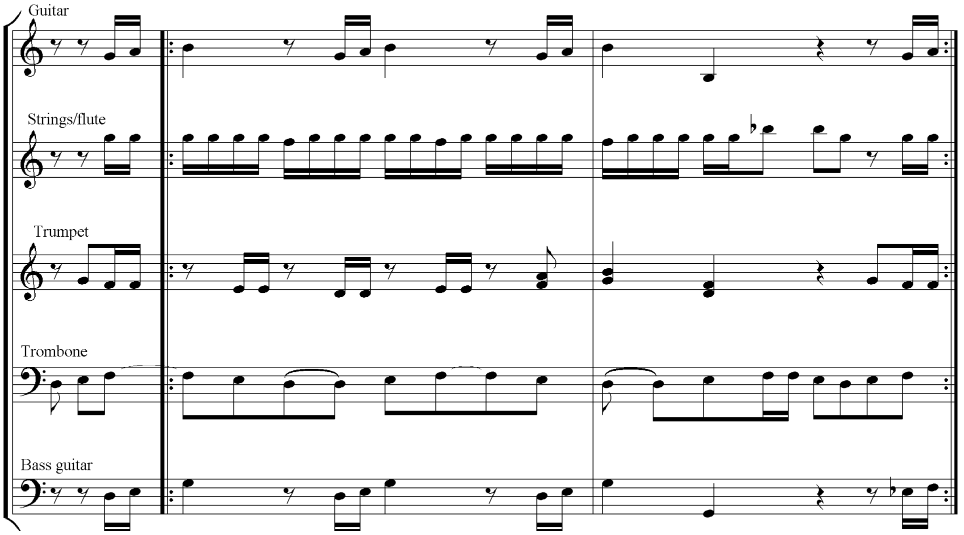
Example 202. ***Papa's Got A Brand New Bag,*** **horn.**

This comparative material suggests that this particular rhythmic figure, linked to a short melodic fragment of two or three notes, was part of the vocabulary of the funk at this time. Unlike *Shaft,* these melodic fragments were juxtaposed against the bass and drums to create a rhythmic counterpoint which has been discussed as the rhythmic lock. By removing music of the textural counterpoint, Hayes simplifies the rhythmic lock by accenting the main beats of the bar. However, listening to the piece reveals an element of ambiguity which Hayes puts in place to create a sense of funk. This effect is demonstrated by examining the guitar and bass riff which is normally considered to fall on the first beat of the bar as follows:



Example 203. *Theme From Shaft,* bass and guitar.

An alternative interpretation of this opening can be created as the short sixteenth notes suggest that the beat is on the longer note:



Example 204. *Theme From Shaft,* middle section with rhythmic offset.

The actual placement of the beat depends on both the listener and on the line that one focuses on. The irregularity created by considering the possibilities of a metrical offset in the bass and guitar creates a substantially different view of the rhythmic texture. The overall effect of this layered riff–based approach retains some of the rhythmic ambiguity that is a feature of earlier funk pieces. However, the rhythmic ambiguity of *Theme From Shaft* appears more measured or restrained than the rhythmic ambiguity created in the rhythmic lock of a song such as *Out Of Sight*.[289] This is not to argue that one type of funk is better than another but comparisions indicate the ability of funk to adapt to new contexts and also to develop stylistically.

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[289] See page 130, example 44.

3.7 New Directions

Although the focus of this chapter has been on those musicians that contribute significantly to establishing funk as a clearly defined genre, it can be seen that the interpretation of funk and the meanings in funk were beginning to diversify. For the purposes of clarity, most of the diversification will be discussed in the next chapter. However, it is worth considering those musicians who were, on a synchronic level, beginning to make an impact on funk. The rationale for excluding these musicians at this stage in the discussion is simply that for the most part, their impact on the sound of funk was made after 1973. Many of these musicians were just beginning their professional careers and as such, had not exerted any significant influence on the wider musical world. Other musicians had not, as yet, begun to use funk extensively.

Some of the artists at this period included established musicians such as those who left the James Brown band in 1970 as part of the walk out. The JBs included all the ex-Brown band and they released a range of music including *The Grunt,* (1970) which continued in a similar trend to much of James Brown's music. Other musicians such as The Temptations and The Meters continued to produce recordings and perform during this period. Their version of funk changes little during these years. Of much more interest are those bands and musicians who, with the benefit of hindsight, were able to exert a significant influence on funk after 1973/4.

These artists include Kool and the Gang, Funkadelic, Parliament, The Temptations, Tower of Power and possibly, groups like The O'Jays who were not primarily funk bands. In addition, bands such as Kool and the Gang were beginning to establish themselves and Earth Wind and Fire were producing soundtracks to *Sweet Sweetbacks Badasss Song*. George Clinton made an important appearance on record with Funkadelic, (1970); *Free Your Mind And Your Ass Will Follow* (1971); and *Maggot Brain* (1971). However, even a cursory listen to an album like "Maggot Brain" will demonstrate that Clinton was following a progressive rock path. Other bands such as Tower of Power were also beginning their careers at this time. This younger generation of new bands would eventually begin to take a leading role in the development of funk as the fortunes of James Brown, Sly Stone and others began to decline. Some of these musicians will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Part 4. Diffusion: The Extended Family 1972-8.

In tracing the development of funk in the early 1970s it has been necessary to take a selective approach and focus on pieces which represent some of the significant changes which were to influence the direction of funk in the 1970s. Whereas the proto-funk was dominated by a performers such as James Brown and the Meters, the seventies saw an increase in the number of bands and artists working with funk. If the early 1970s can be understood both as a consolidations of the funk style and as a time when funk reached a new and wider audience, then the period after 1972 can be seen as a rapid expansion of funk as new bands such as Kool and the Gang, Tower of Power, Parliament, The Ohio Players, and Earth Wind and Fire began to make their mark musically and commercially.

The proliferation of musical styles to emerge in the 1970s has been characterised by Chambers (1985) as an ‘explosion’ as a metaphor for what he understands as a fragmentation of the musical field. Middleton describes the 1970s in similar terminology describing them as a ‘conjunctural tremor’ which marks a distinct situational change or ‘fracture’:

> By the late 1960s, the new social patterns, technologies and musical styles had been substantially assimilated into a reorganized music-industrial system…. directing itself at a series of separate audiences whose distinctness is less subcultural than a creature of market researcher’s consumer profiles. Whether the startling but short-lived explosion of punk rock represented the first sign of a new situational fracture …or the last twitch of the moment of ‘pop culture’… or a less organic, *conjunctural* tremor… is difficult to say (Middleton 1990: 15).

Although Middleton's observation is rooted in rock culture and is culturally quite defined, the general principle of a conjunctural shift seems to provide a useful way to theorise the change that was taking place in funk. For Vincent, the rise of funk 'coincided with the growth a new black identity' (1990:174) which marked a period of 'unparalleled change' in the black community:

> ….with a multitude of converging influences to draw from, black life in America was funky indeed in the early 1970s. A new, integrated world was surrounding blacks everywhere. Change was the operating principle, although not all of the change was for the better (Vincent, 1995: 166).

There are a number of differences between the two views. Middleton's idea is centred on a British rock-pop culture which was distinctly different from American society in the early 70s. However, the principle that music reflects new social patterns and articulates new ideas seems to be important here. The black power movement had now replaced the civil rights movement of the 1960s. One of the principles, laid down by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton was that black people should unite and build a sense of community by recognising their heritage:

> The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1969:58).[290]

While legal segregation may have become a thing of the past in America, Haralambos notes that 'residential segregation increased significantly during the decade 1096-70'

(1974:148). Against this socio-political background comes a significant change way music represented this environment. Songs such as *Say It Loud, I'm Black and Proud* became anthems for the black power movement combining political message with elements of funk. Funk, like soul before it, had become much more than a signifier for a certain kind of music and reflected the new found confidence in black identity. As the number of musicians involved in funk increased the range of musical styles also developed as younger groups began to bring different musical ideas to the funk style. It is here that the musical 'fracture' begins to be noticed as variations to the funk style began to develop.

This chapter will look specifically at the development of funk during the period 1972-1978. A number of stylistic threads become apparent during this period with some music developing elements of the proto-funk with others moving off in new directions as new bands begin to make an impression on the wider musical scene. One last aspect of the era is the integration of funk with other styles of music, particularly jazz through the work of Herbie Hancock.

To represent the change, a revised model of development is required which represents the complexity of change during the seventies. Whereas the model of development first presented in figure 1 was sufficient to describe a chronological development of funk, the proliferation of styles indicate that the genre was developing in a different direction, if, indeed, development is the right term. While the original model was able

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290 Quoted in Haralambos, 174: 141.

to indicate the way that different styles are brought together to form what I have termed a ‘moment of departure’, a more complex model arrives because of the wider range of stylistic developments that can be identified. Rather than a single point of departure where stylistic influences converge, we need to describe the assimulation of other song families and styles within a fluid and dynamic field. In addition, we need to represent the internal stylistic consistencies, relationships and mutations that would affect other song families.

The following model (figure 8) emphasises the non-linear development of funk and expresses the idea that the development of a genre involves multiple activities at the individual, group and genre (holistic) level.

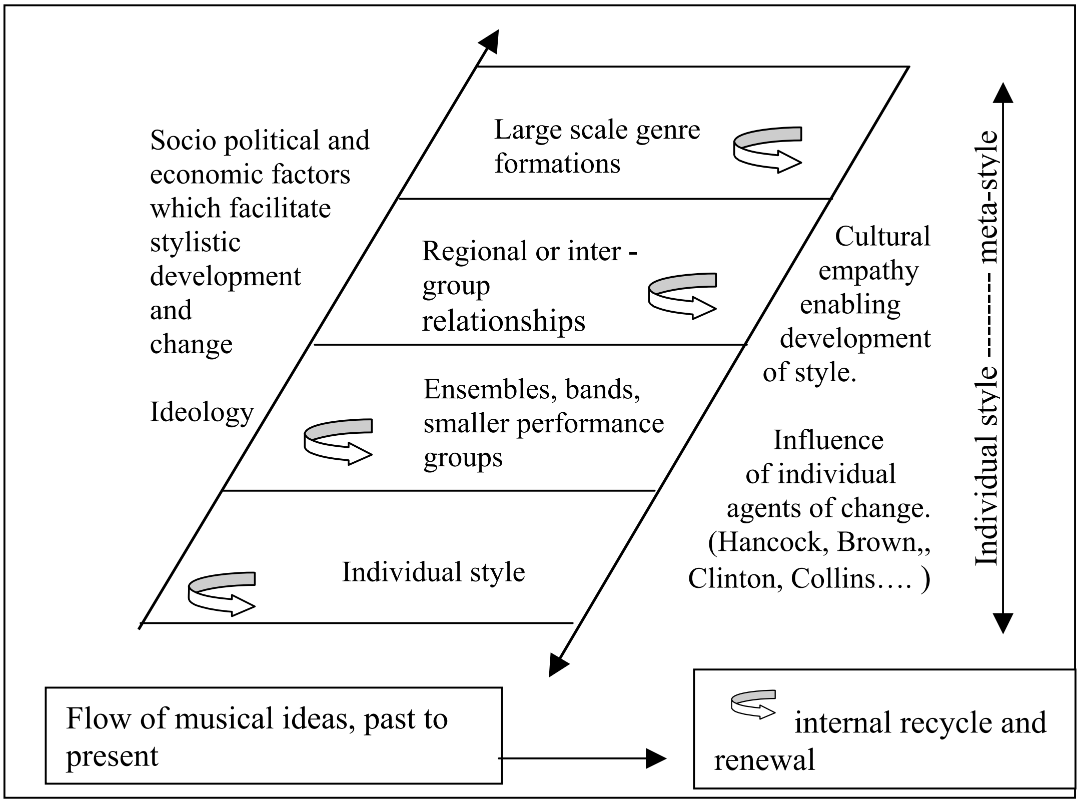
Socio political and economic factors which facilitate stylistic development and change
Ideology
Large scale genre formations
Regional or inter - group relationships
Ensembles, bands, smaller performance groups
Individual style
Cultural empathy enabling development of style.
Influence of individual agents of change. (Hancock, Brown,, Clinton, Collins….)
Individual style -------- meta-style
Flow of musical ideas, past to present
internal recycle and renewal

Figure 8. Model of stylistic development.[291]

Using the off-axis model in Figure 8, it is possible to understand that the flow of musical ideas as a complex field of many interacting layers rather than a simple, one-dimensional linear process. The model also illustrates that the idea of a 'point of departure' could exist at different levels. In this way, the development of individual style could be a point of departure for a group which, in turn, could become a point of departure for understanding a musical style as a genre. These different stages in development are contingent on each other and the intertextual flow of ideas moves across the model. An additional feature of the model is that it considers the socio-political factors that enable and sustain stylistic development as well as the influence of individual musicians on the development of style.

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[291] Figure 1 is taken from Murray Saunders (awaiting publication, 2006) who creates a model of evaluating change from the perspective of social sciences. The model Saunder's develops emphasises the way that ideas are received, adapted, contextualised and developed at an individual and group levels within organisations. At the same time, the model allows for communication occurring between different levels of the organisational structures he is examining.

This diagrammatic representation reiterates my suggestion that the changes in funk at this time represents both a confluence and dissipation of stylistic influences rather than a fragmentation of styles. At this particular stage in the development of funk, we can see a wide range of stylistic interchange which is largely held together by a 'cultural empathy' with the aesthetics of funk. In simple terms the codification of funk in the early 1970s allowed for a more experimental phase in its development.

4.1 Tower of Power: 1973-74

An important theme running through this etymophony is an underlying concept that funk is not static but is constantly modifying. I have argued that by 1970 the genre of funk had been largely established by James Brown and his musicians and the possibilities of funk had been explored and made available to a greater audience by the work of Sly Stone and others. While Brown and Stone may be the agents of change in the musical collective that supported them, the music they created was very much the result of the collaborative contribution made by members of their bands. There are moments where these individual styles fuse in such a way as to create a strong group identity which, at the same time, allows individual voices to stand out of the group style. One particular band that illustrates this point is Tower of Power.

Intitially forming as The Motowns, Tower Of Power underwent a number of personnel changes before recording “East Bay Grease” in 1970. Their importance in this study comes not from the details of their formation, but from considering the musical influences that this collective brought together as a group. By examining their musical influences as individuals we may gain a better understanding of how the sound of Tower of Power developed and how the model described in Figure 8 might be applied beginning with a consideration of individual style. It will not be necessary to investigate every member of Tower of Power as a general appreciation of the stylistic influences of individuals can be drawn from a few case studies.

Emilio Castillo was a saxophonist and band leader of Tower of Power who collaborated closely with baritone saxophonist Steve Krupa to compose pieces such as *Soul Vacation* and *What Is Hip.* Keyboard player Chester Thompson performed soul music as part of a duo before joining the band; drummer David Garibaldi studied with jazz drummer, Chuck Brown; bassist Rocco Prestia was influenced by Motown’s James Jamerson and Chuck Rainey; and saxophonist Lenny Pickett was influenced by jazz saxophonists Sonny Rollins and Junior Walker.[292] According to Garibaldi:

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[292] The information for this section is drawn largely from Garibaldi’s discussion of Tower of Power in Payne (1996).

> Lenny [Pickett] was really typical of the kind of musician that the Bay Area breeds: a lot of jazz influence, funk and all of the world music styles together… The Bay Area is very ethnically diverse (Payne, 1996: 205).

This combination, along with a continually changing band line-up created what Payne describes as 'a powerhouse organisation' combining 'a big band horn section,[293] danceable funk rhythms and soulful, R&B vocals'. That combined with the varied musical interests of the band members itself, along with the regional influences created the defining sound of Tower of Power. Importantly, at least for Garibaldi, was the idea that Tower of Power were a band:

> All of our stuff came from jamming. We were jamming together all the time… we would come up with some kind of weird groove and songs would be built on that, like the "Oakland Stoke." We had that long before we recorded it. We just kept messing around with it as a jam (Payne, 1996: 206).[294]

From these individual music histories, and from the collective way of working, the geographical situation and the cultural context of San Francisco during the late sixties and early seventies combine to create the musical aesthetic of Tower of Power. Given this particular setting, the music of Tower of Power present a singular confluence of musical styles which draw on all the levels illustrated in Figure 8. While the surface image may indeed be fragmentary, these fragments remain connected through a range of individual and dynamic networks both within and outside of the band. Having established the theoretical context of the model in some detail, the next section will consider how this network of interaction is reflected in the music by looking specifically at *Soul Vaccination* (1973) and *What Is Hip?* (1973).

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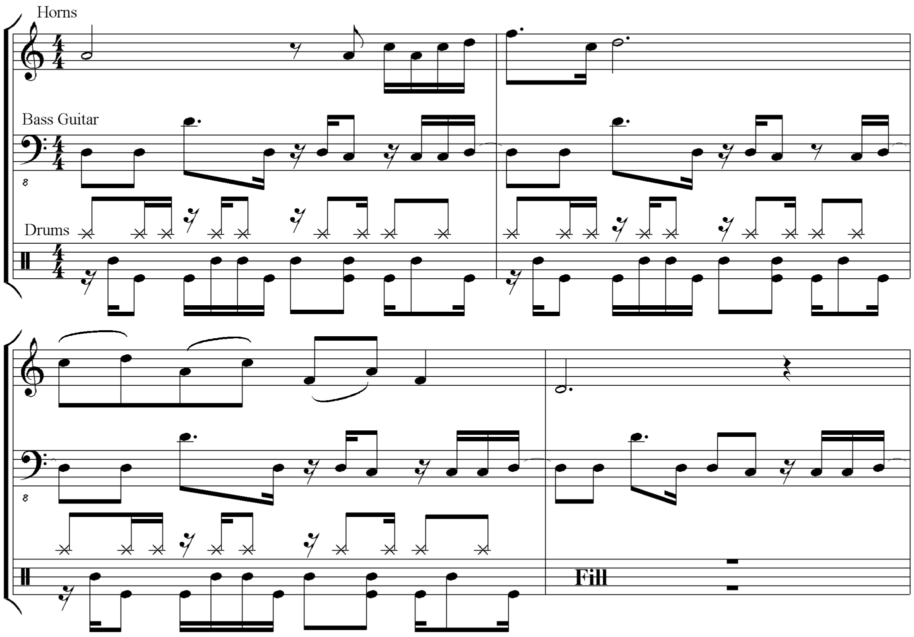
[293] The horn section were also versatile and performed on records with Dionne Warwick, Smokey Robinson, Elton John, and Rod Stewart.

[294] For previous discussion of the importance of social interaction in the band see discussion of hocket in *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag.*

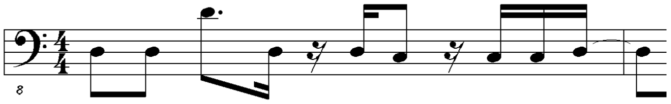
4.1.2 Soul Vaccination and What Is Hip?

By 1973 funk had established itself nationally within the United States but also internationally through the distribution of *Shaft* and the international success of songs such as *Superstition.* Tower of Power are in some ways a pivotal funk group in this process of change releasing their first album "East Bay Grease" in 1970 and "Tower of Power" in 1973. "Tower Of Power" contains the songs *Soul Vaccination* and *What Is Hip?* Lasting almost five minutes, *Soul Vaccination* has a verse chorus construction with extended solos on saxophone and guitar. The main groove is found in the opening of the song and is carried mainly by bass, drums and horns:



Example 205. ***Soul Vaccination*****, museme stack (introduction).**

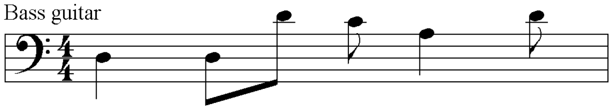
If we consider the opening of *Soul Vaccination* as a museme stack we can isolate a range of musematic material which will allow us to discuss the intertextual relationships embodied in the music. Initially, we will examine the bass guitar which integrates a number of ideas explored by other bass players of the time:



Example 206. ***Soul Vaccination,*** **bass riff.**

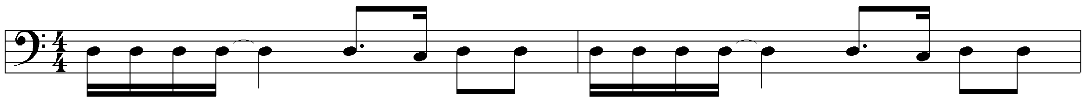
The use of octave leaps, flat sevenths and off-beat syncopated sixteenth-notes has, certainly by 1973, become characteristic of bass style. The intervallic similarities of

Soul Vaccination to the opening of *Cold Sweat* (1967) demonstrates a continuous use of octave leaps and minor sevenths in the style:



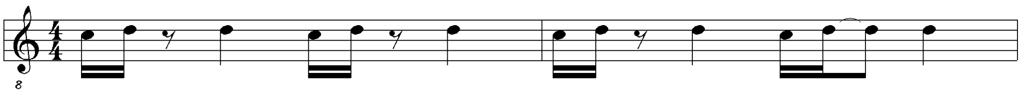
Example 207. *Cold Sweat,* bass riff (bar 1).

Melodically, Tower of Power bassist, Rocco Prestia, seems to be constructing very simple root-seventh patterns and this interest in the root-flat seventh is explored further in the verse of *Soul Vaccination*:



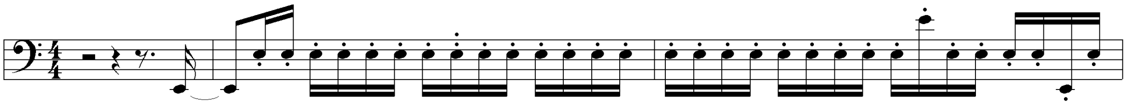
Example 208. *Soul Vaccination*, bass riff, verse.

This melodic simplicity was first discussed as a feature of the guitar introduction to The Temptations 1968 song, *Cloud Nine*:



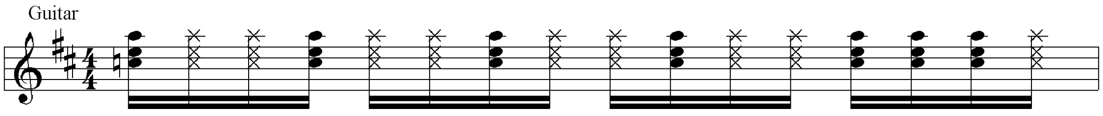
Example 209. *Cloud Nine,* guitar part (with wah-wah).

One of the key differences between the guitar part of *Cloud Nine* and the bass riff of *Soul Vaccination* is that the propulsive element of the wah-wah pedal is replaced by Prestia's use of sixteenth-notes. The use of repeated sixteenth-notes can be understood as an important feature of Prestia's individual style and is a feature he explores further in the bass part to *What Is Hip?* (1973):



Example 210. *What Is Hip?* bass part.

Prestia's approach to bass playing adds a different approach to the performance styles contributed by Graham, Collins and the earlier bass player of the proto-funk. While he clearly draws on elements of funk technique in his use of octave leaps and minor seventh patterns, his major contribution was to focus on the relentless sixteenth-note pattern punctuated by octave leaps. In *Theme From Shaft* (1972) we saw the use of sixteenth-note patterns on the hi-hat as part of a motoric impulse suggesting urgency and energy.[295] The sixteenth-note pattern has also been found in the scratch guitar parts in the turnaround to *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* (1965) and as the underlying rhythmic subdivision in *Make It Funky* (1971):



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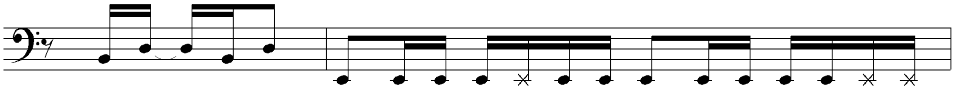
[295] Sixteenth-note figures were also finding their way into rock genres. Led Zepplin's *Whole Lotta Love* (1969) has a strong, propulsive sixteenth-note figure in the bass guitar.

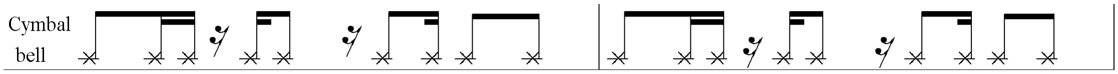


Deep Purple's *My Woman From Tokyo* (1973) begins with a sixteenth-note cymbal pattern reminiscent of *Theme From Shaft* before returning to an eighth note rhythmic groove. Intertextual

Example 211. ***Make It Funky,*** **guitar part.**

The ability to transfer the sixteenth-note propulsive figure between instruments and its arrival in the bass does two things places the motoric rhythm in the lower part of the overall texture instead of, as in *Theme From Shaft,* at the top. The effect is to add a greater drive and propulsion as it is 'felt' to be different. The second effect of this interchange is that with the sixteenth-notes driving in the bass, the other instruments, especially the drums, become free to develop the rhythmic texture.

In *Soul Vaccination,* the opening drum figure contains an off-beat rhythmic figure played on the bell of the cymbal:



Example 212. ***Soul Vaccination,*** **cymbal introduction.**

David Garibaldi discusses some of the rhythmic elements he introduces in his playing and describes the figure (Example 212) as 'the King Kong beat':

> The King Kong beat come from Peter Depoe, the drummer with Redbone. He was a native American from the state of Washington and he played his ride beat on the bell of his cymbal:

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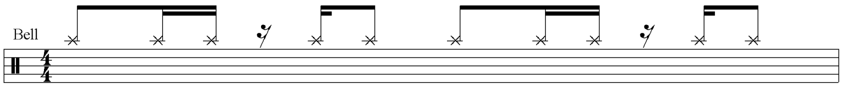
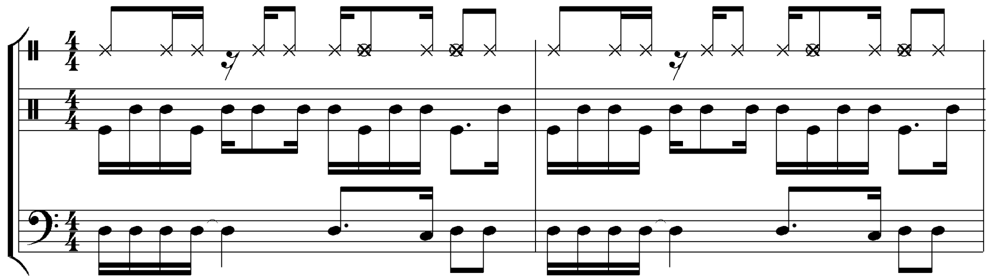
borrowings are possible across both genres and there is clearly further research into wider musical networks, especially those that appear, ideologically at least, quite separate.



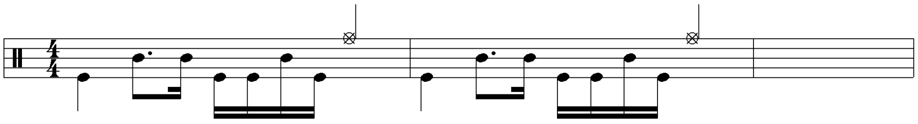
> At the time I didn't really know what it was, but later I learned that it's the same rhythm that's used in Puerto Rican music in the Bomba, the Cuá rhythm. That rhythm came from a song that they did called 'Prehistoric Rhythm' – 'The Prehistoric Rhythm with the King Kong Beat.' (Payne, 1996: 207)

Payne's interview is revealing of the way that Garibaldi developed his rhythmic style. As we found in the drummers of New Orleans, a great deal is learned from other musicians. Garibaldi also cites drummer Rick Marotta and Tony Williams as influences during the 1970s along with Santana percussionist, Armando Peraza other Latin influenced drummers as being important to developing his approach. The 'King Kong' rhythm idea is heard in the verse of *Soul Vaccination* opened out with the hi-hats and combined with a propulsive bass guitar:

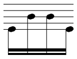
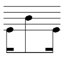


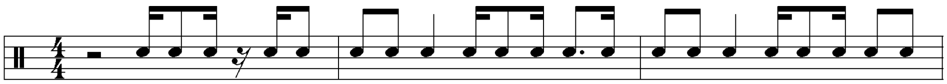
Example 213. *Soul Vaccination*, verse.

The rhythmic elements of this riff contain a number of important features which have been explored by other performers. The sixteenth-note bass-snare figure was used by the Meters in *Sophisticated Cissy* (1968) and was discussed in terms of the street beat transferring from snare to the drum kit:

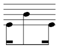


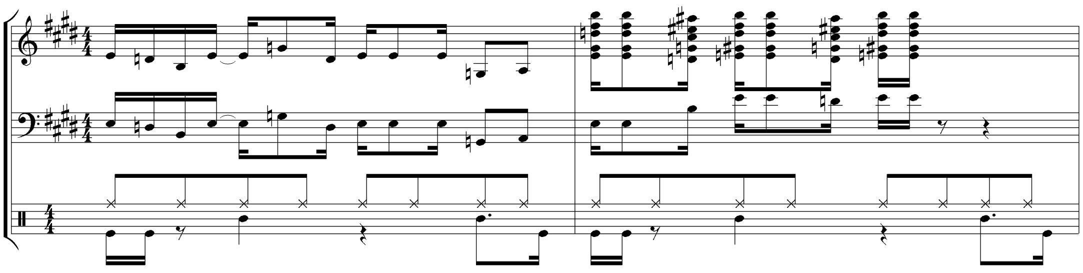
Example 214. *Sophisticated Cissy,* The Meters (1968).[296]

The use of these rhythmic patterns, especially  and  have been identified as an important part of the rhythmic vocabulary in proto-funk pieces such as *Dap Walk* (1972):



Example 215. Earnie and the Top Notes*, Dap Walk.*

The  rhythm is also an important motif in Sly Stone's *Sing a Simple Song*:



Example 216. *Sing A Simple Song*, rhythmic lock.

Garibaldi describes his approach as 'layered sixteenth-notes' which suggests that his vision was to gain a level of technical independence around the sixteenth-note subdivision of the beat:

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[296] Notated for Bass, snare and open hi-hat.

> I wanted to break up all of my limbs. At the time I couldn’t do it. I just had the idea. After I met Pete Depoe and heard Rick Marotta and Bernard Purdie and Tony Williams, I started experimenting on how to break it up so that I could have the sixteenth-note flow without steady 16ths with one hand. The vision I had for it was a much funkier thing than I was doing at the time (Payne, 1996: 207).

Drawing on other artists from the early 70s, Garibaldi’s style of playing is rooted in his present rather than looking back to the proto-funk. Further research would be needed into the etymophony of his influences if we were to attempt some sort of genealogical history. However, a historical journey of this kind may be unnecessary as it may be more important to understand that the basis of the funk style was by the seventies, fully established. Understanding the journey of the sounds and the influence that one drummer has on another seems to be a more important principle. This kind of intertextual activity is on a small scale, but ultimately, as suggested in figure 8, affects the larger whole.

The confidence in using these rhythmic figures and the ease with which the ideas are interchangeable and inter-related in the overall texture of Tower of Power create a different texture to other funk bands. In *Sophisticated Cissy* and *Dap Walk* for instance, the rhythmic device is a focused on one instrument, the ideas are shared out in the texture and become a fundamental element in the overall texture adding to the strong propulsive direction in the music. By taking the sixteenth-note pattern and combining this with the Latin Cuá rhythms, it would appear that Garibaldi had come

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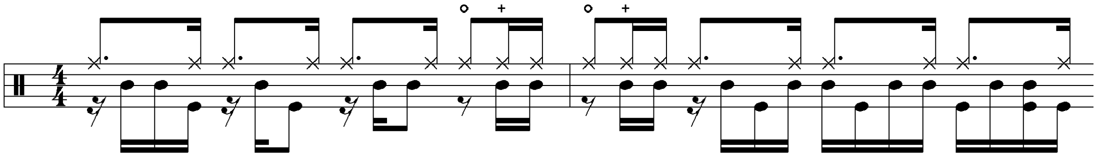
full circle in his own search for funk. Discussion of the New Orleans' street beat by Smith (1994) suggested that the second line or street beat was linked to the Latin clave rhythm and we have seen in early funk, Earl Palmer and Professor Longhair were able to mix together Latin Rhumba with boogie piano and the street beat. In addition to the various musical strands that come together in his playing, Garibaldi adds one more idea which was to, in his terminology, 'play the thing backwards' (Payne, 1996: 208). By this, Garibaldi meant that the snare drum would emphasise the first and third beat with the bass drum on the backbeat:

> I started making up non 2 and 4 beats – 'The Oakland Stroke,' 'Soul Vaccination' and some of the others. These things had their own grooves, and the Oakland/East Bay funk style started to evolve out of that (Payne, 1996: 208).

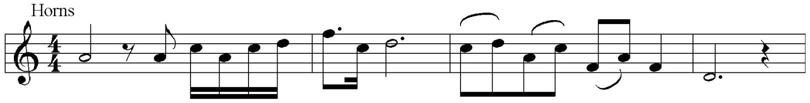
The drum part for *Oakland Stroke* (1974) demonstrates this principle very well where the sixteenth-note distribution over the kit avoids the use of bass and snare on beat:



Example 217. *Oakland Stroke,* drum part.

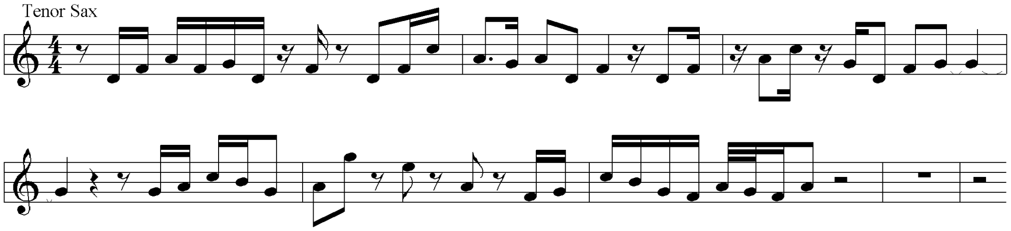
The development of Garibaldi's personal style can be understood in relation to the development model (Figure 8) where intertextual movement moves between the different social groups to form an individual style (Garibaldi's) which translates into the group style (Tower of Power). As a performer within the band and within the wider field of funk, Garibaldi represents an important figure who brings together different musical threads from a variety of styles to fulfil his own vision. This personal network is linked to the network within the band, with each member having a similar personal network, and the band is further linked to a wider network of music.

Intertextual influences can also be found in the horn section of Tower of Power. The opening section of *Soul Vaccination,* for instance, has the following idea based on the dorian mode:



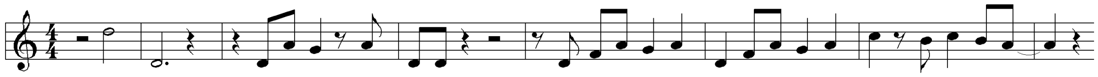
Example 218. ***Soul Vaccination,*** **horn melody.**

Tower of Power's horn section were typical of many funk bands in that the performers were strongly influenced by the jazz tradition. The influence of this tradition can be heard in the tenor saxophone solo of *Soul Vaccination* which revolves around the root, 3, 4 and 5 degree of the D dorian mode:



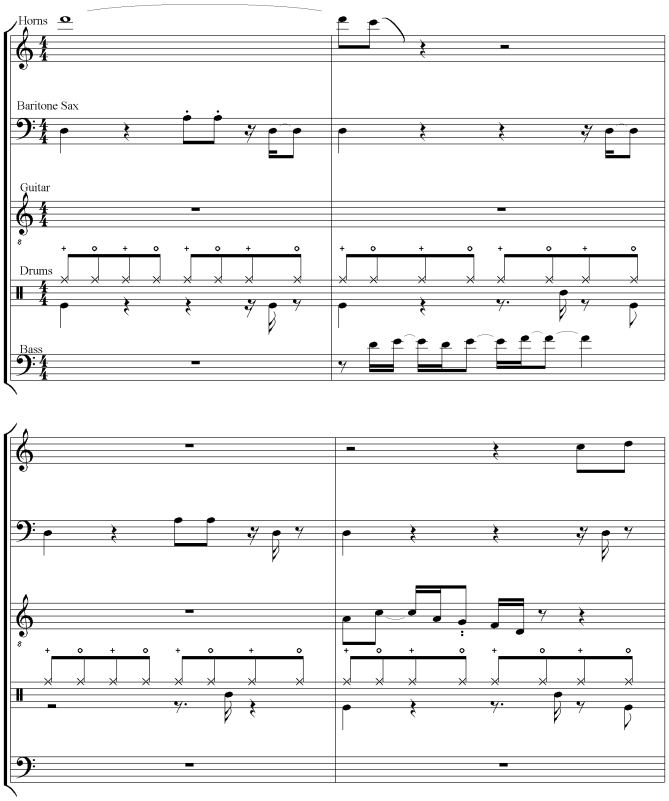
Example 219. ***Soul Vaccination,*** **saxophone solo.**

There are similarities between the opening intervals of the tenor solo (Example 219) and the opening passage to Miles Davis' solo on *So What?* (Example 220). Although the tempo of *So What?* is much slower, there are strong intervallic similarities between the two examples:



Example 220. Miles Davis solo: *So What?*

Other influences in *Soul Vaccination* are also heard in the solo section. After the saxophone solo, a riff section gradually builds up on principles found in the hocket textures of early funk:



Example 221. *Soul Vaccination,* hocket section (2' 55").

The hocket had been seen in *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* and in the Mar-keys' *Grab This Thang.* The retention of hocket clearly remains a feature of the early 1970s and suggests that it had gained some stylistic importance within the genre. The inclusion of this particular texture within the vocabulary of Tower of Power may also say something about the group as a social entity.[297]

Tower of Power present what might be described as an intersection in a complex network of relationships which are socially and culturally defined. At the micro level, the individuals in the band present a convergence of musical ideas and networks and they, in turn, operate on another level between themselves. While at the macro musical level, to follow Chambers and Middleton, there may appear to be an explosion or fracture, this image of splinter and diffusion fails to capture either the convergence of ideas within bands or the process of returning to and reworking earlier ideas. All these different processes work towards defining a genre and will serve as a model for explaining the work of other musical developments during the 1970s.

4.2 Continuing discourse and new directions: the funk moves on.

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[297] See discussion of hocket and social implications in *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag.*

The early years of funk have been represented by a relatively small sample of songs concentrated, at least initially, on artists and bands experimenting with proto-funk. 1970-1973 presented a watershed and a clearer understanding of the funk genre emerged during this time. Although there were stylistic variations, funk began to develop identifiable stylistic features. In addition, through the use of funk in media soundtracks, the genre was distributed on an international scale. As the seventies progressed, new artists and groups emerged bringing their own influences to the already established funk genre. As the popularity of funk grew, the demands for funk music also developed and musicians from outside of the funk tradition working in jazz, rock and dance music, mixing their own musical ideas with those of funk.

To facilitate the discussion of the period, it will be necessary to develop a systematic approach around groups of pieces that can be regarded as 'musical families' with each 'family' sharing some stylistic compatibility. In line with previous samples, the initial selection of songs included in the discussion have been discussed or mentioned in Vincent and Thompson or have been included in funk CD collections. Grouping the list of artists and songs into 'families' has been organised around stylistic traits and combinations following the approach taken by Moore (1993).[298] Moore suggests that, as with other styles, rock 'supports a vast range of labels: progressive rock, stadium rock, classic rock, folk rock, gospel rock, country rock…' (1993:56). Much of this nomenclature comes from journalistic sources which seek to find ways of communicating a rapidly changing field to a specific audience. In essence, the approach acknowledges, albeit in a haphazard and untested way, the way that intertextual practice generates specific genres formations. The approach is not without problems, especially where there is overlap between genres. However, as a way of organising large amounts of musical material, it remains a relatively common approach which can be acknowledged as problematic.

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[298] Musical categories continue to be problematic and have been theorised by Fabbri, (1982, 1999); Toynbee, (2000); and Brackett, (2002) as well as in earlier chapters of this thesis.

Unlike rock, funk does not seem to have acquired the same range of sub-genre recognition in part because of the absence of critical writing on the genre. The following categories are therefore an organisational matter rather than a theoretically tested or critically endorsed division of the musical field. Some categories such as 'jazz-funk' and 'jazz-rock' have developed through existing literature.[299] Others compound terms are used to explain the relationship between soul, rock and disco styles. While in everyday speech about music, these terms may construct a useful codal framework, the framework will not support more detailed discussion of specific bands or individuals. At their best, the broad categories provide a representational framework which embodies a general awareness of stylistic trends but acknowledges the need for other more detailed frameworks to enable discussion at the level of a band or individual musician.[300]

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[299] See Gridley, 1988 and Nicholson, 1998.

[300] The analogy I draw on here is from cartography. The atlas may provide a representational overview but it will not necessarily help to guide us in our journey along footpaths from point a to b. Different scales of maps serve different purposes. An investigation into the history of cartography reveals that we have not always seen the world in the same way with early maps representing little of the geographical detail we have come to expect from today's aerial

In its simplest form, combining stylistic labels as jazz, soul, rock, and pop with funk can create a framework of sub-genres. I have also included a small selection of sub-genres created around political, geographical, ideological or functional boundaries where there is a particular concentration of musical activity around one of these themes. Finally, there is a section which has been described as 'non-funk' which I take to mean songs where elements of the funk style acknowledge an awareness of the hegemonic position of funk during the 1970s but is something of a veneer. As the purpose of these categories is to simply subdivide a larger musical field into something more manageable, little further discussion will be necessary at this stage except to acknowledge the need for further research in this area if we are to effectively discuss wider development of genres like funk.

The categories used as a framework for further discussion are as follows:

1. Proto-funk continuity
2. Jazz-funk
3. Pop-funk
4. Soul-funk
5. Ideological funk: metaphysics and politics

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photographs. The analogy serves a useful purpose to consider the way we map our musical world and the way that representational systems have been redrawn over the years.

In acknowledging the arbitrary nature of this terminology we should acknowledge that behind other arbitrary signs in the linguistic world are numerous other levels which allow us to investigate meaning. Underlying the use of the stylistic, ideological and functional categories created here is an acknowledgement that, as we have seen in the discussion of Tower of Power, a detailed examination of musical structure may not support such all-encompassing terminology. With this proviso in place, the following sections trace the development of these broader musical categories.

4.3 Proto-funk continuity.

A number of bands and musicians active in defining the funk genre during the mid to late 1960s continued to perform into the 1970s. James Brown and musicians such as Maceo Parker continued to make music in the style they had helped to define in the late sixties. The Meters continued to develop their distinct style which drew on New Orleans' traditions. The Bar-Kays continued to play having changed personnel several times and, in the early part of the seventies. Sly Stone remained active in the early seventies as did the Temptations and the Commodores. There were also newer bands such as Funk Inc. and the Average White Band who, although they were newly formed, clearly drew on influences of earlier music from the proto-funk. Table 9 presents a representative selection of pieces which will be used as a basis for considering stylistic changes presented in their music during the mid 1970s.

Proto-funk continuity, representative sample

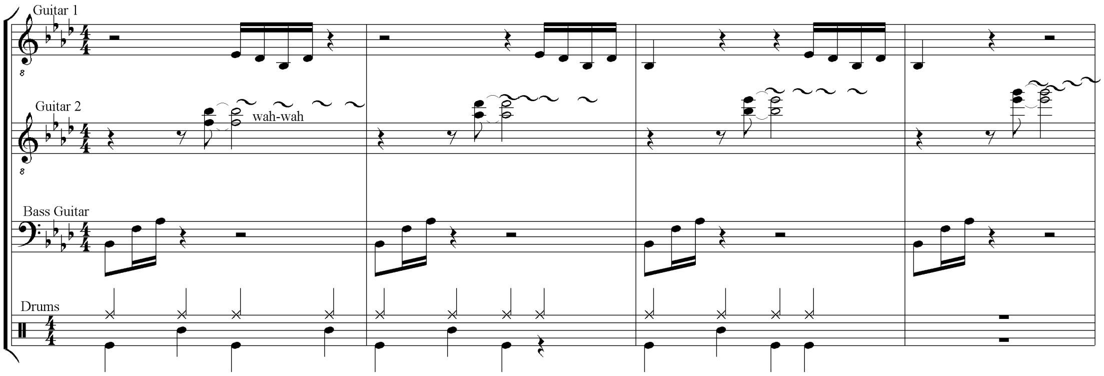
James Brown	*The Payback (bomb)*	1973
Maceo and the Macks	*Soul Power 74*	1974
Lyn Collins	*Think*	1972
The Meters	*Chicken Lickin'* *Hey Pocky A-Way* *People Say*	1972 1974 1974
Sly and the Family Stone	*Loose Booty*	1974
Average White Band	*Pick Up The Pieces*	1975
Bar Kays	*Shake Your Rump To The Funk*	1976
Commodores	*Machine Gun* *I Feel Sanctified*	1974 1974
Temptations	*Shakey Ground*	1975

Table 9. List of analysis pieces: continuity and renewal.

4.3.1 The Payback.

The Payback (1974) was commissioned for a film of the same title but, at the last minute, the piece was rejected by the studio. Brown released the music as an album from which *The Payback* was the title track. A drum and bass pattern with wah-wah guitar forms the basis for the introduction:

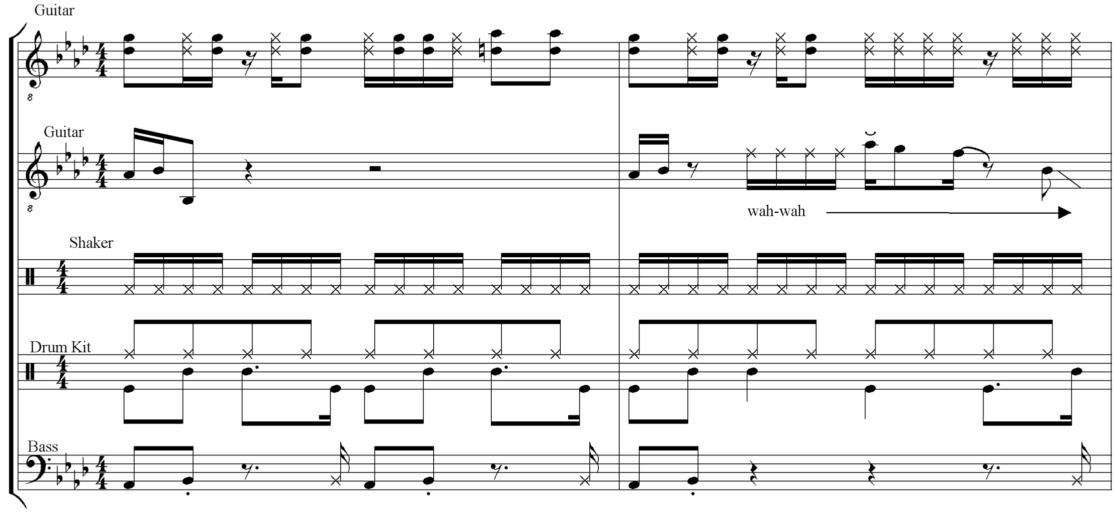
MS1: Introduction



Example 222. *The Payback,* museme stack (introduction).

The verse of *The Payback* has three main elements in the museme stack which forms the riff and includes the guitar, bass and drums. The guitar has a sixteenth-note pattern using muted notes:

MS2: Verse

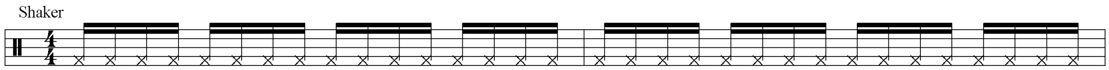


Example 223. *The Payback,* verse.

Discussion.

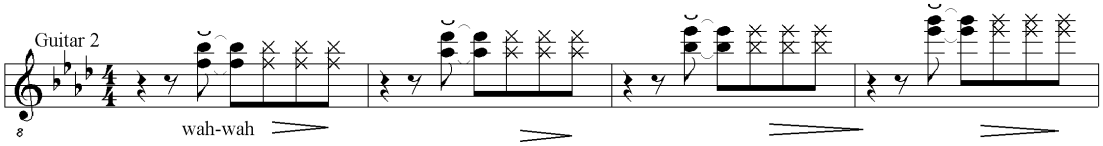
The Payback is an interesting work from both an anecdotal and musical point of view. Anecdotally, the music was rejected as the theme tune for the film because the studio did not think it was funky enough. The irony here is that Brown was not only responsible for generating a consistent approach to the proto-funk during the 1960s, but also that *The Payback* became a major commercial hit for Brown and topped the rhythm ’n’ blues charts shortly after its release.

Musically, *The Payback* highlights features of the style we have seen in earlier Brown songs but, at the same time, also shows him to be working in new directions. *The Payback* included two new instrumental timbres to the so called 'James Brown sound'. The first is the shaker pattern which keeps a sixteenth-note pattern throughout the song:



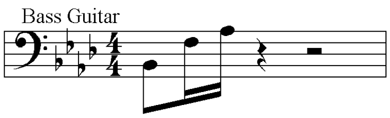
Example 224. *The Payback,* shaker rhythm.

The second timbre introduced in Brown's music was the wah-wah guitar which is a feature of the introduction to the song:



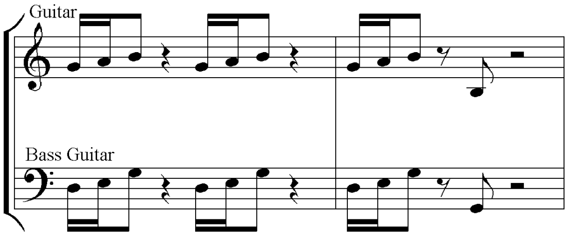
Example 225. *The Payback,* guitar introduction.

Unlike the use of wah-wah in *Theme From Shaft,* Brown's use is quite measured and heard as an eighth note rhythmic pattern. Underpinning this idea is a simple bass line and simple drum part that retains little of the rhythmic syncopations found in earlier songs such as *Cold Sweat* and *Sex Machine*:



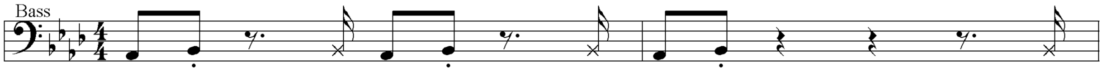
Example 226. *The Payback,* bass introduction.

The bass pattern with its repetitive rhythm displays some similarity to the bass line from *Theme From Shaft,* even thought the rhythm has been inverted:



Example 227. ***Shaft,*** **bass and guitar riff, middle section.**

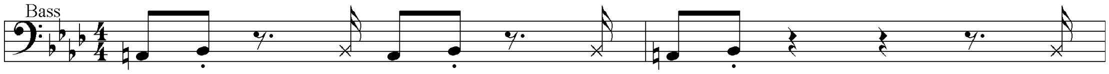
The Payback may have adopted some of these features as a result of Brown's commission to produce the theme music for a film. It is possible that s signifiers such as wah-wah guitar, established by Hayes in 1971, were now too embedded in the funk style to be ignored. However, Brown is not content to simply copy the ideas of others and in the verse, a number of new ideas are presented including a simple bass part:



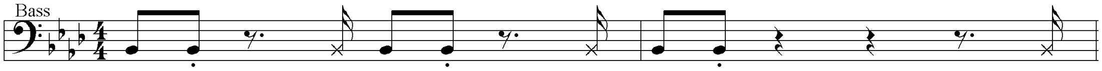
Example 228. ***The Payback,*** **bass riff.**

Although quite repetitive, the bass part provides considerable propulsion to the piece with the A♭ seventh of the scale on the beat adding to the motion of the groove as it leads onto the B♭ tonic. The effect of this particular melodic device can be best understood by comparing it with a number of hypothetical substitutions labelled a, b, c, and d:

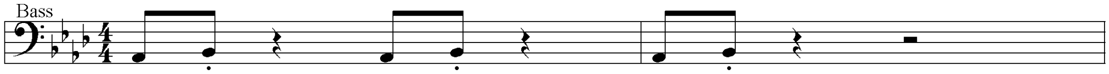
a, (raised seventh)



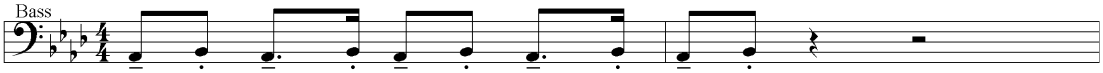
b, (pedal)



c, (no ‘push’ note)



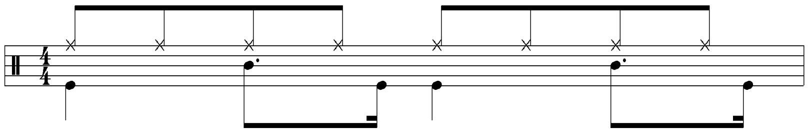
d, (change in rhythmic pattern)



Example 229. *The payback,* hypothetical substitutions.

In hypothetical substitution a, (HSa) a raised seventh replaces the original A♭, and as a consequence, the line changes modality even though the rhythmic propulsion is retained. The shift in modality is a subtle one but would have an implication for the overall harmony moving it from B♭^{7} to a major 7th chord. HSb, is perhaps more obvious a change as without the tension of the A♭ the harmonic tension and release effect of the A♭ moving to the tonic B♭ is absent. Although rhythmically the propulsive characteristics remain the same, the directional affect is lost. In HSc, the absence of the sixteenth-note means that the rhythmic character of the riff is lost even though the melodic character remains largely unaltered. Without the sixteenth-note ‘push’, the rhythm not only looses some of its motoric quality, the flat seventh note looses some of its tension because the B♭ is not anticipated. As a consequence, the same sense of movement away and return to B♭ is lost. The final substitution, HSd, changes the character of the piece altogether as without the space created by the rests, the melodic emphasis moves from beats one and three to the first beat of the second bar where the build of momentum temporarily comes to rest.

By removing aspects of this apparently simple bass line, we begin to appreciate how its motoric and emotional effect are created through melodic and rhythmic tension and release mechanisms. What at first may seem an inconsequential musical figure is of significance in terms of the overall groove. From a different viewpoint, Slutsky and Silverman suggest that there is a keen awareness of the relationship between bass guitar and kick drum with the instrumentalists working together to accentuate this rhythmically propulsive pattern:



Example 230. ***The Payback,*** **drums (verse).**

Slutsky and Silverman refer to the ‘street’ simplicity” of the bass-drum pattern but remind us that the rhythm follows the important principle found in earlier Brown pieces by taking the emphasis away from the backbeat.[301] In this way, the almost amateur ‘street’ sound of this pattern can be understood as a distillation of some of the most important aspects of Brown’s style. This simplicity can be clearly seen in relation to a song such as *Cold Sweat,* which contains a similar semiquaver anticipation to *The Payback* but makes greater use of syncopation. *Cold Sweat* also makes use of additional textural layers from the open hi-hat sound:

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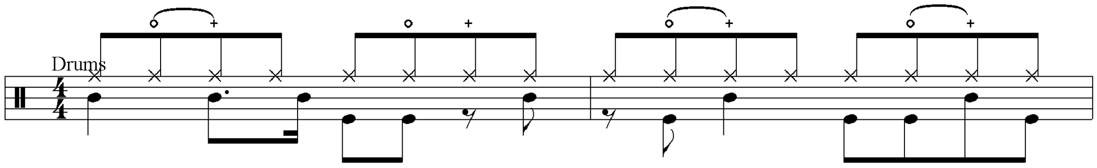
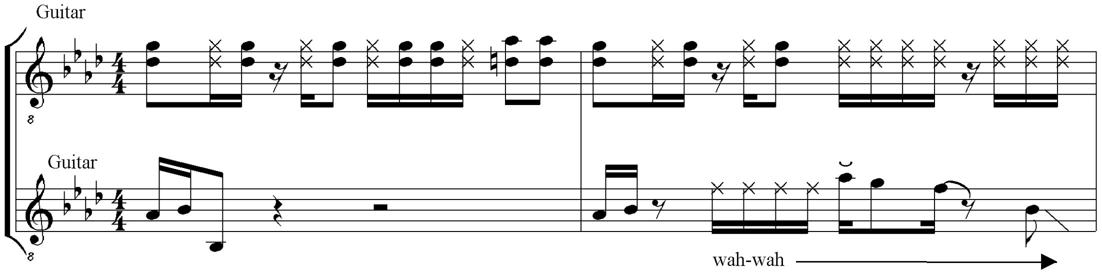
[301] The idea of ‘street’ as a qualifier for ‘street simplicity’ is a confusing but recurrent term in funk and other dance music. For further discussion of notions of the street, see the epilogue to this thesis.



Example 231. *Cold Sweat,* drum riff (verse).

While the drums and bass are relatively simple, the rhythmic interest lies in Brown’s use of guitars. The opening wah-wah is based on eighth notes subdivision which becomes a sixteenth-note subdivision in the verse. The overall effect is created by two guitars providing a strong, syncopated sixteenth-note composite rhythm:



Example 232. *The Payback (verse),* guitars.

The creation of *The Payback* was, according to Fred Wesley, a ‘rush job’ where long term members of the James Brown band took their cues from Brown’s humming:

> That dynamic guitar sound was Jimmy Nolen's creation, based on James' humming. Those famous horn riffs are actually the wrong notes. And James…vocal was completely spontaneous. But Jabo (Starks…) played such a solid beat it made everything else work (Vincent, 1996:84).

Brown continued to create his music using the process of the collective jam. The social interaction necessary for this to be effective has been discussed extensively in the discussion of *Brand New Bag* where the process of refinement was an important consideration in the collective compositional process. The speed in which *The Payback* was produced clearly had an impact on the normal process. Some of the stylistic characteristics such as the simplistic drum part, may therefore have been the result of necessity to meet deadlines rather than any considered development of the funk vocabulary. However, the speed at which the song was produced demonstrate the clear understanding of what was required in a funk song. The song also demonstrates how the musical vocabulary of Brown's musicians had begun to assimilate new musical ideas like the wah-wah guitar effect and introduce them as part of the group style.

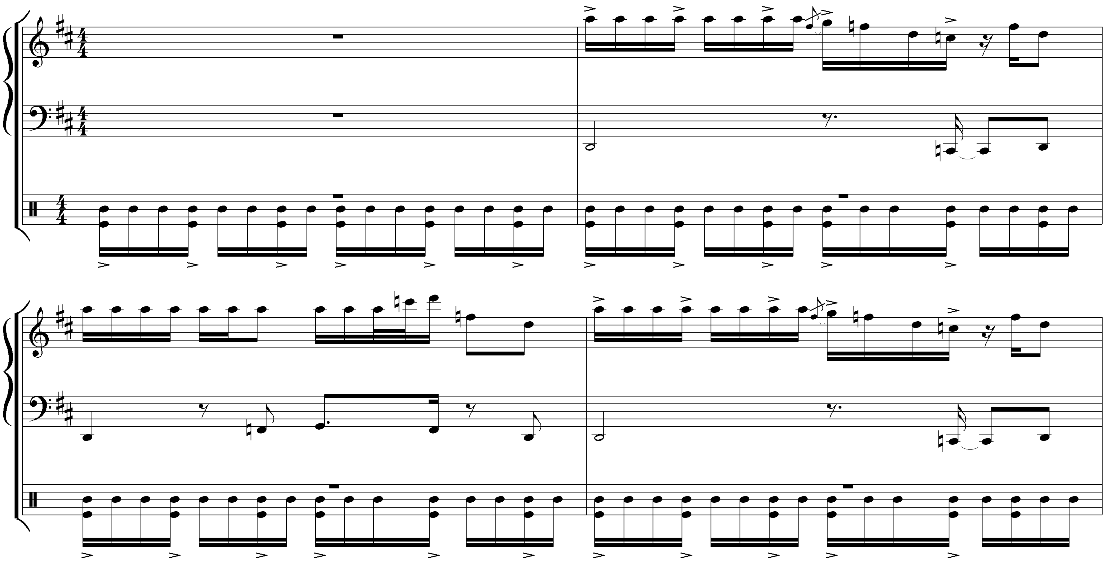
Vincent (1996) suggests that 1973 was the year that Brown's personal life was beginning to suffer from personal pressures, including the loss of his son, and professional pressures from the accusation that Brown owed over 4 million US dollars in tax. Some of the spontaneity of the words may actually reflect some the feelings Brown had when he sings of 'revenge' and makes claims such as 'I'm mad!' and 'I'm gonna fight'.

While the exact meaning of the lyrics are open to speculation, what is more certain is that “The Payback” was to mark the end of an era for Brown. The following year, 1974, saw the release of *Papa Don’t Take no Mess* and the album “Hell” but after this point he would not enjoy the same level of success he had in earlier years. However, *The Payback* also marks the increasing popularity and independence that individual musicians such as Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker and the JBs had acquired following the split from Brown in 1970. The JBs had been backing singers such as Lynn Collins since the early seventies on songs such as *Think* (1972) and *Mama Feelgood* from the film *Black Caesar*(1973). The JBs released a number of songs including *Soul Power 74* (Maceo and the Macks) . By 1975 Parker and Wesley had left Brown and joined George Clinton and the P-Funk collective demonstrating once again the way that individual musicians were able to adapt their musical style to different circumstances.

4.3.2 The Meters, *Hey Pocky-Way*

The Meters continued to release records into the seventies and, in addition to their own work, they were in demand as studio musicians for artists such as Robert Palmer, Dr. John, Paul McCartney and Labelle.[302] In 1974, The Meters released the album “Rejuvenation” which is described by Thompson (2001: 168) as being ‘the funkiest, fieriest of all Meters albums, undented by either time or familiarity’. Structurally, *Hey Pocky-Way* breaks down into a number of sections including introduction, verse, and middle eight. The following analysis will concern itself with stylistic elements of the song in order to examine how The Meters had progressed during the 1970s.

The opening section of *Hey Pocka-Way* begins with snare, bass drum and piano:



Example 233. ***Hey Pocky Way,* (introduction).**

The opening demonstrates the continued commitment to the sound of the snare drum that has already been discussed as part of the New Orleans' street beat. Rhythmically, the snare sound the accented beats form a distinct 3 + 3 + 2 clave rhythm but in a sixteenth-note timeframe rather than the more conventional eighth notes originally examined in Longhair's *Mardi Gras Mambo*:

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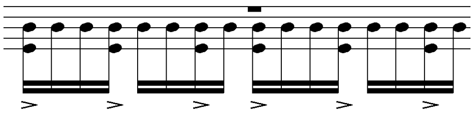
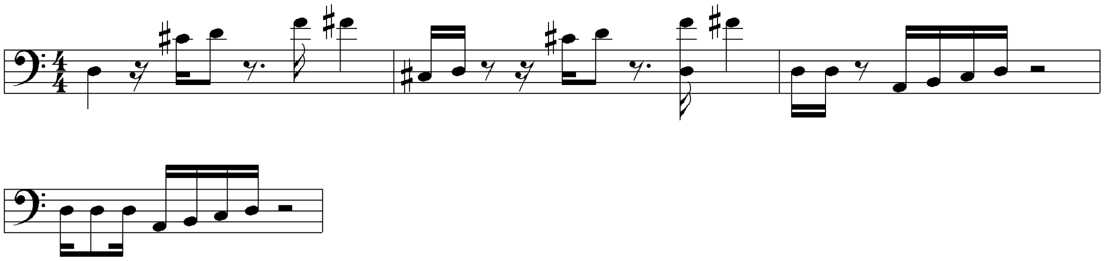
[302] Labelle's *Lady Marmalade* was an international hit in 1974.



Example 234. ***Hey Pocky Way,*** **drum rhythm.**

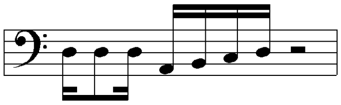
The accented rhythm provides a different feel or groove to the propulsive force of even sixteenth-notes and the 3 + 3 + 2 rhythm is a strong reminder of the importance that these Latin rhythms had on the early proto-funk pieces which came from New Orleans. In addition to these features, the opening section features the sound of the piano playing the same rhythmic idea as the drums with the occasional addition of a grace note or arpeggio figure (bar 3).

Following this New Orleans style introduction, the song beds down into a strong groove supported by a syncopated bass line:



Example 235. ***Hey Pocka-Way*****, bass (verse).**

The main part of the riff comes from the last bar of the bass line which contains the syncopated sixteenth-note rhythmic figure previously identified with the New Orleans street beat:



Example 236. ***Hey Pocka-Way,*** **bass riff.**

Added to this riff are a number of other layers including muted guitar, horns and Latin percussion that gradually build into a dense linear style of playing. The middle section comprises of sixteen bars of Latin percussion. This part perhaps more than any other in the song, reflects the Mardi Gras image. The words before this section call, "Big Chief, Smart Boy, Uptown Ruler" all of which could easily refer to the Mardi Gras Indians who would play percussion and greet other Indian tribes with calls and shouts.[303]

The Meters did not enter a stylistic cul-de-sac but instead demonstrated their ability to retain their strong New Orleans identity thought their use of the street beat sound, the clave rhythm and references to the Mardi Gras culture which was important to them since the early 1970s when they set chants such as *Look-Ka Py Py* (1969). At the same time, the *Rejuvination* album demonstrated their exploration of contemporary wah-wah sounds on songs such as *People Say* (1974). The Meters had always been a versatile band since their early days playing their own music and contributing to others. They remained influential and during 1975-6 joined the Rolling Stones on Tour in North America and Europe suggesting that funk had repositioned its audience during the mid 1970s. The popularity of the group, at least commercially began to wane during the latter part of the seventies and the band split in 1978.

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[303] Lucas (2002) reports that similar greetings are part of the ceremonial activities of Afro-Brazilian religious groups that take part in brotherhoods of Our Lady of the Rosary and in their festivals - Congado - in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Groups from different brotherhoods meet in a parade but retain their identity by holding their musical rhythms constant. Vocal exchanges and calls are part of this ritual. The variation procedures in the rhythmic patterns are related to the function of each group, to the time space of performance and to the hierarchy holding of them by force of the legend behind the rituals.

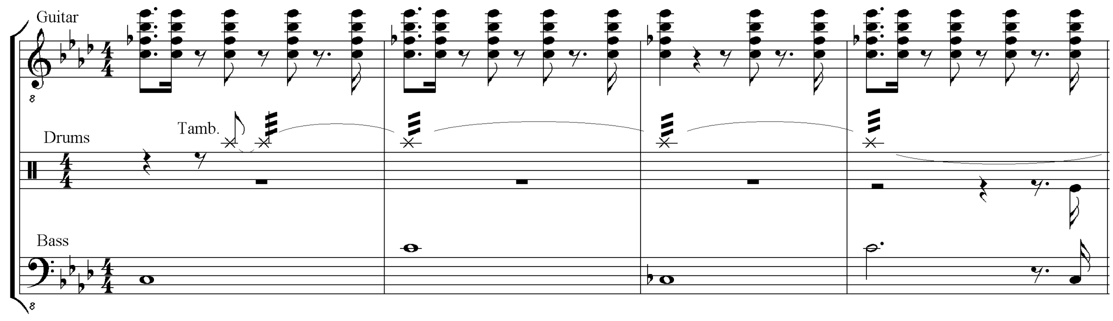
4.3.3 Pick Up the Pieces (1972)

The Average White Band (AWB) formed in 1972 in the United Kingdom with the intention of covering rhythm ’n’ blues bands like Booker T. and the MGs and The Funk Brothers. The band were signed by Atlantic in 1972 and recorded *Pick Up the Pieces* in New York.

According to Thompson (2001):

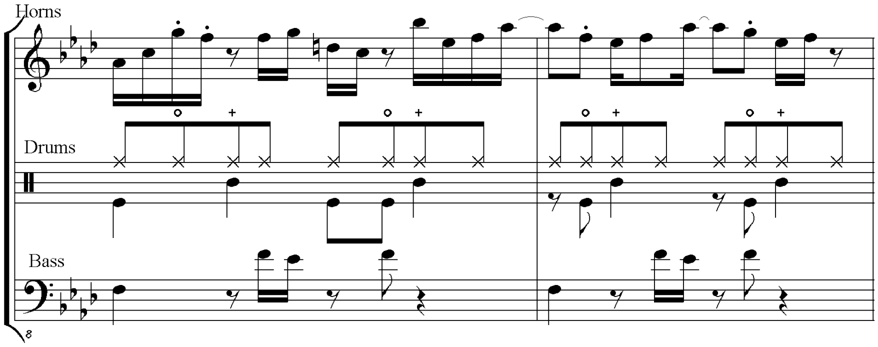
> “Pick Up the Pieces” itself started life as an unnamed jam recorded in tribute to one of AWB’s biggest influences, James Brown (the JBs’ “Gimme Some More” is an undeniable parent of the signature riff) (2001: 70).

Gimme Some More uses tambourine and off-beat guitar chords with a horn theme. Pick up the pieces uses a similar idea in the introduction:



Example 237. ***Pick Up the Pieces,*** **(intro).**

The distinct off-beat chords along with tambourine shake creates a similar texture to the JBs' song. After a four bar introduction, *Gimme Some More* breaks into a saxophone solo and *Pick Up the Pieces* adopts the same structure by placing the theme in the horn section:



Example 238. ***Pick Up the Pieces,*** **(verse).**

So much of *Pick Up the Pieces* belongs to early funk: the open-closed hi-hat sound, the octave leap in the bass with flat seventh, the sharp nine off-beat chords share the resemblance to a number of pieces. Even the chanting of 'Pick up the pieces' in the song is reminiscent of the JBs *Pick Up the Peas.* The ability of groups like AWB to assimilate elements of the funk style has been discussed in the proto-funk period.

What makes the AWB noteworthy is that as a white British band, AWB were able to develop and exploit elements of funk to gain commercial success at an international level. The influences of funk had now extended beyond a regional level and situated itself in the international mainstream.

Proto-funk ideas found in the pieces examined show that the contrapuntal texture, including the hocket, is still to be found in music of 1974 along with sixteenth-note rhythmic timeframes, muted or 'chicken' guitar and the use of wah-wah pedal. Some musical elements, including the octave leap and use of minor seventh in the bass, have developed as stock features of the style. In some cases, the 1974 brought a simpler, less contrapuntal approach but this was not a consistent freature of the period as Tower of Power introduced increasingly more complex rhythmic counterpoint to their music. The idea of 'the jam' remained central to the creative conception of pieces such as *The Payback* and *Hey Pocka-Way,* and it can also be identified in Sly and the Family Stone's *Loose Booty* (1974) and the Bar Kays' *Shake Your Rump to the Funk* (1976).

By bringing together these examples of bands involved in the proto-funk and charting some of the changes, it becomes clear that many of the guiding principles of the style had remained in place during the seventies. The continuity provided by Brown and The Meters was only one musical theme in the wider development of funk. As the seventies progressed, more musicians became involved with funk bringing with them their own musical interests, influences and backgrounds. What results might be best described as a musical fusion where elements of the now well established funk genre are integrated into a number of other styles including jazz, soul, rock, disco and pop. It is these so called fusions that the next sections will examine beginning with the relationship between jazz and funk.

4.4 Jazz-funk

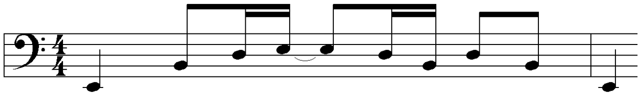
Jazz has always had an influence on funk largely as a result of individual performers who have performed both jazz and funk. We have already discussed the jazz influence in Tower of Power's work and in the earlier work of James Brown, notably *Cold Sweat* (1967) which makes reference to Miles Davis's *So What?* This influence was not all one way and the following section will look at how funk came to influence jazz performers such as Herbie Hancock, Donald Byrd, Stanley Clarke and The Crusaders.

Jazz-funk: Representative Sample

Funk Inc.	*Chicken Lickin'* *Make Peace and Stop War*	1972
Herbie Hancock	*Fat Albert Rotunda* *Headhunters (album)* *Man Child Album*	1969 1974 1975
Donald Byrd	*Places and Spaces*	1975
Stanley Clarke	*Silly Putty*	1976
Tower of Power	*(See previous section)*	
Grover Washington Jr.	*Mr Magic* *Reed Seed*	1975 1977

Table 10. Representative sample: Jazz-funk.

As a genre, jazz has been receptive to innovation by absorbing different stylistic ideas. The Latin influence on Dizzy Gillespie and rock on Miles Davis are now well recorded in the histories of jazz.[304] Jazz had already begun to explore modality and the move away from cyclic harmonic structures to repetitive riffs emerges during the late 1950s and early 1960s. One of the earliest examples of funk elements merging into jazz based composition is to be found in Herbie Hancock's work, *Fat Albert Rotunda* (1969).[305] Songs like *Oh! Oh! Here He Comes* (1969) contain references to the funk style in the use of scratch guitar, an emphasis on the first beat, and a static harmonic background. The bass plays a syncopated variant of the initial sound with typical funk characteristics including the use of modal scales over an octave, the use of scratch guitar, Latin percussion, and a repeated bass riff:



Example 239. ***Fat Albert Rotunda,*** **bass part (intro)**

The bass riff contains similar characteristics to those discussed in proto-funk pieces including the use of the root, fifth and flat seventh intervals to construct the bass line. The repeated riff, provides a secure framework for the introduction and the solos which follow the introduction.

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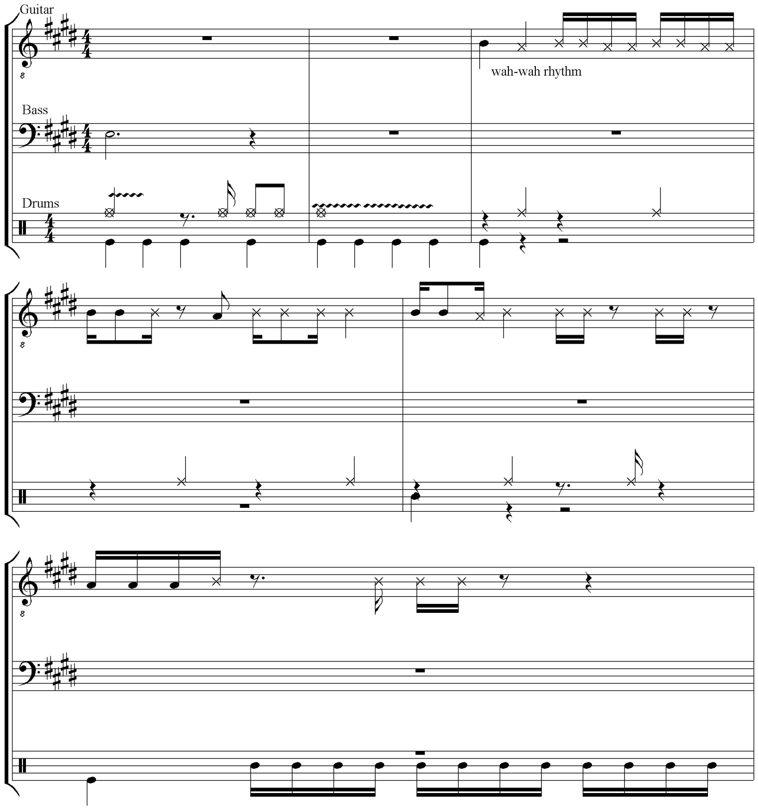
[304] Gridley notes that 'One of Gillespie's special interests, Afro-Cuban music, was explored in big band numbers 'Manteca' and the two-tune combination 'Cubano Be' and 'Cubano Bop'. These pieces, for which Gillespie employed conga drummer Chano Pozo, are among the earliest appearances of Latin American music in modern Jazz (Gridley, 1987: 153-4).

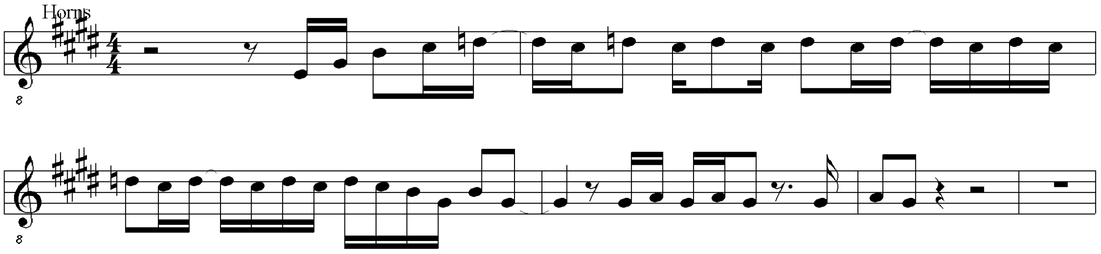
[305] 'Fat Albert Rotunda' was originally a US carton series with music by Hancock.

Aside from Hancock, other musicians were also experimenting with the possible links between jazz and funk. The 1972 song, *Chicken Lickin'* by Funk Inc. combines the use of wah-wah guitar, open hi-hat sound and jazz saxophone to form the basis of rhythmic lock:



Example 240. Funk Inc. *Chickin'Licken* (introduction, b. 7-12).

The song opens with a glissando saxophone in the first two bars (not notated) followed by wah-wah guitar playing a repeated rhythmic riff using chicken-scratch guitar technique. This creates the rhythmic lock for the opening section along with a hi-hat backbeat. A snare fill leads into the main riff over which is heard the following theme:



Example 241. ***Funky Chickin’,*** **theme.**

The main interest of the theme seems to be rhythmic as melodically it oscillates around C♯ and D♮. This two-note oscillatory melody is not an unusual feature of funk and similar ideas have been heard in the horn section riff of *I Got You,*(1965) in the C-D oscillation of the guitar introduction to *Cloud Nine* (1968) and in the repeated notes of the violin theme in *Theme From Shaft* (1971). The main difference between these examples is that syncopated rhythm which Funk Inc. create as the examples given here are metrically even. Following this theme is an extended 32 bar saxophone solo followed by a 36 bar organ solo before the theme ends the piece. In this way *Chicken Lickin’* follows the conventions of jazz using a theme or ‘head’ and improvisations, a structural feature which extends into funk and can be heard in pieces such as Maceo Parker’s *Soul Power ’74* and AWB’s *Pick Up The Pieces.* Lengthy saxophone solos are not a feature of many of the works discussed in this etymophony where the emphasis is generally on the vocal melody or the collective ensemble. The integration of funk ensemble techniques with jazz solo practices during the 1970s is generally seen as a larger movement in jazz towards what is often termed ‘fusion’.

As with other genre terminology, there is significant confusion with the terms jazz-rock, jazz-funk, and jazz fusion being largely interchangeable. The imprecise use of terminology remains problematic and indicates the instability of genre formations. Gridley (1988) suggests that:

> [w]hen Ten Wheel Drive, Chicago, and Blood, Sweat & Tears emerged, much attention was directed to their use of horns and improvisation. Listeners and journalists assumed that such elements lent jazz character to the music, that such use was innovative, and that it justified the 'jazz' part of the label 'jazz-rock'. Yet, soul singer-composer James Brown had already been using horns and improvisation since the late 1950s, and his 1965 hit 'I Got You (I Feel Good)' had made prominent use of saxophone and brass in accompaniment figures and brief interludes. In other words, elements which many journalists presumed to have been contributed to 'jazz-rock'…were primarily a reflection of the influence of other styles within music, not jazz (Gridley, 1988:318).

Gridley's comments suggest that jazz-rock may be a term that fails to take into account the wider stylistic influences that persist in music and rightly points out that Brown, along with other jazz influenced musicians working in the broad category of rhythm 'n' blues, had introduced saxophone solos. Moving away from everyday labels we find that a musical discussion raises issues about the variety of influences. In acknowledging that the musical influences may be more complex than at first appears, Gridley also highlights the political and emotional ties that genre terms create. Re-reading the quotation it may become apparent that Gridley's interest in jazz etymology may be inspired by a desire to retain jazz as a term for swing-based music and therefore disassociate the term (and possibly himself) from other popular genres. Gridley explains his particular understanding of jazz more clearly by suggesting that fusion music:

> ….is modelled on the James Brown and Motown brass style in that their predominant subdivision of the beat is straight eighth-notes and sixteenth-notes instead of the swing eight-notes which characterize jazz (Gridley, 1988: 318).

Applying the jazz label does not come without controversy as musicians protective of musical values attempt to disassociate themselves and use terminology to achieve this end. Clearly for Gridley, the term jazz-funk, like jazz-rock presents an aesthetic antithesis which he is personally unable to resolve. This kind of political-aesthetic appropriation of terminology has been discussed with reference to funk and the development of political meanings during the late 1960s. In practice, intertextual exchange seems unconcerned with the labels and, as a consequence, the 1970s saw an increase in the number of 'fusion' groups led by jazz musicians such as Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter, Joe Zawinul (Weather Report), Chick Corea, Michael Brecker, Donald Byrd, Stanley Clarke,[306] and Herbie Hancock.[307]

The most frequently discussed figure in jazz-funk fusion is Herbie Hancock whose album "Headhunters" (1973) brought together musicians who, according to Vincent and Thompson, were receptive to the electronic-funk music he wanted to create. "Headhunters" became a commercial success for Hancock and provided a 'point of departure' for other artists who were able to access a level of commercial success that was unusual for jazz. Vincent suggests that there was:

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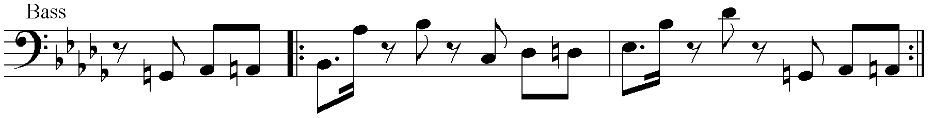
[306] Stanley Clarke's contribution to slap bass has been discussed earlier.

[307] The jazz fusion would be an interesting area for an etymophonic study. Listening to a number of pieces from these musicians reveals a wealth of style indicators bringing together, at a surface level, Latin, rock, pop, funk, African, psychedelic, progressive and technological and free-improvisatory influences.

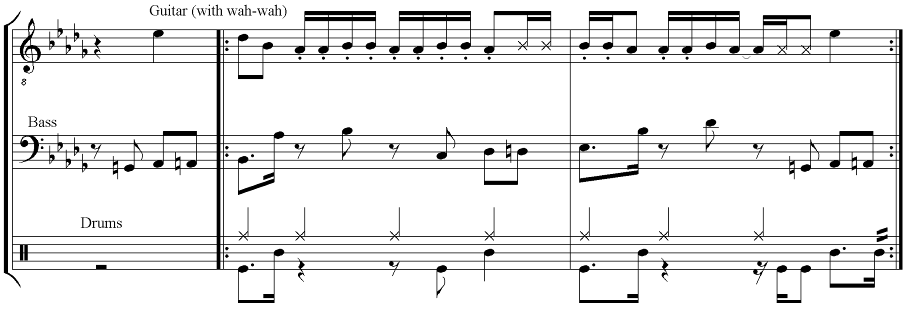
> ….a burgeoning trend of easy-listening jazz that acquired a measure of funky rhythms and interesting improvisation during the early 1970s… marked by its funky bottom and jazzy top…. The works of Roy Ayers, Funk Inc., The JBs and the MGs were some of the most potent in the genre (Vincent, 1996: 146).

The *Headhunters* album consists of four pieces entitled: *Chameleon*, *Watermelon Man*, *Sly* and *Vein Melter*. *Chameleon* begins with an off-beat synthesised bass line containing many of the characteristic elements seen in funk bass including flat sevenths, octaves and chromatic passing notes:[308]



Example 242. *Cameleon,* bass riff.

This introduction is closely followed by the drums and finally guitar (with wah-wah) to form the main riff of the piece:



Example 243. *Cameleon,* main riff (guitar, bass and drums).

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[308] See discussion of James Brown's Out Of Sight.

The guitar part combines single muted notes with unvoiced scratch guitar mainly oscillating between A♭ and B♭. The drum part is much freer than often seen in funk but the underlying rhythmic idea is represented in Example 243. The resultant museme stack in some ways substantiates Vincent’s argument that this type of music was characterised by a ‘funky bottom’. Building the texture literally from the bottom upwards was a technique Hancock also used in other pieces on the album. Hancock’s concept was that:

> Keyboards, bass, drums and percussion were each assigned riff figures which became building blocks in a pulsing, grooving monolith of sound. When jazz *slipped in* [my emphasis] these duties were relaxed, but the tension between the tightness of the groove and the wildness of the jazz was one of the sources of the music’s excitement.[309]

The idea that the riff should be built up on a relatively strict stylistic interpretation of funk and that into this texture jazz ideas are ‘slipped in’ provides an effective metaphor for the way the pieces on this album have been composed. *Chameleon* recycles musical ideas from earlier funk and then adds elements of jazz drawing on performers’ individual styles. This description may suggest that Hancock’s approach was formulaic but the combination of ideas into extended pieces did represent a notable point of departure for the time with the pieces like *Chameleon* being one of the first jazz based compositions to make extensive us of synthesis technology.

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309 Hancock quotation taken from CD insert to *Head Hunters* (Columbia 4712392) compiled by Mark Gilbert (1992).

The principle of recycle and renewal discussed in the model of stylistic development (Figure 8) can be seen to work in the music of Hancock as be recycles ideas from funk and jazz integrating them with new sounds created by synthesis technology. Using this model we can understand his developments in other pieces on the *Headhunters* album. *Watermelon Man* was an earlier composition by Hancock composed in 1962 and reworked into a funkier piece. The 1974 version of *Watermelon Man* begins with a flute tune taken from the Ba-Benzélé Pygmies.[310] In this way, Hancock not only recycled music from the forests of the Central African Republic, he emphasises the theme of Africanicity which has been a recurrent idea in funk.[311] As with *Cameleon,* each textural layer of *Watermelon Man* enters in turn until the texture is created. The third piece on *Headhunters* is called *Sly* and is intended as a tribute to Sly Stone with the final piece called *Vein Melter.* In a similar way to *Cameleon,* the other pieces on the album utilise elements of funk but 'slipped' into the texture is Hancock and the other performers individual jazz style.

In summary, the blend of jazz ideas and funk ideas examined here demonstrate how the jazz aesthetic could be combined with funk ideas. At one level, this can be represented as recycling ideas of funk to create a funky riff on which jazz solos could be executed. On another level, a more conscious attempt to blend jazz with funk to create a point of departure can be found in the music of *Headhunters.* Jazz-funk becomes problematic when the musical matrix extends much further to include electronic funk synthesiser sounds, elements of proto-funk, music of the Ba-Benzélé Pygmies and individual stylistic elements generated by through the improvised solos in each song.

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[310] The tune is an example of a hocket. See Tagg article on hocket on http://tagg.org/articles/epmow/hocket.html.

What emerges from the discussion is an recognition that the complexity found in the combination of musical elements within a piece such as *Cameleon* can never be fully reflected in genre titles alone. Attempts to create comprehensive genre descriptions result in writing of the following kind:

> Philadelphia-bred saxophonist Grover Washington, Jr., was the one to take jazz-funk to the next step with his 1975 release of 'Mr. Magic,' a long, slow, bluesy, sexy syncopated Latin-flavored jazz riff… There was enough blues in the guitar work of Eric Gale to make the record a soulful standout… (Vincent, 1996: 146).

Unpacking the musical message involved in *Mr Magic* requires a paragraph outlining geographical background, at least five stylistic terms (jazz, funk, soul, blues, Latin), a discussion of collaborative contributions by other instrumentalists, rhythmic descriptions (syncopated) and imprecise emotional qualifiers including sexy and bluesy. Taken out of context, Vincent's words appear to be a collection of contradictory musical descriptions, yet his literary stew may be closer to the truth than it first appears. To describe what he hears listening to *Mr Magic,* Vincent has to

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311 African influences were to become a more prominent theme in the music of Earth Wind and Fire as well as Kook and the Gang as some funk bands, and no doubt segments of African-American society drew on their cultural heritage at this time.

call on multiple descriptions to capture the multiplicity of codes that emerge. While contradictory in one way, his thoughts on *Mr Magic* perhaps mirrors the complexity and intertextual relationships that Washington, Gale and other musicians on the track bring to the music.

4.5 Pop-funk

The discussion of jazz-funk has raised a number of issues around the imprecise terminology we use in describing music. In the case of jazz-funk, we have seen that the ability of funk to generate strong groove patterns have proved useful for instrumentalists to create extended improvisations while ensuring that their music retains some commercial viability. We have also seen that by combining innovatory technology to create new sounds, and by recycling a wide range of styles including funk, African flute music, jazz and Latin sounds, a ‘point of departure’ can be created which stimulates other musicians to develop and interpret this convergence of ideas in their own way. We have also seen that the new musical possibilities suggested by Hancock were not always greeted with enthusiasm because the term jazz creates different meanings and values for the audience.

Many of these problems of imprecise terminology, aesthetic conflict and complex are present in the next section which discusses music which I have called pop-funk. The main distinction I would wish to make using ‘pop’ is that the music has been written with a commercial market in mind and success would be measured by the songs success in the popular charts. This working definition presents an immediate problem as most of the songs discussed in this thesis, with very few exceptions, were released commercially and had some chart success. However, whereas a piece like *Chameleon* draws on a strong musical tradition, Carl Douglas's *Kung Fu Fighting* is a commercial creation which follows the success of kung fu action films in cinema and TV.[312] Rufus's *Funky Penguin* has been included as one of a series of novelty songs which included the word funky and *Outa-Space,* another novelty song, has been included because of its use of synthesiser technology.[313] Finally, *I Feel Sanctified* as been included as representative of the commercially focused Motown company.

Sample of pop-funk pieces

Billy Preston	Outa-Spac e	1972
Rufus	Funky Penguin	1972
Carl Douglas	Kung Fu Fighting	1974
Commodores	I Feel Sanctified	1974

Table 11. Representative sample: pop-funk.

Outa-Space (1974) composer and performer Billy Preston was a gospel keyboard player who also worked with Ray Charles, Sly Stone and The Beatles. According to Vincent, (1996: 180), 'Preston's mastery of the clavinet and the micro Moog synthesizer influenced a generation funk keyboardists (sic)'. Such a claim would require a detailed etymophonic study to validate, but for now, we can recognise Castors' influence in integrating new synthesis technology into the pop-funk genre.

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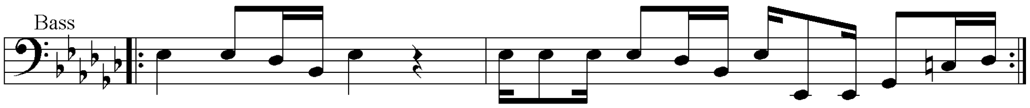
[312] Kung Fu was popularised by the films of Bruce Lee who stared in *The Big Boss* (1970) and *Fist of Fury* (1972) as well as the TV series *Kung Fu* which ran through for three series between 1972 and 1975.

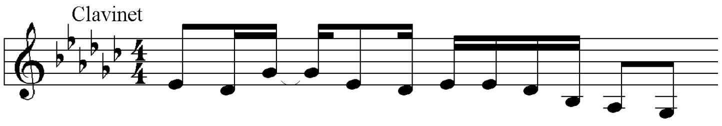
[313] Vincent (1996:180) suggests that 'pop funk proliferated in the summer of 1972' and the novelty value of *Troglodyte*, for instance, ensured that it was 'the party jam of 1972'. Vincent's inclusion of *Troglodyte* is largely for ideological rather than musical reasons.

After a 4 bar introduction, the bass guitar plays the main riff of the piece:



Example 244. *Outa-Space,* opening bars.

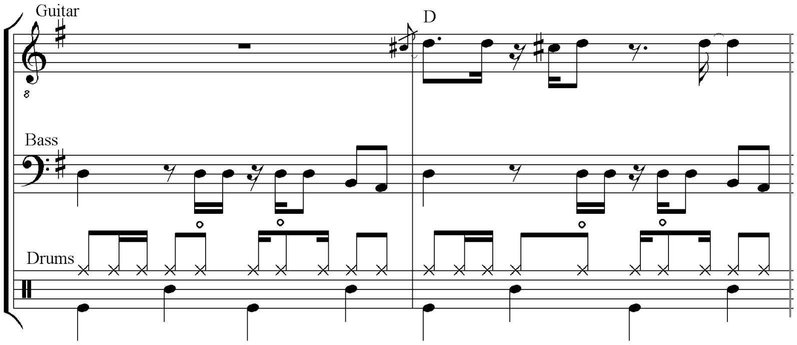
The bass line contains many of the syncopated rhythms, flat seventh and octave leaps that we have seen in earlier funk pieces. Over the top of this bass line are the chords to the song but played on clavinet. A discussion has already taken place about the clavinet and its use in *Superstition*. The inclusion of the clavinet as a melody instrument at the same time as *Superstition* demonstrates the difficulty in making to great a claim for one piece or another to act as a point of departure for others to follow.



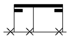
Example 245. *Outa-Space,* example of clavinet phrase.

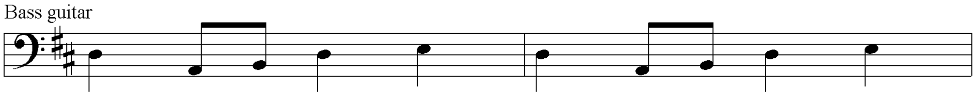
Castor, along with Stevie Wonder and Herbie Hancock were all exploring the new timbres of the synthesisers in the context of their own personal style. The decision to use funky, syncopated patterns at this time in the pop charts suggests that funk had reached a wide audience by 1972 and this was possibly more extensive with the musical contribution of pieces such as *Superstition* and *Theme From Shaft.*

A similar approach to *Outa-Space* was taken in *Kung Fu Fighting* where elements of funk were utilised to create a pop song. The basic riff for the *Kung Fu Fighting* includes sixteenth-note patterns in both the bass and drums:



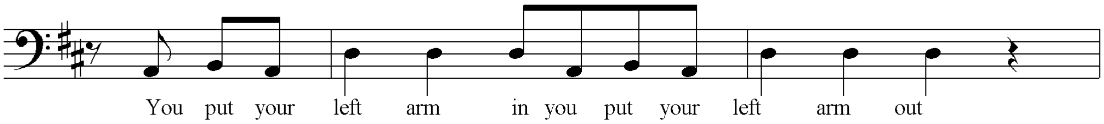
Example 246. ***Kung Fu Fighting,*** **riff (opening 2 bars)**

Residual funk features include the  rhythm discussed as part of the New Orleans' street beat and found in other songs from 1972 such as *Dap Walk* (1972). The syncopated open-closed hi-hat rhythm is supported in the bass and drums by a simple backbeat figure. Unlike the riff-based *Outa-Space, Kung Fu Fighting* is not harmonically static and instead moves through a sixteen bar harmonic sequence alternating D and G chords until the sixteenth bar where a dominant chord acts as a turnaround. *Kung Fu Fighting* does not, therefore, make use of minor seventh modes which had become a stylistic feature of proto-funk pieces such as Brown's *Cold Sweat.* The use of the sixth degree of the scale (B) in the bass part, and the use of major seventh intervals suggests that harmonically at least, this song draws on intertextual referents which are not related to funk. As an example of this the use of tonic, submediant and dominant notes in the bass are generally associated with more popular tunes such as the Beach Boys' *Sloop John B* which uses a variant of these intervals:



Example 247. ***Sloop John B,*** **bass riff (transposed).**

Other examples of this intervallic relationship come from the popular 1940s dance, the Hokey Cokey which has little relationship to the distinctive funk lines of the early 1970s:



Example 248. ***Hokey Cokey.***

Ideologically, *Kung Fu Fighting* presents the exploitative commercial face of pop music. Douglas exploits a range of devices in his song including a slow vocal déclenchement combining strings, wind chimes, pentatonic flute and heavy reverberation to create a sense of distant calling. From this point, the music suddenly moves into a funk-dance rhythm with a strong backbeat rhythm with wah-wah guitar. A number of 'kung fu' vocal gestures such as 'huh' and 'hah' incorporated into the chorus invite communal participation on the dance floor. One further technique, not related to funk, is the use of pentatonic flute melodies acting as metonymic clichés for ethnicity (pentatonic = China = Kung Fu). Given the complex intertextual construction of this song, the funk elements can easily be lost. The dominance of the backbeat rhythm, emphasised in the dance mix, detracts from the syncopated hi-hat rhythm leaving only the muted wah-wah guitar to provide a clue to the song's stylistic links with funk.

Rufus Thomas was another artist who based much of his work around the dance floor crazes contributing an number of 'funky' songs between 1967 and 1975 including *Funkiest Man Alive, Funky Grits, Do The Funky Penguin, Do The Funky Chicken, The Funky Bird,* and *Funky Mississippi.*[314] It would be easy to dismiss these songs as having nothing more than a novelty factor but their success in the popular charts and on the dance floor perhaps invite greater attention than they normally receive. The songs largely draw on the resources of Stax and utilise funk bass riffs, horn sections and a funky drum beat to create the right feel for the dances he describes.

The success of Stevie Wonder and Jimmy Castor in 1972 acted as a catalyst for other bands eager to achieve the same commercial success. The Commodores were one such group who were able to bridge a number of genres. Later in their career, the Commodores became well known for ballads such as *Three Times A Lady* (1978) but in 1974 their interest was in funky dance songs such as *I Feel Sanctified*.

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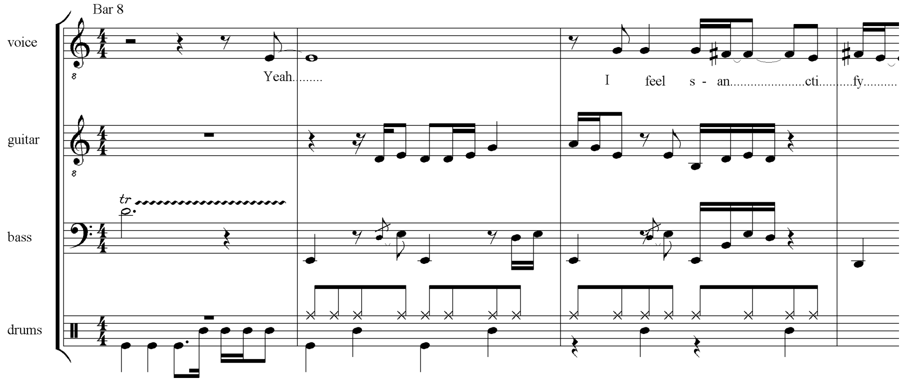
[314] Rufus was presumably building on his earlier pre-funk success with descriptive novelty dance titles such as *Walking The Dog (1963).*

The rhythmic lock of *I Feel Sanctified* demonstrates the Commodores approach to pop-funk:


Bar 8
voice
guitar
bass
drums
tr
Yeah........
I feel s - an......................cti...........fy..........

Example 249. ***I feel Sanctified*** **(introduction).**

The Commodors' approach in *I Feel Sanctified* is both contrapuntal and modal thereby preserving many of the approaches developed in the proto-funk development phase. As the song develops, other elements of the proto-funk can be heard including wah-wah guitar, slap-pop bass technique, muted guitar (single note riffs), open-closed hi-hat patterns and a strong sense of a rhythmic 'lock' as described in the discussion on proto-funk.

Written the same year as *I Feel Sanctified, Machine Gun* makes use of similar funk elements but introduces clavinet and synthesiser timbres to the ensemble. There is a strong stylistic link between *Machine Gun* and Preston's *Outa-Space* (1972) both in the assimilation of funk elements and in the incorporation of synthesiser technology. In etymophonic terms the introduction of the contemporary electronic keyboard in the 1970s is similar to the introduction of the wah-wah to the guitar in the late 1960s as each event represents a particular point of departure which, because of the introduction of technology, can be identified chronologically. The attraction of instruments such as the Honer Clavinet, ARP Odyssey and Moog synthesisers was not universal and a large number of musicians including Rufus, Brown, and the Meters, retained the original rhythm ’n’ blues instrumentation that had defined their sound during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Technological innovation may, at first, be something of a novelty and in this respect, its inclusion in the pop-funk genre should not surprise us. Technological innovation is, by itself, unlikely to influence the development of a genre as the integration of the new sonic possibilities into existing codes have to be legitimised by individual musicians. Hancock, Preston, the Commodores and Stevie Wonder were all influential in using synthesiser technology in funk. As a group, these musicians represent a wide range of musical styles and influences and their ability to adapt synthesis technology and to use them in a personal way demonstrates their adaptive approach to style and genre in general. Although the stylistic influences are quite wide, the sounds circulating in funk seem to be primarily focused around the clavinet timbre. In this way, innovation is undertaken in a controlled, measured way as instrumentalists negotiate to find acceptable ways to integrate these instruments into existing meanings of funk.

The synthesiser was not the only technology stimulating change in funk. The 1970s saw the introduction of new recording technologies which not only created a significant shift in the way that music was produced, but in the way it was received. It has already been noted that new approaches to production were influential in creating songs such as the Temptations' *Cloud Nine.* Other studios were also actively engaged in developing identifiable production values. One of these, Philadelphia International, created an influential set of production values that became known as the 'Philly Sound'. It is these production values that will be discussed in the following section an in particular how they integrated with, and developed, the funk style.

4.6 Soul-funk

Although the Philly Sound was closely associated with soul music, the distinction between soul and funk is not a simple one. In his discussion of 'funky soul', Vincent (1996: 135) suggests that the success of singers such as Donna Summer made the distinction 'between the slicker sound of disco, the street sound of The Funk, and the once familiar sentimental sound of soul' more difficult. The only clear distinction Vincent can find between the 'sound of a strong soul singer and that of a funk band was the strength of the band driving the songs'. Vincent's point may have some etymophonic justification as our discussion of jazz-funk and pop-funk noted that the major contribution of the funk style was to provide a strong rhythmic foundation that can be used as a groove for jazz or pop based melodic invention. The rhythmic foundation for the O'Jays was the Philadelphia International house band, the MFSB.[315]

As a group, the O'Jays had achieves notable success for songs such as *Backstabbers* (1972) which is a carefully orchestrated song with a Latin rhythmic feel. The rich brass and string ensembles represent something of the soul style that allowed Philadelphia International to become such a success during the early 1970s. According to Gillett (1983:222), the 'sound of Philadelphia…became identified with sophisticated arrangements that used most of the instruments of a classical orchestra over danceable grooves'. If this 'sophisticated' orchestrated sound was one outcome of the O'Jays' work, the other was represented by *The Love Of Money* (1974) which demonstrates the way that the MFSB house band integrated elements of funk into the songs.

For The Love Of Money begins with a sixteenth-note bass pattern integrating octave leaps and minor seventh intervals.[316] Although the repeated notes shown in Example 250 are similar to the style of playing examined in Rocco Prestia's technique (Example 210), session musician Alexander Jackson's technique makes greater use of muted notes to create the motoric rhythm:

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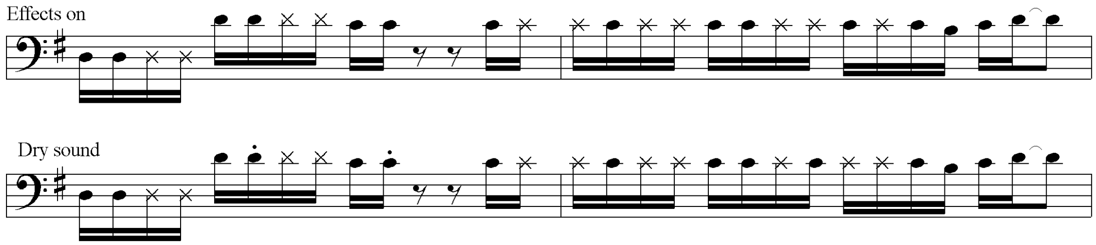
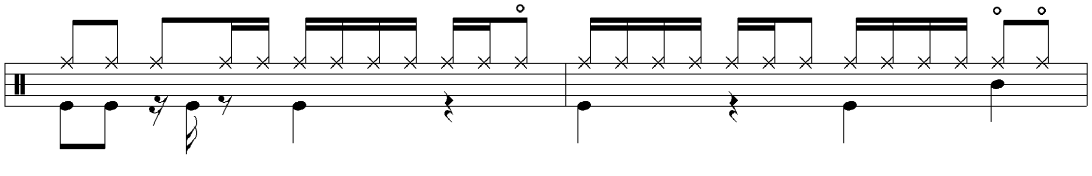
[315] MFSB or 'Mother, Father, Sister, Brother'. For Vincent, 'the O'Jays… could handle the hottest funk tracks while blending smooth harmonies and tender ballads with social statements (Vincent, 1996, 135).



Example 250. ***For The Love Of Money,*** **bass introduction.**

After 4 bars, the drum riff (Example 251) is added to the bass. This uses the sixteenth-note motoric rhythm on the hi-hat:



Example 251. ***For The Love Of Money,*** **drums.**

While the performance style of this opening shows some similarities to sixteenth-note bass and drum patterns used by Tower of Power, the production techniques used demonstrate a new approach to production. The opening of the bass solo has multiple effects whereas the third and fourth bar, the bass is heard without effects. This represents a new departure for funk which had, aside from some reverberation (*I Feel Good)* and the use of wah-wah pedal, used the recording process to capture the live sound of the band. *For The Love Of Money* presents a departure from this tradition.

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316 The bass part was played by Anthony Jackson.

Huff and Gamble worked with engineer Joe Tarsia on *For The Love Of Money* who, according to web based sources,[317] was introduced to some of the experimental work of psychedelic rock musicians by guitarist Todd Rundgren. Rundgren, the guitarist with Nazz, can be heard using phasing and flanging techniques in his work on songs such as *Open My Eyes* (1968). Inspired by Rundgren, Tarsia worked on *For the Love Of Money* producing a song which made use of several effects including wah-wah on the bass, echo, reverse echo (using tape reversal), phasing, and gated vibraphone (triggered by the snare) and double tracked drums. Lacasse suggests that the echo effect, which appears to be a short, slap echo:

> ….added a kind of excitement ot the recordings acting as a sort of rhythmic catalyser. Most of the time, the short echo's delay was indeed rhythmically tuned to the pulsation of the songs. This way, layers were added to the rhythmical texture, thus combining the echo's rhythmic pattern to the one of the original performance. Craig Anderton (1985: 34) judiciously writes about a *synchronic* feeling resulting from this rhythmical cohesion (Lacasse, 2000: 124-5).

A closer examination of this technique may be achieved by examining the waveform of the opening 4 notes of the bass riff:

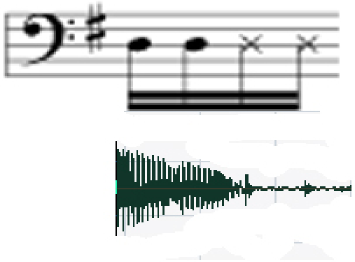

Figure 9. Waveform representation of echo in *For The Love Of Money.*

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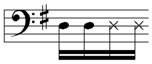
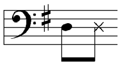
[317] http://mixonline.com/mag/audio_classic_tracks_ojays/ (accessed 12.12.05).

The initial thought about this passage is that it was played using sixteenth-notes and progressively dampening the strings. Examination of the waveform suggests that the second D and the second muted note are progressively less loud, much in the same way than an echo would decay in volume. If it is the case that the second and fourth notes of this extract are generated not by performance, but by echo, instead of  the performer would actually be playing  with the rhythmic 'excitement' provided by the short, single echo delay. The result of this effect on the bass line is to provide the sixteenth-note motoric effect through the use of studio techniques.

In addition to the echo technique, when the drums enter in the fourth bar, the timbre has been modified using phasing along with the possibility of a gated vibraphone sound on the snare beat. Phasing is summarised by Lacasse, quoting Kendall (1995) as the 'timbral colouration and combing associated with *constructive and destructive interference* of multiple delayed signals'. The effect of the phasing is to emphasise the higher frequencies of the aural spectrum in an unnatural way. Linked to the reverse echo effect on the voice, wah-wah and other effects, this produces a very unusual funk-inspired song.

What *For The Love Of Money* does in a much more powerful way than we have found before, is to foreground production techniques by adding to the funk layers a number of other timbral ideas which sonically enhance the performance capabilities of the musicians. In most of the works studied so far, possibly with the exception of *Cloud Nine,* the role of the engineer or producer was essentially to capture the studio sound of the performers. Whitfield's role in the production of *Cloud Nine* was largely to energize the production sound using fairly conventional arranging techniques with effects such as wah-wah being introduced as part of the musicians performance practice. In *For The Love Of Money,* Tarsia's intervention adds several rhythmic, textural and timbral layers using specialist electronic effects which would not normally be possible in performance.

What emerges from this discussion is that our concept of intertextual practice may extend much further than the individual and collective influences of the musicians to include engineers and producers. Norman Whitfield had demonstrated the powerful influence that a producer could have in the collective process of creating a song but this is one of the first examples in funk, of an engineer taking a dominant role in the collective product. The previous discussion of the intertextual nexus has, until this moment, largely circulated around performance codes. *For The Love Of Money* raises the possibility of other codal information being important including those discrete sounds created by technology.

Two further points emerge in this discussion of *Love For Money*. The first is that the O'Jays continued a tradition of using their songs to present a social commentary or to raise important socio-political issues in the lyrics. The second is that as a collective entity, Philadelphia International were not limited to a single stylistic influence. Funk was only one stylistic direction they were able to travel in. Vincent considered that the distinction between a soul and funk took into consideration the ‘strength of the band driving the songs’. This presents too generalized a distinction to deal with a song such as *Love For Money.* The technological impact on the rhythmic layers and on the sonic experience goes beyond the instrumentalists alone and needs to acknowledge the wider collective contribution of those involved in producing the song.

The creative collective is a theme which continues into the next section looking specifically at the contribution of George Clinton and what has been termed, the P-Funk. Over the years, Clinton’s two main collectives, Parliament and Funkadelic included the services of over 218 musicians.[318] This number of musicians present a huge intertextual as well as personal network as musicians came and went. To achieve this required a strong sense of purpose which would bring together numerous people to work on one project. Clinton achieved this by creating the idea of the p-funk or ‘pure’ funk around which he created a metaphysical world of spaceships, outlandish characters and a ‘theology’ which celebrated funk not just as music, but as a life force.

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[318] These figures are based on Thompson’s list of personnel 1969-2000.

4.7 Ideological funk: metaphysics and politics

For Thompson (2000:84), George Clinton was ‘the single most influential figure in the history of funk’ while for Vincent (1996: 253), ‘Clinton and his P-funk band developed something far greater than their simple identity as a musical ensemble. P-Funk was and is more than a music style; it is a philosophy of life’. The identity Vincent refers to was largely disseminated through the elaborate stage shows that Clinton created which explored theatricality as much as music. The centrepiece for his stage show was a space ship and from it descended Clinton’s personas named Dr. Funkenstein. Between 1970 and 1981, Clinton was able to explore many themes in his writing for Parliament. Some of these themes revolved around socio-political issues and others, such as *Star Child* (1976)*, Supergroovalisticproscifunkstication* (1976), and *Funkentelechy* (1978) simply further his own individualistic portrayal of the funk world.

Funk metaphysics did not get in the way of dealing with those political issues which faced the African-American community in the 1970s. *Chocolate City* (1976), demonstrates the often humorous and playful way that Clinton would deal with political issues. *Chocolate City* consists of a fragmentary funk riff over which Clinton speaks instead of sings. This type of performance draws on performance practices of performance poets such as the Last Poets and Gil Scott Heron who were politically active in the early 1970s. The first part of *Chocolate City* message tells us that:

There's a lot of chocolate cities, around
We've got Newark, we've got Gary
Somebody told me we got L.A.
And we're working on Atlanta…

Chocolate city forms a social utopia which reflects an actual change in African-American politics and a growing pride in that achievement.[319] The basis for the Chocolate City was the newfound confidence as a result of African-American mayors being appointed to these cities. However, Clinton did not always take the politics as seriously as he might:

And don't be surprised if Ali is in the White House
Reverend Ike, Secretary of the Treasure
Richard Pryor, Minister of Education
Stevie Wonder, Secretary of FINE arts
And Miss Aretha Franklin, the First Lady….

In spite of the humour, Clintons message is clear:

A chocolate city is no dream
It's my piece of the rock and I dig you, CC
God bless Chocolate City and its (gainin' on ya!) vanilla suburbs
Can y'all get to that?

Earlier in the 1970s, the message of groups such as the Last Poets was much starker. *When The Revolution Comes* (1974) is a form of performance poetry accompanied only by African style drumming. Their message was more radical than Clinton and it lacked either humour or confidence that things were changing for the better:

When the revolution comes,
Some of us will probably catch it on TV
With chicken in our mouths…

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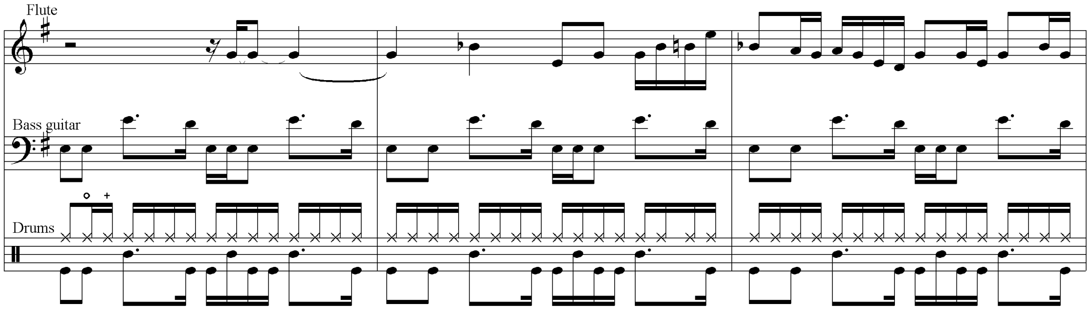
[319] See Haralambos, 1974: 143 (quoted on page 330).

> When the revolution comes…
>
> Blood will run through the streets of Harlem
> Drowning anything without substance

In the same year as *When The Revolution Comes*, Gil Scott-Heron released *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* in which the words are spoken over a funk riff. Scott-Heron's message is much more of a hidden critical commentary on the way we view the world much more suggesting, as he does in the opening of the poem, that non-participation will not be an option. His imagery draws on ideas of brotherhood and evokes the spirit of civil rights activists Young and Wilkens:

> There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down
> brothers in the instant replay.
> There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down
> brothers in the instant replay.
> There will be no pictures of Whitney Young being
> run out of Harlem on a rail with a brand new process.
> There will be no slow motion or still life of Roy
> Wilkens strolling through Watts in a Red, Black and
> Green liberation jumpsuit that he had been saving
> For just the proper occasion.

Scott-Heron's *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (1974) was accompanied by bass drums and flute:



Example 252. *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, introduction.

Scott-Heron clearly draws on elements of the funk style, notably the octave and minor 7th intervals in the bass guitar and the sixteenth-note hi-hat figure in the drums. These are rhythmic and intervallic ideas that are, by 1974, well established as stylistic identifiers for funk. Over the rhythmic texture, Scott-Heron has a flute playing in a jazzy style. The use of flute comes from a more jazz orientated musical world rather than funk and, as we have found in discussions of other styles, indicates something of the intertextual exchange that reflects Scott-Herons individual style.[320] The decision to link together the motoric rhythms of funk was not simply as a way of creating a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Linking funk with performance poetry of this kind acknowledges the acceptability that funk has as a vehicle for socio-political commentary. The appropriation of funk to relay messages of a black revolution give an indication of the position that the music had in more radical areas of African-American politics.

If *Chocolate City* in some way idealised the political possibility then *Tear The Roof Off The Sucker (Give Up The Funk),* (1975), takes Clinton's message into a completely different dimension. Funk had turned from being a term to describe stylistic features of the music and become an essence. Clinton creates a mythological world where funk is a necessity for the masses when he sings:

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[320] The jazz flute was used from the 1920s and during the 1960s performers such as Eric Dolphy contributed to the repertoire with pieces such as *Gazzellioni* (1964). Other examples of the flute in jazz include the work of flautist and alto saxophonist Sonny Fortune who played on McCoy Tyner's recording, 'Sahara' (1972).

> We need the funk, give us the funk

Clinton had turned funk from being a vehicle for expressing political concerns into a metaphysical essence. From this point, Clinton was able to manufacture a world which revolved around the idea of 'the Mothership', a huge spaceship which became part of his elaborate stage show. Around his stage show and through his albums, Clinton Created a universe of the P-funk: pure, uncut 'the bomb'. In Clinton's universe, funk was the essential pulse of life which beats around the idea of 'The One'.

Tear The Roof Of The Sucker was a part of this funk mythology which believes that everyone wants and needs 'the' funk. The mantra for the song is 'we need the funk, we gotta have the funk' chanted over and over. *Tear The Roof Of The Sucker* is first and foremost a dance song. Thematically, it seems quite innocuous but the song is part of a wider message. In addition, *Tear The Roof Of The Sucker* uses a range of 'street' language including 'mother', 'mother sucker', and 'getting down', a language which belongs to blaxploitation movies.[321]

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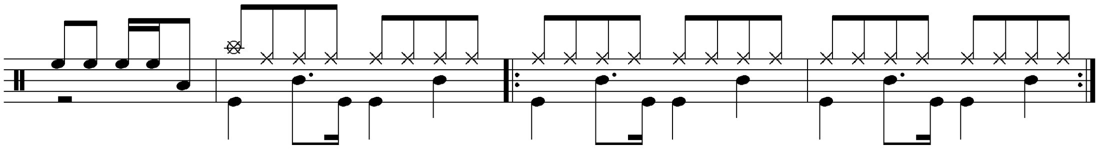
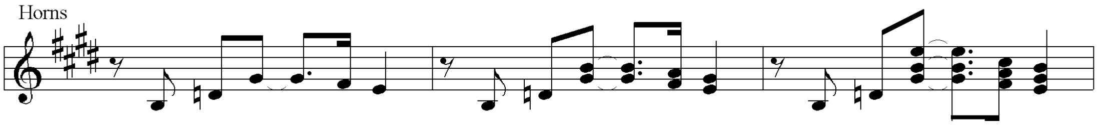
[321] The use of this kind of language in the African-American tradition, and its meanings, has been discussed extensively in Gates' *The Signifying Monkey* (1988).

Musically, *Tear The Roof Of The Sucker* opens with short drum fill before settling into the main groove:



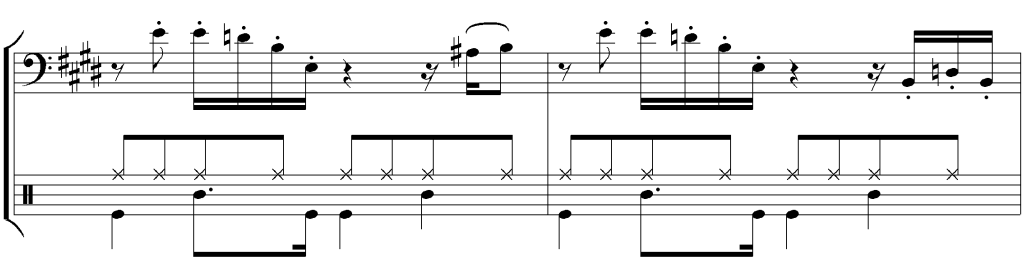
Example 253. *Tear The Roof Off The Sucker,* drum introduction.

We have seen in pieces such as *For The Love Of Money* how funk lends itself to building up the final texture by gradually adding instruments. Clinton uses the same compositional device and after the drum introduction, horns enter gradually building their own riff:



Example 254. *Tear The Roof Off The Sucker,* horn introduction.

Eventually voice and bass enter. Example 255 shows the sixteenth-note bass lines against the eighth note drum pattern:



Example 255. *Tear The Roof Off The Sucker,* verse.

The band for *Tear The Roof Off The Sucker* included musicians who had played with James Brown (Fred Wesley, Maceo Parker, Bootsy Collins) and others from the field of jazz (Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker). Clinton acted as an important figurehead for funk during the mid 1970s. Through his stage shows he brought outlandish costume, an outlandish philosophy of funk and brought together a wide range of musicians interested in playing and developing funk.

As a result of his all-embracing approach, Clinton stands out amongst the groups we have examined it would be impossible to give a fuller account of Clinton's music. His contribution to the development of funk requires further research and is outside the scope of a general etymophony. Within the music studied, we have seen that Clinton not only uses typical bass, drums and horn sections, but contains his style within a carefully constructed ideology.

4.8 Conclusion.

Tracing the development of funk through the mid to late 1970s has proved problematic because of the number of performers active in a wide range of genres who integrated funk in their music. At the surface level, this can be seen as a considerable expansion in the number of funk bands and funk-inspired pieces. Although Chambers describes a similar phenomenon in rock and pop during the 1960s as an ‘explosion’ and Middleton suggests that this is a ‘fragmentation’, I would argue that what we see is a diffusion of style. By diffusion I would like to suggest that elements of funk began to merge with other styles and genres such as jazz, soul and pop in a less explosive and more organic way.

The key concept to understanding the process of diffusion lies in understanding the nature of the intertextual exchange. Using figure 1, I have modelled the flow of musical ideas creating the idea that at certain points in the flow of musical ideas, songs represent points of arrival or departure. In the 1960s, with so few musicians involved in developing the funk style, this process was relatively clear. By 1970, funk had consolidated itself and emerged with a number of recognisable stylistic features. At this point, musicians were able to take on these negotiated ideas and integrate them into their own musical style. Once this process generates a certain momentum, it becomes less clear where the points of arrival/departure are. Without this clarity, we can consider each piece as an intersection of stylistic influences and the role of the etymophony is to clarify the situation by tracing elements of style within the music.

As the rate of intertextual exchange increases, the picture of how funk develops becomes increasingly complex. A discussion of Tower of Power musician David Garibaldi demonstrated the wide range of intertextual influences which circulate around an individual in a band. A more detailed model is found in Figure 8 to account for the interchange of musical ideas at different levels. This model suggests that there are several level of intertextual activity bound by socio-political, economic and cultural considerations.

Using this model, stylistic departures can be understood as negotiated through musical and ideological discourse. On the surface level, the activity generated by the numbers of musicians may be apparent is an explosion but at the individual level, the intertextual exchange process continues as it has always done. For some reason, the early and mid 1970s does seem to represent a significant point of arrival as more musicians assimilate ideas from funk. Vincent may have identified, at least in part, the reasons for the interest in funk when he explains the difference between soul and funk as being in the strength of the band providing the rhythmic drive.[322]

A common feature of all the music discussed in this section has been the integration of element of the rhythmic lock into established stylistic ideas such as jazz, pop and soul. In this way, the main stylistic elements to be absorbed by other musical genres can be summarised as follows:

- sixteenth note hi-hat rhythm
- octave, minor 7th intervallic patterns in the bass guitar
- contrapuntal rhythmic textures used to create the ‘rhythmic lock’
- continuing use of wah-wah guitar and scratch or muted guitar to add to the rhythmic counterpoint

In addition to these features, we have seen several points of departure in the musical style as elements of funk develop through the integration of new technology. These developments have largely centred around the introduction of the clavinet sound either as a bass instrument or as a rhythm instrument. As studio technology developed, the role of the recording engineer changed to directly influence both the rhythmic and timbral possibilities of funk.

The diffusion of styles extends beyond the scope of the present etymophonic study and it would have been possible to extend the study to include many other groups. While it would appear that funk was dominated by Anglo-American groups, there should be some acknowledgement that performers from the African sub-continent, including Manu Dibango and Fela Kuti, and in Europe, where an extensive body of funk related releases emerged in the 1970s, were contributing to the funk genre.[323] By

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[322] See page 364 above.

[323] A number of ‘rare’ record sites are dedicated to funk, soul-funk, jazz-funk from the 70s. These have a useful list of record released from that date. Although not comprehensive in any way, they

the 1970s, funk had become recognised as an international style and the rhythmic elements of funk had been explored worldwide. This intertextual exchange between different continents, the increasing opportunities for musicians of different countries to perform together and record together would be an area for further research.

The diffusion of funk in the 1970s represents a point of arrival rather than of departure. These terms, derived from figure 1, indicate that although elements of the style have consolidated in some way, they remain relatively unchanged with performance practices recycling ideas rather than developing the style. Since the early 1960s, funk had been in a continual state of change as the performance vocabulary gradually expanded. Vincent suggests that by 1975:

> By 1975, a slew of heavily funk-influenced bands took the black dance impulse and deliberately stretched it into more repetitive formulas for more ‘accessible’ consumption. Leaders of this new pack were K.C. and the Sunshine Band, the B.T. Express, Brass Construction, and Brick… (Vincent, 1996: 216).

Vincent considers the changes that began to take place in what he terms dance-funk were a dilution of those funk values which are essentialised by Brown.[324] Dance-funk is regarded as a simplification of funk rhythms which ‘became the basis for disco’.[325] This is a view that is supported by Vincent whose suggestion is that disco:

> …. was co-opting the [James Brown’s] fundamental breakthroughs and distilling The Funk for a generation of polyester consumers. At first, the disco-

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indicate the breadth of funk-related music that existed in the 1970s. Further details can be found at similar sites to: http://www.funkishere.com/categ2/Jazz_Funk.html

[324] Thompson (2001: 219-291) refers to this stage as ‘disco funk’.

[325] ‘With some simplification of its rhythms, funk became the basis for disco’ quoted from Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll in Vincent (1996: 205).

> dance bands burned up the floor with such energy, nobody seemed to notice the warning signs, but some funkateers could see that K.C. and the Sunshine Band was the beginning of the end (*ibid.*).

Vincent's description of 'warning signs' of 'the beginning of the end' captures the view of many music commentators but also reveals a subtext that disco was in some way the antithesis of those values that funk had come to represent. While these issues are a constant feature of musical discourse as one set of ideological values displace another, the difficultly is that the political message may obscure the music.

The following chapter aims to examine the musical relationship that funk has to disco and in particular examine the intertextual relationship that existed through the flow of musical ideas. As part of this investigation I will discuss the possibility that, in spite of the political resistance to disco from many music commentators, the production processes that 'marked the beginning of the end' also marked a significant point of departure for funk as a genre.

Part 5. Funk and the phenomenon of disco

The emergence of disco from the sixties to the seventies is well documented in popular music literature (Poschardt, 1995; Vincent, 1995; Toop, 1991; Cohn, 1989, Lawrence, 2003). Like the writing on funk, the historical documentation that exists concentrates largely on the personalities of disco and says little is about the musical sound. The focus of these histories is generally on the American disco club scene that emerged during the 1960s exploding into a phenomena which saw '10,000 discotheques (*sic)* operating in the United States by 1976, many of them integrated within hotel chains or run as franchise operations' (Straw, 2001: 166). Some of these histories also discuss the emergence of the disco in France and disco scenes in London, Montréal, Munich and elsewhere. In the disco environment the latest dance craze mixed with urban nightlife and the media's obsession with celebrity culture. On the one hand, discos celebrated the dance much as clubs and cabaret culture had done in the past but on the other, disco represented hedonistic excesses of a society in decline. The reasons for the socio-cultural success of disco are not, however, the focus of this study but some understanding of the ideology of seventies disco will be useful before examining the music.

5.1 Ideology and the funky disco beat

Disco, like muzak,[326] belongs to a group of musical genres that attracts a significant amount of negative criticism in the discourse that surround musical aesthetics. For some, it is the openly commercial aspect of disco which invites criticism; for others the production values which creates a dichotomy between product and performance; for the puritan audience it is the content of disco song, its open display and communication of sexuality and sensuality which causes offence; finally, for the African-American political writer, 'disco sucks' and is a betrayal of essential values.[327] Against this critical backlash Dyer (1979/1990), presented a 'defence of disco' which begins first and foremost with the fact that he, like many from that particular generation, actually liked disco. Dyer's argument against commercial criticism, sexuality and materialism suggests that the reality of the situation may be more complicated than it seems and 'part of the wider to and fro between work and leisure, alienation and escape, boredom and enjoyment that we are so accustomed to' (Dyer, 1990: 417).

Most of the arguments against disco come from a particular position which generally reflects arguments of authenticity: one music (my music) is more real than yours

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[326] See Marconi, (2003) who suggests that: 'le terme désigne également une musique de peu de valeur esthétique, qui ne mérite pas d'être écoutée attentivement….' (2003 : 807).

[327] See Vincent, 1995: 214-5; George, 1998: 6-9.

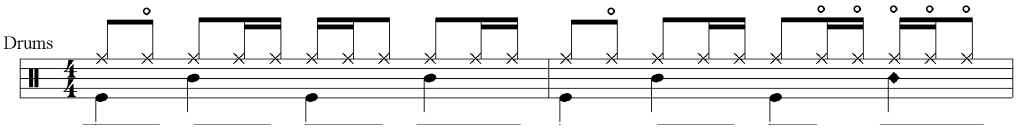
(disco). Held up to scrutiny, as Dyer demonstrates in his article, most of these arguments reduce to aesthetic beliefs that are supported and sustained by personal opinion. The real differences between disco and other musical forms might not be discussed in black and white terms and actually be a matter of degree: disco is commercial, but so is rock; disco is sexual but so are many popular songs; disco is often hedonistic but so is rock; and the political ideology represents a recurring discourse in music as so called 'black' music is appropriated by 'white' culture.

Musically, disco has been criticised much in the same way as commercial pop has: it is represented as simplistic, repetitive, mindless and formulaic. Songs such as Van McCoy's *The Hustle* (1975); Silver Convention's *Fly Robin Fly* (1976); and A Taste of Honey's *Boogie Oogie Oogie,* (1978) are all described in these terms by Vincent, Thompson, and George. The tone of their writing generally reflects a negative approach to disco:

> This new sound provided a dance experience with easy-to-learn steps, taught at clean clubs typically managed by gays and white ethnics and set on the high-class boulevards (rather than dank R&B venues in da hood), and drew a middle-class white America into the fold. The…endless dance, the throbbing, simple beat, the impenetrable sheen of polyester fashions, and the perpetual rush of cocaine were all a part of the escapism of the disco experience (Vincent, 1995: 206).

However, the distinction between funk and disco was not as clear-cut as it might seem given this kind of critique. Funk had always been associated with dancing since the 1960s and songs such as *Funky Broadway* had included instruction for the dance as part of the lyrics. The point of crossover between funk and disco is a difficult one to map and producers such as Allan Tousaint using bands such as the Meters were responsible for 'disco anthems' like *Lady Marmalade,* (LaBelle, 1974).[328] Other bands including Kool and The Gang, Earth Wind and Fire, and the Gap Band, became involved in disco during the latter half of the 1970s modifying their music to meet the demands of the market place.

From a different perspective, it may be that the simplification of funk had been taking place over a number of years. Stevie Wonder's *Superstition* had demonstrated that production techniques were becoming important to funk from the early seventies. The same song also indicated a different approach to funk with a simpler approach to the bass line and the drum part which dispenses with the more complicated sixteenth-note pattern found in the bass-snare patterns of earlier funk:



Example 256. *Superstition,* drum kit.

While the move towards simplicity and repetition of formulaic phrases may be considered to be 'mindless' and 'escapist', this type of ideological discourse articulates musical tastes and values which may not have a basis in the musical text. To test this hypothesis, it may be appropriate to consider the funk and disco as different elements within the same musical continuum where musicians, producers, musical elements and dance-steps are interchangeable. In taking this approach, we may find that the ideological separation of funk and disco may be less defined than it first appears.[329]

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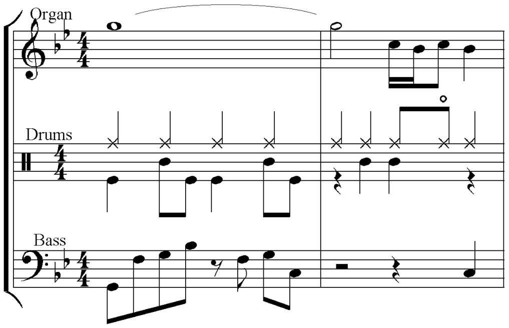
[328] It is of interest that *Lady Marmalade* was introduced to a new audience in 2001 when the music was used for a dance sequence in Luhrmann's film *Moulin Rouge.* Students on my funk course who were not born until the mid-1980s know the song well but not necessarily Pattie LaBelle's version.

5.2 What's goin' on? Inside the music.

One of the musical criticisms directed at disco is the simplicity of the music. *Lady Marmalade* begins with a 4 bar riff from the meters before the voices begin:



Example 257. *Lady Marmalade,* introduction.

The riff for *Lady Marmalade* appears to be melodically straightforward with an accompaniment revolving around the Gm – C bass riff. The underlying rhythmic idea in *Lady Marmalade* is the eighth note which, in comparison to a song like the Meters'

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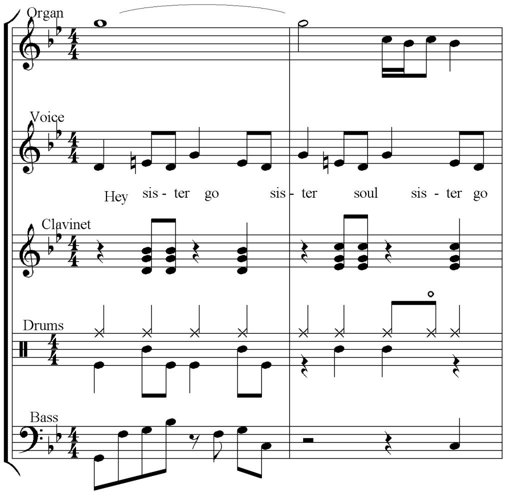
[329] As an indicator of the difficulty in separating funk from disco, compilation albums often contain the same song on differently labelled genre collections. Lady Marmalade (1974), for instance, is to be found on the compilation Black Cream: The Best of Soul (Sony, 2004) but also on The Disco Album (SMI, 2003) yet, as has already been noted, the music was created by New Orleans funk band, The Meters.

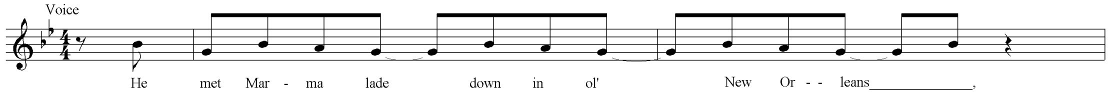
Hey Pocka-Way (1974), could be described as simplistic. The classic Meters' approach is to create contrapuntal textures whereas *Lady Marmalade* is based around a much simpler backbeat chord on the clavinet:


Organ
Voice
Hey sis - ter go sis - ter soul sis - ter go
Clavinet
Drums
Bass

Example 258. ***Lady Marmalade,*** **introduction with vocals.**

The introduction has a chant-like melodic line which may account for the 'anthemic' description offered by Thompson. These easy to sing lines can become a chant for the dancers in the disco environment.

The verse itself is built around a simple, melodic line contained within a minor third:


Voice
He met Mar - ma lade down in ol' New Or - - leans____________,

Example 259. ***Lady Marmalade,*** **verse.**

On the surface, *Lady Marmalade* appears to be a relatively simple, eighth note rhythmic accompaniment and it is difficult to see why the song would become a disco favourite. Three features that are difficult to notate, stand out in the performance and act as style indicators for appreciation by a disco audience. The first is the use of Latin percussion including bongos and cowbell. The second is the sexually suggestive use of the voice and the final feature is the female 'diva' voice that had became popular in disco.

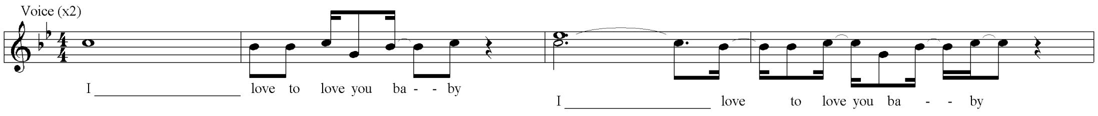
Latin instruments had been found in funk prior to disco, but by the 1975 the Latin sound had become an essential ingredient of disco. The complexity of the rhythmic texture would increase later as drum machine technology came to be used more frequently. In addition to the main vocal sound, there are other vocal sounds which vary from low, breathy sounds to dramatic exhaling. Some of these sounds could be interpreted as related to the sensual-sexual theme which has been identified as part of the ideology of disco. These sounds add a backdrop to the refrain, 'voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir?' and, as we shall see, became an important feature of the disco aesthetic largely through the work of Donna Summer and producer Georgio Moroder. .

The female voice has been largely missing from the funk sound explored so far in this etymophony. Having been successful in gospel, soul music and in jazz, it seems strange that the main voice heard in funk has been male. The female voice had not disappeared but had repositioned itself in the wider musical field and found a following in disco. LaBelle’s voice has strong gospel-soul stylistic overtones. It is not until the middle of the song that an element of display enters the performance. The contrast between the oscillating opening and the minor third verse could not be more dramatic. Powerful sustained, gospel inflected high notes introduce the second verse (1’ 57”). Set against the backing singers, this forms a powerful, female persona for the song.

The sexual diva was an important feature of the disco aesthetic. Whereas funk lyrics played on the meaning of words, disco became more direct. The song that expressed this aesthetic was Donna Summer’s *Love To Love You Baby* (1975). *Love To Love You Baby* brought Donna Summer to the attention of an international audience. Produced by Moroder while Summer was in Germany, the song explored the sexual in an open and direct way. Summer’s:

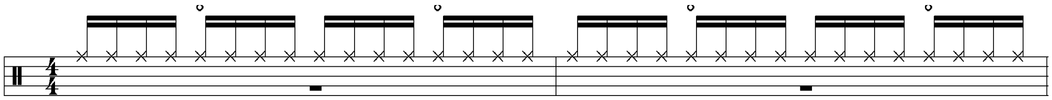
> sensuous, strong voice was exploited in ways never before heard of. Her novelty record “Love To Love You Baby” featured a fantastic simulated sex act “performed” by Summer that scorched the radio in early 1976. Her “marathon of orgasms” prompted a wide range or reactions…against what was being called “sex-rock” (Vincent, 1995: 207).

The song begins with a simple, repeated refrain:



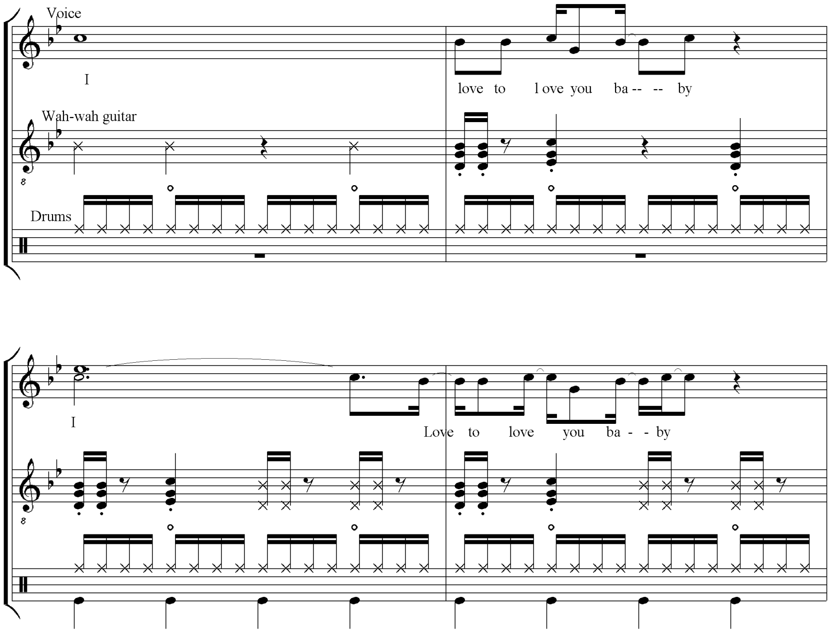
Example 260. *Love To Love You Baby,* vocal introduction.

The quality of the voice is important to the effect of this song. Summer sings softly with a breathy quality.[330] The accompaniment for this section is provided by sixteenth-note hi-hat figure:



Example 261. *Love To Love You Baby*, hi-hat accompaniment.

The sixteenth-note hi-hat rhythm has been discussed in detail as an indicator of the funk style first coming to international prominence in Isaac Hayes's *Theme From Shaft* (1972). Other funk ideas emerge in the song including muted and scratched guitar chords played with wah-wah effects pedal:



Example 262. *Love To Love You Baby,* rhythm and voice.

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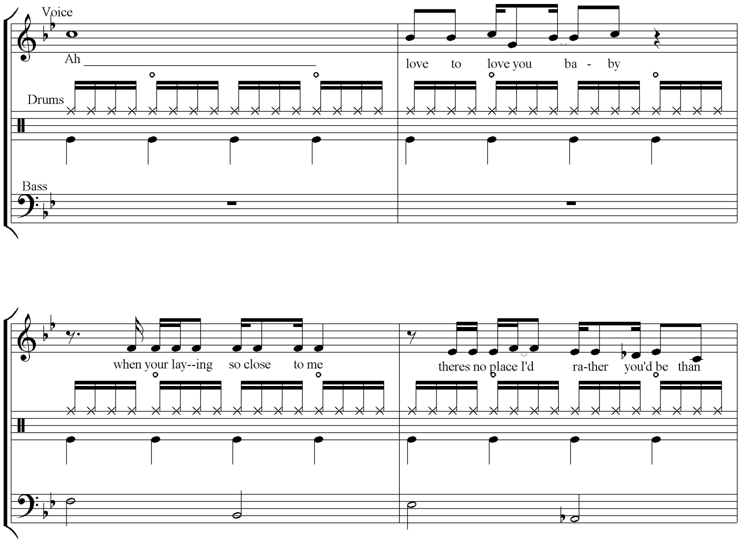
[330] It is difficult to say with accuracy if Summer sings softly or if there have been some

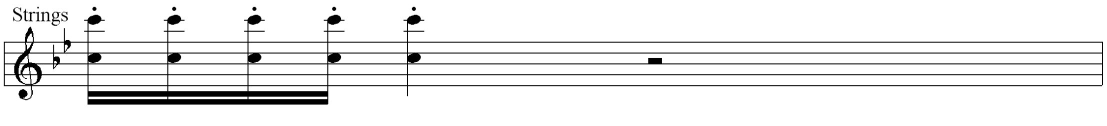
Alongside the hi-hat figure is a clear ‘four on the floor’ bass drum pattern which emphasises every beat in a metronomic fashion. The refrain continues while the different instrumental parts are added. It is not until bar 9 that the refrain is altered:


Voice
Ah
love to love you ba - by
Drums
Bass
when your lay--ing so close to me
theres no place I'd ra-ther you'd be than

Example 263. ***Love To Love You Baby,*** **bars 9 - 12.**

In bar 9 the first soft sensual groan emerges as a counterpoint to the ‘ah’. Bar 11 continues with ‘when you’re laying close to me’ but sung in a quiet, breathy whisper changing at the end of the phrase as the voice breaks. Once again, it is difficult to notate these timbral subtleties and their sonic content can be only inadequately described.

Accompanying the melody in *Love To Love You, Baby* is a short, repeated string figure:



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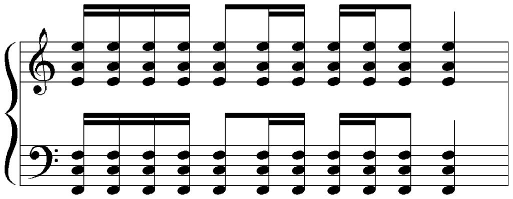
technological interventions in the recording studio.

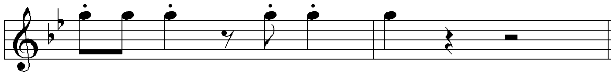
Example 264. ***Love To Love You Baby,*** **Strings.**

Strings are an important feature of disco and the repeated idea, like the hi-hat, was found in the *Theme From Shaft* where it was described as bringing a sense of urgency to the music:



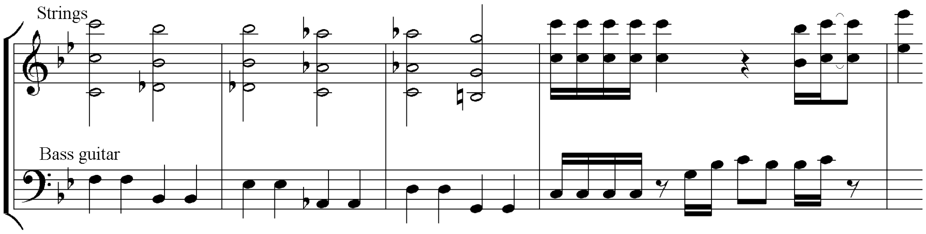
Example 265. ***Theme From Shaft,*** **orchestral chords.**

A similar, short, punctuated string idea can be heard in the O'Jays' *Backstabbers*:



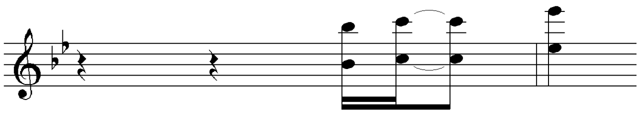
Example 266. ***Backstabbers*****, string chord.**

The strings are not typical of the funk sound. In addition to the punctuated, rhythmic strings, *Love To Love You* includes the lush string sound which is now viewed as a cliché of disco. In *Love To Love You*, the lush, high string sound provides the sonic texture for a harmonic sequence which utilises the cycle of fifths, in this case, F, B♭m, E♭7 , A♭, Dm$^{(\flat 5)}$, G, Cm^{7}:



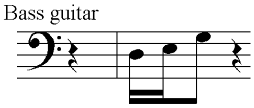
Example 267. ***Love To Love You,*** **cycle of fifths.**

This sequence is not characteristic of the funk style and in relation to the pieces studied in this etymophony, it would be considered unusual to use of this type of cyclic harmony. This sequence is much more typical of tin pan alley tunes or jazz standards and moves against the trend in funk to avoid harmonic progressions. In addition, the sequence is carefully measured almost removing the sense of groove. The rapid rhythm of the strings returns us to a more funkier feel with an octave – flat 7th bass riff and a short, syncopated string fragment:



Example 268. ***Love To Love You,*** **strings.**

The rising figure – flat seventh followed by a minor third, is a melodic pattern heard in *Theme From Shaft:*



Example 269. ***Theme From Shaft,*** **bass figure.**

In *Theme From Shaft,* the bass guitar figure announces the faster paced middle section bringing with it a sense of urgency and movement.

From these early songs, a number of musical ideas which may be style identifiers for disco. These musical ideas include:

- Diva vocals
- String stabs
- Lush Strings
- Simple bass lines (compared to funk)
- ¼ note bass and snare backbeat
- Sixteenth-note hi-hat
- Open Hi-hat sound
- Sensual or sexual vocal sound
- Latin percussion
- Clavinet sound
- The use of cyclic sequences

Some of these features, like the sixteenth-note figure have a strong identity with funk. Other features, such as the quarter note bass-snare backbeat are, for the most part, alien to funk as drummers generally preferred to use the sixteenth-note subdivision to create their rhythms. Etymologically, those ideas associated originally with funk can include the sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern, wah-wah and muted guitar, and open-closed hi-hat. Other features take on a prominence in these disco pieces. Using this information it would be possible to construct a table of musical features which showed those features which were etymologically derived from funk, and those which were rarely, if ever, found in funk but became associated with disco. The table could be constructed as follows:

Stylistic indicators

Funk ◄────► Disco

Open funk Hi-hat	16th note hi-hat	16th note bass /snare	Funk bass (ve/b7)	Funk Brass	Muted/scratch guitar	16th note guitar break	Wah-wah guitar	Latin Percussion	Riff based structure	Declamatory vocals	Synth bass/clavinet	Syth brass/melody	Diva vocals	Chord sequence	Hand claps	Drum Machine	Lush Strings	String stabs	Simple bass	Basssnare backbeat	Sensual/sexual vocal	Open disco hi-hat

Table 12. Funk-disco stylistic indicators.

As well as showing the main stylistic indicators for funk and disco drawn from *Lady Marmalade* and *Love To Love You*, the table has been constructed in such a way as to emphasise certain stylistic opposites (‘funk bass’ is opposite ‘simple bass’). Using this table we will be able to identify stylistic elements of songs with a view to determining those elements of funk which are influential in the development of disco. Analysis of these table will not only assist in our examination of the continuity between funk and disco but also identify those songs which act as significant points of departure by creating new musical codes.

Disco songs from 1975 to 1979 were selected from both the US and UK chart listings using McAleer (2001) and a number of artists and groups were selected on the basis that they feature in disco compilations. It was not possible, or necessary, to include all listings for a single artist in the same year and therefore only one song was selected where there were multiple releases.

The following table gives an explanation of the categories chosen, the funk works already discussed and the relationship (similarity or opposite) that appears in disco:

Funk Style indication	Comment	Disco style indicator
Open funk Hi-hat	Tight opening hi hat against disco's continually open hi-hat sound	Open disco hi-hat
16th note hi-hat	e.g. *Theme From Shaft* or sixteenth-note variant (*Superstition)*	
16th note bass /snare	Tower of Power style vs simple four beat rhythms	Bass-snare backbeat
Funk bass (ve/b^7)	Larry Graham/Bootsy Collins vs simple repeated notes	Simple bass
Funk Brass	JB horns vs synthesiser brass sound	Syth brass/melody (M)
Muted/scratch guitar	Jimmy Nolen/Alfonzo Kellum style (*Cold Sweat)*	
16th note guitar break	Open sixteenth-note rhythms	
Wah-wah guitar	e.g *Cloud Nine; Theme From Shaft*	
Latin Percussion	Includes rhythm instruments such as maracas, congas etc.	Latin Percussion
Synth bass/clavinet	Superstition	Synth bass/clavinet
Riff based structure	funk uses riff based structures but some disco uses harmonic sequences	Chord sequence
Declamatory vocals	Declamatory as in *Funky Broadway;* Diva as in *Love To Love You.*	Diva vocals
	Replaces live drummer found in funk	Drum Machine
	Usually a drum machine sound	Hand claps
	Lush string sound	Lush Strings
	As in *Love To Love You*	String stabs
	As in *Love To Love You*	Sensual/sexual vocal
		Drum machine sounds
		Hand claps
		Warm or high octave string sounds
		String stabs as in

Table 13. Funk-disco stylistic indicators explained

The sample group contains 40 songs which had some chart success in the UK or US between 1975 and 1979. On listening to each song, the musical characteristics were noted in tabular form. A shaded area indicates that a particular stylistic feature was present. Any deviation from the table of descriptions shown above will be discussed in the text. 1975 saw a number of disco songs reach the charts including *Lady*

Marmalade, Do the Hustle, and *Jive Talking.* Of the nine songs released in 1975, the following characteristics were noted:

1975 Funk◄——Style indicators ——►Disco

	Open funk Hi-hat	16th note hi-hat	16th note bass	Funk bass (ve/b7)	Funk Brass	Muted/scratch	16th note guitar	Wah-wah guitar	Latin Percussion	2 Bar riff	Declamatory	Synth bass	Syth brass	Diva vocals	Chord sequence	Hand claps	Drum Machine	Lush Strings	String stabs	Simple bass	¼ note bass/	Sensual/sexual	Open Disco Hi-
That's The Way (KC and the Sunshine Band)	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨			▨	▨													
Get Down Tonight (KC & Sunshine Band)	▨			▨	▨				▨	▨				▨								▨	
Lady Marmalade (LaBelle)	▨			▨	▨				▨	▨				▨								▨	
Do the Hustle (McCoy)	▨			▨		▨	▨		▨						▨			▨			▨		
Jive Talking (Bee Gees)	▨					▨		▨	▨			▨	▨		▨	▨				▨	▨		
You Sexy Thing (Hot Chocolate)		▨		▨				▨	▨									▨	▨		▨	▨	▨
Love To Love You Baby (Summer)		▨		▨						▨				▨	▨			▨	▨		▨	▨	
Never Can Say Goodbye (Gaynor)				▨										▨	▨		▨	▨		▨	▨		
I'm on Fire (5000 volts)		▨										▨		▨	▨			▨		▨			▨

Table 14. Funk/Disco style indicators 1975.

The overall table shows a fairly clear distinction between those songs using funk style indicators and with characteristic of disco music. *Lady Marmalade* has five funky features with only the diva voice and the sensual/sexual vocal sounds indicating a disco sound. Overall, songs by KC and the Sunshine Band show a strong stylistic leaning to funk and their live sound suggests that they keep the dance-funk ideas of earlier funk alive in their music. The songs with the greatest number of disco style indicators include Donna Summer's *Love To Love You Baby;* Gloria Gaynor's *Never Can Say Goodbye;* The Bee Gees' *Jive Talking;* and UK group, 5000 Volts' *I'm On Fire.*

Some songs introduce other features not associated with funk. Hot Chocolate have a very loose sounding hi-hat played with the cymbals slightly apart to produce a much different sound from the tighter hi-hat figure used in funk. In addition, there is an unusual guitar sound with the wah-wah creating a frequency sweep almost as if separate drums were being played across 16th notes.

Unlike KC and the Sunshine Band or The Meters (*Lady Marmalade),* the Bee Gees have no musical background in funk. The Bee Gees' entry into the disco music, *Jive Talking,* shows a studio based approach using heavy muted guitar sounds alongside deep resonant synthesised bass sounds. Aside from the open-closed hi-hat sound, the only intertextual reference to funk is in the sixteenth-note rhythm guitar heard in the chorus. Latin percussion, claps and a heavy 'four on the floor' appears in the arrangement of the chorus. There is a strong studio production to this song both in the arrangement and the types of sounds used by the group.

It would appear that the dance music of 1975 would seem to owe a debt to the funk sounds especially in using sixteenth-note hi-hat patterns , funk bass and muted guitar. Alongside these sounds, a number of changes includes the increasing use of strings, a simpler bass-snare backbeat rhythm and the increasing use of the female voice.

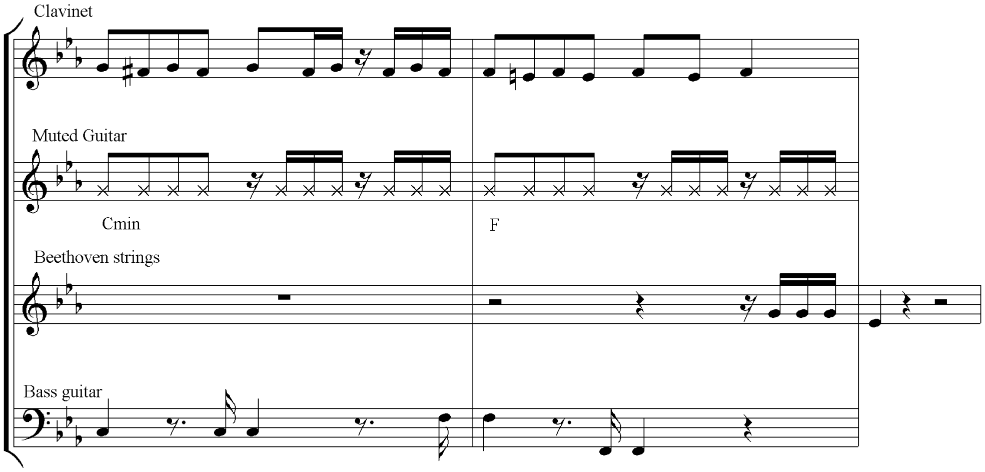
Eight songs were selected from disco music of 1976. These included music by Isaac Hayes and the Ohio Players along with the Bee Gees and Motown's Dianna Ross.

1976 Funk ◄ Style indicator ► Disco

	funk Hi-hat	16^{th} note hi-hat	16^{th} note bass /snare	Funk bass (ve/b7)	Funk Brass	Muted/scratch guitar	16^{th} note guitar break	Wah-wah guitar	Latin Percussion	Riff based structure	Declamatory vocals	Synth bass/clavinet	Syth brass/melody	Diva vocals	Chord sequence	Hand claps	Drum Machine	Lush Strings	String stabs	Simple bass	Basssnare backbeat	Sensual/sexual vocal	Disco machie hi-hat
Play That Funky Music (Wild Cherry)	■			■	■	■			■	■	■												
Love Rollercoaster (Ohio Players)	■	■			■	■	■		■									■			■		
Shake Your Booty (KC &SB)	■	■			■	■				■	■									■	■		
Disco Connection (Hayes)	■	■			■				■	■		■					■	■			■		
Love Hangover (Ross)		■	■	■		■			■	■				■				■				■	■
Movin' (Brass Connection)				■	■	■							■			■					■		
You Should be Dancin' (Bee Gees)							■		■	■		■		■				■		■	■		
A Fifth *of Beethoven*	■					■						■	■					■	■		■		

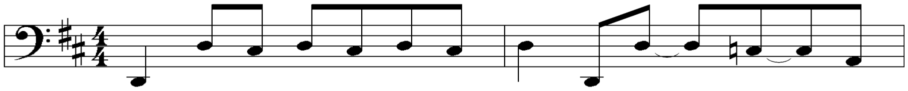
Table 15. Disco style indicators, 1976.

A similar picture emerges in the 1976 sample when compared to disco style indicators for 1975. Funk style indicators remain strong in all artists except the Bee Gees and Walter Murphy's *A Fifth Of Beethoven.* Murphy's song takes the opening as the fifth symphony as a basis for the riff and mixes the song with a disco feel combining clavinet, synthesiser melodies, string arrangements (in addition to the Beethoven string sound) and a simple backbeat. *A Fifth Of Beethoven* uses the opening of the symphony as a theme against which an eight note pattern on the drums along with a clavinet, organ and guitar.



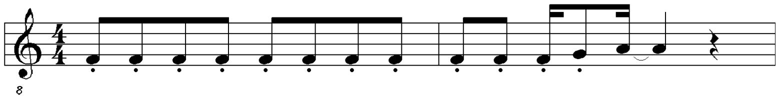
Example 270. ***A Fifth Of Beethoven*****, (clavinet).**

Although Table 15 shows *A Fifth Of Beethoven* as being largely outside the funk style, closer examination of the clavinet, bass and guitar part show a similarity to a number of stylistic indicators we have met in funk. The oscillating note on clavinet is melodically similar to Brown's melody in the bass part of *I Got You:*



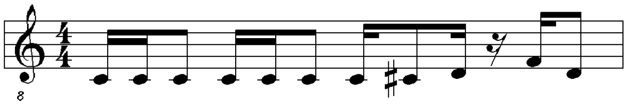
Example 271. ***I Got You*****, bass riff.**

The sixteenth-note, muted guitar is a prominent feature of proto-funk pieces such as *Cold Sweat* which also includes the scratch guitar sound on rhythm guitar. Of these two sounds, the scratch guitar is used more frequently in the proto-funk sound. The single note, muted sound was an important element in Brown's *Superbad* (1970):



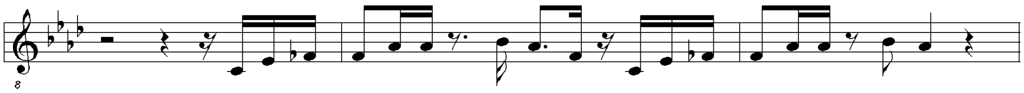
Example 272. ***Superbad,*** **muted guitar (single note).**

The single note guitar riff became a feature of Brown's style at during the early 70s and can also be heard on *Give it Up or Turn it Loose:*



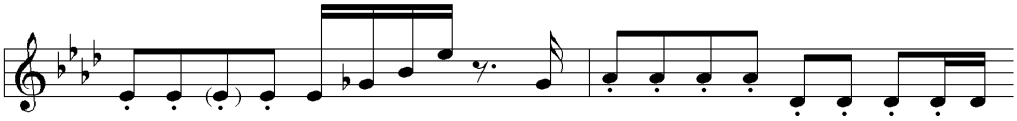
Example 273. ***Give It Up or Turn It Loose,*** **muted guitar riff.**

Other muted guitar riffs include the five note riff in *Pick up the Pieces:*



Example 274. ***Pick Up The Pieces*****, guitar riff.**

A combination of these repeated note figures and arpeggios figures are to be found in the faster tempo section of Ross's *Love Hangover:*



Example 275. ***Thank You,*** **muted and scratch guitar.**

The different approaches to muted guitar demonstrates the continuing popularity that the sound had from the 1970s funk until 1976. Its integration into the disco sound of *A Fifth Of Beethoven, Jive Talk,* and *That's The Way (I like It)* not only demonstrates a link between dico and earlier funk. The transfer of the muted guitar sound to clavinet is a similar process to that found in *Superstition* suggesting that the muted guitar sound had became a style identifier for disco.

From Table 16, the year 1977 would seem to represent a change in the way that the music is constructed. While earlier tables demonstrate that dance music of the time had several identifiable funk features, the table shows a much more open grid. The main features of the funk-disco style in 1977 is shown as a simple bass line and a riff-based approach to the composition. The pieces included in the 1977 survey include *Car Wash*; Heatwave's *Boogie Nights;* Donna Summer's *I Feel Love* and the humorous, *Ain't Gonna Bump No More (With No Big Fat Woman)* by Joe Tex .

1977 Funk ◄——— Style indicators ———► Disco

	Open funk Hi-hat	16th note hi-hat	16th note bass /snare	Funk bass (ve/b7)	Funk Brass	Muted/scratch guitar	16th note guitar break	Wah-wah guitar	Latin Percussion	Riff based structure	Declamatory vocals	Synth bass/clavinet	Syth brass/melody (M)	Diva vocals	Chord sequence	Hand claps	Drum Machine	Lush Strings	String stabs	Simple bass	Basssnare backbeat	Sensual/sexual vocal	Open disco hi-hat
Strawberry Letter 23 (Brothers Johnson)		■		■					■				■									■	
Ain't gonna Bump no more (Tex)		■		■	■					■											■	■	■
I'm your Boogie Man (KC & SB)					■	■				■										■	■		
Dazz (Brick)				■						■			■			■					■		
Car Wash (Rose Royce)				■				■		■						■		■			■	■	
Boogie Nights (Heatwave)						■			■	■			■			■				■	■	■	■
I Feel Love (Donna Summer)												■	■				■				■		

Table 16. Disco style indicators, 1977.

Of all the songs in the 1977 sample, the one with the greatest significance to the sound of disco was *I Feel Love* which uses a repeating pattern on a Moog synth bass part but also introduces a metallic percussion sound created, possibly on the drum machine. However the sound itself was created, an important aesthetic shift is represented by *I Feel Love*: the move from acoustic instruments to an electronic sound world of synthesiser sounds shaped by arpeggiators, drum machines, and filter sweeps. *I Feel Love* was produced by Giorgio Moroder and was the first chart hit with a synthesised backing track. Table 18 shows that the stylistic indicators found in *I Feel Love* represent a significant shift from funk. Summer's *I Feel Love* was created using electronic instruments in the studio environment but without any of the instruments normally found in funk. As such, producer Moroder may have achieve that moment of departure described in table one, where established funk codes become redundant as studio processes and production techniques dominate his working processes.

I Feel Good producer Giogio Moroder was not the only person developing a highly specialized studio technique. Quincy Jones produced The Brothers Johnson and their *Strawberry Letter 23* contains harpsichord sounds, backing singers, synthesiser sounds, and an instrumental section which includes a lengthy delayed sound to build up the texture. Heatwave were also to use synthesiser sounds in their song *Boogie Nights* while underpinning this development with Latin percussion and a strong bass line. The song also included a harp and soulful jazz guitar. Brick brought a jazz sensibility to the disco dance (Dazz was short for disco-jazz). To this sensibility Dazz brought jazz flute, complete with extended techniques such as singing while playing.[331]

By 1977, a range of sounds were being used in producing disco, some of these created by an innovative use of contemporary instrumental technology. The recurrent musical characteristics of the disco sound was the sixteenth-note hi-hat, muted guitar, lush strings and a solid rhythmic backbeat. Production techniques became more polished and bands such as Earth Wind and Fire produced very carefully crafted commercial arrangements of their songs. In 1978 the film *Saturday Night Fever* was released creating an international awareness of the New York disco scene and announcing disco's move from a subculture to the mainstream.

Table 17 shows the disco style indicators for 1978 and includes the Bee Gees' *Stayin' Alive* and *Night Fever* which featured in *Saturday Night Fever*:

1978 Funk ◄—— Style indicators ——► Disco

	Open funk Hi-hat	16th note hi-hat	16th note bass/snare	Funk bass (ve/b7)	Funk Brass	Muted/scratch	16th note guitar	Wah-wah guitar	Latin Percussion	Riff based structure	Declamatory vocals	Synth bass/clavinet	Syth brass/melody	Diva vocals	Chord sequence	Hand claps	Drum Machine	Lush Strings	String stabs	Simple bass	Basssnare backbeat	Sensual/sexual	Open disco hi-hat
Le Freak (Chic)	■	■			■	■				■	■					■		■					
I love You (Summer)	■	■						■	■				■					■	■	■	■		
Dance Dance Dance (Chic)		■				■				■	■							■	■	■	■		
Fantasy (EWF)		■			■	■									■			■	■		■		
Boogie Oogie Oogie (Taste of Honey)		■			■	■	■			■		■	■			■							
Love Don't Live Here Any More (Rose Royce)	■	■			■							■	■				■	■			■		
Night Fever (Bee Gees)	■	■				■		■					■	░	■			■		■	■		
Stayin' Alive (Bee Gees)						■			■			■		░				■		■	■		
YMCA (Village People)									■			■	■		■	■		■		■	■		

Table 17. Disco style indicators, 1978.

It becomes difficult to generalize stylistic indicators in the music of 1978. For Vincent the success of disco relates to the 'gullibility of the audience' and the gradual inroads

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331 Ian Anderson was also using this technique in Jethro Tull. Anderson's extended solo on Bourée

made by 'white groups' into the 'black charts'. Vincent's distaste for disco is therefore aimed at the musical and political level for what he sees as a 'lack of soulful vocalising' (Vincent, 1995: 209). In effect, for Vincent at least, disco was the antithesis of those musical, cultural and political values that funk represented. The problem with this type of argument is that it uses an inappropriate set of values to make a judgement. Funk had begun to change, just as it had in 1970. However, the change was paralleled with a social change which, perhaps, was represented by *Saturday Night Fever.*

The 'fever' of 1978 was set around the fantasy of the dance floor. The Bee Gees' *Night Fever,* Chic's *Dance, Dance, Dance* and Earth Wind and Fire produced *Fantasy* and *Boogie Wonderland.* Although disco was distributed internationally, *Saturday Night Fever* had the effect of bringing the music to a wider audience. The effect was such that by 1979 disco tracks were being released by commercially aware rock artists including Rod Stewart (*Do You Think I'm Sexy,* 1979*)* and The Rolling Stones (*Miss You,* 1978), while Herbie Hancock (*I Thought I Was You,* 1978) and Donald Byrd (*Sexy Dancer,* 1982*)* introduced disco beats to their musical repertoire.

By 1979, the disco fever not was not only reflected in the range of sounds being used by other genres such as jazz and rock, but by the more uniform style that was beginning to emerge. Table 18 shows the songs sampled for 1979. Musically, the funk

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included singing while playing, flutter tonguing and lengthy improvisation. (*Living in the Past,*1972. (Chrysalis 2106) elements such as brass, muted guitar, wah-wah guitar and the tight hi-hat sound had almost disappeared from the disco hits of that year. Three songs from the sample retain strong elements of the funk style. Chic's *Good Times,* Michael Jackson's *Get On The Floor,* and Sister Sledge's *We are Family* all contain strong funk bass lines including examples of slap bass on *We Are Family* and *Get On The Floor.*

1979 Funk ◄ Style indicators ► Disco

	Open funk Hi-hat	16th note hi-hat	16th note bass /snare	Funk bass (ve/b7)	Funk Brass	Muted/scratch	16th note guitar	Wah-wah guitar	Latin Percussion	Riff based	Declamatory vocals	Synth bass/clavinet	Syth brass/melody	Diva vocals	Chord sequence	Hand claps	Drum Machine	Lush Strings	String stabs	Simple bass	Basssnare backbeat	Sensual/sexual	Open disco hi-hat
We Are Family. (Sister Sledge)	▨		▨	▨	▨		▨		▨	▨				▨			▨	▨			▨		
I Will Survive. (Gaynor)		▨			▨	▨			▨						▨			▨		▨	▨		▨
Good Times (Chic)	▨	▨			▨	▨				▨	▨					▨		▨	▨		▨		
Get on the Floor (Jackson)	▨	▨		▨	▨	▨										▨		▨					
I was Made for Dancing (Garrett)		▨			▨										▨			▨		▨	▨		
Oops Upside you Head (Gap Band)					▨				▨	▨		▨				▨					▨	▨	▨
Boogie-Wonderland (EWF)				▨									▨					▨			▨		
Strut Your Funky Stuff. (Frantique)											▨	▨	▨			▨				▨	▨		▨

Table 18. Disco style indicators, 1979.

5.3 Disco as a socio-musical continuum

The valorisation of funk and the denigration disco represented in the writings of Vincent (1995), George (1998) and Thompson (2001) is partly fuelled by recognising that the values constructed alongside the development of funk were being eroded by the move towards disco. Disco presented an alternative construction of social and political identity which presented a threat to existing value systems. For a segment of society, disco had meaning and, as Frith (1996) suggests:

> [t]o grasp the meaning of a piece of music is to hear something not simply present to the ear. It is to understand a musical culture, to have a 'scheme of interpretation'. For sounds to be music we need to know how to hear them; we need 'knowledge not just of musical forms but also of rules of behaviour in musical settings.' The 'meaning' of music describes, in short, not just an interpretative but a social process: musical meaning is not inherent…. in the text (Frith, 1996:249-250).

If Frith is correct, then understanding the relationship between funk and disco cannot be done by study of the musical text alone. However, as a scheme of interpretation a study of the musical text may be a better place to begin to study the relationship between funk and disco. Studying the musical text would, in the first place, allow us to evaluate judgements which see disco music such as *Boogie, Oogie, Oogie* as 'the epitome of the endless, brainless dance track'.[332] Stylistically, *Boogie, Oogie, Oogie* is a transitional piece which intersects many elements of funk and disco. The threat Vincent perceives in *Boogie, Oogie, Oogie* is, as Frith suggests, not inherent in the text, but in the interpretive processes which construct social identities around music. My own strategy in discussing the relationship between funk and disco is to place the music at the foreground. This is not to attempt at a formalistic or essentialist reading of the text, but presents a way to examine how musical relationships unfold over time rather than attempt to resolve a potentially irresolvable ideological dichotomy.

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[332] (Vincent, 1996:209).

In my representation of the flow of musical ideas,[333] any point of departure is preceded by a point of arrival. Between these two theoretical junctures lies a transition period which may span several years as producers, in the wider sense of the term, distil those musical codes and present them in ways which are meaningful in the socio-economic environment in which supports them. Musically, this brief survey suggests that with the exception of Moroder's *I Feel Love,* stylistic indicators of funk were retained in most disco music.

Of all the pieces examined in this survey of dance music, the one to show the greatest stylistic departure from funk is the Moroder's *I Feel Love* (1977). By concentrating all the production efforts on synthesis technology and by using early programming techniques, multi-tracking and studio effects, Moroder was able to create a substantial shift in the way music was produced. In doing so, he reinforced a new set of aesthetics which circulated around the opportunities presented by synthesis technology. Moroder's innovative techniques on *I Feel Love* can also be understood as part of an individual continuum which, in the present study, can be traced from *Love To Love You Baby* (1974) to *I Feel Love. Love To Love You Baby* demonstrated a number of funk stylistic identifiers including the use of scratch guitar, sixteenth note hi-hat, Latin percussion and the clavinet. The stylistic transition between *Love To Love You Baby* with its residual elements of funk, to the new departures presented in *I Feel Love* can be measured in years rather than months. The process involved in stylistic change has, in the case of slap bass guitar techniques for instance, taken place over a similar time-span. Acknowledging Moroder as a point of departure in the study of funk and disco does not mean that his ideas were taken up immediately. The stylistic comparisons for 1978 and 1979 do not indicate that electronic disco music became an overnight success but that the process of absorbing new aesthetic ideas, learning new performance techniques and developing appropriate studio techniques takes time.

An examination of the process of intertextual change does not provide any evidence to support the polarized ideological attack on disco. Viewed from a musical perspective, it is possible to see that stylistic change takes place over time. The continuity between older and newer stylistic formations may easily be obscured by the ideological thinking that supports or denigrates the music. Musical eveidence would sugest that the difference is not as clear cut as the ideologues would have us believe and from that, we may consider reviewing our understanding of disco. In his 'Defence of Disco' Dyer was able to refute many of the arguments against dance music of the late 1970s, but an etymophonic study allows for a different defence which, at least in terms of the evidence presented by the music, is as value free as our choice of music makes it. From this empirical starting point, we may find that we are able to take a more pragmatic approach to social change.

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[333] See figure 1, Flow of musical ideas on page 37

Part 6. Conclusion

6.1. General summary and key points

The primary aim of this thesis was to present an etymophony of funk which would trace the development of funk from the 1950s to 1979. In order to achieve this aim, an etymophonic approach has been taken which foregrounds the musical text treating the music as a primary source to trace the development of the funk style. The objective of such a study was to contribute to a better understanding of a genre on which, to date, there has been relatively little musicological investigation.

Underlying the etymophonic approach is the idea that any style develops as part of a process. To understand this process, a framework was created to represent the flow of musical ideas. This model attempted to map out the way that music developed noting in particular ‘points of arrival’ and ‘points of departure’. By ‘points of arrival’ I have noted those codes that consolidate and stabilise stylistic formations. In contrast, ‘points of departure’ represent stylistic intersections acting as a catalyst for new musical codes or stylistic formations. These ‘points’ in the flow of musical ideas are recognised as being contingent on a variety of socio-political and economic factors. A further model (Figure 8, p. 309) was developed to explain stylistic development in terms of intertextual relationships. Studying these intertextual relationships required the development of a second conceptual model to provide a framework for understanding the movement of musical ideas at an individual, group, local, regional, national and international level.

The scope of the study was restricted to music recorded between 1950 and 1979. The period was divided into three phases reflecting the musical processes outlined in the conceptual framework (figure 1) and include the ‘proto-funk’, ‘confluence’ and ‘diffusion’. The proto-funk phase deals with early funk formations from the 1950s to the 1960s and examines claims that the funk style developed from New Orleans. It is argued that the music of James Brown during the mid-1960s makes an important contribution to establishing a proto-funk style in songs such as *Papa’s Got A Brand New Bag and Cold Sweat.*[334]

Brown’s work on the proto-funk provided a catalyst for his own continued exploration of funk elements and the contributions of a range of other musicians between 1966 and 1969. In addition to the stylistic features from the proto-funk, several other elements established themselves during the late sixties including the use of wah-wah pedal on guitar, the introduction of one-chord jams, and an introduction of the sixteenth note hi-hat.

The period from 1970-1972 is considered as one in which elements of the funk style were consolidated and redefined. A number of artists including James Brown, Sly Stone, Larry Graham, Stevie Wonder and Isaac Hayes provided a focus for this phase in tracing the stylistic development of funk. It is argued that the early 1970s presents a watershed for establishing a recognisable funk styles. In addition to a range of stylistic innovations, the early 1970s marked a period of wider, international recognition through the association of funk music with blaxploitation films, especially *Shaft.* New meanings also arose through the association with film subjects around African-American urban landscapes and detective themes.

The final section in the etymophony examines how funk, as an established style, was assimilated into a number of other genres including jazz, soul, and pop and also how it acquired new meanings through the work of George Clinton. For the most part, the intersection of styles are conceptualised as points of arrival within the framework created to explain the flow of musical ideas. The one significant point of departure for this phase comes in the increasing use of recording and synthesis technology. Utilising new technology proved to be an important point of departure for the development of disco which, in spite of a substantial critical disapproval, can be considered as part of a continuum of the funk style.

From these initial findings, a number of methodological, theoretical and musicological issues arise which require further consideration. These issues will be outlined in the following section (7.2).

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334 For a more detailed summary of findings extracted from the main text, see appendix 1.

6.2. General Observations and implications

Previous histories of funk along with general histories of popular music have generally focused their narrative on personalities or politics rather than music as sound. An etymophonic approach takes a different view and focuses on the musical text instead of paramusical or simplistic linear narratives that only partially explain the emergence and development of a style. By focusing on the musical text we privilege the musical sound rather than the personality or ideological associations.

The problem has been succinctly put by Bowman (1995) when he suggests that to date:

> ….there has been no academic musicological work… that has attempted to ferret out the component parts of a given genre through an analysis of a sizeable body of repertoire. There is a need for such a work if popular music scholars are going to begin to understand in concrete terms what is meant by terms such as rock, soul, funk, … and so on (Bowman 1995: 285).

Although writing from the perspective of 1995, it is noteworthy that some 10 years after Bowman's article, little has changed. The review of literature provided in the main body of this thesis shows no substantial addition to the academic literature on funk since 2000. The reluctance of the musicological community to take up the challenge presented by Bowman is outside the scope of this present study. This etymophony makes a positive attempt to address the situation through the analysis of a sizeable body of repertoire.

Creating, as Bowman suggests, a concrete understanding of ‘terms such as…funk’ can be achieved by investigating musical elements. By tracing the development of funk it has been possible to map out the formation of these elements chronologically and gain an insight into the intertextual relationships that exist within a musical style. The methodology adopted for this study is based on the work of Tagg which, using the concept of musematic analysis, contains a number of analytic techniques designed to investigate intertextual relationships.

Tagg’s method allows for the identification of small meaningful units of musical code whose development can be traced by examining social networks that exist amongst musicians. The outcome of such an approach would be to challenge existing approaches to creating the historical past. Although some literature points towards the possibility of creating a history based around textual concerns (Walser, 1996: 63-74), no sustained discussion of a musical genre exists.

A sustained investigation into intertextual relationships would extend the body of literature on the musical text significantly. Undertaking such an investigation would not only provide a clearer understanding of musical exchange networks, it would also provide a critical view of current approaches for dividing up the musical field. Through this etymophony it has been possible to demonstrate that textural interchange is a fluid and dynamic process which is not bounded by semantic or ideological discourse. Middleton (1990) suggests that:

> Conventional music history's delineation of the period through rigid Classical/Romantic periodization or 'great man' physiognomies hides a complex web of interactions, as old and new elements were articulated into a variety of patterns and meanings (Middleton, 1990: 13).

Etymological research would provide a systematic approach to map the 'complex web of interactions' by investigating the flow of musical ideas.

Investigating musical ideas often results in an attempt to essentialise a genre of style by creating a catalogue of elements. While such an approach provides a convenient way of generalising a style, it does not acknowledge the complexity of the interactive process. An alternative approach would be to consider funk as an 'open concept' which makes allowance for the range of approaches to funk over time. While elements of the funk were in place in the early 1960s, it was not until the 1970s that these stylistic indicators begin to be recycled by a wider range of musicians. The difficulty in applying stylistic definitions is that these fail to take into account individual styles of performers which have an impact on group style. Bass guitarists such as Rocco Prestia, for instance, did not use the slap bass technique which is often cited as a stylistic indicator of funk. Using the principle of an open concept, funk becomes a much more approachable idea which allows for a wide range of individual, group and national variations.

While conventional histories refer to James Brown as the 'Godfather of Funk', his personal development relied heavily on the input of individual musicians such as Maceo and Melvin Parker, Jimmy Nolan, Bernard Odum, Bootsy Collins, and other members of his band. There is a need to account for these individual musicians in the development of funk. While Brown and other band leaders may have been important catalysts for the development of funk, the intertextual relationships established by individual members of the band were of significant importance. Melvin Parker introduced the open hi-hat sound to what is known as the 'James Brown Sound' as part of his personal vision of what the music should sound like. The network of musicians reflected wider intertextual networks and rehearsal and performance opportunities were places where these different musical codes would come together. Through negotiation and musical discourse, ideas were shared, included and excluded in the continually evolving musical framework.

The etymophonic outlined in this thesis is not at the expense of socio-political, economic or cultural associations. Models created for understanding intertextual relationships acknowledge those paramusical features which give meaning to the text. Etymophonic investigation indicates that different values may co-exist around the same musical framework. Disco provides an interesting example where the music was both denigrated and valorised by opposing sectors of society. Detailed investigation of the textual content reveals that the musical differences between funk and disco may not have been extreme as the two styles share similar musical elements.

6.3 Further Research

While the present etymophony raises a number of implications for the way we approach the investigation of a style or genre, there are a number of areas which would require further research. Some of these areas are specific to the present study but others recognise the wider research required to develop our understanding of a style of genre.

One area which could not be given additional space in this study, was the impact that technology has on the sound of funk. Although aspects of the production techniques were discussed in the analysis of *I Feel Good, Cloud Nine*, *I Got Money, Superstition* and *Love To Love You Baby,* this is an area which deserves further study. The way that technology determines our listening becomes of greater importance during the 1970s and potentially undermines the influence of the jam session. A related area of study would be to focus on the instrument technology which developed during the study period. In particular, it would be useful to investigate the development of guitar technology and to assess the impact that this had on creating the wah-wah sound, the muted guitar sound and also the slap bass sound.

During the main discussion of funk it has been noted that from time to time songwriters, bands and producers sought to reflect something of the social and political world in which funk developed. The suggestion here would be to examine the musical code to consider how this might reflect contemporary socio-political activity. Baraka (1963) suggests that:

> The negro's music changed as he changed, reflecting shifting attitudes or consistent attitudes within changed context. And it is why the music changed that seems most important to me (Baraka, 1963: 153).

Baraka's suggestion is that if we follow the changing values in music, we will discover a great deal about social conditions. Some of these values have been found in the use of lyrics to songs such as *Funky Broadway*, *Cloud Nine* and later songs by Parliament but very little has been examined on the way that the music reflects the changing social context.

The sample list is ethnocentrically determined and includes pieces taken from the African-American tradition. While this is understandable in the proto-funk phase, as the internationalisation of funk meant that other cultures began to shape their own stylistic interpretation of the style. Future research in this area may lead to a better understanding of the intertextual network which supported musicians such as Fela Kuti. Intertextual research would also allow for investigation of the possible links between funk and Afro-beat.[335]

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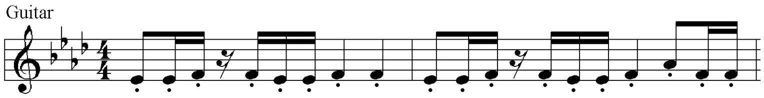
[335] See http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/world/reviews/kuti_expensive.shtml for further information. An increasing number of compilation recordings are being produced linking funk with Africa. See Armstrong's review of *Ghana Soundz: Afro-Beat, Funk and Fusion in 70s Ghana* on http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/world/reviews.

A final area for research would be into the nature of the groove and how our bodies respond to funk music. Keil (1994) called for a new aesthetic of the groove to be developed. Recent research into neurology combined with physiology and psychology along with our developing knowledge of how the brain works, may provide a way of theorising and understanding why we groove. One of the central aesthetic principles of funk, and perhaps its most identifiable musical characteristic, is that it can create a physical response in the performer and in the listener. Much of this is an area for further research but we may find that understanding meaning in funk may require investigation of what Pressing (2002) and Iyer (2002) refer to as ‘embodied sound’. Middleton (2000a) has discussed the need for a theory of gesture which would allow us to understand groove based musics in a much clearer way.

6.4 Final thoughts

The initial stimulus for this study came from analysing the muted guitar sound which accompanies the Crusaders song, *Street Life*:



Example 276. *Street Life,* guitar riff.

My inability to trace the development of sound and therefore to explore its meaning as a musical code was of concern to me. Having trace the journey, at least in part, of this musical code from James Brown’s *Cold Sweat* (1967) to the Crusaders’ *Street Life* (1979) has opened up further lines of enquiry into how this stylistic element found its way into funk and where it came from. Although the muted sound of the guitar goes back further than 1967, this was the first proto-funk record to feature this particular device so prominently. The difference between 1967 and 1979 is not, however, simply between the newness of the idea in *Cold Sweat* and the reworking of the feature in *Street Life.* The difference between the two relate significantly to the way that funk had changed over a 12 year period. By 1979, creating funk had become a much more measured, conceptualised process which seems to have lost much of the initial energy which came from the jam. In the late 1960s, as in the early 1970s, each musician brought with him a different part of the funk texture. Nolen, the guitarist on *Cold Sweat,* played a muted part whereas the scratch guitar part on the same track was played by Alfonzo Kellum. As the musicians changed, so did the music and the individuality of the proto-funk tracks were generated from the collective creative process. Listening to *Street Life* now, much of this energy seems to be lost and a new aesthetic quality emerges which may be the subject of future etymophonic study.

For the present study, the one aesthetic quality which remains unexplored is that of the groove. Much of this study has explored groove as a rhythm but groove extends further than this to encompass feel. It should be understood that not all rhythms groove in the same way as funk. Different cultures and societies produce different grooves and funk is no exception. The realisation that there are alternative ways of understanding rhythm and groove allows us an opportunity to reflect critically on our own concepts and the processes that formed them. In examining the funk groove we are able to identify various syncopated, interlocking patterns which are usually represented around a sixteenth-note rhythmic subdivision. While such a discussion is useful to us as musicologists we might easily forget that these same patterns, in a funk context, make us move and in moving we participate in the music.

Recognition of our varied responses to music is a relatively new area for the study of popular music. Moore (2003) suggests that analysis might be broadened not only to include ideas about the sound, but the experience of music itself. Many people, he suggests:

> experience music…*simply in order to have been part of the experience that was that music.* It is thus, at root, the experience which is subject to interpretation' (2003: 6).

The experience of music and our participation perhaps offers a rationale for our need for different types of music. Our ways of organising our experiences are different with different genres offering alternative ways of participation. General definitions of the funk groove are generally discussed in terms of the interplay of interlocking rhythms over repetitive harmonic patterns.[336] In addition to the rhythmic aspects of funk are particular sounds such as the slap bass, open and closed sixteenth note hi-hat patterns and the scratch guitar which became synonymous with the style during the 1970s.[337]

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[336] See Brackett, David: 'Funk', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [01.01.2003), <http://www.grovemusic.com> and Stewart (2000) for more detailed definitions.

[337] Although there may have been precursors, the slap sound of Larry Graham was captured in *Thank You Falettinme be Mice Elf Agin* (1970), which along with the open and closed hi-hat sound from the theme tune to *Shaft* (1972) became stylistic identifiers for the period. The muted or scratch guitar sound of Jimmy Nolan and Alfonzo Kellum found its way into the sound of funk in James Brown's *Cold Sweat* (1967).

However, none of these musical attributes account for the ability to make people move, groove or feel ‘funky’.

Keil and Feld discuss the implications of groove and movement by asking if an aesthetic must ‘be exclusively verbal’ and discuss the ‘conversation’ which exists between dancers and musicians. (1994: 57). The implication of this is that we would recognise a particular aesthetic not by discussion, but through participation. Kool and the Gang would also seem to agree with Keil and Feld when they suggest that:

> You know it, when you’re dancing,
> You show it, when you move, move, move,
> You know it, when you’re dancing,
> You show it, as you have to move across the floor.

Neurologically, physically, socially and emotionally, we are ‘programmed’ to move and to respond to movement; it is this human characteristic is what draws many of us to experience music. Songs such as *Funky Broadway* (1967), *Tighten Up* (1968), *Everything I do Gohn Be Funky (From Now On)* (1969), *Cissy Strut* (1969), *Strut Your Funky Stuff* (1979), *Get Down On It* (1981), *You Can Do It* (2000) are only a few of the many songs that, in different ways, celebrate an aesthetic of the groove.

There may be some who wonder why it is so important to trace these musical codes and they would be right to do so. Yet as a species, we are fascinated by codes and what they tell us about ourselves. In 1990, the international science community began

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what has been termed ‘The Human Genome Project’ whose goal was the complete mapping and understanding of all the genes of human beings.[338] Thirteen years later the map of the human genome is now complete and post sequencing projects are being undertaken that will help us understand who we are as complex living systems.

What the genome project will not tell us is why we use musical codes to create a sense of ourselves, to express deep-felt emotions or to experience something that makes us fundamentally human. The reluctance of musicology to engage with the fundamental building blocks of music means that we continue to resort to ideology, mythology and received wisdom to explain who we are. An etymophonic approach has the potential to disentangle us from those ideological, mythical and epistemological ideas which may, ultimately, cloud our judgement. My hope is that in presenting an etymophony of funk, it adds to the body of knowledge which will eventually help us understand more about our music, the relationships we have with the music and in the process, something more about ourselves.

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[338] For further information see, http://www.genome.gov/12011238

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Discography

Discographical information is presented with singer or band first followed by the dater of the original release. Individual singers have been presented as surname followed by first name; bands have been listed using the first name of the band other than 'the'. Italicised titles indicate that the original song has been quoted; titles in inverted commas indicate that the recording has been sourced from a compilation album. Where it has been possible to access the original recording, the full recording catalogue is given. The growth of internet provision has meant that researchers now have access to a huge library of material. Where material has been downloaded (legally through a UK internet provider) the source album has been referenced but without a catalogue number. In this way, the Bee Gees' *Jive Talking* is referenced as:

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This indicates that it has been possible to access the original recording. In this case, *Jive Talking* was available as part of a compilation released in 2004. Release dates are indicated in brackets after label information.

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The Roots of Funk Vol 3. 1993 (Rhino R2 71433)

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CD2 *The Pioneers* (P1210)
CD3 *The Hit Makers* (P1211)
CD4 *Hip Shakin' mamas, Crooners and Shouters* (P1212)

The Ultimate Soul Collection: 45 Original Soul Classics. 1995 compilation. (Warner Music UK Ltd. LC4281/2)

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Video/DVD

The Lynx pulse advert (2003) can be seen at http://www.visit4info.com/details.cfm?adid=7658

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Appendix 1

Summary of stylistic elements for each period.

The following summary is derived from analysis of sample pieces examined in the main body of the etymophony.

Proto-funk

Findings from the analysis of Brown's music indicate that his main contribution to the proto-funk style during the first half of the 1960s included:

- Establishing the blues-based jam as an essential part of the collective creative process
- Developing a sixteenth-note rhythmic framework to replace (or modify) shuffles and even eighths-note rhythms
- A focus on the groove as the central aesthetic of the piece
- A move towards an open contrapuntal texture of ensemble playing which includes the use of hocket techniques
- A development of blues-based harmonies to include V^9 chords
- Prominent use of open hi-hat cymbals adding to the linear texture
- Prominent use of the dampened or scratch guitar sound as part of the contrapuntal rhythmic texture
- The possibility of changing the groove within a song

Brown's work on the proto-funk provided a catalyst for his own exploration of funk and for the contributions of a range of other musicians studies between 1966 and 1969 included the following stylistic elements:

- Sixteenth-note hi-hat patterns become more frequent
- Wah-wah guitar
- Modal one-chord jams
- V^{9th} chord established as a stylistic identifier

- Continuation of scratch guitar rhythmic layer
- Changes of grooves within songs for expressive purposes

In addition to these stylistic identifiers, two other features were identified from the analysis sample:

- A increasing influence of studio production techniques on timbre
- Social conditions and political issues reflected in the lyrics

Consolidation and refinement, (1970-1974)

The stylistic elements to emerge from the sample of pieces discussed between 1970 and 1974 include:

- The foregrounding of the bass guitar as a driving rhythmic force in the rhythmic lock
- Introduction of the slap-bass technique
- The development of octave, minor 7th figures in the bass
- Introduction of clavinet to the range of timbres
- Refinement of the concept of 'the one'
- Sixteenth note rhythms become distributed throughout the texture
- Continued development of the single note scratch guitar, often in combination with wah-wah pedal
- Introduction of contemporary studio techniques in the creation of funk recordings

In addition, the early 1970s marked a period of wider, international recognition through the association of funk music with blaxploitation films, especially *Shaft.* New meanings also arose through the association with film subjects around African-American urban landscapes and detective themes which were to continue into the latter part of the 1970s.

Diffusion (1975-1979)

These musical ideas included established elements of funk including:

- sixteenth note hi-hat rhythm
- octave, minor 7th intervallic patterns in the bass guitar
- contrapuntal rhythmic textures used to create the ‘rhythmic lock’
- continuing use of wah-wah guitar and scratch or muted guitar to add to the rhythmic counterpoint

Glossary of terms

Anaphone (Tagg: 1991, *neol.*)

A museme of museme compound acting as a stylised homology for paramusical sond, amusical movement and paramusical touch. These categories are divided into:
Sonic anaphone: (paramusical sound)
Kinetic anaphone: (amusical movement)
Tactile anaphone: (paramusical touch)

Articulation (Theory of)

Hall (1981) used the term 'articulate' to examine the process by which relations of dominance and subordination are articulated in class societies through struggle. Gramsci also discussed the 'principle of articulation'. Middleton uses the theory to describe and understand the *relationships* which structhre the cultural field. For Middleton (1990):

> The theory of articulation recognizes the complexity of cultural fields. It preserces a relative autonomy for cultural and ideological elements… but also insists that those combinatory patterns that are actually constructed do mediate deep, objective patterns in socio-economic formation, and that the mediation takes place *in struggle*: the classes fight to articulate together consituents of the cultural repertoire in particulat ways so that they are organized in terms of principles or sets of values determed by the position and interests of the class in the prevailing mode of production. (Middleton, 1990: 9)

Boogie Woogie

Boogie-woogie was essentially a piano music which developed in the 1930s and was particularly associated with cities such as Chicago, Kansas and New York where it became linked with the craze for swing music. At this time, the music was associated with Peter Johnson, Big Joe Turner, Albert Ammons, Jimmy Yancey and the connection with swing can be found in the music of Tommy Dorsey and Count Basie. In the late 1940s boogie-woogie became a style of playing blues and remained and enduring element of blues performance right into Rock 'n' Roll where pianists such as Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis used the form.

Baadasss cinema.

Named after "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasss Song" , (Peebles, 1971) baadasss cinema is a sub-genre of blaxplotiation movies (see blaxploitation).

Backbeat

In simple terms, the backbeat usually refers to the second and fourth beats of drum rhythm in 4/4 time. In popular music, the backbeat is usually heard as a snare drum beat. Tamlyn's study of backbeat concentrates on music of the 1950s where its effect was an important part of the groove. The backbeat can also be played by chord instruments including the guitar. See Tamlyn's study of backbeat in rock 'n' roll.

Blaxploitation

Blaxploitation refers to a genre of films created during the early 1970s. Although these films were created by African-Americans and proved to be popular, the images portrayed negative stereotypes from the urban city. 'Sweetback's Baadasss Song' was the first widely released film made entirely with black cast and crew. Its subject revolved around the seedy world of pimps, prostitutes, urban ghetto culture and crooked 'cops'.

Codes (semiotic)

The concept of code is funamental in semiotics and the production and interpretation of texts depends on the ezistnece (and recognition) of the of codes or conventions for communication. Codes organize signs into meaningful sustems which correlate signifiers and signifieds.

Contrapuntal

See Rhythmic Counterpoint.

Episodic Marker

A term from Tagg to indicate musematic material which is used to 'mark' the movement from one musical episode to another. These could include drum fills before the chorus, sus4-V7 sequences or the introduction of horns or strings to highlight the structural change.

Etymophony (Tagg, *neol* 1994)

'The study of the origin of an item of sonic signification' (Tagg, 2003: 806).

Feel

The terms feel and groove present particular problems for the study of music because they are generally used in an imprecise way. Feel is an open concept that some musicians use to talk about and understand particular performance practices. All music has a 'feel' which describes the physical or emotional sensation which we, as individuals, remember from a particular performance event. In this way, to have a concept of a particular 'feel' suggests that there has been some engagement with that particular feel in the past. When we talk of a swing feel, to know and understand that particular meaning comes from having 'felt' the music. In this way, the participatory 'imprint' is similar to smell or touch. To remember the smell of ammonia, you have to experience it, or something similar; to remember the feel of velvet, you have to have experienced it. From these tactile and olfactory memories comes our ability to understand when someone says, 'this smells like ammonia' or 'this leaf feels like velvet'. These examples represent sensory experiences which have been internalised and can be recalled or, if not recalled, can resurface as a result of some form of association. . In the same way to understand or associate a 'swing feel' we have to have experienced it in some way in order that we can recall something of the sensation it created.

Once the originating reference has been 'imprinted' on our memory, we are able to recall that particular feel. A performing musician may have a good feel for swing, but finds himself unable to play reggae. Listening to a recording, it is possible to identify with and participate in a particular feel (often by moving the body, but not always). Sometimes, where an unfamiliar feel is heard, then the listener may be unaffected by that song. It may take several listenings over a longer period of time before a feel is absorbed sufficiently to develop a concept of feel which allows the listener to 'participate' effectively.

Musicians talk of laid-back and on-top feels, of slow feel, funky feels, and numerous others. In all cases, they are creating an approximation of the feeling they experienced and share with others. This shared feeling allows for musicians to come together and use the idea of a feel to create a groove.

Genre

A genre is a kind of music, as it is acknowledged by a community for any reason or purpose or criteria, i.e., a set of musical events whose course is governed by rules (of any kind) accepted by a community.

In music, genres emerge as names to define similarities, recurrences that members of a community made pertinent to identify musical events: the process can be explicit, like in the proclamation of an aesthetic manifesto, a law, or a marketing campaign, or it can never be declared (see Lewis 1969). Rules that define a genre can be related to any of the codes involved in a musical event (i.e. also rules of behaviour, etiquettes, proxemic and kinesic codes, economic regulations, etc.), in such a way that knowing 'what kind of music' one will be listening to (or playing, or talking about, etc.) will act as a compass, helping to choose the proper codes and tools for the participant.

Genres, then, can be seen as short-cuts to speed up communication within a musical community…., (Fabbri, 1999).

Genre Synecdoche (part for whole)

In verbal language, a synechdoche denotes a figure of speebch in which a part sunstitues the whole, as in the expression 'all hands on deck', implying, at least from the captain's view, that the sailors' brawn is worth more than their brain. A musical synechdoche would therefore be a set of musical structures inside a given musical style that refer to another (different, foreign, alien,) musical style.

Groove/beat

Groove is a participatory activity which emerges in performance and can be recognised by audiences. While a groove can have a certain feel, the groove cannot be imprinted in the memory of the musician because a groove is a collective experience which results from the musicians creating a particular 'lock'. To create a funk groove, musicians would have to have a sense of what funk was, in other words, a funk feel. An emerging groove comes as a result of negotiation and refinement, through performance, of a feel. Just as you might 'feel' your way through a darkened corridor, so to musicians 'feel' their way into a 'groove'.

A groove then is the result of several people working to create a particular musical experience. A groove is a point of arrival, a feel is an exploratory process. Once the groove has finished, the imprint left on the individual musician is retained as a 'feel'. The groove may, in the end, be a unique experience.
(See also Tamlyn, 1998: 49-56)

Habanera

Although this dance dates back to 18th century Europe, its current day associations are with a slow, deliberate dance with a dotted note (even note) ostinato.

Hocket

(From French *hoquet* = 'hiccup'.) In musical performance, a hocket is a technique where the individual notes of a musical phrase are distributed between different voices or instruments. An example of a hocket is in the Ba-Benzélé pan-pipe tune heard at the beginning of Herbie Hancock's *Watermelon Man* (1974). According to Tagg:

> Typical examples of funk hocketing are the quick, agogic interplay between high and low slap bass notes, or the fast interchange between extremely short vocal utterances, stabs from the horn section and

interpunctuations from the rest of the band (e.g. James Brown, Larry Graham).[339]

Hypothetical substitution (Tagg, *neol*. 1979)

Hypothetical substitution, i.e. the commutation of one musical element or parameter of expression for another (Tagg, 2003: 807).

IOCM (Tagg, *neol*. 1979)

InterObjective Comparision Material which consists of extracts from piees of music bearing demonstrable sonic resemblance to parts, or parts of, the analysis object.

Kinetic Anaphone see Anaphone

Latin (Afro-carribean)

The term ‘Latin’ is used generically to describe those rhythmic elements conoting Latin American dance rhythms. The term may also be used to describe the use of Latin American percussion instruments such as maraccas, claves, bongos and congas.

Mambo

Derived from the Cuban rumba, the mambo achieves popular interest in America during the late 1940s and 1950s.

March

March music is essentially a fixed, regular and repeated drum rhythm usually associated with a specific form of walking movement.

Meter

Metre is characterised by organising musical duration into duple, triple or quadruple time within a hierarchical rhythmic framework.

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[339] Hocket entry for EPMOW <http://www.ptagg.info/tagg/articles/epmow/hocket.html>

Museme (Seeger, 1961, adapted Tagg, 1979)

A minimal identifiable unit of musical discourse that can recur in the sam eguise and produce the same recognisable effect within the frameowrl of any one musical style in the contedxto fo the same culture(Tagg, 2003: 808) .

Museme stack (Tagg, neol. 1979)

Museme stack denotes a unit of musical code consisting of two or more simultaneiously soundins musemes, and containable within the duration of an immediate present-time experience. (Tagg, 2003: 808)

Overdetermined

In semiotic theory, a text is considered to be overdetermined when refers to the process where all kinds of contextual cues contribute to its reading. An academic text, for instance, is immediately recognisable to readers by the 'scholarly apparatus'. In other words, where there are multiple conventions established to determine meaning, a code is said to be overdetermined.

Polyrhythm

Polyrhythm is used to describe two or more rhythms heard at the same time. According to Groves Music Online, the term is used synomynously with cross-rhythm. For the purpose of this etymophony, the term rhythmic counterpoint will be adopted.

Positivism

Positivism is a term drawn from philosophy (Auguste Compte) which regards reality as independent of the observer, and that truthful knowledge of this reality can arise from unbiased, verified observation. According to Kerman (1985) 'Positivism in scholarship was originally a nineteenth-century movement, a movement which put its ineradicable stamp on early musicology' (1985:74). In spite of alternative strategies, including hermeneutics, positivism became a tried and trusted way of looking at musical texts in a scientific and absolutist way.

Rhythm

'A primary parameter of musical structure' (Meyer, E. 1973) rhythm refers to the temporal organisation within a piece of music. (See Tamlyn, 1998).

Rhythm and blues.

Term coined in 1949 to describe music marketed primarily to African-Americans. The term was used by *Billboard* to replace the politically unacceptable term “Race records”. Many of the styles embraced by the term rhythm and blues played a part in the development from the mid-1950s of rock and roll but at times, the term is used to describe a wider spectrum of African-American music.

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Rhythmic feel see ‘feel’.

Rhythmic Lock

Where several rhythmic lines are performed simultaneously, there is a moment where performers ‘lock’ and the rhythmic output sounds as if one voice. The rhythmic lock is a specific performance technique closely related to groove and feel. Within an ensemble, pairs or small groups can ‘lock’ rhythmically (e.g. bass and drums).

Rhythmic counterpoint

Counterpoint is a term used to describe the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines. Rhyhmic counterpoint denotes the combination of rhythmic lines to create a simultaneously sound rhythmic line. In this way, rhythmic counterpoint is closely related to the idea of a rhythmic ‘lock’.

Rhumba (rumba)

A popular dance of Afto-Cuban origin which became popular in the USA during the 1930s.

Second line rhythm

Second line drumming is a term used to describe the music made by people following the many parades which were a part of New Orleans life. Drummers such as Ed Blackwell[340] remembered that as a child:

….every Sunday there was a parade…. Everything called for a parade… Naturally, when you heard the music, people would gather and a big crowd would just follow behind… All the kids would have the “second line.” The kids would follow behind the parade dancing. Most of the drummers would come up with that heritage, and you can hear it in their playing (Blackwell quoted in Tress, 1995: 50).

Freddie Kohlman, a musician from New Orleans, reflects that the second line comes from playing in the street bands:

….(to get that) beat, you’ve got to get it out in the street with one of them brass bands (and listen to) especially the bass drum… That’s why New Orleans drummers got it above all the different cats that are away from here because of their foot and the way they play that parade beat on a lot of them rock tunes. (Kohlman in Tress, 1995: 63).

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[340] Ed Blackwell (1929-1992) played with Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane.

According to Tress (1995), one of the most influential factors in developing a New Orleans style of drumming comes from the 'sense of community' that emerged amongst its musicians. In his history of second line drumming, his lineage of drummers extends from the late 1890s until the 1990s and includes some 96 musicians who were active over that period. Tress makes the point that jazz drummers such as Warren 'Baby' Dodds,[341] playing in the 1920s, acknowledged the influence of second line drumming practices. Later, during the 1950s a new generation of drummers emerged to play, amongst other styles, R&B, gospel, blues and jazz. New Orleans drummers of this period are represented by Charles 'Hungry' Williams,[342] Albert 'June' Gardner,[343] Charles 'Honeyboy' Otis,[344] and Earl Palmer.[345]

Rockology (neol, 1992)

Study of rock or pop music characterised by adherence to general tenets of rock aesthetics. See Tagg, 2003 (chapter 2) for further discussion.

Soul Music

An African-American popular music style popular in the 1960s. Like many terms it is difficult to define precisely as it became something of a 'catch-all' term from the music of the time. The term soul music is often linked to labels such as Atlantic and Stax and to performers such as Wilson Pickett, James Brown, Otis Redding, Olomon Burke and Ray Charles.

Stomp

Used in early jazz, the term referrs to music with a marked dance beat. Titles using the word include *King Porter Stomp* by Jelly Roll Morton.

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[341] Dodds played with King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong. Dodds travelled on the Mississippi riverboats playing with Fate Marable and Louis Armstrong. In 1922 Dodds moved to Chicago (influencing players such as Gene Krupa) a factor that highlights the mobility of musicians and musical ideas in the United States.

[342] Williams was an influential drummer playing with Huey Piano Smith, Fats Domino and Professor Longhair.

[343] Gardner (b.1930) was drummer for Sam Cooke, Lionel Hampton, Ray Charles, Roy Brown and Dave Bartholomew.

[344] Otis played with Barholomew, SamCooke, Otis Redding and Big Joe Turner

[345] Palmer (b.1924) played with Bartholomew, Little Richard, Fats Domino, and Professor Longhair until 1957 when he moved to Los Angeles to become, as Tress describes it, '[a] studio legend'.

Shuffle.

The shuffle is connected to a dance step where the feet move on the dance floor without being lifted. The music connected to this term is thought to be more specific than swing or boogie and subdivides into uneven triplets as found in the early styles of jazz during the 1920s and 1930s. A more contemporary use of the shuffle is to be found in Weather Reports' *Birdland*.

Style

A recurring arrangement of features in musical events which is typical of an individual (composer, performer), a group of musicians, a genre, a place, a period of time (Fabbri, 1999).

Style indicator

A style indicator is any musical structure or set of musical structures that are either constantfor or regareded as typical of the 'home' musical style

Swing.

A quality attributed to jazz performance which has resisted concise definition or description largely because it is a personal performance style which is modified by individual exponents. The development of swing coincided with the emergence by 1932 of the 13-piece dance band or 'big band' including those led by Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and Earl Hines

'The One'

A term used in funk writing to describe an emphasis on the first beat of the bar. One of the first pieces to emphasise this beat was James Brown's *Out of Sight* (1964) where the **backbeat** was not accented. This was an unusual approach for the time but gained in currency during the 1970s. George Clinton generated a spiritual, quasi-religious meaning for the term during the late 1970s.