# Affirmative Salsero

Celia Cruz “Quimbara” 0:00-0:35

[African Drums play in the background & Celia sings]

Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba

Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba

Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba

Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba

Ee Mama Ee Mama Ee Mama Ee Mama

"Quimbara" is not a Spanish word. Don´t waste your time looking for its meaning because you won´t find it. We will never be able to understand, because it is from a culture long lost to us.

But we can understand its origin. So lets bring it back in time to Africa during the Middle Passage. Africans were forced to leave their homelands and went through a horrid voyage where mothers would jump off the boats with their children just to avoid a life of slavery. 75% of these voyages led Africans to areas like Cuba and other lands in the Caribbean and what we know as “Latin America”. This is where modernity began, with this first act of economic engagement with Cuba. African culture became lost and the Black was created. The newly created black began to work on sugar plantations and create the basis for Cuban society. Indeed, blackness itself was grinded like the sugar cane in the mills to create other cultures, and other identities, in the Cuban Plantation.

Celia is a descendant of these slaves, and used African words into her songs. Such as, "Quimbara", "Toro Mata”, or "Burundanga". She used these words as a way to remind her listeners not only of her roots, but the basis for Cuba to exist, and the basis of a Cuban identity. As Latin@s we forget, via our lighter skin, or through the creation of “Mestizaje” that we have African roots, and black heritage.

As a Puerto Rican, and as a Dominican, Geo and I would not exist if it were not for the Middle Passage, and our identity within Civil Society, and debate itself is shaped by this same anti-blackness that began the Middle Passage.

See, the Middle Passage was not just a singular event, it created a colonial and anti-black matrix, which was structured off the death of the black, in which economic engagement between Cuba and the U.S. was based off sugar plantations, in which blacks were the slaves cutting the sugar cane, and working the sugar mills. This structure places us, the structurally damned in a permanent state of hell, in which we are open to rapeability and killability. This is the death ethics of war.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, associate professor of comparative literature at Rutgers, ‘8 [Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity, p. 217-21] //DDI13

Dussel, Quijano, and Wynter lead us to the understanding that what happened in the Americas was a transformation and naturalization of the non-ethics of war—which represented a sort of exception to the ethics that regulate normal conduct in Christian countries—into a more stable and long-standing reality of damnation, and that this epistemic and material shift occurred in the colony. Damnation, life in hell, is colonialism: a reality characterized by the naturalization of war by means of the naturalization of slavery, now justified in relation to the very constitution of people and no longer solely or principally to their faith or belief. That human beings become slaves when they are vanquished in a war translates in the Americas into the suspicion that the conq uered people, and then non-European peoples in general, are constitutively inferior and that therefore they should assume a position of slavery and serfdom. Later on, this idea would be solidified with respect to the slavery of African peoples, achieving stability up to the present with the tragic reality of different forms of racism. Through this process, what looked like a "state of exception" in the colonies became the rule in the modern world. However, deviating from Giorgio Agarnben's diagnosis, one must say that the colony--long before the concentration camp and the Nazi politics of extermination--served as the testing ground for the limits and possibilities of modernity, thereby revealing its darkest secrets." It is race, the coloniality of power, and its concomitant Eurocentrism (and not only national socialisms or forms of fascism) that allow the "state of exception" to continue to define ordinary relations in this, our so-called postmodern world. Race emerges within a permanent state of exception where forms of behavior that are legitimate in war become a natural part of the ordinary way of life. In that world, an otherwise extraordinary affair becomes the norm and living in it requires extraordinary effort." In the racial/ colonial world, the "hell" of war becomes a condition that defines the reality of racialized selves, which Fanon referred to as the damnes de la terre (condemned of the earth). The damne (condemned) is a subject who exists in a permanent "hell," and as such, this figure serves as the main referent or liminal other that guarantees the continued affirmation of modernity as a paradigm of war. The hell of the condemned is not defined by the alienation of colonized productive forces, but rather signals the dispensability of racialized subjects, that is, the idea that the world would be fundamentally better without them. The racialized subject is ultimately a dispensable source of value, and exploitation is conceived in this context as due torture, and not solely as the extraction of surplus value. Moreover, it is this very same conception that gives rise to the particular erotic dynamics that characterize the relation between the master and its slaves or racialized workers. The condemned, in short, inhabit a context in which the confrontation with death and murder is ordinary. Their "hell" is not simply "other people," as Sartre would have put it-at least at one point - but rather racist perceptions that are responsible for the suspension of ethical behavior toward peoples at the bottom of the color line. Through racial conceptions that became central to the modern self, modernity and coloniality produced a permanent state of war that racialized and colonized subjects cannot evade or escape. The modern function of race and the coloniality of power, I am suggesting here, can be understood as a radicalization and naturalization of the non-ethics of war in colonialism." This non-ethics included the practices of eliminating and enslaving certain subjects-for example, indigenous and black-as part of the enterprise of colonization. From here one could as well refer to them as the death ethics of war. War, however, is not only about killing or enslaving; it also includes a particular treatment of sexuality and femininity: rape. Coloniality is an order of things that places people of color within the murderous and rapist view of a vigilant ego, and the primary targets of this rape are women. But men of color are also seen through these lenses and feminized, to become fundamentally penetrable subjects for the ego conquiro. Racial- ization functions through gender and sex, and the ego conquiro is thereby constitutively a phallic ego as well." Dussel. who presents this thesis of the phallic character of the ego cogito, also makes links, albeit indirectly, with the reality of war. And thus, in the beginning of modernity, before Descartes discovered ... a terrifying anthropological dualism in Europe, the Spanish conquistadors arrived in America. The phallic conception of the European-medieval world is now added to the forms of submission of the vanquished Indians. "Males," Bartolome de las Casas writes, are reduced through "the hardest, most horrible, and harshest serfdom"; but this only occurs with those who have remained alive, because many of them have died; however, "in war typically they only leave alive young men (mozos) and women.""5 The indigenous people who survive the massacre or are left alive have to contend with a world that considers them to be dispensable. And since their bodies have been conceived of as inherently inferior or violent, they must be constantly subdued or civilized, which requires renewed acts of conquest and colonization. The survivors continue to live in a world defined by war, and this situation is peculiar in the case of women. AsT. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Renee T, White put it in the preface to their anthology Spoils oJ War: Women oJ Color, Cultures, and Revolutions: A sexist and/or racist patriarchal culture and order posts and attempts to maintain, through violent acts of force if necessary, the subjugation and inferiority of women of color. As Joy James notes, "its explicit, general premise constructs a conceptual framework of male [and/or white] as normative in order to enforce a politicaljracial, economic, cultural. sexual] and intellectual mandate of male [and/or white] as superior." The warfront has always been a "feminized" and "colored" space for women of color. Their experiences and perceptions of war, conA ict, resistance, and struggle emerge from their specific racial-ethnic and gendered locations ... Inter arma silent leges: in time of war the law is silent," Walzer notes. Thus, this volume operates from the premise that war has been and is presently in our midst.” The links between war, conquest, and the exploitation of women's bodies are hardly accidental. In his study of war and gender, Joshua Goldstein argues that conquest usually proceeds through an extension of the rape and exploitation of women in wartime." He argues that to understand conquest, one needs to examine: I) male sexuality as a cause of aggression; 2) the feminization of enemies as symbolic domination; and 3) dependence on the exploitation of women's labor-including reproduction." My argument is, first, that these three elements came together in a powerful way in the idea of race that began to emerge in the conquest and colonization of the Americas. My second point is that through the idea of race, these elements exceed the activity of conquest and come to define what from that point on passes as the idea of a "normal" world. As a result, the phenomenology of a racial context resembles, if it is not fundamentally identical to, the phenomenology of war and conquest. Racism posits its targets as racialized and sexualized subjects that, once vanquished, are said to be inherently servile and whose bodies come to form part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation, and control. The coloniality of power cannot be fully understood without reference to the transformation and naturalization of war and conquest in modern times. Hellish existence in the colonial world carries with it both the racial and the gendered aspects of the naturalization of the non-ethics of war. "Killability" and "rapeability" are inscribed into the images of colonial bodies and deeply mark their ordinary existence. Lacking real authority, colonized men are permanently feminized and simultaneously represent a constant threat for whom any amount of authority, any visible trace of the phallus is multiplied in a symbolic hysteria that knows no lirnits.?" Mythical depiction of the black man's penis is a case in point: the black man is depicted as an aggressive sexual beast who desires to rape women, particularly white women. The black woman, in turn, is seen as always already sexually available to the rapist gaze of the white, and as fundamentally promiscuous. In short, the black woman is seen as a highly erotic being whose primary function is fulfilling sexual desire and reproduction. To be sure, any amount of "penis" in either one represents a threat, but in his most familiar and typical forms the black man represents the act of rape- "raping" -while the black woman is seen as the most legitimate victim of rape- "being raped." In an antiblack world black women appear as subjects who deserve to be raped and to suffer the consequences-in terms of a lack of protection from the legal system, sexual abuse, and lack of financial assistance to sustain themselves and their families-just as black men deserve to be penalized for raping, even without having committed the act. Both "raping" and "being raped" are attached to blackness as if they form part of the essence of black folk, who are seen as a dispensable population. Black bodies are seen as excessively violent and erotic, as well as being the legitimate recipients of excessive violence, erotic and otherwise." "Killability" and "rapeability" are part of their essence, understood in a phenomenological way. The "essence" of blackness in a colonial anti-black world is part of a larger context of meaning in which the death ethics of war gradually becomes a constitutive part of an allegedly normal world. In its modern racial and colonial connotations and uses, blackness is the invention and the projection of a social body oriented by the death ethics of war." This murderous and raping social body projects the features that define it onto sub-Others in order to be able to legitimate the same behavior that is allegedly descriptive of them. The same ideas that inspire perverted acts in war--particularly slavery, murder, and rape--are legitimized in modernity through the idea of race and gradually come to be seen as more or less normal thanks to the alleged obviousness and non-problematic character of black slavery and anti-black racism. To be sure, those who suffer the consequences of such a system are primarily blacks and indigenous peoples, but it also deeply affects all of those who appear as colored or close to darkness. In short, this system of symbolic representations, the material conditions that in part produce and continue to legitimate it, and the existential dynamics that occur therein (which are also at the same time derivative and constitutive of such a context) are part of a process that naturalizes the non-ethics or death ethics of war. Sub-ontological difference is the result of such naturalization and is legitimized through the idea of race. In such a world, ontology collapses into a Manicheanism, as Fanon suggested."

This Death Ethics of War has persisted throughout history. Before the revolution, in 1912, the social death of blacks was evident. In 1912, the Partido Indepiendiente de Color (People of Color Party) and other groups of blacks advocated supporting separate institutions and movements that would ensure a “rightful share” for Cubans of color, and sought to end United States intervention in Cuba. This led to a government-sanctioned murder of these black advocates. The massacre that resulted in somewhere between five to six thousand actual deaths of blacks is not merely a metaphor.

In 1952, Cuban dictator, Batista aligned with the wealthy owners of these sugar plantations and maintained the exploitation of afro-Cubanos, also keeping intact the segregation between white and black Cubanos which was brought to the island by American armed forces in 1898.

Now, even after the revolution, the position of the black as a slave hardly changed. Though the Castro administration destroyed legal segregation, it maintained the whitening practices inherent in Cuban culture. The overseer might have changed, but the Cuban Plantation remains.

#### Celia Cruz –Azucar Negra (Black Sugar)

(0:00 -00:46) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tedY6jbPpQM>

*[Soy dulce como el melao'   
alegre como el tambor   
llevo el ritmico tumbao'   
llevo el ritmico tumbao'   
que hace que en el corazon   
  
Y habia una isla rica   
eclava de una sonrisa   
soy de ayer soy carnaval   
pongo corazon y tierra   
mi sangre es de azucar negra   
es amor y es musica   
  
Azucar azucar negra   
hay cuanto me gusta y me alegra   
azucar azucar negra   
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In the spirit of Azucar Negra, vote Affirmative, because our performance accesses the root of Cuban economic engagement by beginning our analysis at the sugar plantations where it all began. The resolution calls for us to increase our economic engagement with Cuba, without getting to the basic question of what bonds Cubans, Dominicans, and Boricuas together; The root of our bond is the experience of the slave on the plantation. Only our Aff confronts the disconnect between America and Cuba and what it truly means to engage those people in those spaces.

Aparicio writes in 1999(Frances R. Aparicio 1999 The Blackness Of Sugar: Celia Cruz And The Performance Of (Trans)Nationalism is Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and Director of the Latina and Latino Studies Program at Northwestern University. She has previously taught at Stanford University, University of Arizona, University of Michigan, and University of Illinois at Chicago.)G.L

Her 1998 recording, Azúcar negra, and its title song, render the single utterance of ‘azúcar’ much more complex. While sugar is white, the seemingly oxymoronic metaphor of ‘black sugar’ foregrounds the traces of slavery behind the national economy of the plantation, a blackness that is indeed reaffirmed in the title song ‘Azúcar negra’. The initial, ritualistic African-style drumming in this cut composed by Mario Díaz indexes the genealogy of blackness in Afro-Cuban music. Again, this song establishes a metaphor between Celia as a singing subject and Afro-Cuban culture. When she states that her blood is black sugar and that her skin is marked by the rumba and the bongó, this discourse inscribes Africanness and black agency on her body, the traces of slavery that facilitated the economy of the island. Significantly, the lyrics also identify the singing subject as the daughter of a rich island, foregrounding the association between slavery and capitalism and simultaneously suggesting the nostalgic discourse of the Cuban exile subject. Celia Cruz’s musical repertoire is indeed an expression of afrocubanismo. Afro-Cuban vernacular poetics, including popular religious beliefs such as santería, popular oral traditions such as pregones and street slang, are the stylistic and discursive substance of many of Celia’s songs. From the early hits with La Sonora Matancera, such as ‘El yerberito moderno’ and ‘Burundanga’ to the famous two-volume recording, Homenaje a los santos, which anthologizes some authentic African santería music with modern arrangements of songs dedicated to particular saints, Celia Cruz’s music has consistently foregrounded the African legacy in Cuba’s music, rhythms and cultural heritage. Her singing in African languages, particularly in lucumí, as in ‘Lalle lalle’ (Cruz, 1991) and ‘Changó “ta veni”’ (1989), her rhythmical dialogues with the drums, as in ‘Quimbo Quimbumbia’ (1969), and songs such as ‘Azúcar negra’ (1998),‘Bembelequá’ (1994), and ‘La cumbanchera de Belén’ (1989),which foregrounds the figure of the black rumbera and her dancing movements, are all traditional expressions of afrocubanismo at multiple levels. Salsa **hits such as ‘Quimbara’,** according to Mayra Santos,‘are basically a call to the dance floor, where the purpose of rhyme, rhythm, and lyrics is to bring to consciousness the act of salsa itself, an act of bonding where audience, dancers, musicians, and singers come together as a community of “entendidos”’ (1997: 184). As the Afroboricua writer Mayra Santos suggests here, this particular song by Celia Cruz enacts the ritualistic task of creating a translocal, mulatto and black working-class community through the Afrocuban vernacular poetics and rhythms that inform many of her songs.

**The Role of The Ballot is who best performatively and methodologically uproots the plantation.** Uprooting the plantation means to provide and embody a methodology that forefronts salsa as a starting point to understanding the foundation of US economic engagement with Cuba, the plantation. This starting point is the best, because it initiates the discussion and the social location of the slave working the field, and their method of survival.

We have proven that our bodies are the foundation of the plantation – The Cuban plantation, The United States Plantation, and the Policy Debate Plantation – Our bodies are the ones putting in the hard hours of work, the sweat, the blood, the tears, and the hard intellectual work that goes into the struggle for survival. Our bodies produce the goods that are then used to economically engage. We are at the root of all this shit, we make it grow. When you try to involve other parties, like the Federal Government, you produce poisoned fruit, because you exclude the people actually doing the work, The Cuban plantation is at the root of the research, epistemology, and scholarship necessary to effectively debate the resolution. We are a pre-requisite in terms of education and scholarship because all your literature assumes an ethic of the masters of the plantation. That ethic must be rejected. We are a pre-requisite in terms of starting point, because our Affirmative has proven that salsa is not only important, but necessary for us to manifest the hard revolutionary work, towards the goal of liberation. Additionally, salsa gets to the epicenter of all impacts and understandings of the Cuban plantation, and economic engagement. If you talk about the Cuban Plantation, if you talk about the economy, and you aren’t talking about the slaves who put in the work to cut that sugar cane, than there is a problem with your policy proposal, and impact stories. This is the heart of the topic – the plantations of the past, and the plantations of the present remain to be an insidious and pervasive structure in our path towards liberation. There is a discussion that must be had, the root; the root of Azucar Negra, Black Sugar.