THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE SPOT

THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE SPOT:

ORNETTE COLEMAN
AND
THE NEW YORK JAZZ FIELD

By

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ABSTRACT

In November 1959, Ornette Coleman arrived from Los Angeles to present his quartet at New York's Five Spot Café. Coleman's New York debut is often cited as the beginning of the "free jazz" style that became prevalent in the 1960s. His music polarized the jazz community between positions of avid support and stern disapproval.

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of artistic and intellectual "fields" can offer important insights to the dynamics of Coleman's reception. Bourdieu's depictions of the role of the avant-garde, the movements between "positions and position-takings," and the influence of "consecrating figures" in an artistic field, fit perfectly the range of reactions that greeted Coleman's music.

It can be shown that many of the reactions to Coleman were not a reaction per se to how his music *sounded*, but to the exercise of power by the combined forces that helped bring Coleman to the Five Spot in 1959. On the side of his supporters, we can often see a "high modernist" agenda that was not always shared by the era's jazz musicians. Coleman's detractors often objected less to Coleman's music than they did to the combination of critical, scholarly and music industry forces that they felt were forcing Coleman into the limelight.

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First among the faculty at McMaster's School of the Arts I must acknowledge Susan Fast. Responding to my first curious email back in 2002, Dr. Fast phoned me at my home in Pender Harbour, answered all my questions and facilitated my application and acceptance. She supervised my first attempts at roughing out a thesis in my reading course, including a complete change of topic a month into the course. Finally she coached me through SOTA's acceptance of my new topic for my master's thesis and turned me over to James Deaville as advisor. As head of the Music Criticism program during my first year at McMaster, Dr. Fast was able to skillfully and sympathetically ensure that my abilities and the program's mandate worked to each other's advantage.

I have been fortunate in having Jim Deaville as thesis advisor as well as instructor in two graduate courses. In my second year, during the Christmas break, he threw me a curve in suggesting that I lay aside a thesis topic (*Jazz and the Image of Romantic Genius*) in which I had invested many hours, in favour of expanding my term paper on Ornette Coleman into the present work. My desk still surrounded by stacks of books on Coleman, Pierre Bourdieu, and modern jazz, I readily took up his challenge and Dr. Deaville was a great help in helping me see it through. Each time I delivered a new draft or chapter, he got back to me promptly with notes and comments that were always positive, humorous and insightful.

However, the material in this thesis has taken various forms in my short time at McMaster. In the spring of 2003, Dr. Roseanne Kydd's encouragement and comments helped me through my first attempt to write about Coleman, jazz critics and the Five Spot. Ajay Heble prompted me to further develop the topic for the colloquium of the September 2003 Guelph Jazz Festival. Later that fall, having been introduced to some of the writings of Pierre Bourdieu in a course taught by the ubiquitous Dr. Deaville, I was able to begin applying Bourdieu's ideas to Ornette Coleman in a colloquium that Sandy Thorburn presented on musical topics at SOTA.

I must thank my other instructors who were so vital to making the MA program in Music Criticism such a positive experience: Mary Cyr, William Renwick, and especially Paul Rapoport, whose "Practical Music Criticism" sessions eased the difficult transition into academic life. All of my fellow grad students had much more formal musical background than I do, and all of them were willing and eager to shore up my weak spots on the many occasions when it was necessary: Annemarie Camilleri, Jane Clifton, Kate Davies, Tina Depko, Nick Donlevy, Deborah Henry, Rebekah Jordan, Shona Moiny, Dan Sheridan, Tim Smith and Jennifer Taylor.

Finally among my academic affiliations I must thank my second and third readers: Christina Baade, especially for steering me towards writings that were essential in helping to fill out my argument about the evolution of jazz criticism, and Hugh Hartwell, whose knowledge of jazz I depend on to help keep me on track in my descriptions of the music's history and the Five Spot milieu.

Outside of McMaster, I am grateful to Canada's foremost jazz scholar, Mark Miller, for bringing to my attention the Olin Downes review referred to on page 18 and supplying me with a copy. In a more general sense I must thank John Norris and Bill Smith, who many years ago hired me to work at the Jazz and Blues Centre in Toronto, opening up for me a daily exposure to the music and musicians that lasted for eight years. Bill in particular became a close friend and musical collaborator who, circa 1980, while we were in New York for a Sackville recording session, pointed out to me a cluttered, abandoned storefront that had once been the legendary Five Spot Café.

For all this, it was a comment made many years ago by pianist Paul Bley that led me to investigate the role played by critics in Ornette Coleman's rise to prominence. Working with Bley on his autobiography, I became impressed with the truth of his perspective of the workshop nature of life on the bandstand—that the practice of jazz is itself a university where deep analysis, quick thinking and intense motivation bring the greatest rewards.

For all of the above expertise I have been able to call upon, and all the references I have been able to muster, writing a work of this length consists largely of sitting at a keyboard and putting down one's own ideas, with all their possible idiosyncrasies and misinterpretations. Among other things, although Ornette Coleman has been part of my musical life for almost thirty years, my introduction to Pierre Bourdieu is still very recent, and my own application of his ideas to jazz is still very much a work in progress. For any factual errors or sins of omission that may have found their way into this manuscript, I can only take full responsibility.

David Lee

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INTRODUCTION

On November 17, 1959, the Ornette Coleman Quartet began a two-week engagement at the Five Spot Café in New York City. They brought with them a radical and controversial new approach to jazz performance. The quartet (Coleman, alto saxophone; Don Cherry, pocket trumpet; Charlie Haden, bass; and Billy Higgins, drums) drew large and engaged audiences to a small, unpretentious nightclub that generally catered to New York artists and bohemians:[1]

> [Composer/conductor Leonard] Bernstein pronounced Ornette Coleman a genius. John Coltrane came down to play with him between sets. Lionel Hampton asked to sit in.... Thelonious Monk said that what Coleman was doing was "bad".... Charles Mingus was ambivalent... So was Miles Davis.... Someone set a car on fire out front; someone else burst into the kitchen between sets and punched Coleman. Most jazz writers were hostile, too.[2]

Unfortunately, there are no recordings of Coleman's many Five Spot performances. However a brief description of a quartet version (with Ed Blackwell instead of Higgins on drums) of Coleman's *Beauty Is a Rare Thing*, recorded the following July, illustrates some of the musical traits that elicited such powerful and mixed reactions.

Beauty is a Rare Thing is, after *Lonely Woman*, probably the Coleman composition most played by other musicians, usually as a slow "ballad." Coleman

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[1] Geoffrey C. Ward, *Jazz: A History of America's Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), p. 417. A photograph shows lineups in the street outside the Five Spot during Coleman's November 1959 debut.

[2] Ibid.

opens this version, playing the melody through twice with rubato; Blackwell responding lightly with mallets, Haden playing arco bass as he does throughout. Don Cherry enters for a short improvised passage before the melody is played again.

After the melody is played a third time, there ensues a group improvisation that is like nothing previously recorded in jazz. Haden introduces a passage of unvarying tremolo ground bass, on strings dampened so that the tonal centre is unclear. Cherry improvises freely over this background, and instead of pairing with Haden in the conventional rhythm section alliance of bass and drums, Blackwell interacts with Cherry, his melodic drum figures responding to the trumpet lines. When Coleman enters, playing in the altissimo register of the alto saxophone, the quartet engages in a brief passage of improvisation that is rhythmically and harmonically unrelated to anything that has gone before. It does, however, serve the *feeling* of the piece, and it confers and confirms the responsibility for developing that feeling onto the musicians, as improvisers reacting to each other in real time, rather than as interpreters basing their work upon the original theme. Although at different times the horns or the bass may play fragments of melody that recall the melody of *Beauty is a Rare Thing*, the improvisation is not in the key of the original melody (F minor).

The concept behind the piece itself departs radically from jazz tradition, even from the bulk of Coleman's own repertoire up to this time. At no point are chords implied in the bassist's accompaniment. Instead, Haden plays counterpoint

against the melody, as does Cherry in his freewheeling contributions when the melody is reprised at the end of the piece. The improvised nature of the counterpoint is confirmed when the performance ends not on a conventional chord but on a C and G played by the trumpet and saxophone respectively, sustained over an F in the bass.

There is no steady tempo throughout the piece. Although it was an established practice for the beginning or ending of a jazz piece to be played rubato, the resulting tension was traditionally resolved at some point within the performance by stating the melody in tempo. There is no such resolution in *Beauty is a Rare Thing*. The rubato feeling of the opening melody seems to imply that it is being played against a slow 4/4, but such implications are dispensed with in the improvisations, where the rhythms of the different players call, respond, and merge into a collective freedom.[3]

Coleman's biographer John Litweiler, writing in 1992, called this performance "a prophetic work, a usually unacknowledged precedent to the exploration to come among younger New York and especially Chicago jazz artists in the later 1960s" (to which one might add the atonal "non-idiomatic free improvisation" associated with the Spontaneous Music Ensemble in London, the ICP (Instant Composers Pool) in Amsterdam and the musicians recorded by FMP

[3] Ornette Coleman, "Beauty is a Rare Thing," *This is Our Music* (Atlantic SD 1353; CD reissue Sepia Tone 02, 2002), recorded August 2, 1960.

(Free Music Production) in Berlin).[4] Many would agree with Litweiler about the extent of Coleman's influence, but even today not everyone would regard it as beneficial, or as a positive expansion of jazz's horizons. Coleman's arrival in New York spurred a controversy that in many ways is still active forty-five years later.[5]

There are clear differences between Coleman's music and the prevailing styles of the time. The quartet's arrangements are simple "heads" played in loose unison or with improvised counterpoint. The instrumentation is sparse—alto saxophone, trumpet, bass and drums. The intonation is loose and vocalized rather than strict and tempered.

Yet usually the music is in a fixed rhythm and it even "swings." Many of Coleman's compositions have entered the jazz repertoire; the aforementioned *Lonely Woman* quickly became a jazz standard and has remained so for years. So it can be hard for the contemporary listener to understand why, at the time, the music inspired such vehement objections. As Gary Giddins wrote in 1998, "Coleman's music remains so singular that, forty years after his debut recordings, I still can't hear it without marveling anew at how his privileged ear resisted the laws of harmony, melody, rhythm, and pitch, all of which he ultimately revised in the abracadabra of harmolodic."[6]

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[4] John Litweiler, *Ornette Coleman: A Harmolodic Life* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1992), p. 88.

[5] Ibid, p. 75.

[6] Gary Giddins, "Ornette Coleman (This is Our Music)," *Visions of Jazz: The First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 466.

Decades after the fact, we can look back somewhat bemusedly, even fondly, on the furor that surrounded Coleman at the Five Spot. We can observe that Coleman's music, after all, did not turn out to be a trick or a fad, and we can admit that it was a logical development of the jazz that came before it.

Then why at the time did the music cause such an outcry? At the dawn of the twenty-first century, are we somehow smarter and more sophisticated than the movers and shakers in the jazz field were over forty years ago? Or was there more at stake than the item of currency that was most commonly traded throughout the controversy: the question of whether Coleman's music was "bad" or "good?" The arguments that have been recorded in jazz histories and textbooks are arguments about technique and aesthetics. But for musicians, critics and scholars at the time, there was much more at stake. Even among Coleman's proponents, for example, a central question in evaluating the music was the question of whether Coleman's approach was going to influence jazz as a whole, or prove to be a stylistic dead end—a music admired but little imitated, or a music that after the furor of its debut, would simply be forgotten.

The music has by no means been forgotten, but the issues surrounding it—issues just as pressing now as they were in 1959—have been overlooked and a review of them is overdue. This thesis contends that these other issues influenced the reception of Coleman's music just as much as the way the music actually *sounded.*

In trying to arrive at a useful and accurate reading of just what these issues might be, I have been aided by referring Coleman's Five Spot debut to the theory of artistic "field," constructed by the French philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

Beyond both being born in 1930, Ornette Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu had little in common. Bourdieu (1930–2002), the son of a postman in the French Pyrenees, was an outstanding student who graduated in philosophy from the prestigious Lycée Louis-le-Grand.[7]

Coleman, an African-American born in Fort Worth, Texas, came from more modest circumstances than Bourdieu.[8] His father Randolph was a cook and construction worker who died when Ornette was seven, and his mother Rosa worked as a clerk in a funeral home, as a seamstress and at some point, according to Ornette, "did something like selling Avon products…"[9] When Coleman finished high school, rather than continuing his formal education, he received on-the-job training as a professional musician, playing tenor saxophone in rhythm-and-blues bands to support himself and his mother.

Throughout his twenties, Pierre Bourdieu was always comfortably installed at one institution or another—whether at the *Lycée*, Algiers University,

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[7] Jeremy F. Lane. *Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction.* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 9.

[8] A.B. Spellman, *Black Music: Four Lives* (originally *Four Lives in the Bebop Business,* 1966; New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 83.

[9] Litweiler, pp. 23–4. Coleman sums up his background by saying, "I didn't come from a poor family, I came from a *po'* family. Poorer than poor."

the Sorbonne, or even as a conscript in the French Army (where, even if Bourdieu missed creature comforts or the company of intellectual peers, he would have at least known where his next meal was coming from). During those same years, Ornette Coleman endured the stress and hardships of sporadic and low-paying work as a touring musician, and worked at day jobs as an elevator operator, houseboy and porter.

However, each of them—Bourdieu the sociologist and Coleman the musician—was able to turn his back on the prevailing wisdom of his respective discipline in order to re-interpret that discipline in unique, even radical new ways. "As Bourdieu has put it, if he arrived in Algeria in 1955 a philosopher, by the time he left [in 1960] he had become a sociologist."[10] It could similarly be said that if, in 1955, Coleman was a struggling jazz saxophonist, by 1960 he was a headline-making musical figure and a recognized jazz innovator.[11] In many ways—certainly in terms of his public profile—the Five Spot, during Coleman's residencies in autumn 1959 and spring 1960, was the site of this transformation.

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[10] Lane, p. 9. The citation given is an interview with Bourdieu by Honneth et al., 1986. Nowhere in the interview does Bourdieu sum up quite as neatly as this his conversion from philosopher to sociologist, nor in such a precise time frame. However his statements throughout the interview—for example, that in the late 1950s, "I saw myself as a philosopher and it took some time until I realized that I had become an ethnologist." (p. 38), taken together, conform the accuracy of Lane's summary.

[11] Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993), p. 376. "... the introduction of any of these concepts [atonality, compositional indeterminacy] into jazz had never been accomplished with any security before the thirty-year-old Coleman took his stand.... The miracle worth noting, however, was the speed with which this music influenced jazz and engendered a major style change."

Bourdieu, with his concern for "a theory of practice," was as much sociologist and anthropologist as philosopher. However, after years of approaching sociological subjects and applying to them sociological questions, he became increasingly self-reflexive, and began to steer his research towards an inquiry of the historical forces that determined just why, at a specific place and time in history, these particular questions should be raised.[12] His writings cover many topics, from the culture of traditional ethnic groups in North Africa to the effect of television in the modern West, but this thesis refers most heavily to what Jeremy Lane calls Bourdieu's "concept of the 'intellectual field,' that structured space of competing, often antagonistic positions, 'the space of theoretical and methodological possibles,' within which all intellectuals necessarily take a position whenever they speak or write on a particular issue."[13]

Perhaps unusually so for a French intellectual, Bourdieu did not seem greatly interested in jazz.[14] In relating different tastes to different types of art, Bourdieu identifies jazz accurately enough as an art form "still in the process of legitimation" (along with cinema, comic strips and popular songs)—not yet ranked with poetry and classical music in the hierarchy of the high arts, but well

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[12] Pierre Bourdieu, *Meditations pascaliennes* (Paris: Collection Liber/Editions du Seuil, 1977). p. 77. Quoted in Lane, p. 3.

[13] Lane, p. 3.

[14] I may be guilty here of stereotyping the French intellectual in the Parisian bistro, à la *Round Midnight* and other films that depict French bohemia, but I am also thinking of the long-standing advocacy of jazz by so many in the French intelligentsia: the seminal critics Hughes Panassié and Andre Hodeir, the multi-disciplinary artist Jean Cocteau, filmmakers such as Louis Malle and Roger Vadim who commissioned soundtracks from American jazz musicians, etc.

on its way. But he does not seem to have been a fan, drawn to the music for aesthetic pleasure or for insights such as those he found, for example, in nineteenth-century French literature.[15]

This thesis intends to apply a range of Bourdieu's theories to jazz music. By concentrating on a crucial episode in the music's history, I hope to depict the era's major players as members of an artistic "field" in the same sense that Bourdieu described. This can be done readily by researching and reassessing the considerable documentation that exists for Ornette Coleman's arrival in New York in 1959 and the reactions to him from other members of the jazz field.

Bourdieu's theories were formulated from disparate sources. In Algeria in the 1950s he studied local cultures, observing its citizens both as indigenous peoples pursuing their "traditional" lifestyles and as the subjects of a colonial power. Later, he turned to studies of nineteenth-century French literature, especially the novels of Gustave Flaubert and the intellectual circles in which Flaubert lived and worked.

Unless one is familiar with Algerian ethnology, or French literature, one might find Bourdieu's concept of "field" difficult to grasp for lack of a familiar example—preferably some kind of narrative in which we might see the dynamics of the field enacted. For those familiar with the history of jazz, the field of the Five Spot provides just such an example. The unwritten criteria for admission to

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[15] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 16.

the field, the positions and position-takings, the "consecrating figures" whose decisions embrace or exclude the innovations of the avant-garde—these are all factors that Bourdieu describes in the field of literature and the other arts, and all of them can be seen at work in jazz music during this critical episode in its history.

The "jazz world" (and it is very much a world unto itself; Bourdieu goes so far as to call a field a "self-contained universe") includes creators, mediators and consumers; those who make the sounds we call "music," their audience, and the many intermediaries in the music business that connects them. The notion that this world fits Bourdieu's definition of an artistic field is furthered (and as I hope to prove, confirmed) by readings of the author's other works, especially the essays that were first collected in English in the 1993 book *The Field of Cultural Production*, in which he thoroughly defines the idea of the artistic "field."

Bourdieu clearly establishes the importance of position and of "position-taking" within a field, and describes the delicate relationships between a field's members: an intricate ecology in which each individual's movements within the field hierarchy are constantly monitored by the other members. This constant scrutiny is an essential part of the field's structure, because each person's change in status, up or down through the field's ranks, has the potential to displace the position of any one or all of the field's members. Hence, an artistic or intellectual field is also a field of tensions regarding the maintenance or improvement of its

members' positions. The ultimate discretion is applied to the admission or exclusion of new members, who are potential disruptors of the field's status quo.

If we accept these relationships as part of a definition of jazz as an artistic field unto itself, we can begin to perceive within the literature of the jazz world—interviews, journalism, criticism, advertisements, liner notes and scholarly essays—the currents of power, the webs of influence, the flux of positions and position-takings that are characteristic of a field. Within a field, for example, the avant-garde has a very special role, and we can see how precisely and dramatically Ornette Coleman stepped into this role when he made his first recordings, and then debuted his quartet's music in New York City.

Welcomed by some, resisted by others, Coleman's seemingly sudden arrival in New York in 1959 was unexpected, radical and disturbing. It revealed the work of the field's incumbents in a new light, then one by one and in varying degrees, it displaced them. In general, those who had aligned themselves with "the shape of jazz to come" by championing Coleman were happy with their revised roles. From others, relegated overnight from the music's advance guard to its worthy but less remarkable rank and file, there were howls of protest.

The positions of field members at the time are well-documented. Perhaps because the controversy around Coleman was so intense, it seems that virtually none of the field's members chose (or were allowed by the hungry media) to be passive listeners, or to distance themselves from the debate. From accounts of tensions and showdowns in the Five Spot itself, to newspaper articles, interviews,

critical essays and *Down Beat* blindfold tests, at one time or another representatives of all positions within the field had to declare themselves in relation to Coleman. In declaring themselves, each revealed his or her position, for better or worse, in all of its aspects.

Considering the cultural disparity between Bourdieu's areas of study and American jazz, it is not surprising that his ideas do not always fit perfectly around the figures who shaped jazz music. A twentieth-century jazz club is not a nineteenth century Parisian *salon*. What *is* surprising, and what I believe makes this study worthwhile, is how often they *can* be seen to make that perfect fit.

Descriptions of the Five Spot at the time of Coleman's debut embody Bourdieu's concept of the field, made real as a dank, crowded Lower Manhattan bar. Onstage are the avant-garde artists, fresh from California, excited about their music but uncertain of its reception. At the bar we find the New York musicians, black and white, watching each others' reactions, attentive to the music, but also attentive to the new light it shines upon their own work, in artistic and in professional terms. Behind the bar are the owners, pleased that this programming gamble has paid off, their livelihoods and those of their staff depending on the balance they can maintain between sponsoring "art for art's sake" and selling as many drinks as possible to each customer. And in the audience the New York intelligentsia, some with a professional stake in the jazz field, some with none; drinking, listening, declaiming, flirting, networking and arguing for or against the music and its future. The arena of the Five Spot Café was an artistic field shorn of

all abstractions, in which the sound of the music, the judgements of the critics, and the personal tastes of each of its members became essential currencies in determining each member's professional status and position.

When Coleman arrived in New York, his music had to run the gauntlet of the city's jazz field, to weather the dynamics, the politics and the power structures of a community that had sustained several generations and numerous styles of jazz creativity. How his music fared in that milieu determined its reception by members of the national and international jazz field: musicians, critics, jazz listeners, and the readership of the countless newspapers and magazines that reported on this new way of playing the music. I undertake this study in the hope that the interpretation of Coleman's music in terms of Bourdieu's thought might lead to a fuller understanding of how the music was heard at the time, of its relationship to contemporaneous music and musicians.

It is to be remembered that if this thesis tries to identify the participants in Coleman's debut in terms of their place in an artistic "field," the experiment works both ways. Hopefully this undertaking will test the validity of Bourdieu's theories against the concrete examples provided by the extensive documentation that exists: accounts of Coleman's performances at the Five Spot, and reviews of his first recordings.

I hope to illustrate how the music's initial reception in 1959 continues to affect our perception of it now, and to help clarify how and why Coleman's music has been assigned its special position in the history of jazz.

CHAPTER 1:

JAZZ AND ORNETTE COLEMAN

At the time of Coleman's New York debut, jazz was well-established as a music based on a variety of song forms, primarily the blues and the popular song as defined by Broadway musicals and the composers of Tin Pan Alley. The music had a documented history with a widely-accepted canon of major figures, many of whom were still alive and performing. Yet it was, as it remains today, a genre subject to a variety of social and musical tensions.[16]

A Black American Art Form Within White Hegemony

The greatest of these was an underlying racial tension. Few have ever disputed that jazz was originated by black Americans who brought African cultural influences to a variety of European-based song forms. But like African-Americans themselves, the music faced ongoing problems of identity and representation within a white hegemony in which European musical traditions still carried the greatest cultural currency.[17] These problems were made worse by the

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[16] Leonard Feather, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1960), p. 23. In addition to the inherent thoroughness of its research, the publication date of this venerable reference work makes it especially valuable in recapturing the ambience of the jazz field at the time of Coleman's emergence. For example, one of its appendices (p. 479) includes a special sub-section on "Reactions to (and by) Ornette Coleman."

[17] Spellman, p. 5, brings this perspective: "The black musicians, such as John Lewis and J.J. Johnson, who were involved in what has been called Third Stream music... belong to a tradition in

speed with which white musicians appropriated new approaches and new techniques as quickly as black musicians could introduce them. This was true in the teens with the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, in the 1920s with Paul Whiteman, in the 1930s with Benny Goodman and in the 1940s with Woody Herman—in every case white artists won popular success by presenting styles, compositions and arrangements that originated with black artists who were themselves continually marginalized by the music industry.

The first jazz record was made in 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a white group that had thoroughly assimilated the style of black New Orleans Jazz.[18] The record became a hit, and set the pattern within the music industry for white musicians appropriating black styles, promoting them as "jazz" and claiming the lion's share of the work's potential for commercial profit.[19] It

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jazz in which one first proves oneself capable of playing classical music to show that playing the blues was a matter of choice. This tradition goes back to Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, and Willie 'The Lion' Smith, who once boasted that he could 'play Chopin faster than any man alive.'"

[18] Mark Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis*, fourth edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), p. 55. The ODJB's historic 78 rpm record had *Livery Stable Blues* on one side and *Dixie Jazz Band One-Step* on the other.

[19] Feather, p. 23. At this time of writing (2004), virtually all serious scholars agree that jazz originated with black Americans, but in fact this is exactly what Feather disputes in his historical overview. A lifelong champion of black American music, he was also a champion of white contributions (including by implication his own, as pianist and songwriter) to the jazz idiom. Although his overview confirms the facts of early jazz that I list here, like other presumably well-intentioned writers of his generation (for example Marshall Stearns in *The Story of Jazz,* 1956), Feather chooses not to acknowledge the imbalance of power between white and black musicians within the music industry as a factor in the music's history. Instead, Feather celebrates the steady accession to popularity through which jazz styles gradually became accepted by larger audiences. In such a narrative, white popularizers such as the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Paul Whiteman

was six years until a black group (under the leadership of Joe "King" Oliver) made a similar breakthrough.[20]

During the 1920s, despite the remarkable music being made by black artists such as Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington, it was the white bandleader Paul Whiteman who successfully promoted himself as "the King of Jazz"—even though what his orchestra played at tea dances and ballrooms was "society" music influenced by jazz rather than what we today consider jazz. At a milestone 1924 concert, Whiteman premiered George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, an historic synthesis of jazz influences and classical instrumentation—and, one must regretfully point out, a milestone in paying obeisance to the beauties of black American music, without actually involving a single black performer, arranger or composer. In 1930 Whiteman starred in an early sound film which confirmed him eponymously as *The King of Jazz*, during an era which saw relatively modest gains made by innovative, influential, and often popular black artists such as King Porter, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Fletcher Henderson.[21]

In the 1930s, despite the prominence of the early swing groups led by Fats Waller, Luis Russell, and Count Basie, and buoyed by the growing powers of

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and Benny Goodman come across as "paving the way" (one of Feather's favourite terms) for the music's black originators.

[20] Ibid, p. 371.

[21] Ibid, pp. 24–25, 460.

radio and the record industry, the white clarinetist Benny Goodman became hugely popular, often using arrangements purchased from Fletcher Henderson, Benny Carter and other black musicians who did not have access to the performance or recording opportunities that were available to Goodman.[22] Carter, for example, went to Europe to find work during the 1930s, while the work of Henderson, whose arranging was a seminal influence on large-group jazz performance practice, is better-known to the jazz scholar than to the general listener.[23]

Similarly in the 1950s, many black jazz artists felt eclipsed by the publicity and popularity garnered by pianist Dave Brubeck—featured on the cover of *Time* Magazine, yet considered by aficionados to be inferior to most of his black contemporaries.[24] To this day, this cultural disjunct continues. If we think of the music industry as a record store, in one window the industry celebrates and displays jazz as the great African-American art form, and at the next window it displays the latest white jazz star. Even today, when Wynton Marsalis and others are actively trying to reclaim jazz culturally as an African-

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[22] Ibid, p. 27.

[23] Feather, p. 155 (Carter entry) and pp. 250–251 (Henderson).

[24] There are few major artists whose position in the jazz canon takes such roller-coaster soars and dips as does that of Brubeck (1920–). On one hand he was sneered at for his music's popularity and accessibility, and for his admittedly unsubtle piano technique; on the other hand he was lauded for his compositions, his experiments with odd time signatures and for his personal warmth and charisma. Black avant-gardists such as Anthony Braxton and Cecil Taylor have praised him as an early influence, but credit him with leading them to explore black jazz artists who soon supplanted Brubeck as influences. As Taylor has said, "I found Brubeck's work interesting until I heard [Art] Tatum, Horace Silver, and Oscar Peterson...." Spellman, p. 62.

American art form, they would find themselves sharing an industry window along with reissues of recordings by Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. The neighbouring window would be wholly given over to the era's most heavily marketed jazz artist, the blonde Canadian singer/pianist, Diana Krall.

Jazz as High Art

Another major tension was caused by the uncertain status of jazz within the popular music industry. Even before 1920, the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet[25] and the American critic Olin Downes[26] had written that certain aspects of jazz music deserved serious critical attention; they are the first writers on record to treat jazz as high art, rather than discounting it as a trivial entertainment catering to frivolous popular tastes. Gradually over the years, other voices joined theirs in urging that the music could be listened to seriously and with discernment.

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[25] Robert Walser, ed. *Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 9–11, is the source here for composer/conductor Ernest Ansermet's famous review, "Sur un Orchestre Nègre" (*Revue Romande,* Switzerland 1919). Until the discovery of Downe's 1918 review in the *Boston Sunday Post* (see following footnote), Ansermet's piece was often cited as the first time that jazz was legitimized as high art by a white "consecrating figure" from the classical music world. Ansermet praises the music of James Reese Europe's orchestra, applying the term "genius" both to the ensemble's music and to the work of its leading soloist, clarinet Sidney Bechet.

[26] Olin Downes, *Boston Sunday Post*, August 4, 1918. In this review, predating Ansermet's by a year, Downes praises the black musicians of the Clef Club Orchestra, and concludes that "The musical art of the Negro should be welcomed, encouraged, and cultivated in this country for the great and significant thing which it is, and not merely as the passing amusement of an idle summer's evening."

However, the declarations of critics that jazz was indeed a "high art" carried no weight in the milieux where the musicians actually earned their livelihoods. The music was still played in venues where it needed to turn a profit, in ticket sales or bar receipts or both. The artistic statements so praised by critics had to be made in ways that would not distract an audience that had paid to drink, dance and socialize.

This position within the entertainment industry was stubbornly (if rarely effectively) resisted by determined musicians, critics and sympathetic scholars. If anything, it was strengthened somewhat during the 1940s by three factors: the positions taken by leading bebop figures such as Dizzy Gillespie, the advance into concert halls made by musicians such as Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman and promoters such as Norman Granz, and the music's waning power as the mainstream of popular style (which made "high art" status more appealing to musicians who saw it as the best of their dwindling options).

Within the jazz field, musicians who tried to present their work as high art often found themselves selling a product for which the market was meagre and unpredictable. Although jazz players were making slow incursions into the subsidized markets of college and university performances and "legitimate" concert series, by and large their livelihoods depended on their abilities to attract paying customers to jazz clubs. By the 1950s many of those customers, to whom jazz was a functional music for drinking, dancing and socializing, were being lost to rhythm and blues and the rising tide of rock and roll.

By 1959, jazz had managed achieve at least an entry-level status as a "high art" within the field of Western music. Jazz was presented in colleges and universities and occasionally in concert series alongside classical and folk music. The Lenox School of Jazz in Massachusetts was established as an academic proving-grounds for the teaching of jazz history, composing, and performing practices.

But these modest advances into a field traditionally dominated by European classical music were by no means welcomed by all the members of that field. Although enthusiastically endorsed, analyzed and studied by a host of intellectuals, bohemians and educated listeners, jazz had been allowed only as far as the margins of the classical hegemony, without actually being ushered inside. There were, after all, no cultural mediators more vigilant than those who guarded the gates of the classical world. Anyone who did not readily fit the traditional model of the European artiste had difficulty gaining admission, regardless of their abilities.[27] By definition this excluded African-American artists, but it also extended to jazz styles of composing, arranging and improvising. For many years, only through sheer virtuosity, and loud and proactive sponsorship by powerful white liberals, were a few black classical performers such as Marian Anderson[28]

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[27] In fact, the insularity of the classical world helps to identify it clearly as a legitimate cultural "field," as we will see when we get to Pierre Bourdieu.

[28] Lynne Olson, *Freedom's Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830 to 1970* (New York: Scribner, 2001), p. 59. The African-American artist Marian Anderson (1897–1993) had won acclaim for her performances as a classical contralto since the early 1920s. The actions of the Washington, DC chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, who

and Andre Watts[29] able to make gradual headway against the glacial inertia of classical tradition.

Jazz and the Song Form

There were two constants through all these conflicts of identity. One was improvisation, which has been essential to jazz since its earliest days (and which was to be offered bountifully by the Coleman quartet). The other was the association of jazz music with the song form, a constant which Coleman, alarmingly, seemed to be in the process of discarding.

By the time that Coleman appeared on the scene, jazz had proven in nightly performances, and had documented in forty years of recordings, that the song form, although outwardly constricting, could be constantly reinvented through new approaches to arrangement and interpretation. Above all, the song form was the essential context for the improvisations that were considered by many to be jazz music's defining feature. The art of the jazz improviser was the art of improvising over the "changes"—the chord sequences of popular songs.

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prevented Anderson from performing a February 1939 concert at Constitution Hall, indicate the strength of the resistance to black performers of classical music. In that instance, U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt responded by resigning from the DAR and presenting a concert featuring Anderson on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

[29] Harry A. Ploski & Warren Marr, II, eds., *The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the Afro American* (New York: The Bellwether Co., 1976), p. 863. André Watts (1946–), born a half-century after Anderson, had a somewhat warmer welcome into the classical field. The esteemed composer/conductor Leonard Bernstein presented Watts (at the age of 16) on national television with the New York Philharmonic. Page 90 of the present study relates how Bernstein's efforts on behalf of black artists were also brought to bear, in a markedly different manner, on Ornette Coleman.

Jazz musicians were constantly testing the limits of the song form: investigating and instigating new procedures, new approaches to harmony, new relationships between soloists and accompanists in small and large ensembles. To date, the jazz canon of seminal composers and improvisers had worked exclusively within the song form. Tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, trumpeter Louis Armstrong, clarinetist Benny Goodman and singer Ella Fitzgerald, for example, were all established virtuosos, capable of extended improvisations which stretched, but never departed from, the harmonic boundaries of the song's chord progressions. The same was true of the "bebop" generation who came to prominence in the 1940s and 1950s; although the new melodies they composed to the chord changes of jazz standards were more intricate and presented daunting technical challenges, their dependence on the song form was just as implicit.

Early in 1959, trumpeter Miles Davis' album "Kind of Blue" had introduced "modal" playing to jazz. Although these compositions were built on harmonically simpler structures, they effectively maintained the familiar pattern of sequencing chord changes for the duration of a performance.

The song form remained the basis of the jazz canon, a canon adjudicated by enthusiastic listeners, critics and record collectors, disseminated by radio broadcasts, live performances and recordings, and maintained by records, published editions, "fake sheets" and transcriptions.

Jazz in the 1950s

In the mid-1950s, in an attempt to win back listeners who were turning to rhythm-and-blues and rock and roll, musicians such as Art Blakey and Horace Silver developed a style of small-group jazz that was simpler in structure and more overtly blues-based than the prevailing bebop styles. What came to be known as "hard bop" was more accessible and danceable than bebop, and was also tightly arranged, immaculately presented, and featured inventive soloists improvising tunefully and virtuosically over bluesy chord changes.

Hard bop could be seen as a populist reaction to bebop—the attempt to reaffirm jazz as a popular music. In the gospel-influenced voicings often favoured by its composers (Horace Silver, Lee Morgan, Bobby Timmons), in its leanings towards the blues rather than the popular song, and in the fact that most of its proponents were black, it has also been seen as reaffirmation of traditional African-American musical tropes, in the face of perceived attempts to align jazz with the Western classical tradition.[30]

In fact, just such attempts constituted the other major movement in jazz in the 1950s. Beginning in the 1940s with the work of instrumentalist/composers such as Miles Davis, Gil Evans, Gerry Mulligan and Gunther Schuller, this movement was seen, in Schuller's words, as a "confluence of two idioms [which

[30] LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963; London: The Jazz Book Club, MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), pp. 216–220.

may] broaden into a self-sufficient third stream," [31] Within this Third Stream, jazz composers experimented with new forms, and improvisers accordingly strove to find new ways to improvise within these forms. Although Third Stream never became a sufficiently widespread practice to become a "mainstream" of its own, before Coleman's debut it was widely regarded as an inevitable step in the evolution of jazz.[32]

Ornette Coleman in Los Angeles

Ornette Coleman began playing the alto saxophone in his early teens. Unable to afford a teacher, he taught himself from instruction books, and learned songs that he heard on the radio. Although he enthusiastically experimented with the instrument's potential ("I used to play one note all day, and I used to try to find how many different sounds I could get out of the mouthpiece," he also formed a number of misconceptions about the facts of scales and transpositions.[33] Years later, Gunther Schuller, after befriending Coleman, giving him private theory lessons, and transcribing a number of his compositions, concluded that:

> [Coleman] studied (on his own) harmony and theory textbooks, and gradually evolved a radically new concept and style, seemingly from a combination of musical intuition, born of South-western country blues

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[31] Gunther Schuller, "Is Jazz Coming of Age"? (*The Jazz Word,* London: Dobson Books Ltd., 1962), p. 185. (Originally published in *Musical America,* February 1959).

[32] Ibid, p. 184. In Schuller's words, jazz and classical music "have been veering toward each other for some forty years, and have, in recent years, become tangent."

[33] Litweiler, p. 25.

> and folk forms, and his misreadings – or highly personal interpretations – of the theoretical texts. [34]

In editing ten of Coleman's pieces for a 1961 MJQ Music edition, Schuller found huge disparities between how the composer notated his pieces, and how he played them. Schuller admitted in the foreword to the edition that he had resorted to transcribing the music from recordings, and flatly declared "Mr. Coleman never learned to read or write conventional musical notation correctly." Schuller continues:

> Lest this be construed as criticism of his abilities, we wish to assure the reader that, were this the case, this publication would never have been undertaken. On the contrary, we believe it is precisely because Mr. Coleman was not "handicapped" by conventional music education that he has been able to make his unique contribution to contemporary music.[35]

Unconventional as it may have been, his background included intense playing and personal collaborations, both with a jazz-loving peer group at I.M. Terrell High School in Fort Worth, and with the more experienced musicians in the working bands where Coleman gradually found a professional niche.[36] As his musical compatriot John Carter pointed out:

> [In the mid-1940s] a good many young men who would have been out there playing were in the service. High school-age boys could go out and

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[34] Gunther Schuller, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd edition (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), p. 99.

[35] Gunther Schuller, *Musings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 80–81.

[36] Litweiler, pp. 27–28.

> get work at what would ordinarily be a man's job—that was true in every area of society, and it was true in music."[37]

As a result, although Coleman was essentially a self-taught musician, he spent his mid-to-late teens in an extended apprenticeship, playing for hours every night in blues, rhythm and blues and pop bands, touring with a minstrel show, and taking occasional excursions into bebop. A 1950 tour with the blues singer-guitarist Pee Wee Crayton stranded Coleman in Los Angeles. Although he spent part of 1952 and 1953 back in Fort Worth, Los Angeles became Coleman's home until he moved east to New York City in 1959.[38]

Despite the daily challenges he faced simply in order to earn a living, Coleman studied, practiced, and eventually evolved his own system of composing and improvising music, a system that he later named "harmolodics."[39] As Ian Carr describes harmolodics:

> Each instrument in an ensemble is both a melody and a rhythm instrument; players abandon their traditional roles and instruments which normally accompany share as lead voices in creating the music.... Harmonic consonance and resolution become irrelevant, the emphasis being on creating interacting lines.[40]

An advance in spreading a broader understanding of harmolodics was doubtless made when Coleman began to write through-composed music for larger

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[37] Ibid, p. 29.

[38] Ibid, pp. 21–44.

[39] Litweiler, pp. 57 and 147. Although Coleman refers to *Lonely Woman* (c. 1959) as the first "harmolodic" composition he recorded, he did not use the term publicly until 1972.

[40] Ian Carr with Digby Fairweather and Brian Priestley: *Jazz: The Essential Companion* (London: Grafton Books, 1987), p. 216.

ensembles in the 1960s. When he began leading his own groups in the late 1950s, however, it was more clearly manifest in ensemble improvisations, in the way that the bassist and percussionist were encouraged to depart from a composition's structures in order to improvise melodies and counter-rhythms on an equal basis with the horns.

It was this deconstruction of the traditional hierarchy of the small jazz group that perhaps constituted Coleman's greatest influence on the "free jazz" that was to follow him. In a sense, harmolodics can be interpreted simply as playing by ear, with a de-emphasizing of the customary roles played by each instrument. In conventional terms this can be (and often has been) interpreted as a relaxation, even an utter abandonment, of musical discipline. However, since early in his career Coleman has made clear that his version of musical freedom did not refute traditional musical disciplines as much as it sought to liberate them. In a sense harmolodics simply reshuffles performance priorities. Rather than defying traditional jazz performance practices, it approaches them from a new angle.

Coleman steadily developed his ideas throughout the 1950s, but had a hard time getting them across. In Los Angeles, he politely followed the standard jazz protocol of asking to sit in with local and visiting bands, but his playing was rejected by such musicians as Dexter Gordon, Clifford Brown, Max Roach and

Eric Dolphy.[41] However, other more established local musicians such as Hampton Hawes, Teddy Edwards and Bill Holman encouraged him, and eventually Coleman accumulated a nucleus of colleagues and collaborators who believed in what he was doing: saxophonist James Clay, trumpeters Bobby Bradford and Don Cherry, drummers Billy Higgins and Ed Blackwell, pianists George Newman, Walter Norris and Don Friedman, and bassists Charlie Haden, Ben Tucker and Don Payne.[42]

It was at Payne's house in 1958 that the Los Angeles bassist Red Mitchell heard Coleman and recommended him to Lester Koenig, the owner of the Contemporary jazz record label. The resulting LP, "Something Else!," brought Coleman a small amount of critical attention, but no offers of work. There was nothing in the wind to suggest that, in a year's time, he would be standing on centre stage at the Five Spot, but in fact the chain of events that would take him there was already in motion.

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[41] Litweiler, pp 46–48, suggests that strictly musical objections might have made up a fairly minor component of Coleman's rejection by established musicians. He presents evidence that the saxophonist's appearance and demeanor, and even the type of instrument that he played, were also important factors. Coleman had long hair and a beard, both indicators of non-conformity (especially for an African-American) that would certainly brand him as "different" in the Los Angeles jazz scene of the time. Regardless of how the music sounded, a working jazz musician might not want to share his stage with a figure whose very appearance could offend paying customers. In addition, Coleman played an inexpensive plastic alto saxophone, an instrument many musicians did not take seriously. And his low-key demeanor and quiet, high-pitched voice worked against him in a conservative social milieu, marking him as a possible homosexual (which was occasionally presumed), or at any rate as an eccentric who could be easily denigrated or bullied. However, by the time he began making records in 1958, Coleman had cut his hair and shaved off his beard, and photos from the time present him in tidy sweaters and slacks.

[42] Ibid, pp. 50–55.

Towards Atonality in Jazz

The Montreal jazz pianist Paul Bley (1932–) attended the Juilliard School of Music (1949–1952) and moved to New York City in 1954. Bley was conservatory-trained, experienced in playing bebop and earlier styles of jazz, and—having been from an early age a musical prodigy—was always on the lookout for new musical challenges. As such, he was well-situated to grasp the motives behind Coleman's music, and its implications for jazz as a whole.

At the beginning of the 1950s, Juilliard was a centre of Third Stream activity. Although open to innovation, and a pioneer in adding jazz instruction to its curriculum, the school's implicit orientation influenced its students to envision jazz innovations within the context of the classical tradition. In Bley's words:

> We learned something about the evolution of classical music, which had gone through a parallel sequence of development 75 years earlier than jazz. Once you realized that, you could look at the history of this European art music to see what was coming next in jazz. It was easy in 1950 to see that the music was about to become very impressionistic, and so it did.... After impressionism, atonality was next. The big mystery wasn't whether atonal music was coming; it was why it wasn't already here. European music had been atonal since the twenties—what was taking jazz so long?[43]

The great barrier between jazz and atonality, Bley maintains, was the influence of alto saxophonist Charlie Parker (nicknamed "Bird," 1920–1955). Parker's innovations in harmony and phrasing had been considerable, but it was his sheer virtuosity that set the standard for jazz instrumentalists in the 1950s.

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[43] Paul Bley with David Lee, *Stopping Time* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1999), p. 24.

Parker's level of ability inspired younger musicians, but also frustrated and defeated them. For approximately a decade from the late 1940s onward, jazz styles evolved around Parker's style rather than from it. A style of music such as "bebop" implies a consensual manner of playing, and the proper development of a new style assumes mastery of the prevailing style that preceded it. However, few could master their instruments to the extent that Parker mastered the saxophone; even if they could copy his tone and phrasing, they could not match the sheer velocity of his playing. Undaunted, many evolving jazz players spent years trying to do exactly that, feeling that the standard set by Parker was a hurdle that must be surmounted if they were to develop their music beyond the boundaries of bebop. As Bley says:

> Bird was more triadic than we like to remember. He placed a great emphasis on the flatted fifth and the raised ninth, and these intervals sounded so dissonant at the time that it seemed that Bird's playing might be a major signpost on the road to atonality....
>
> But here we were in New York trying to force jazz into atonality. It was a concern shared by all of the orchestral writers.... If there had been, for example, an alto saxophonist in any of their bands who could equal what they were trying to do, that saxophonist would have become the man of the hour. But the ideas stayed in the score, because as soon as the alto saxophone player stood up to solo, it was Bird again, and didn't refer to any of the advances that were being made in the writing.[44]

Thus, besides the more populist tendencies of hard bop and the "art for art's sake" accomplishments of Third Stream, the influence of Charlie Parker had led to an identity crisis for modern jazz musicians in the 1950s. The idea of a

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[44] Ibid, pp. 25–26.

technical "advance" beyond bebop seemed impossibly difficult. Technique seemed to be the barrier behind which the development of jazz was stalled. The African-American composer George Russell depicted the immediate future of jazz as a battlefield in which the composer and the improviser would have to arrive at a *détente* in order to merge their forces against the daunting challenge of moving beyond bebop: "The jazz music of the future… the techniques are going to get more complex… [it] represents a continuance of man's struggle with nature to accept ever-more complex materials and subdue them."[45]

Bley's account of these developments is of special interest, as he was the first among his New York peers to encounter Ornette Coleman's music and to appreciate the alternatives it offered to the stalemate of post-bebop jazz. As a conservatory-trained musician, as a "bebop" pianist who opened his mind to the Coleman experience, and as an analytical and articulate exponent of what Bourdieu might have called the "theory of practice," Bley provides valuable insights into the impact that Coleman had on the jazz field of the time. Once moving to New York, Bley played with, and learned from, swing veterans such as Lester Young, bebop revolutionaries such as Charlie Parker and young modernists such as Charles Mingus and Sonny Rollins. In 1956, a cross-country tour leading his own trio brought him to Los Angeles, where for a time he experimented in free improvisation with a fellow Canadian expatriate, trumpeter Herbie Spanier.

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[45] George Russell, "Where Do We Go From Here?", *The Jazz Word,* pp. 190–192.

Eventually Bley settled into an extended engagement at the Hillcrest Club, on Washington Boulevard in a largely African-American section of Los Angeles. His quartet consisted of vibraphonist Dave Pike, bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Billy Higgins. One night at the Hillcrest in the autumn of 1958, Higgins invited Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry to sit in with the group. To Bley, the resulting music was an epiphany:

> In none of [jazz's prevailing] genres was the music coming together the way that I felt it could. I was mastering all the *parts* of the music—they were no problem. The problem was defining an approach that would bring them all together—tempo and non-tempo, atonality and tonality, written and improvised—in a new and profound way.... As hard as Herbie and I worked to put all these elements together, and as hard as the Third Stream composers were trying to put it together, we were all waiting for something, we knew not what. Unknown to us, we were waiting for Ornette Coleman to join our band at the Hillcrest Club.[46]

By the time he and Cherry sat in at the Hillcrest, Coleman had a large repertoire of his own compositions. Upon hearing them, Bley fired his vibraphonist, hired the two young horn players, and set about learning this new music. This was an unusual reaction for a professional jazz musician, experienced in the song form, to exhibit to the new approach that Coleman and Cherry brought to the bandstand. When Coleman moved to New York, most of Bley's peers in the jazz field did not share his excitement:

> But the real surprise was, when we played a second piece, which was a Coleman original, although the solos started in the key of the original, rather than following an AABA form, they followed an A to Z form. This I had never heard done before by anyone, not by any of the composers who we had hoped would lead us out of the bebop wilderness,

[46] Bley, *Stopping Time,* p. 61.

> and certainly not in front of a rhythm section that was playing time. In a single gesture, all the constraints of repetitive structure fell away.[47]

Coleman's compositions were scored with chord changes marked in the traditional jazz fashion, but during improvisations, soloists frequently departed from the chord changes—and so did the bassist who (once Coleman began leading his own groups) provided the sole harmonic accompaniment.

Upon hearing Coleman's first recordings and experiencing him live at the Five Spot, George Russell became one of his supporters, explaining the music in this way:

> Chords have always helped the jazz player to shape melody, maybe to an extent that he is now over-dependent on the chord. Ornette seems to depend mostly on the over-all tonality of the song as a point of departure for melody. By this I don't mean the key the music might be in. His pieces don't readily infer key. They could almost be in any key or no key. I mean that the melody and the chords of his compositions have an overall sound which Ornette seems to use as a point of departure. This approach liberates the improviser to sing his own song really, without having to meet the deadline of any particular chord.[48]

The group at the Five Spot—Coleman alto saxophone, Don Cherry trumpet, Charlie Haden bass, Billy Higgins drums—would play 32-bar tunes more or less in the accepted way, but the solo sections would not be in 32-bar increments. In fact, once the melody was played as a "head" arrangement against the prescribed chords, it seemed as if literally anything could happen (Bley's

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[47] Ibid, p. 63.

[48] George Russell and Martin Williams, "Ornette Coleman and Tonality," *The Jazz Review,* Vol. 3, No. 3, June 1960. p. 9.

description of an "A to Z" structure)—the musicians were free to play whatever they chose until Coleman cued the end of the piece by playing the "head" again.

It was an approach that overturned standard jazz performance practice. The quartet's music endured a barrage of criticism from musicians, critics, scholars and listeners. It also won loyal supporters within all those categories, but at the time it was difficult to predict who would support Coleman and who would condemn him. The debate over Coleman became a pivotal moment in jazz history, forcing interested parties to reexamine and assert their musical and philosophical positions—in short, to question their own artistic tastes.

CHAPTER 2:

PIERRE BOURDIEU AND THE CONCEPT OF "FIELD"

Taste

In his 1979 book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* Pierre Bourdieu defines "taste" as a central signifier of social power. As an example, he examines the difference between working-class taste and the tastes of intellectuals:

> In fact, through the economic and social conditions which they [aesthetic judgements] presuppose, the different ways of relating to realities and fictions, of believing in fictions and the realities they simulate, with more or less distance and detachment, are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (*habitus*) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions. Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.[49]

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Rather than overthrow the corresponding dictionary definition of taste as "aesthetic discernment in art or literature or conduct,"[50] Bourdieu acknowledges how readily taste is appropriated into the individual struggle for influence and power (in short, into the struggle for

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[49] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 5–6.

[50] Allen, R.E. *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English,* seventh edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 770.

"distinction" within one's field), and the ways in which taste defines and reinforces differences (or "distinctions") in social class:

> Nothing more clearly affirms one's "class," nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music.... For a bourgeois world which conceives its relation to the populace in terms of the relationship of the soul to the body, "insensitivity to music" doubtless represents a particularly unavowable form of materialist coarseness... Music represents the most radical and most absolute form of the negation of the world, and especially the social world, which the bourgeois ethos tends to demand of all forms of art.[51]

Bourdieu describes a "bourgeois world" in which European art music, or classical music, is the sole unquestionably "legitimate" form of music. Although other forms of music are admitted a certain "middle-brow" quality or "popular" appeal, they will never attain "legitimate" status. On the other hand, jazz, along with cinema and the works of certain songwriters, is an art which "the most self-assured aesthetes can combine with the most legitimate of the arts that are still in the process of legitimation."[52] In other words, some people with "legitimate" tastes will accept jazz as a "high-brow" art form, on a par with classical music, although some of them do so in order to deliberately distinguish themselves from prevailing opinions—in other words, to achieve distinction among their peers.

This positioning of jazz agrees with the dynamics we can observe in the jazz field of 1959. An overriding question was, is jazz as *good* as classical music? Esteemed figures such as Duke Ellington had already described jazz as

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[51] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 18–19.

[52] Ibid, p. 16.

"America's classical music," but as a black American himself, Ellington was not a member of the classical hegemony, and certainly not one of the gatekeepers who decided admittance to its exclusive circles. But an ongoing discourse, implicit in the discussions of Third Stream music such as the above comments by Schuller and Russell, outlined exactly the tensions between exclusion and legitimation that Bourdieu referred to in his references to jazz. Taste, then, is one of the battery of assets, potent and valuable within the field of cultural production, that Bourdieu refers to as *cultural capital.*

Capital

Within the arts, cultural capital can be defined as what one *knows* about one's chosen field: the knowledge of the genre's history, the background that enables one to interpret the codes implicit in a work, and perhaps most importantly, the command of the language used by members of the field. The possession of cultural capital is vital to the acquisition of *symbolic capital*, which "refers to degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge… and recognition."[53]

Symbolic and cultural capital can be converted into economic capital, but only in certain circumstances. In general, they have no economic value. Instead, a major item of trade among social groups is:

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[53] Randal Johnson, "Editor's Introduction." Pierre Bourdieu: *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 7.

> symbolic power based on diverse forms of capital which are not reducible to economic capital. Academic capital, for example, derives from formal education and can be measured by degrees or diplomas held. Linguistic capital concerns an agent's linguistic competence measured in relation to a specific linguistic market where often unrecognized power relations are at stake.
>
> Two forms of capital are particularly important in the field of cultural production. *Symbolic capital* refers to degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge and recognition. *Cultural capital* concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions... Bourdieu defines cultural capital as a form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artifacts. He suggests that "a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded." [54] The possession of this code, or cultural capital, is accumulated through a long process of acquisition or inculcation which includes the pedagogical action of the family or group members (family education), educated members of the social formation (diffuse education) and social institutions (institutionalized education).
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> Possession of economic capital does not *necessarily* imply possession of cultural or symbolic capital, and vice versa. Bourdieu, in fact, analyses the field of cultural production as an "economic world reversed" based on a "winner loses" logic, since economic success (in literary terms, for example, writing a best seller) may well signal a barrier to specific consecration and symbolic power.[55]

However, within a cultural field there can be many different kinds of relationships between cultural capital and economic capital (see below).

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[54] Bourdieu, *Distinction,* p. 2.

[55] Johnson, introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 7–8.

Field

Many of the forces that came to bear around the Five Spot in November 1959 can be identified in Bourdieu's essay, "Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus."[56] Here Bourdieu identifies, among other things, the "entirely recent historical inventions" of the writer and the artist as dependent on the constitution of an artistic "field."[57]

> What do I mean by "field"? As I use the term, a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy. ... The literary field (one may also speak of the artistic field, the philosophical field, etc.) is an independent social universe with its own laws of functioning, its specific relations of force, its dominants and its dominated, and so forth. ... [Within the field] there accumulates a particular form of capital and... relations of force of a particular type are exerted.[58]

Each artistic field is an "independent universe" whose members, even though they clash and compete for dominance, define themselves (and may even depend for their livelihoods) on the amount of cultural capital they possess, and are defined by other members according to the amount of symbolic capital they have accumulated.

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[56] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production,* pp. 161–175.

[57] Ibid, p. 162.

[58] Ibid, pp. 162–164.

Habitus

Habitus is the name that Bourdieu gives to the collection of mental structures through which each individual processes incoming information. As Randal Johnson explains it, "the habitus is the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a 'second sense' or a second nature."[59] It is the individual's habitus that assesses new information, applying value judgements that are largely conditioned by the social conditions of his or her upbringing, and delimits the range of practices appropriate for a response. Habitus is the reason that a working-class man raised in a household with marginal literacy, and a middle-class man from a highly literate, "cultured" household, can react quite differently when confronting the same problem. Their assessments of the problem and the range of responses each deems appropriate will be shaped by each person's individual habitus.[60]

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[59] Ibid, p. 5.

[60] Ibid, pp. 4–5.

The Three Artistic Positions

All members of an artistic field possess cultural capital to some degree, but no one's amount is exactly equal. All are struggling to gain more capital, or to maintain what they have, and the terrain is competitive, even combative. Artists according to Bourdieu, take one of three positions:

> 1) **Social art**. "The partisans of social art... demand that literature fulfill a social or political function."
>
> 2) **Bourgeois art**. "The partisans of 'bourgeois art'... are closely and directly tied to the dominant class by their lifestyle and their system of values, and they receive, in addition to significant material benefits... all the symbols of bourgeois honour...."[61]
>
> 3) **Art for art's sake**. "Thus the defenders of art for art's sake occupy a central but structurally ambiguous position in the field which... compels them to think of themselves, on the aesthetic as well as the political level, in opposition to the 'bourgeois artists'... and in opposition to the 'social artists'.... As a result, the members of this group are led to form contradictory images of the groups they oppose as well as of themselves.... they can simultaneously or successively identify with a glorified working class or with a new aristocracy of the spirit."[62]

The battle for cultural capital is a battle for power—a battle for dominant positions within the field. In his essay *The Field of Cultural Production,* Bourdieu points out that an artistic field is "a field of positions and a field of position-takings."[63] His remarks on the role of the avant-garde depict the history of a given field as:

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[61] Ibid, p. 166.

[62] Ibid, p. 167.

[63] Ibid, p. 34.

> The struggle between the established figures and the young challengers... The agents engaged in the struggle are both contemporaries—precisely by virtue of the struggle which synchronizes them—and separated by time and in respect of time... The emergence of a group capable of "making an epoch" by imposing a new, advanced position is accompanied by a displacement of the structure of temporally hierarchized positions opposed within a given field; each of them moves a step down the temporal hierarchy which is at the same time a social hierarchy; the avant-garde is separated by a generation from the consecrated avant-garde which is itself separated by another generation from the avant-garde that was already consecrated when it made its own entry into the field. Each author, school or work which "makes its mark" displaces the whole series of earlier authors, schools or works.[64]

A key word in this passage is *consecrated.* "Consecration" is the process by which an artist who newly arrives from outside of the field, or who is already allowed a low position in its hierarchy, achieves substantial status within it. It is a process whereby the value of one's symbolic capital is inarguably confirmed. In the arts, Bourdieu recognizes a range of "consecrating agents," from "academies, museums, learned societies and the educational system" to "literary circles, critical circles, salons, and small groups surrounding a famous author or associating with a publisher, a review or a literary or artistic magazine."[65]

These "relations of force" were very much at work in the reception of the Ornette Coleman Quartet's music in the jazz "field" of 1959. The impact of Coleman's music, and the heat of the controversy around it, engendered a wealth of accounts—reviews, interviews, anecdotes and historical analyses—of this time

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[64] Ibid, p. 60.

[65] Ibid, p. 121.

and place. Because of this, the forces that Bourdieu depicts as working implicitly within and around artistic fields—often at a salon's corner tables, within an art gallery's mailing list, or behind the closed doors of a record company or book publisher—can be seen clearly at work in this field. The agents of these forces work to further the music's consecration, or to resist it; they allocate or deny symbolic capital; they angle, elbow or dicker to elevate their own artistic position within the jazz hierarchy.

CHAPTER 3:

THE FIELD OF THE FIVE SPOT

The Culture of the Jazz Club

The Five Spot Café was a neighbourhood bar located at Five Cooper Square in the Bowery, a traditionally working-class neighbourhood in Lower Manhattan. Because of its location east of the clubs, lofts and galleries of Greenwich Village, the Bowery was home to a number of artists and intellectuals from the village scene, and some of them would gather at the Five Spot.[66]

The club had a piano, which occasionally one of the habitués would play, and in 1956 the brothers Joe and Iggy Termini, who had inherited the Five Spot from their father, initiated a jazz policy. They presented such modern artists as Thelonious Monk, Randy Weston and David Amram, as well as the radical young avant-garde pianist Cecil Taylor. Taylor's six-week engagement "immediately attracted a new crowd of artists, writers, and members of what at that time was commonly referred to as the Uptown Bohemia. The skids went out, the sawdust came off the floor, the prices went up," and by the end of the year the Five Spot had become an outpost, pioneering the transformation of its neighbourhood into the East Village—an eastward extension of the long-established Greenwich Village artistic community. [67]

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[66] Leslie Gourse, *Straight, No Chaser: The Life and Genius of Thelonious Monk* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), pp. 130–132.

[67] Spellman, pp. 10–11.

By the time Coleman premiered there on November 17, 1959, the Five Spot had featured such jazz artists as Herbie Nichols, Charles Mingus and Monk's quartet with John Coltrane.[68] None of these artists were the commercial jazz stars of the era, but all of them were counted among the era's leading jazz innovators.

Whether or not the Terminis' investment in the jazz avant-garde was a function of their own tastes in music, their hiring of these 1950s practitioners of "art for art's sake" was a canny business move to make at this particular time and place.[69] After all, the Five Spot bordered on the North American centre of "art for art's sake," Greenwich Village in Lower Manhattan. The area was a home and/or business centre for thousands of artists, intellectuals, journalists, art dealers and students, and a destination for thousands of visitors from outside the city or abroad, many of whom also had a vested interest in the arts. The neighbourhood sustained a volume of intellectual traffic that put the Terminis in a rare position: one in which the presentation of "art for art's sake" in a non-subsidized commercial venue could turn out to be a sound business decision.

Indeed, the decision worked well for them. Various stories from the era agree that the avant-garde jazz musicians at the Five Spot frequently played to full

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[68] Litweiler, p. 78.

[69] Spellman, p. 9. Spellman's interview with Joe Termini circa 1966 reveals the club owner, sympathetic to jazz as he might have been, to be not so sympathetic as to put the music's needs above his own: "I might not have jazz in the future. People seem to like dancing, and I might go into that.... If I lose money, I won't have jazz anymore." On page 8 of the same article, Taylor's bassist Buell Neidlinger relates how the Terminis consistently tried to curtail the length of the group's sets, so that the audience would start ordering drinks.

houses.[70] The audience often included "bohemians" from all disciplines: jazz musicians as well as critics and media personalities. The clientele included such famous names as painters Robert Rauschenberg, Larry Rivers and Franz Kline, writers Norman Mailer and Jack Kerouac, and conductor Leonard Bernstein, as well as the African-American writers James Baldwin and Amiri Baraka (then known as LeRoi Jones).[71]

In their roles as meeting-places, the cafes, nightclubs and bars of Greenwich Village had spawned a unique local culture, a regionally distinct urban intellectual field, by bringing together artists and artistic mediators (gallery-owners, editors, scholars, critics) from different disciplines. Within this culture the famous mingled with the infamous, the celebrity with the unknown, the rich with the poor, the eccentric with the conventional. This culture also served as an important meeting-place for black people and whites.

Robert K. McMichael offers an interesting perspective on the dynamics of the presentation of jazz, usually played by black musicians, in these venues:

> The fact that whites owned the majority of jazz clubs is significant, and often mitigated or limited the extent to which musicians could practice their craft freely. However, it is worth considering the very existence of an improvisatory African American art form in a white-owned commercial space something of a radical (or at least

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[70] Ibid, pp. 6–7.

[71] Chambers, p. 19, lists these names among the audience. The poet/photographer Fred W. McDarrah, in *Beat Generation: Glory Days in Greenwich Village* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), p. 103, recalls taking Jack Kerouac late in the evening on December 10, 1959 to hear Coleman at the Five Spot, where "the place was nearly empty except for [painters] Franz Kline and William Morris."

> postmodern) configuration, at least insofar as the tension between capitalist market forces and racially integrated but African American improvisatory and antiphonal practices often dramatically interrupts dominant racist social codes.[72]

McMichael also quotes from Mingus' autobiography *Beneath the Underdog*, and identifies a club Mingus calls "The Fast Buck" as the Five Spot circa 1959:

> The club is definitely the place this season for society and college girls from New York and out-of-town who want to have a fling at life via the bandstand or the single male customers who press around the bar and it's nothing wild to walk in on a crowded night and find Mingus at a table with half a dozen girls huddled around him or sitting on his knees or him perching on theirs.... These days Charles feels wholly free and not only as good as any white people but better than most and he's found a musical home, a place to play for people who really seem to want to hear.[73]

McMichael concludes that "the musicians as well as the audience were conscious of and interested in the cultivation of an integrationist subculture."[74]

The jazz club of 1959, then, was a place where racial tensions between black and white were ignored, sublimated, or enacted in more subtle forms (as exemplified by Mingus' adoring coterie of white women, the jazz club milieu enabled whites to pay homage to black artists, to enact a liberating, if temporary, reversal of the roles allocated to them in American society). This could be said to

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[72] Robert K. McMichael, "'We Insist—Freedom Now!': Black Moral Authority, Jazz, and the Changeable Shape of Whiteness," *American Music,* Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 1998), fn. p. 413.

[73] Charles Mingus, *Beneath the Underdog* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 249–250. Cited in McMichael, p. 392.

[74] McMichael, p. 393.

be true of the jazz field as a whole: it had an independent identity as a field in itself, but it also provided numerous intersections where the (predominantly white) members of different fields—poetry, *belles lettres,* painting, "classical" music—could congregate and make public their liberal humanism in regard to black American culture. From its opening until well into the 1960s, the Five Spot Café was one of the busier of these intersections. Perhaps the club assumed this role because it consistently presented artists whose music was simultaneously accessible and innovative, such as that of Mingus and Monk.

Its importance as an arena of interactions, in which participants gained different degrees of cachet by displaying their participation in the jazz field, can be especially understood through the presence of Norman Mailer (1923–) and James Baldwin (1924–1988). They were both up-and-coming young writers who had made names for themselves through their fiction as well as essays and criticism. They were both native New Yorkers, although in Baldwin's words, "I am a black boy from the Harlem streets, and Norman is a middle-class Jew."[75] Their attendance at the Five Spot identifies them as members of the jazz "field," but they were also prominent members of another artistic field, the New York literary field.[76]

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[75] James Baldwin, "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1985), p. 289; originally published in *Esquire*, May 1961.

[76] Norman Podhoretz, *Making It* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), p. 110. This particular artistic field is vividly described as a "family" by Podhoretz in this memoir. As a young man, Podhoretz was eager to join the New York literary "family" of the 1950s. He justifies the term *family* "by the

Norman Mailer

Norman Mailer, although well known as a literary writer, published in books and literary journals where his opinions could be widely read, also made his opinions known within the jazz field—an artistic field in which although he neither played, presented or wrote about jazz, he nevertheless felt a personal stake. Bassist Buell Neidlinger, for example, claims that a Cecil Taylor residency at the Five Spot was curtailed by influential members of the jazz community because of Mailer's loud championing of Taylor's music over that of Thelonious Monk (who was playing at a rival club), to other audience members.[77] Even if Mailer was not a jazz stakeholder professionally, he moved enough in jazz circles that a club such as the Five Spot became an active part of his writing career. Mailer's *Esquire* coverage of the 1960 Democratic National Convention came about through a chance meeting with *Esquire* editor Clay Felker in the Five Spot on a busy spring night

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fact that these were people who by virtue of their tastes, ideas, and general concerns found themselves stuck with one another against the rest of the world whether they liked it or not (and most did not), preoccupied with one another to the point of obsession, and intense in their attachments and hostilities as only a family is capable of being." Podhoretz takes pains to point out that the interests and activities of family members continually crossed genre boundaries; it was an "intellectual" family rather than a strictly literary one. His "family's" relationships of power and position match Bourdieu's account of field relationships; so does his account of their genre-crossing predilections, as exemplified by the presence of Baldwin and Mailer, two members of the literary "family" whose names also appear in accounts of the Five Spot.

[77] Spellman, p. 11.

(in fact, probably during a Coleman engagement) when Joe Termini seated Felker at Mailer's table.[78]

If there was a "voice of the times" in the bustling New York City intellectual community at the end of the 1950s, it was Norman Mailer. His voice, in print and in live discourse, was loud, arresting, controversial and occasionally brilliant. His influence was pervasive, and it is possible that examples of his writing can give us clues to the context in which critics (by and large white critics, except for Baraka) received Ornette Coleman's debut.

Mailer's writing had established him as a kind of link between the ecstatic, anti-establishment literature of the Beats, such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, and the equally passionate, but more precise liberalism of writers like Baldwin and Gore Vidal. In the month that Coleman opened at the Five Spot, Mailer's "The Mind of an Outlaw" appeared in *Esquire*—an essay that characterized modern writers (especially Mailer himself) as anti-establishment outsiders.

Even more significant was "The White Negro," an excerpt from Mailer's new book *Advertisements for Myself* that had appeared in the magazine he edited, *Dissent,* earlier in the year.[79] Passages from "The White Negro" display a view of

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[78] Hilary Millers, *Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Empire Books, 1982), p. 207. Since Coleman's quartet played again at the Five Spot from April through July 1960, this return engagement was the probable occasion for Mailer and Felker's "spring of 1960" meeting.

[79] Ibid, pp. 206–207.

jazz—and a view of venues such as the Five Spot—that to an extent pervaded the era's intellectual life:

> But the presence of Hip as a working philosophy in the sub-worlds of American life is probably due to jazz, and its knifelike entrance into culture, its subtle but so penetrating influence on an avant-garde generation.... In such places as Greenwich Village, a *ménage-à-trois* was completed—the bohemian and the juvenile delinquent came face-to-face with the Negro, and the hipster was a fact in American life.... For jazz is orgasm, it is the music of orgasm, good orgasm and bad, and so it spoke across a nation, it had the communication of art even where it was watered, perverted, corrupted, and almost killed, it spoke in no matter what laundered popular way of instantaneous existential states to which some whites could respond, it was indeed a communication by art because it said, "I feel this, and now you do too."[80]

Mailer's point of view was unapologetically essentialist, and at the same time that he paid homage to the superiority of the clichés of African-American spontaneity, sexuality, and primitivism, he summoned these forces primarily to serve as muses for his own "avant-garde generation" of white artists. Although one might excuse the "White Negro" perspective as a white intellectual's sincere attempt to embrace (his own concept of) black culture on the same terms that he embraced his own, it is worth questioning the extent to which it encourages a misinterpretation and even a total misreading of black music.

As Ingrid Monson writes,

> To the extent that well-meaning white Americans have confused the most "transgressive" aspects of African American culture with its true character, they fall into the trap of viewing blackness as absence. Whether conceived as an absence of morality or of bourgeois

[80] Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" in *Advertisements for Myself*. (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1961). pp. 284–5.

> pretensions, this view of blackness, paradoxically, buys into the historical legacy of primitivism and its concomitant exoticism of the "Other."[81]

Monson traces the mythos of black "hipness" through the writing of Mezz Mezzrow – a white clarinetist in New Orleans and early swing styles who felt a deep identification with black culture – and through the emergence of bebop. In every case, she finds that intellectual curiosity, the systematic exploration of new ideas and the cultivation of discipline among black jazz musicians is misinterpreted by white enthusiasts:

> Different observers, it seems, chose to emphasize different aspects of bebop according to their investment in particular images and associations of blackness and music. In their recollections, the principal musical participants stress the intellectuality, artistry, and social consciousness of the musical movement. [Bebop drummer] Kenny Clarke recalls: "It was the most intelligent phase of our music.... There was a message in our music. Whatever you go into, go into it *intelligently.* As simple as that." By contrast, Mailer saw in the hip African American the true existentialist/hedonist who counteracted death by taking an "uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self," with particular attention to the pleasures of the body.[82]

Given the high profile of Mailer's writing at the time—certainly other journalists, including jazz journalists, would have been aware of it—it seems possible that in his romanticized discourse, Mailer was voicing certain expectations that some white listeners were bringing to black music. These expectations were that jazz would offer more than just passing enjoyment; in fact, that it had the potential to be even more profound an art form than classical music. According to these

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[81] Ingrid Monson, "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse," *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* Vol. XLVIII, No. 3, Fall 1995, p. 398.
[82] Ibid, p. 415.

expectations, jazz was, both in the primacy it gave to improvisation and in the "hipness" of its origins in African American culture, virtually an elemental force in which sexual desire, the desire for individual freedom and dignity, and the myriad desires behind the artistic impulse were mystically entwined and merged within a singular musical voice.[83]

None of these expectations were articulated when jazz music was defined by its actual practitioners. As Monson writes of her interviews with African American jazz musicians, "I found that most emphasized discipline and responsibility as the keys to performing at a level that meets the jazz community's standards of spontaneity and soulfulness."[84] It can nevertheless be useful to keep these quotes from "The White Negro" in mind when trying to grasp the expectations of critics as they approached the music of Ornette Coleman. Doing so might help to illuminate, among other things, the clash of agendas between what musicians saw as important, and what was valued by jazz critics and influential jazz listeners of the time.

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[83] Carl Rollyson, *The Lives of Norman Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), p. 110, describes that around the time that Mailer was writing "The White Negro," "he rented a saxophone in order to 'honk' along with the music of Thelonious Monk. Although he could not play the instrument, Mailer believed he was in tune with it, that he was 'hip.'"

[84] Monson, p. 420.

James Baldwin

Despite his pride in his black heritage and his fascination with African American culture, James Baldwin's intellectual interests, and his desire to be a writer, drew him downtown from the black working-class background of his native Harlem, and into social circles where, even though he stood out on account of his race, he was at any rate encouraged in his literary interests.[85] His background gave him a unique perspective on the dynamics of a Lower Manhattan meeting-place catering to a mostly-white clientele, such as the Five Spot, in his comparison of Harlem ("uptown") and Lower Manhattan ("downtown") night life. If the black club is a happier place, Baldwin says, it is not because black Americans are a "happy" people, but because:

> No one gives a damn, and this allows everyone to be himself—at the club. No one gives a damn because they know exactly how rough it is out there, when the club gates close. And while they are dancing and listening to the music and drinking and joking and laughing, with all their finery on, and looking so bold and free, they know who enters, who leaves, and on what errands: they are aware of the terrible and unreachable forces which yet rule their lives.
>
> Well, the Negro is not happy in his place, and white people aren't happy in their place, either—two very intimately related

[85] Ibid, pp. 26–27. Baldwin had to remove himself from his cultural background in order to join the intellectual field represented at the Five Spot. This, in fact, was true to some extent of most of the field's members. Again, Norman Podhoretz provides a graphic description of the necessity of severing one's ethnic roots (in his case, working-class Brooklyn Jewish) in order to join the "family" (or field) of intellectual Manhattan, when he describes his reaction to the uplifting intentions of "Mrs. K.," a high school teacher who took him under her wing and exposed him to high culture: "And how could she have explained to me that there was no socially neutral ground to be found in the United States of America, and that a distaste for the surroundings in which I was bred, and ultimately (God forgive me) even for many of the people I loved, and so a new taste for other kinds of people—how could she have explained that all this was inexorably entailed in the logic of a taste for the poetry of Keats and the painting of Cézanne and the music of Mozart?"

> facts—but the unhappiness of white people seems never to rattle and resound more fiercely than in their pleasure mills. The world that mainly frequents white nightclubs seems afflicted with a strange uncertainty as to whether or not they are really having fun—they keep peeping at each other in order to find out. One's aware, in an eerie way, that there are barriers which must not be crossed, and that by these invisible barriers everyone is mesmerized. But it is quite impossible to discover where, in action, these barriers are to be found; nothing matches the abandon of those struggling to be free of invisible chains, who wish, at the same time, to remain socially safe. And nothing matches the joylessness, either.... White people are isolated from each other in their nightclubs as they are all over America, in their daily lives. The nightclub being no place to establish a human relationship, they walk out as untouched as they were when they walked in. It is this cumulative and grinding inability to reach out to others which makes nightclub life, downtown, so grim.[86]

On occasion Baldwin's writing, like Mailer's, had paid tribute to the power of African-American music and to the transcendent message of jazz, yet it conveyed an insider's view, shorn of Mailer's essentialism and certainly of any notion of "hipness." As a gay man and as a black man, Baldwin was compelled to step carefully, testing his welcome, into the Lower Manhattan venues where Mailer made his presence known so noisily. For example, both men were acquainted with Miles Davis, but where Mailer's relationship with the trumpeter was tense and competitive, Baldwin and Davis formed a warm, lifelong friendship. As an African-American writer, Baldwin's relationship to the music and to the milieu of the Lower Manhattan jazz scene was different from Mailer's in every way.

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[86] Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket,* pp. 320–323.

The Jazz Club and its Audience

I have already described the venues in which jazz was performed. Although the music was making gradual incursions into concert situations where it was treated as "art," the jazz club was still very much the marketplace where jazz was bought and sold. Although the clubs drew discerning listeners, the music was expected to present a sympathetic background for drinking, socializing and even dancing.

Casual as the jazz club setting may have seemed, it was a setting that made huge demands on the performers. For example, at this writing (2004), there are two clubs in Toronto that regularly feature jazz, both by local musicians and out-of-towners. These engagements last a maximum of one week, a "week" extending from Tuesday to Saturday. Each evening's performance consists of three or four sets from about 9:00 to 1:00 am, so the engagement calls for a total of about twenty hours of making music, including intermissions.

In 1959 it was common for a club engagement to last for at least two weeks and sometimes more. Each week's performances lasted from Tuesday to Sunday with a matinee added on Saturday afternoon, and as Coleman did at the Five Spot, the musicians played from 9:00 pm until 3:00 am each night, totaling, with intermissions, about 39 hours of performance for the week. It is easy to understand Coleman's complaint at the time, that the strain of this schedule interfered with the creativity that was his ostensible appeal.[87]

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[87] Litweiler, p. 91.

However, until his new fame brought him to the Monterey Festival and New York's Town Hall in 1959, Coleman had only played in clubs, or earlier in his career when he was still Texas-based, in dance halls. As he developed his own style, his music became increasingly out of sync with the spirit of these venues:

> Drummer Mel Lewis, who gigged in and around Los Angeles in the mid-1950s, recalls an engagement with Bill Holman, who was an early supporter of Coleman's music: "We were working over at the Jazz Cellar on La Palmas, and one night Ornette Coleman came and sat in with us. You never saw a club empty out so fast. The woman who ran the club told us that if we let him sit in again, we were fired. The very next night, who comes in but John Lewis and Gunther Schuller. They want to hear Ornette with the band. Well, we let him sit in again, and the club emptied out again. This time she fires us."[88]

Paul Bley also describes how the Hillcrest's predominantly black, working-class audience reacted when Coleman and Don Cherry first performed with his band:

> Several things happened almost at once. The audience en masse got up, leaving their drinks on the table and on the bar, and headed for the door. The club literally emptied as soon as the band began playing.
>
> For the duration of that gig, if you were driving down Washington Boulevard past the Hillcrest Club you could always tell if the band was on the bandstand or not. If the street was full of the audience holding drinks in front of the club, the band was playing. If the audience was in the club, it was intermission.[89]

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[88] Ted Gioia, *West Coast Jazz: Modern Jazz in California 1945–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 351. Although this anecdote agrees with other stories of Coleman's reception at the time, Mel Lewis might have had his dates mixed up, since other accounts have John Lewis encountering Coleman's music no earlier than 1958, and Schuller not until Lenox in 1959. On the other hand, it would be worthwhile finding out if either or both of them had indeed heard Coleman before those dates.

[89] Paul Bley, *Stopping Time*, p. 63.

Bley's quartet with Dave Pike had built a good relationship with the club owner and with a large audience of regulars. Obviously the new configuration with Coleman and Cherry was no longer fulfilling the same function.[90] Although still based in steady jazz time, the music's angular melodies and dissonant voicings, the bittersweet, vocalized exchanges of the two horns, and the unpredictable twists and turns of the group's improvisations were a world apart from the more conventional aural background the group had supplied as a piano/vibraphone quartet.

At the Five Spot in the new bohemia of the East Village, a meeting-place for writers, artists, poets and musicians, one might expect that the audience reaction would be more urbane, more informed, and more tolerant—indeed, encouraging—of new developments. Indeed, to some extent because of the musical controversy he had generated in the media, every night that Coleman's quartet played at the Five Spot became a kind of spectacle, drawing an audience quite different from the audience at the Hillcrest the previous year. The character of Coleman's audience at the Five Spot was so distinctive, and its expectations so different from that of the usual jazz audience, that in the pages of the British journal *New Statesman,* Eric Hobsbawm raised serious questions about Coleman and his listeners:

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[90] Bley, *Stopping Time*, p. 68. "The owner of the Hillcrest... was in denial. This band had done so well for him. Three of its original members were still on the bandstand.... It took him a month to realize that he could no longer afford having an atom bomb go off in his club every night. With much regret, he told us that he had to let us go."

> But who has recognized him? The public at the Five Spot is overwhelmingly young, white, and intellectual or bohemian. Here are the jazz fans (white or coloured) with the "Draft Stevenson" buttons, lost over their $1.50 beer. If Coleman were to blow in Small's Paradise in Harlem, it would clear the place in five minutes. Musicians such as he are, it seems, as cut off from the common listeners among their people as Webern is from the public at the Filey Butin's. They depend on those who are themselves alienated, the internal emigrants of America.[91]

Hobsbawm's plaint acknowledges a change that had already taken place in the jazz field: although most of the music's creators were black Americans, it was no longer especially a music played for black American audiences.[92] Especially as Hobwbawm was a visitor from another country where jazz audiences had always been predominantly white, it is interesting to speculate as to why he would consider the audience demographic to be important. Perhaps as a visitor he saw jazz less as a subset of a larger field of "American music," and more as a subset of

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[91] Hobsbawm, Eric (writing as Francis Newton) in *New Statesman*, quoted in Nat Hentoff, "Jazz in Print," *Jazz Review*, November 1960. (quoted in Litweiler, pp.83–84).

[92] The alleged decline of interest in jazz among black audiences is a lament heard repeatedly from certain jazz commentators. Until serious studies allow the subject to be seen more clearly, it will presumably continue to be a jazz homily readily appropriated to causes of essentialism and chicanery.

From its emergence as a popular form circa 1920, jazz has occupied a position in the popular music industry analogous to that of rhythm and blues or hip-hop in later eras— dance music styles that evolved in black communities and retained their original audiences even as they were discovered by the white mainstream (and appropriated by white artists). However, black artists often performed in venues that allowed only white audiences, and in another context, sought popularity among white audiences. Current black popular music forms retain their audiences in the black community, but jazz is no longer a current black popular music. As jazz evolved into an avant-garde "art" music, it also moved into a musical position—and a specialized, rarefied genre within the music industry—that was broadly popular neither with black nor with white audiences. It is significant that Hobsbawm, as a visitor from England, made this observation. Historically, most British and Continental critics have been forthright in regarding jazz as an aspect of black American culture, whereas American critics, their *habiti* unavoidably subject to the racial tensions of their society, often evaded the issue.

the field of "African-American culture." But why would this concern a Britisher as deeply as it seems to concern Hobsbawm?

Hobsbawm clearly is referring to the audience as much more than passive consumers who empower the music with their paid attendance. They define the music itself and imbue it with cultural value. In effect, they become a constituency whose very presence is a demonstration of support; they have elected the musicians to represent them. Towards this relationship, Hobsbawm's doubts are misgivings about *authenticity;* about the extent to which the Coleman quartet actually represented their audience, and vice versa.

Hobsbawm, despite his misgivings, came out on the side of the music. Overall he found Coleman's music shocking, even unpleasant, but irresistible. He admitted that "the unforgettable thing… is the passion with which he blows. I have heard nothing like it in modern jazz since Parker."[93]

Regardless of who actually came to the Five Spot, Coleman drew so well that the two-week engagement stretched to ten weeks. It lasted until the end of January 1960. Two months later, on April 5, the quartet (with Edward Blackwell replacing Higgins on drums) returned for another engagement, this time staying for four months.

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[93] Hobsbawm, quoted in Litweiler, p. 83.

Contemporary Accounts of the Five Spot Café's Jazz "Field"

If, in understanding the impact of Coleman's debut, the Five Spot itself should be looked at more closely, we are fortunate in having a wealth of documentation from the time and place. By the late 1950s, the image of the bereted "beatnik" or bohemian was a popular trope on record and magazine covers, on television and in Hollywood films. This image pervades the work of writers who felt they could best describe the Five Spot by describing its audience:

> The Five Spot, one of New York's more *outré* jazz clubs, usually attracts a fairly wild-looking crowd of jazz aficionados. College girls in shorts rub shoulders with long-haired painters in mottled dungarees. Village girls in leotards, men in sweaters and leather jackets—their eyes shaded by dark glasses—sailors, cadets, and the Madison Avenue cool crowd, have all made the Five Spot their own. It is home for both the "beatnik" and the serious jazz student.[94]

It was common enough in the era's journalism to treat the mixed cast of Greenwich Village bohemia as a novelty item. However, some writers analyzed the Five Spot clientele more precisely and more seriously. In terms of Bourdieu's three artistic positions, it is interesting to read Robert Kotlowitz's description of the audience that filled the Five Spot for Thelonious Monk's extended residency in 1961:

> What Monk's audience thinks of him depends on which audience is being talked about. There are three.
>
> One is in attendance because it has gathered that it is the hip thing to do.... Jazz offers swollen legends of narcotics, of drink, race guilt, and violence, bearing a strangely attractive aura of sadness and

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[94] Bob Rolontz, "What Became of Jazz and Poetry?", *The Jazz Review,* New York (Feb. 1958). Reprinted in *The Jazz Word*, p. 71.

> pain. For the "hippies," it means an evening's brush with emotional anarchy for the price of a beer.
>
> A second audience comes because it has heard that Monk is a character.... For this audience, he is a spectacle; it is sheerest coincidence that a little music is thrown in.
>
> The third audience, young, ardent, and often bearded without being beat, will come to a night club for a Monk performance, but it won't drink very much. It is loyal, intense, and responsive to the music, which is what it comes to hear.[95]

The writer clearly observes and defines the three artistic positions that Bourdieu was to recognize two decades later. The first audience is attracted to the music as *social art*. They are less interested in aesthetic experience than in social significance, and want no more than a detached, even voyeuristic exposure to the music's "swollen legends of narcotics, of drink, race guilt, and violence." The second audience comes searching for *bourgeois art*, for entertainment: to see Monk dance, wear funny hats and otherwise be a "spectacle." The writer most clearly approves of the third audience: "loyal, intense, and responsive," this audience regards the music as *art for art's sake*.

Having played with Coleman in Los Angeles, Paul Bley was an enthusiastic listener at the Five Spot and describes Coleman's debut clearly in terms of artistic position. In the custom of the day, Coleman's quartet alternated sets with a group called the Jazztet, a "sextet that sounds like a big band," according to their publicity.[96] The group was led by trumpeter Art Farmer and tenor saxophonist Benny Golson, with trombonist Curtis Fuller, pianist McCoy

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[95] Robert Kotlowitz, "Monk Talk," *Harper's*, Sept. 1961, pp. 21–22.

[96] Advertisement, Argo Records, *The Jazz Review*, June 1960. Inside front cover.

Tyner, Addison Farmer on bass and Lex Humphries on drums. This is how Bley describes the pairing of the Jazztet's music with Coleman's:

> The week before Ornette came [the Jazztet] sounded like a very modern, Horace Silver-type arranged band: beautiful aesthetics, with all the rough points ironed out, slick, smooth. Ornette played one set and turned them into Guy Lombardo.[97]

Again we have a description of the displacement of artistic position within the field: a group that was, if not avant-garde, certainly "modern," lost stature upon Coleman's entry into the jazz field. In Bley's estimation, Coleman's music stripped the Jazztet of the potential to be regarded as "art for art's sake," and relegated them to the status of bourgeois art.

Jazz Criticism in 1959

In order to accept the concept of cultural capital and symbolic capital, it is fair to ask how this capital becomes imbued with value. Although one's impulse might be to denote all value within a work of art as the product of the artist alone, Bourdieu attributes the creation of artistic value to all members of an artistic field.

As an example from the jazz field, we could take Miles Davis playing *Kind of Blue.* The *sound* that came from Davis' trumpet was completely his creation as composer, interpreter and improviser. However, Davis' intentions and opinions as to how much that sound should be valued as *art* are only a small part

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[97] Paul Bley, from interviews with the author, unpublished, 1985–88. Guy Lombardo led a popular "sweet" dance band, playing sentimental favourites, for so many decades that his name became virtually a synonym for commercial, compromised, banal dance music.

of the eventual consensus as to the value of that sound—a consensus arrived at by the efforts of many members of the jazz field. Value is added by the presenter who deems that sound worth presenting in a club or concert hall, and by the producer who believes that a recording of that sound can be promoted and sold as a work of art. Value is added by the audience who pays to hear that sound; whether they applaud each solo, or wait silently until the end of each tune, or talk while the music is playing, they have all invested in the belief that they gain something from association with that sound. Value is added by the educated listener who can place that sound in the context of the jazz trumpeters who came before and after Davis. Value is added by any listener who acknowledges the worth of the recording of *Kind of Blue* by buying it. Whether they play it only to themselves, play it for friends, or buy it and never play it at all, in every case, it is their choice, their decision that has imbued that sound with value as a work of art.

The critic plays a major role in the creation of value:

> The production of discourse (critical, historical, etc.) about the work of art is one of the conditions of production of the work. Every critical affirmation contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it, which is thus designated as a worthy object of legitimate discourse, ...and on the other hand an affirmation of its own legitimacy. All critics declare not only their judgement of the work but also their claim to the right to talk about it and judge it. In short, they take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art, and consequently in the production of the value of the work of art.[98]

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[98] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 35–6.

Bernard Gendron identifies jazz criticism as a deployment of two opposing sets of values, and dates the emergence of these values to "the first jazz war" fought between swing adherents and New Orleans revivalists in the 1940s.[99] It was this battle between "moldy figs" and modernists that introduced to jazz the aesthetic discourse within which the Coleman controversy was conducted. Gendron writes:

> The unity of this new aesthetic discourse was a "unity in dispersion," to use Foucault's phrase—that is, a unity that propagated discursive opposition, that created points of discursive repulsion. As such, it was organized primarily around a group of interconnected binary oppositions: *art–commerce, authenticity–artificiality, swing–jazz, European–native, folk culture–refined culture, technique–affect, modern–traditional, black–white, fascism–communism,* and *right wing–left wing.*[100]

To these binaries one might add *improvised–composed* and *freedom–oppression.* Gendron describes how these discursive practices became entrenched during the first "jazz war" between revivalists and swing adherents, and were carried over intact into the second "jazz war," where swing now represented stodgy tradition, and bebop the new, threatening avant-garde. Gendron points out that:

> The revivalists were as much "modernists" as were their swing adversaries. They simply accentuated certain tendencies of the "modernist" impulse at the expense of others. We need to remember, for example, that the concepts of the *folkloric* and the *primitive* were crucially involved in the "modernist" practices of Picasso, Bartók, Milhaud, and the Surrealists, while the notion of *reactionary* and

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[99] Bernard Gendron, "'Moldy Figs' and Modernists," in Krin Gabbard, ed., *Jazz Among the Discourses* (New York: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 32.

[100] Ibid, p. 50.

> art/commerce dichotomy entered crucially into the avant-garde terminologies of opprobrium.[101]

This perspective shows us how, by 1959, jazz criticism had evolved a level of discourse that was, in Gendron's words, "lifted out of the various European avant-garde and modernist discourses."[102]

I suggested in the previous section that New York jazz critics circa 1959 were influenced by the era's literary writers. With these writers they shared a common geography in the Lower Manhattan milieu that included Greenwich Village and its coffee-houses, clubs and bars: a milieu that was in itself a sprawling intellectual field in which the memberships of the literary and jazz fields met and overlapped. Such a confluence, and influence, is certainly implied in first-hand accounts of the Five Spot audience of the time, where jazz critics such as Nat Hentoff and Martin Williams mingled with literary writers, including Mailer and Kerouac. If the fields themselves overlapped, it is not unreasonable to speculate that the agendas of the fields' members overlapped as well, and certainly that the discursive practices described by Gendron were very much at work.

Discussing critical reactions to Miles Davis' music in the 1950s, John Szwed writes, "Jazz critics were high modernists, looking for originality, influence, a certain toughness of self-expression in their heroes."[103] In writing

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[101] Ibid, p. 50.

[102] Ibid, p. 50.

[103] John Szwed, *So What: The Life of Miles Davis* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2002), p. 107.

about the same period—the declining years of bebop—Scott DeVeaux has identified the work of "a shifting (and often uneasy) coalition of musicians and critics" who campaigned to position jazz "on the far side of the 'Great Divide' separating art in the modernist mold from 'an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture.'"[104]

Of course individuality, tough and even idiosyncratic self-expression, and an identification with "art in the modernist mold," rather than with the products of mass culture, are precisely the positions that Norman Mailer attributed to the hipster in "The White Negro." These characteristics can be grouped under a single term, *authenticity.* Gendron identified authenticity as an important part of the 1940s revivalist-swing debate, and it also became an important part of the debate over Coleman. Authenticity is, if anything, resolutely anti-commercial; as Bourdieu writes, "A heretical break with the prevailing artistic traditions proves its claim to authenticity by its disinterestedness."[105]

The "high modernist" agenda can clearly be seen at work in jazz criticism at the time of Coleman's debut.

For example, during the first week of Coleman's Five Spot engagement, the *New York Times* critic John S. Wilson reviewed a Town Hall jazz concert that included sets by Chico Hamilton, Dave Brubeck and Chris Connor. Although

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[104] Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). "...an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture," p. vii. Quoted in DeVeaux, p. 443.

[105] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 40.

Connor was a singer whose abilities had often met reservations from jazz critics,[106] Hamilton and Brubeck were both respected artists who had experimented with classical forms (Hamilton's quintet, uniquely among jazz groups, even included a cellist). Both had managed to merge critical praise and popular success. In reviewing the evening's performances, however, Wilson found that "the only jazz of merit… came in two brief solos by Mr. Hamilton's versatile reedman, Eric Dolphy, one on alto saxophone and the other a remarkably virtuosic and swinging spree on bass clarinet."[107]

At the time Dolphy (1928–1964) was still based in Los Angeles, where he had been acquainted with Coleman (and evidently joined the jazz majority in dismissing him) during the 1950s.[108] Dolphy, however, "did not share Coleman's problems of acceptance with other musicians,"[109] because of his thorough conventional training, his excellent sight-reading, and his ability to improvise within the song form. Nevertheless, toward the end of the decade Dolphy's techniques on saxophone, bass clarinet and flute were becoming increasingly

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[106] Feather, pp. 168–9. The entry on Connors quotes Wilson's questioning of Connors' "flat hoarse manner," and conclusion that she is, at best, "a pleasant pop singer." It also relates reservations from Martin Williams about the singer's abilities.

[107] John S. Wilson, "Jazz at Town Hall," *The New York Times,* November 21, 1959. p. 26.

[108] Litweiler, p. 55. Coleman recalls Dolphy having been "cold" to him in his Los Angeles period, although in New York they became friends and recorded the album *Free Jazz* together. On p. 46, on the other hand, Litweiler quotes Dolphy recalling that he had heard Coleman in 1954 and praised his music.

[109] Vladimir Simosko and Berry Tepperman, *Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography & Discography* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), p. 36.

vocalized, full of unexpected manipulations of pitch and timbre and a freeness of phrasing. In the next few years, he collaborated with Coleman as well as such innovators as Charles Mingus and John Coltrane.

It is noteworthy that in a concert featuring some of the era's most successful and acclaimed jazz artists, a critic for a major newspaper would credit a player as challenging as Dolphy with providing "the only jazz of merit." This seems to reflect, and perhaps confirm, Szwed's description of the critical search for "heroes" rather than entertainers. In DeVeaux's terms, the praise of such an avant-garde artist in relation to his more popular peers could be seen as an example of the positioning of jazz as "art in the modernist mold" rather than as a part of "mass culture."

This agenda can be seen at work in record reviews in the December 1959 *Down Beat*, an issue of the magazine that would have been on the newsstands at the time of Coleman's Five Spot debut. In these reviews, respected jazz musicians get short shrift from a range of well-known jazz critics. Ralph Gleason (later a co-founder of *Rolling Stone* magazine) dismisses a Van Alexander record as "just plain dull." Jimmy Cleveland's all-star sextet, claims critic Don DeMicheal, "rarely gets off the ground." Buddy Collette's four-flute record is "all but a waste of time," writes Gleason. [110]

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[110] "In Review." *Down Beat*, Dec. 24, 1959, pp. 39–40.

For different reasons, DeMicheal seems prepared to dismiss Ornette Coleman's second Contemporary record, "Tomorrow is the Question." The reviewer takes note of the music's "wild, incoherent solos… marked by extremely bad intonation and sloppy execution." However, this very wildness, even incoherence, leads DeMicheal to rate the record as "astonishing"—a record that "must be listened to many times… Coleman may be the next great influence." In contrast to the responses to Alexander, Cleveland and Collette, DeMicheal seems to be saying that Coleman may not be competent—but at least he is *authentic.* There is a devaluing of what one might call "professionalism" that is also present in Bley's comparison of Coleman with the Farmer-Golson Jazztet.

This modernist need for the transgressive, the authentic, even the primitive, pervades a subsequent *Down Beat* account of the press preview that the Termini brothers held at the Five Spot on the evening of Coleman's opening night. The need is so implicit that the writer, George Hoefer, does not even find it necessary to discuss or describe the music itself. He refers to it only in terms of the extent to which it fulfills a modernist agenda: "Jazz can well use a new thrill, idea, or sound, something similar to what happened when a jaded swing era spawned Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk and Dizzy Gillespie in the early 1940s."[111]

This agenda pervades the work of all four of these critics. "Ah conformity!" DeMicheal writes despairingly in his Jimmy Cleveland review.

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[111] Hoefer, George. "Caught in the Act," *Down Beat*, Jan. 7, 1960, pp. 40–41.

Coleman's record, on the other hand, "must be listened to many times." Part of the "high modernist" agenda was an aversion to "conformity," which Eric Lott has identified as part of "an American tradition of racial abdication."[112] On the other hand, because it was also accepted as a symptom of creative genius, "non-conformity" could be used to excuse a wide range of idiosyncratic, even aberrant behaviour.[113]

It is revealing that Hoefer's review offers virtually no comment on how the music sounded to him as a listener. Instead, Hoefer follows his writer's intuition that the magazine's readers could best assess the music's value by surveying the reactions of the other artistic mediators in the audience. Hoefer's few references to the actual music of the quartet are far more vague and casual than the thoroughly engaged account that he offers in the first half of the review:

> Some walked in and out before they could finish a drink, some sat mesmerized by the sound, others talked constantly to their neighbors at the table or argued with drink in hand at the bar. It was, for all this, the largest collection of VIPs the jazz world has seen in many a year. A sampling included John Hammond, John Mehegan, Marshall Stearns, Jack Lewis, Burt Korall, Eric Vogel (American correspon-dent for Germany's *Jazz Podium* magazine), Hsio Wen Shih, Gunther Schuller, Symphony Sid Torin, Pete Long, Bob Reisner, and the Ertegun brothers....
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> This special preview for the press brought forth mixed-up comments:

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[112] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 51. Quoted in Monson, p. 405.

[113] Monson, p. 412. "To the extent that the romantic conception of the artist linked the notion of genius with madness and pathology, and entitled the artist to behave in an unorthodox manner as well, it opened an interpretive space in which supposedly negative social behaviours could be transformed into positive markers of artistic genius."

> "He'll change the entire course of jazz." "He's a fake." "He's a genius." "I can't say; I'll have to hear him a lot more times." "He has no form." "He swings like HELL." "I'm going home and listen to my Benny Goodman trios and quartets." "He's out, real far out." "I like him, but I don't have any idea what he is doing."
>
> Finally, one a&r man made the simple statement "I've got a recording date" and left.[114]

In the sense that Bourdieu described a field of "positions and a field of position-takings," Coleman could have asked no better ticket of admission to the jazz field than this confirmation from an important member of the field (*Down Beat* was the leading US jazz magazine, and Hoefer had been a contributor for over twenty years) that his art was best assessed in terms of the positions taken towards it by the field's members.[115] The thrust of Hoefer's review is (A) to establish that other influential field members attended the event and then (B) to log the positions, pro and con, of a cross-section of these attendees, diplomatically refraining from identifying the source of each comment, or from committing himself to a strongly-held position in regard to the music. No superlatives were

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[114] Hoefer, George. "Caught in the Act," *Down Beat*, Jan. 7, 1960, p. 40. It is significant that the names of the jazz world's "very important persons" that Hoefer chooses to impress the reader are those of John Hammond (producer), John Mehegan (educator), Marshall Stearns (educator, scholar), Jack Lewis (producer), Burt Korall (critic), Eric Vogel (American correspondent for Germany's *Jazz Podium* magazine), Hsio Wen Shih (critic, editor), Gunther Schuller (educator, composer), Symphony Sid Torin (broadcaster), Pete Long (British alto saxophonist), Bob Reisner (producer), and the Ertegun brothers (Ahmed and Nesuhi, owners of Atlantic Records). The vocations on this list—except for Long, none of these "VIPs" are actually *jazz musicians*—confirms Bourdieu's depiction of a "field of cultural production" in which, although not all the field's members actually make the music, each of their efforts must conjoin to literally *substantiate* the music as a valid art form.

[115] Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, *The Jazz Makers* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1957), p. xi. This collection of essays on jazz artists identifies contributor Hoefer as having "conducted the 'Hot Box' column in *Down Beat* for more than 20 years and has written for *Esquire, Metronome, Tempo,* and other jazz publications."

needed for the artists themselves when they could be applied so readily to the event's clientele: "the largest collection of VIPs the jazz world has seen in many a year."

The Reactions of Jazz Musicians

The response to Coleman's music among the working jazz musicians of the time was, at least at first, overwhelmingly negative. One of the era's most progressive and proactive critics, Nat Hentoff, recorded some of their responses:[116]

> **Roy Eldridge:** "I think he's jiving, baby. He's putting everybody on."
>
> **Coleman Hawkins:** "Now, you know that I never like to criticize anyone publicly. Just say I think he needs seasoning. A lot of seasoning."
>
> **Red Garland:** "Nothing's happening... Coleman is faking. He's being very unfair to the public."[117]

Miles Davis went to the Five Spot accompanied by his sextet's tenor saxophonist, John Coltrane. Coltrane was intrigued, later played with Coleman privately, and was soon to follow many of Coleman's leads in developing his own music. Davis, however, was the reigning jazz star of the time, and his comments were picked up by the press: "Hell, just listen to what he writes and how he plays

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[116] Among his many crusading actions on behalf of the music, Hentoff published and co-edited his own jazz magazine, *The Jazz Review*, from 1958 to 1961and started a record company, Candid, in the same period.

[117] Nat Hentoff, *The Jazz Life* (London: P. Davies, 1962), pp. 228–9. Reprinted by Da Capo Press, New York, 1975.

it," he said of Coleman. "If you're talking psychologically, the man is all screwed up inside."[118]

In these comments, older generations of jazz artists enact what Bourdieu would identify as a struggle between artistic generations:

> The structure of the field of cultural production is based on two fundamental and quite different oppositions: first, the opposition between the sub-field of restricted production and the sub-field of large-scale production, i.e. between two economies, two time-scales, two audiences, which endlessly produces and reproduces the negative existence of the sub-field of restricted production and its basic opposition to the bourgeois economic order; and secondly, the opposition, within the sub-field of restricted production, between the consecrated avant-garde and the avant-garde, the established figures and the newcomers, i.e. between *artistic generations*, often only a few years apart, between the "young" and the "old," the "neo" and the "paleo," the "new" and the "outmoded," etc.; in short, between cultural orthodoxy and heresy.[119]

Coleman's sudden appearance put him in the obvious position of a "newcomer," an "un-consecrated" avant-garde figure, thus making him clearly an object of the opposition that Bourdieu identifies. Thus, we can see, the conflict between "artistic generations, often only a few years apart," that Bourdieu describes. We can also perhaps better understand the vehemence of so many of Coleman's detractors among jazz musicians. Trumpeter Miles Davis, for example, was the reigning jazz star of the time: musically innovative, personally fashionable and commercially successful. One can read in his comments on Coleman a bitterness at being displaced—sent down the ranks, as it were—from

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[118] Quoted in Joe Goldberg, *Jazz Masters of the Fifties* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 231.

[119] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production,* p. 53.

his pre-eminent position in the prevailing avant-garde: Coleman is not just a musical heretic but is "all screwed up inside."

Milt Jackson, vibraphonist in perhaps the era's most popular and respected jazz group, the Modern Jazz Quartet (which ironically, he co-led with Ornette's proponent John Lewis), stated that the music was "nothing—there's no such thing as free form."[120] Drummer Max Roach, a bebop pioneer who was a successful leader and innovator in his own right, objected to the music so strongly that one night he followed Coleman into the Five Spot kitchen between sets, punched him in the mouth, and later harangued him from the street outside his apartment.[121]

It is worth noting that despite their initial revulsion at hearing Coleman for the first time, many of these musicians made sincere efforts to come to terms with this new music. Within the next few years of Coleman's Five Spot debut, many of those who had rejected Coleman, perhaps with some qualifications, now accepted him, though often with some reservations. It seems possible that professional jazz musicians' thorough grounding in conventional harmony and the chord changes of the song form did not equip them for hearing—much less playing—this new music, and they needed time to rethink Coleman's approach in terms of their own. Certainly if musicians are schooled and experienced in navigating the more rigid constraints of the song form, it would not be fair to expect them to immediately

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[120] Chambers, p. 20.

[121] Litweiler, p. 83.

absorb the style pioneered by Coleman, with its shifting tonality, free rhythms and restless, dancelike exchange of voices. The following summer, however, Roach's antagonism had eased enough for him to play with Coleman at the rival Newport festival that Roach and Charles Mingus had organized.[122] Both the drummer's and Mingus's subsequent recordings introduced "free" elements that had not been heard before in their music; the same holds true for Miles Davis, and certainly for John Coltrane. By 1962, even Coleman Hawkins and Shelly Manne had inserted a freely-improvised tenor saxophone–drums duet into an album of jazz standards.[123]

Among musicians newly exposed to Ornette Coleman there was a pattern of resistance, then acceptance. The resistance stage can be easily understood in terms of the impact of an avant-garde newcomer on the jazz field. In a "self-contained universe," where the most valued currency is symbolic capital, the avant-garde is in a high position, possessing a uniquely precious capital that cannot be shared until it is more widely understood.

Milt Jackson, an active member of the bebop generation in the 1940s when they *were* the jazz avant-garde, was still "modern," but was associated already with the Modern Jazz Quartet's "cool," sedate brand of modernism, successfully marketed to predominantly-white bourgeois audiences in concerts and the more high-priced nightclubs. It is feasible to surmise that Jackson would

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[122] Priestley, photo signature between pp. 148 & 149, includes William Claxton's photograph that confirms this collaboration. The caption reads, "Newport 'rebels' Mingus and Roach with Kenny Dorham and Ornette Coleman; Cliff Walk Manor Hotel, 3 July 1960."

[123] Shelly Manne, *2-3-4,* Impulse! Records Stereo A-20, 1962.

not disdain or resist his relegation to the jazz field's "old guard," since it would present no professional disadvantage, and would classify him along with artists he considered to be more rightfully his peers. Jackson's career was built primarily on his reputation as the finest vibraphonist in jazz, and Coleman's music was making no claims on that particular territory. With these factors taken together, it was just as easy for Jackson, having made his statements on Coleman's music, to withdraw, claiming no further investment in the controversy.

Davis, however, was the leading figure in what Bourdieu would term the consecrated avant-garde. He had followed the protocols of apprenticeship, establishing his musical credentials working with such artists as Coleman Hawkins and Charlie Parker, who had long since been accepted into the canon of the jazz tradition. He had just recorded his ground-breaking, modally-influenced recording "Kind of Blue," and his group included musicians such as Bill Evans and John Coltrane, who were already becoming major influences in their own rights. Musically a perfect example of Szwed's "high modernism," Davis was also a commercially successful musician. He was handsome, fashionable and photogenic, immaculately well dressed, and personally remote—an African-American "hipster" of the model given such exalted symbolic capital in Mailer's "The White Negro."[124] It is no wonder, then, that Davis—who unlike Milt

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[124] Szwed, pp. 148–9. In fact, Davis and Mailer knew each other well and even engaged in romantic rivalry over actress Beverly Bentley, who eventually married Mailer. It has been suggested that Mailer's "hipster" was largely modeled on his concept of Davis.

Jackson, had a considerable professional investment in being seen as the music's cutting edge—criticized Coleman so bitterly.

There are strictly musical reasons for Coleman's profound effect on the jazz field. It is possible that in an impulse related to Spellman's observation of jazz musicians who felt they must prove themselves "capable of playing classical music to show that playing the blues was a matter of choice," musicians also felt they *needed* to come to terms with Coleman's music; to prove that they *could* play it, even if they did not especially want to.[125]

In expressing his disappointment with the reactions of New York musicians, Coleman revealed some insight into the roots of their objections: that his music challenged them to question the practices they had worked so long and hard to master:

> When I arrived in New York... from most of the jazz musicians, all I got was a wall of hostility... I guess it's pretty shocking to hear someone like me come on the scene when they're already comfortable in Charlie Parker's language. They figure that now they may have to learn something else.[126]

Other musicians on Coleman's side echo this view. Buell Neidlinger (the bassist with Cecil Taylor during the 1950s) described the musicians at the Five Spot as "scared to death Ornette was going to be the thing and that they couldn't make it."[127] It is perhaps instructive that Neidlinger presents the problem as an

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[125] Spellman, p. 5.

[126] Hentoff, p. 231.

[127] Ibid.

imperative: if this music is "going to be *the* thing," then they are offered no alternatives. Similarly, Coleman asserted that having heard his music, "they may *have to* learn something else."

For its detractors, it was easy to turn their backs on Coleman, but demonstrating that they could master his idiom, in order to prove that they were ignoring him as a matter of choice, was not so easy, despite the wide margins for error that were apparent in this new freedom.

Possibly this reveals something more about the intrinsic value of the symbolic capital possessed by each member of the jazz field. If a member could not countenance the procedures of the incoming avant-garde, they were fortunate if, like Milt Jackson, they could move gracefully from an understated position in the modernist camp to the mainstream jazz canon which stood ready and willing to embrace and enshrine them.[128]

Not all jazz virtuosi were that lucky. Their inability to come to terms with Coleman's style meant that they effectively lost rank within the jazz field. The awful truth, as revealed in the acclaim bestowed on Coleman by the field's mediators, was that the positions of these musicians was no longer determined solely by the merit of their accomplishments—the extent to which, in their musical work, they had improved on what they had been given. The paradigm of

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[128] The innovations of John Lewis' compositions and arrangements were always subtle and pleasing to the ear. This, combined with subdued timbre of the ensemble's sound and the tuxedoed gentility of their stage image, made the MJQ a very un-threatening avant-garde—and certainly one whose professionalism was never questioned.

jazz performance had shifted, and it was made clear that their music's future prospects would be judged on how much, or how little, it resembled that of the incoming avant-garde, who had now been boosted to the peak of the field's hierarchy.

In other words: in terms of symbolic capital, if the most valuable currency within the field was possessed by those musicians seen as the most *au courant,* then after decades of working their way up through the hierarchy, the most respected artists in jazz were now clearly being sent back down. As Bley suggests in his remarks about the Jazztet, before Coleman's advent, the jazz virtuoso who had best mastered the song form occupied the field's most honoured position. Post-Coleman, it could be seen as a default position—the acclaim of record producers, educators, classical composers and critics strongly suggested that musicians who continued to play within the song form did so only because they were not sophisticated enough to grasp the new style, or simply unable to play it.

In these terms, it is possible that Coleman's fiercest detractors among the era's jazz musicians were reacting not to him or to his music, but to what they saw as a devaluing of their entire body of work and a threat to their status within the jazz field, a threat that menaced the integrity of the jazz field as a whole. This threat came from both inside and outside the field.

Although many of the jazz musicians who objected the most strongly to Coleman's music eventually modified their positions, most historical accounts

have recorded only those objections expressed on a strictly musical basis, and expressed in strictly musical language. There were another set of objections, raised by members of the jazz field who felt that Coleman was a pawn being manipulated by forces determined to dominate the field.

The Mediators of the Jazz Field

For all these mixed reactions, Paul Bley has said that jazz critics of the time—

> performed a yeoman service in quickly identifying Ornette's validity to the skeptics... The critics did more than their job of acquainting the public with the music. They acquainted the *musicians* with the music. They acted as liaisons between the avant-garde and the musical community.[129]

Bley differentiates clearly between the avant-garde and the "musical community" at large, emphasizing the distance felt by jazz musicians between their music and Coleman's (indeed, if Coleman began the "free jazz" revolution of the 1960s, he also began the still-ongoing problem of differentiating between "jazz" and "improvised music"). However unlike Bley, not everyone felt that the mediation of the critics was a good thing.

In a letter to *Down Beat* late in 1959, pianist-educator John Mehegan condemned the part that critics were playing in the public reception of the music:

> What [Coleman] is doing certainly has nothing to do with jazz and, I'm afraid, very little to do with music in any form.... His reputation is completely the result of artificial promotion by a small group of king-makers.... The frightening thing here is that a small group of writers can

[129] Bill Smith, *Coda Magazine*, Toronto, No. 166, 1979, "The Paul Bley Interview," p. 4.

> "launch" a young musician on a path that can only end in personal defeat and bitterness for the persons involved.[130]

Mehegan's letter is valuable less for its vehement objections to Coleman's music as for the precise placement of the author's non-musical objections. Even if Coleman's detractors could accept the sincerity of Coleman's motives in creating music that upset that process, they could not accept the exercise of power they saw in the "yeoman service" of jazz critics.

Leonard Feather voiced similar reservations when, for 1960's first issue of *Down Beat*, he subjected Ornette Coleman to a Blindfold Test. In this regular *Down Beat* feature, a musician would be asked to identify and comment on recordings by unnamed jazz artists. Over the years the Blindfold Test served as an entertaining, if highly unscientific, litmus test of a musician's knowledge, a test which evoked unpredictable responses from artists in all genres of jazz.

In Coleman's case, the allegedly rootless avant-gardist astutely identified most of the artists that he heard, and criticized their music precisely if idiosyncratically (Feather remarked that Coleman is "no less unusual in his verbal than in his musical expression"). But first, Feather prefaced the test with an introduction that took a firm critical stance on Coleman's notoriety, and in doing so echoed Mehegan in identifying the problem of power.

> In the early days, jazz talent took its natural course. Anybody with something new and important to say would find his way to the surface of public acceptance, simply on the strength of the stir he had created among fellow musicians.

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[130] *Down Beat*, Dec. 10, 1959, p.6.

> Today the situation is very different. The initiative in molding new stars has been seized by other experts, including some who were among the slowest to accord reluctant recognition to Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Ornette Coleman, an alto saxophonist, who, until a few months ago, was virtually unknown, must suffer the judgements applied by the contemporary method. [131]

In the past, Feather is saying, established musicians were the first to acknowledge original new artists, by testing and tempering their abilities in the nightly workshop of the jazz engagement. Now, because the consensus of critics is supplanting this "natural" method, musicians may find themselves in the spotlight before their abilities have earned them a place there.

At the time of writing, Feather himself had been the USA's pre-eminent jazz critic for over twenty years. Since his arrival from England in the mid-1930s, his influence had been felt in the careers of countless American jazz musicians. Feather wrote reviews and books on jazz, produced concerts and records, and even wrote songs that would occasionally be performed by jazz musicians. So there is a disingenuousness in his complaint about the power of critics—other critics, that is—to alter the "natural course" of jazz talent. [132]

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[131] *Down Beat*, Jan. 7, 1960, pp. 39–40.

[132] Gourse, p. 38. Feather's comments in the *Down Beat* test cover an implicit disapproval of Coleman's music that was characteristic of this critic's reception of post-swing jazz styles. Fifteen years earlier, Feather had been literally strong-armed into writing more favourably about the emerging styles which came to be known under the name of "bebop," including the music of the distinctive pianist/composer Thelonious Monk. As Monk's son related the story: "Feather had previously written very critical articles about Thelonious. Monk was extremely upset. One day the big, intense pianist grabbed Feather, a slender, almost reedy-looking man, by the collar—or the 'neck,' as one person recalled it—and threatened to throw him over a guard wall at Rockefeller Center. There was a big drop to the ground below on a level that was a popular, sunken ice-skating rink. 'You're taking the bread out of my mouth!' Monk said." It is perhaps no coincidence that

Despite this, his comments can furnish a starting point for examining the workings of power within the jazz field. How in fact *did* Coleman come to enter the jazz field with such an impact? Was it in fact not just the power of his music, but the power of a "small group of king-makers" behind his leap into the spotlight? If "the initiative in molding new stars" had indeed been seized by "experts," who were these experts—and how can one of the USA's most widely-published and influential critics not consider himself one of their number?

The jazz literature of the time provides ready answers to most of these questions. In fact, some of the most influential and powerful individuals and institutions helped to boost Coleman into prominence. The chain of events that brought Ornette Coleman to the Five Spot combined the best efforts of critics, record producers, academics and the promotional forces of the music industry. It was a chain of events very different to the organic process that Feature describes as a "natural course," but one that plainly revealed the currents of power that are at work within artistic fields. As Joe Goldberg wrote in 1965, recalling Coleman's first Five Spot engagement:

> Unfortunately, Coleman immediately became a scapegoat; critics used him as a shield behind which to take potshots at other critics. Two of Coleman's staunchest admirers were Nat Hentoff and Martin Williams, co-editors of *The Jazz Review*. The publisher of that magazine, Hsio Wen Shih, became Coleman's manager for a while. Some journalists began to see a Lenox–Atlantic–*Jazz Review* Establishment, forcing Coleman on

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soon after this incident, Feather's attitude toward bebop became more favourable, culminating in his 1950 book, *Inside Bebop.*

the jazz world.... With such poison pellets in the air, reasoned comment on Coleman's music became almost impossible.[133]

[133] Goldberg, p. 235.

CHAPTER 4:

THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE SPOT

Pierre Bourdieu depicts the artistic field as a fiercely politicized society. As in any society, struggles for survival and struggles for power are waged continually. Although in day-to-day intercourse all members can be acknowledged as equals, in reality the field has a rigid hierarchy. It is structured as a pyramid that can only accommodate a select few at its apex.

However, membership in the field has its own rewards. Each of its members constantly monitors his or her own position, and while valuing its assets and debits, each will also evaluate them in relation to the positions of their fellow members within the field.[134] Competition is fierce. All members must confront the challenge of aspiring to a higher position within the field, while holding on to such status as they already possess. Taste, as we have seen already, is one of the markers with which each individual stakes out his or her area of personal distinction.

Looking back, twenty-first-century listeners might very well shake their heads and wonder just what all the fuss was about. As Gunther Schuller wrote in 1997, in a retrospective of Coleman's 1960 recording *Free Jazz:*

> Hearing this music nearly 40 years later, much of the shock effect has worn off. Free playing is no longer the novelty it once was. There is

[134] James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket,* pp. 320–323. Perhaps Baldwin identified the structure of the night club itself as "field" when he described its habitués "peeping at each other in order to find out [if]...they are really having fun," and the "invisible barriers... which must not be crossed."

> hardly a jazz musician worth talking about in the last two generations—the postbop era—who, whether as a soloist or as part of a collective ensemble, has not at some time and in some way improvised freely, eschewing basic harmonic progressions, themes, and motives, as well as the standard song or tune repertory.[135]

In the same vein, Frank Tirro has written: "The strength of the reaction, in retrospect, is somewhat amusing, for Coleman's music, by the standards of the classical avant-garde musicians of the day, was neither new nor shocking."[136]

This may be true if we approach the music from a strictly positivist viewpoint, reviewing it simply in terms of its techniques. Coleman broke out of jazz's traditional structures, but instead of new structures, he offered the alternative of greater improvisational freedom. In a period when the future of jazz was seen in more fully-composed works for larger ensembles, his emphasis on group improvisation re-emphasized the primacy of a small group of peers and de-emphasized the role of the composer. At a time when jazz was beginning to be taught in academies heretofore dedicated to European music, and accordingly was interpreted in the terms of that music, the raw timbre of his quartet and the folkish looseness of their tonality evoked for many listeners the country blues sound of Coleman's Texas heritage and reaffirmed jazz as an African-American expression. Certainly what Trevor Tolley wrote years later about Archie Shepp

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[135] Gunther Schuller, booklet accompanying CD reissue of *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation by the Ornette Coleman Double Quartet* (Santa Monica, CA: Rhino Entertainment Co., 1998), p. 5.

[136] Tirro, p. 376.

(who was, in 1959, an up-and-coming young avant-gardist who was to draw great inspiration from Coleman) could equally have been said about Coleman himself:

> As time passes, the great innovators of jazz appear as the makers of the jazz tradition. Their roots in that tradition appear stronger and stronger, until it requires an effort of the imagination to see how they in fact revolutionized the music.[137]

Why then, one must ask, could no one at the time offer Coleman the assured place in the jazz canon that we are able to extend to him today? The answer to this question lies within the reality of the well-defined, well-established jazz field in which the music was received.

It must be borne in mind that the jazz field *was* the field within which the music was received—not that of the classical avant-garde.[138] The latter was, and is, essentially a concert music strongly oriented toward the classical canon and its attendant infrastructure of the conservatory, the university and the concert hall. In contrast, jazz in 1959 was still essentially a music played in bars. Among its audience, even the most dedicated aesthetes were expected to move about and

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[137] Trevor Tolley, "Archie Shepp, CW'S, Ottawa, April 10, 1980," *Coda* Magazine No. 173 (1980), p. 32.

[138] To begin with, there were no black instrumentalists/ composers such as Coleman and Don Cherry in classical avant-garde circles of the time. That there are any now—mostly to the extent that "new music" concert series and festivals will now admit some avant-garde "jazz" into their programming—is due to the gradual progress Coleman, George Russell, Cecil Taylor and others made in gaining entry to those circles in the 1960s. At the same time in Europe, musicians such as John Stevens, Alexander von Schlippenbach, Misha Mengelberg, Willem Breuker and Gunter Hampel were exploring similar frontiers (von Schlippenbach's Globe Unity Orchestra even served as a catalyst for a collaboration between Don Cherry and Krzysztof Penderecki in 1971). Experiments with new compositional forms and extended instrumental techniques were expanded upon in the 1970s and afterwards by such musicians as the Chicago AACM school (Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell, Leo Smith et al) and the British improvising community that included Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Barry Guy, etc.

socialize while the music was playing, and above all to subsidize the event by buying drinks. It would take another fifteen years for the phenomenon of the multi-disciplinary gallery/concert venue—such as New York's The Kitchen or The Knitting Factory—to confront the issue of programming both avant-garde "jazz" and "classical music" on an equal basis, presenting along with these different musics the assumption that they shared an aesthetic kinship; that although they might take different approaches to solving similar problems, they were on equal terms as elite art forms.

Meanwhile, the impact of Coleman's music on the jazz field *was* new and shocking. In judging it by their prevailing standards, all the members of the field, both supporters and detractors, treated the issue of this new music with utter seriousness.[139]

Consecration/Legitimation

Acceptance means *legitimacy*. To be accepted within an artistic field, one's art must be deemed legitimate by a consensus or by the controlling members of that field. Bourdieu refers to this process of legitimization as *consecration*.[140]

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[139] Litweiler, p. 83, between expressions of loathing from Max Roach and English critic Stanley Dance, offers examples of Coleman-inspired humour such as the joke, repeated to him by Coleman himself, about the couple hearing a nightclub waiter drop a tray of dishes: "'Listen dear, Ornette's playing our favorite song!' *Down Beat* columnist George Crater, who claimed to have invented an Ornette Coleman windup doll—wind it up, and it forgets the chord changes'—raised the question of whether an evening spent listening to Ornette was covered by Blue Cross."

[140] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 50–51.

With these terms in mind, we can begin to see why Coleman in 1959 was so controversial. He did not appear—was not allowed to appear—at the Five Spot as a blank slate on which anyone might inscribe their own interpretation. By the time he took the stage on his first night there were already powerful consecrating forces working on behalf of his legitimization. In many cases it was these forces to which his audience reacted, as much as to Coleman himself. On one occasion, America's most popular classical composer and conductor of the time, Leonard Bernstein, sat in on piano with Coleman's group.[141] If this in itself wasn't enough to align him with the incoming avant-garde, one night Bernstein, like Mailer at Taylor's engagement a few years before, made sure that all those present knew his position. He "...leaped to his feet at the end of one set and declared that 'this is the greatest thing that has ever happened in jazz' and that 'Bird was nothing.'"[142] Although a persuasive consecration from a man who was, at the time, possibly the most powerful personage in American classical music, such a display must have caused further resentment among jazz musicians who, in effect, were being told that their taste, aesthetics and hard-earned abilities were now obsolete.

Consecration by Peers

> When you come to New York there are certain customs and protocols.
> It's a tradition that for the first twelve months you're seen and not heard.
> You attend all the events, you make friends, but essentially it's

[141] Spellman, p. 128.
[142] Chambers, pp. 19-20. "Bird" was alto saxophonist and composer Charlie Parker (1920-1955), who in style and technique was perhaps the strongest prevailing influence on the jazz musicians – indeed the entire jazz "field" – of the 1950s.

> considered gauche to expect anyone to hire you just because you're the hot flash from out-of-town, so you do a great deal of listening.[143]

Paul Bley is describing the first stages of what John Szwed has called "the jazz recruitment process."[144] In John Litweiler's words, it was:

> Part of the orthodox bop attitude of the day… the belief that only musicians who had worked as sidemen for established New York-based leaders for a period—paying their dues, the practice was called—deserved success.[145]

Coleman of course had never satisfied the demands of this New York protocol: he had never played with or even auditioned for Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Horace Silver, Art Blakey or any of the other prominent leaders in jazz, who were all based in New York. In fact, he had never even been to New York. He had never allowed himself to be judged, employed, fired or mentored by any of the established jazz artists who now joined the crowd at the Five Spot to hear him. If he had done so with any degree of success, he could have gained an entry level position as a "sideman" within the jazz field's musical hierarchy. These were traditionally the first steps toward leading a band of one's own.

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[143] Bley et al., *Stopping Time,* p. 36.

[144] Szwed, p. 236. The full quote reads, "The other menacing music, free jazz, then still called the 'new thing,' sounded as if it had zoomed in from outer space, played by musicians who often seemed to have completely escaped the jazz recruitment process. They were classically trained virtuosos and musical illiterates, intellectuals and street rebels, and highbrows disguised as primitives."

[145] Litweiler, p. 80.

If then, in an alternative course of events, Coleman *had* fulfilled these protocols, how would his music have fared? We might look at another Coleman contemporary, Cecil Taylor, as a model for speculation.[146]

A native New Yorker, from the time the Termini brothers took over the club, Taylor was a regular performer at the Five Spot. His percussive, densely clustered piano style presented a challenge to standard jazz performance practice that was as radical as anything that Coleman had to offer.

However, Taylor possessed legitimizing qualifications—to put it differently, jazz credentials—that Coleman did not have. After extensive early training, and four years at the New England Conservatory, Taylor had gained entry to the jazz field by years of avid listening in New York clubs, followed by apprenticeships with swing musicians Hot Lips Page, Johnny Hodges and Lawrence Brown. He then began leading his own groups, and developing his style in an increasingly free, non-tonal direction. His music was not popular with the majority of musicians in the jazz field, but his background and observation of the field's protocols enabled him to be recognized as a legitimate member.

In Taylor's case, recognition did not necessarily mean success. In a field dominated by bebop virtuosos such as Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins and Max Roach, the understated "cool" jazz of Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Miles Davis, and the Modern Jazz Quartet, and the blues revival of Horace Silver, Art Blakey and Cannonball Adderley, Taylor's aggressive, atonal style was an anomaly. By

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[146] Spellman, p. 5.

the time Coleman arrived in New York, Taylor had made few recordings, was chronically under-employed (even by the desperate standards of anyone trying to make a living as a jazz musician), and was collaborating with a small number of musicians who were willing and able to play his music. It is indeed true that, by observing the protocols, Taylor had been admitted to the field by the consensus of established members. However, that same consensus also kept him in a marginalized position that would be no threat to the position of any other member.[147]

Coleman, on the other hand, came to New York from Los Angeles as a leader. He debuted in a prestigious club, leading a band of equally untried and non-"recruited" (or "unconsecrated") sidemen. Arriving by this route, Coleman bypassed the "customs and protocols" that would have allowed the members of the jazz field to admit him eventually, and once having admitted him, to marginalize him, as Taylor had been marginalized.[148]

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[147] Spellman, p. 14, articulates the jazz field's problem coping with Taylor: "It was that Cecil's music was an abrupt challenge to the hard bop music with its ready availability to both performer and listener. Unless Cecil would just go away, music would never be the same, and the musical scene would never be the same."

[148] Carr et al., p. 487. Ian Carr's entry on Cecil Taylor includes this revealing sentence: "The whole jazz scene in the late 1950s was ripe for a shake-up, which happened with the advent of free jazz, and Taylor should have played a very prominent role as one of the trail-blazers of abstraction; but the arrival in New York of Ornette Coleman, in the autumn of 1959, put Taylor completely in the shade, blighting his career for several years." The late saxophonist Steve Lacy, in Derek Bailey's *Improvisation: its nature and practice in music* (Ashbourne, UK: Moorland Publishing, 1980), pp. 72–73, says, "There was complete opposition to what [Taylor] was doing in the '50s. To me in New York he was the most important figure in the earlier '50s. Then when Ornette hit town, that was the blow."

Aided by the economic capital of a major record company and the symbolic capital granted by influential critics and other mediators, Coleman impacted like a meteor on the jazz field. These consecrating forces rammed him into a prominent position that forced the field's established members to defend, to redefine and even to relinquish the positions they had worked long and hard to gain. Although the shock of his entry was personally out of character for the polite, soft-spoken Coleman, he revealed that he was acutely aware of the implications of his arrival in his reference to the pressure on established jazz musicians who "now… may have to learn something else."

In reality, of course, rather than "learning something else," an older generation of musicians would have to cope with being displaced in position, and forced to move downward through the hierarchy of the jazz field. In effect, it seems possible that the actual sound of Coleman's music was made more shocking by what was interpreted as the colossal rudeness, the elbowing-aside of established protocols, with which it arrived. To call it, in Goldberg's words, "a Lenox–Atlantic–*Jazz Review* Establishment" (in fact instead of "establishment," perhaps "conspiracy" was closer to what he meant) was not necessarily far off the mark.

Consecrating Figures

When Contemporary Records first recorded Ornette Coleman in 1958, the group included bassist Don Payne, who eventually played a test pressing of the

session for Nat Hentoff and John Tynan, the West Coast correspondent for *Down Beat* magazine. Tynan in particular reviewed the record enthusiastically in *Down Beat*, but failed in his efforts to convince the prestigious Monterey Jazz Festival to present Coleman.[149]

Meanwhile, partly through Payne's continuing advocacy, Coleman came to the attention of two of the members of one of the era's most respected jazz groups, the Modern Jazz Quartet. After Coleman and Cherry persuaded the MJQ's bassist, Percy Heath, to play on their second Contemporary record, the group's pianist, John Lewis, took an interest in the music and soon had convinced the MJQ's label, Atlantic Records, to record them.

Although Coleman's fame was launched by a series of advocates working separately and together, simultaneously and consecutively, John Lewis was possibly the central consecrating figure in the process. A pianist who worked with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and Lester Young in the 1940s, in 1951 he and Milt Jackson founded the Modern Jazz Quartet. Throughout the 1950s the MJQ, with their subdued sound and their tuxedos and with Lewis as musical director, actively strove to perform in concert venues. Lewis himself was instrumental in pioneering "Third Stream" performances (merging jazz and classical music) and the concept of jazz summer schools.[150]

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[149] Litweiler, pp. 60–61.

[150] Carr et al., pp. 298–299.

The Modern Jazz Quartet's mellow piano-vibraphone-bass-drums sound was disparaged by some members of the jazz field as too mild and conciliatory (in fact, too bourgeois), and their adoption of classical forms as a denial of African-American heritage. However, as a black group making a niche for themselves in the music industry, playing essentially a concert music, they were important pioneers. Robert Walser has written:

> African-American performers and composers have long worked to defeat racist essentialism by proving their ability to write and perform European concert music. The chamber jazz of the Modern Jazz Quartet, with its cool fusions of swing and classical forms, was also a statement of black pride, however conservative it seemed amid the turmoil of the 1960s.[151]

Whatever the jazz field's reservations about the MJQ's music, no one denied the quality of their musicianship. With their commercial and critical success, and his own compositions for ballet, theatre and film, Lewis gradually transformed himself into a respected artist, an influential figure and a powerful consecrating force.

In the spring of 1959 he turned the full force of his influence to Coleman's benefit. Atlantic Records was a large independent company with a diverse catalogue and wide distribution that made an Atlantic contract an enviable goal for a musician—a goal that many well-established jazz artists could not achieve.[152] Atlantic's relative promotional aggressiveness made itself clear as

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[151] Robert Walser, *Running With the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), p. 61.

[152] Litweiler, p. 66.

soon as it took on Coleman as one of its artists. The Contemporary records had been titled "Something Else!" and "Tomorrow is the Question"—titles that alerted the listener to something new and innovative. The first Atlantic record was called "The Shape of Jazz to Come," soon followed by "Change of the Century." The titles were loud proclamations that left no room to doubt that Coleman's music was The Next Big Thing, with which all jazz listeners, and players, would have to contend, whether they liked it or not.

Meanwhile, John Lewis was able to book Coleman into the upcoming Monterey Jazz Festival (where Lewis held the position of artistic adviser)—a prestigious, high-profile venue that only a year before had rejected Kenneth Tynan's efforts on behalf of Coleman.[153] As director of the summer Lenox School of Jazz in Massachusetts, Lewis arranged for Coleman and Cherry to get scholarships (paid for by Atlantic) to the summer 1959 sessions—less for the program's curricular benefits than to introduce the men and their music to the musicians and writers on the Lenox faculty.[154]

At Lenox, composer/educator Gunther Schuller and critic Martin Williams were both impressed with Coleman, and their influence opened further doors. Both praised him privately and in print. Williams was instrumental in convincing the Termini brothers to book Coleman's group into the Five Spot, and in the

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[153] Ibid, p. 70.

[154] Ibid, p. 68.

months to follow, Schuller wrote music for Coleman and gave him private theory lessons.[155]

But for all their good works on Coleman's behalf, Lewis can still be seen as the major consecrating force. Unlike most of the prominent musicians in the New York jazz field, Schuller was an academic, and a white academic at that; to some members of the field, he would always have a degree of outsider status. Williams was a white critic who wrote about a black music form; his reputation would vary among the field's members, probably in proportion to how fairly each of them felt his or her work had been treated by Williams and other critics.

In contrast, Lewis's status in the field was unassailable. In his youth, he had honoured the unwritten protocols of working for the field's most prominent leaders, and had duly advanced through the ranks to leading his own group. The Modern Jazz Quartet had carved a distinctive niche for itself in the international music world: on one hand it boasted Lewis's sophisticated compositions and arrangements and on the other Milt Jackson, the leading jazz vibraphonist of his generation, along with the superb instrumental talents of bassist Heath and drummer Connie Kay. As a black composer, artistic adviser and educator, Lewis had made significant inroads into areas traditionally dominated by whites. The endorsement and support of a figure as widely respected as Lewis was a consecration that few, if any, members of the jazz field would be able to deny.

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[155] Ibid, p. 70.

CONCLUSION

The Jazz Field / The New York Jazz Field

Throughout this thesis the reader might read references to "the jazz field" that allow for two different definitions. It is easy enough to recall that Ornette Coleman was controversial throughout the jazz field, and to evoke the milieu of his first Five Spot performances as a microcosm of that field. Some readers might conclude that "the jazz field" in question includes everyone in the world who is actively involved with jazz—a record collector in Cairo, a guitar player in Beijing and a club owner in Milan—regardless of location, nationality or ethnicity. Others may read "the jazz field" as synonymous with "the New York jazz field," weighting the term with the tacit assumption that the era's major players were all based in New York City, as were virtually all the major critics, scholars and record companies.

One of these definitions situates the jazz field within the boundaries of New York City. The other envisions the jazz field as a community literally without borders of nation and geography. In fact both of these views of the jazz field are accurate, and both co-existed actively in the jazz music of 1959, even as they do today.

An artistic field is an economic as well as a social and artistic entity, and all major cities, with their performance venues, art galleries, schools, publishers and studios, tend to attract the artists from their surrounding region. This is especially true of jazz artists. Dependent on the creative abilities of his or her

fellow band members for the success of each night's performance, musicians benefit from living among a community of available players.

Throughout the twentieth century, New York City was the undisputed capital of jazz music, the centre to which all jazz musicians of the top rank must eventually gravitate.[156] New York was also the site of the headquarters of the major radio networks and record companies, and the home of most of North America's most influential publishers of books and magazines. To take advantage of its wealth of opportunities, musicians came to New York, and in turn the city became the place where reputations were made. Because of this, acceptance in the New York jazz field has become the ultimate test of a musician's legitimacy. Throughout jazz history it has been the base for tours, recordings and criticism, and the site for the creation of careers and eventually of canons. There is no better proof of the latter statement than the career of Ornette Coleman.

The origins of jazz as a music that came up the river from "New Orleans, the traditional birthplace of jazz"[157] are still not seriously disputed despite the vast oversimplification of rendering the music's progress into one simple movement. Among other things, this familiar trope depicts the music's ultimate destination as New York and New York only, undervaluing its vital developments in Chicago,

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[156] Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography of Miles Davis* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1989), p. 86. An example of New York's symbolic importance is Davis' terse description of how he and his New York-based peers assessed Charles Mingus's bass playing when they first heard him in Los Angeles in the 1940s: "We... knew that he would have to come to New York, which he did."

[157] Tirro, p. 6.

Kansas City and points west. For example, Ted Gioia has pointed out that early New Orleans musicians such as Jelly Roll Morton, Kid Ory and King Oliver lived and worked in Los Angeles and San Francisco before 1920. He even traces the use of the term "jazz" itself from 1916 to a bandleader in San Francisco in 1914.[158] However, as well as championing the US west coast as a site of musical ferment, Gioia challenges the ways of disseminating and documenting jazz music that restrict the creation of canonic figures and movements to New York, and points out that the Eastern bias has affected jazz reputations from the music's earliest days:

> Jelly Roll Morton, in words that could be written today, remarked about a trombonist from Oakland from the pre-Prohibition years: "Poor Padio, he's dead now, never got East so none of the critics ever heard him."[159]
>
> Outside of a few individuals such as Les Koenig and Richard Bock, the West largely lacked the nonmusical resources—the behind-the-scenes support groups made up of journalists, impresarios, and the like—that are often crucial in determining what gets heard and what gets neglected. In the short run, such outside figures often hold the key to a musician's commercial viability; in the long run, they affect nothing less than how the history of the music is written.[160]

Gioia provides a wealth of information that enables the reader to form an impression of the course that Ornette Coleman's career might have taken if he had not been swept up so suddenly into New York's jazz circles. For western natives

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[158] Gioia, p. 61.

[159] Ibid, p. 62.

[160] Ibid, pp. 358–9.

such as Coleman and Charles Mingus, moving to New York eventually won them positions as canonic figures whose music was a major influence. But for musicians who stayed in California such as Buddy Collette, Teddy Edwards, Hampton Hawes and many others, decades of accomplishment still left their contributions marginalized as "West Coast Jazz."

As we have seen, throughout the 1950s Coleman had found musical collaborators and managed to perform occasionally. His first recordings for the Los Angeles label Contemporary had garnered him only modest attention. It is reasonable to surmise that had he stayed in Los Angeles he, like so many other West Coast musicians, would have built a substantial body of work, but remained no more than a footnote in official jazz histories.

Similarly, had he brought his saxophone and his compositions to New York, acting only on his own initiative, one can imagine he would have found the same mixed, predominately negative reactions he found among Los Angeles musicians. If the same circles that accepted Cecil Taylor would have accepted him, this would have ensured Coleman's entry into the jazz field, but on the same marginalized level accorded Taylor. If Coleman had brought his whole band to New York unannounced, it seems doubtful that they would have found enough work to support themselves.

Instead, Coleman appeared in New York already heralded as "a walking myth, the image of a small bearded man striding out of the woods of Texas and

into New York's usually closed jazz scene."[161] Due to the consecrating efforts of John Lewis, Gunther Schuller, Atlantic Records and a host of enthusiastic and proactive critics, Coleman immediately became famous, both as a musician and as a divisive and controversial figure.

Coleman's initial Five Spot engagement illustrates clearly the currents of power within the jazz field. When Bourdieu wrote, "nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class,' nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music," he made possible a study such as this one, which tries to show how on this occasion power worked its influence within the jazz field, all the while expressing itself as the language of musical taste. In the Coleman dispute, such expressions of taste marked one's allocation of cultural capital, hence of one's status within the field.[162]

For many, Coleman's music was more than influential; it was epochal. For some, it represented the end of jazz. If that is overstating the case, the music was certainly the end of any kind of consensus within the jazz field as to what constituted the prevailing avant-garde, and much less as to who the next incoming innovators might be. The demanding Coleman-influenced music that John Coltrane was to produce a few years later did not displace Coleman from his special position in the avant-garde; nor did the radically vocalized saxophone playing of Albert Ayler. During the 1960s a wave of avant-garde jazz began to

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[161] Spellman, p. 79.

[162] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 18–19.

come from Europe and Japan; to this day many members of the American jazz field do not even include these musics in their notions of jazz.[163] Instead, critics still argue about whether the electric groups that Miles Davis started in the 1960s were an "art for art's sake" step (forwards) or a "bourgeois art" step (backwards). They argue about whether jazz is a "white" (art for art's sake) art form or a "black" (social art) art form. They argue about whether music is jazz if it does not swing, use certain scales, and employ the song form. And they argue about Ornette Coleman.

Once Bourdieu's ideas have been placed in this context, a universe of possibilities becomes apparent. How do taste, field and the three artistic positions apply to the widely diversified musics that are "jazz" today? How did they work throughout the careers of major figures such as Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, and Charlie Parker? How do positions within the field differ for black and white artists, for men and for women?

It would be fascinating, for example, to look at the jazz field around Duke Ellington's performance at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival, when an extended

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[163] Tirro is a good example. This college textbook, updated to 1993, gives generous space to Coleman and the AACM musicians of the 1970s, and covers American musicians of the 1980s such as Anthony Davis and Ray Anderson. However, among European jazz musicians only Django Reinhardt (1910–1953) is named, and then only as a passing reference. Innovative and influential instrumentalists such as Albert Mangelsdorff (Germany; 1928–), Derek Bailey (UK; 1932–), or Evan Parker (1944–) are not mentioned, nor are the many different ways in which Germany's Globe Unity Orchestra, Holland's Willem Breuker Kollektief or the UK's Brotherhood of Breath or London Jazz Composers Orchestra re-conceived and revitalized the jazz orchestra. If New York's jazz field is a "closed jazz scene," skeptical of out-of-towners, then the forces reifying jazz as "America's classical music" can be equally blinkered to contributions to jazz from outside the US borders.

version of *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* revived Ellington's career by reifying him as a popular "bourgeois" artist in a time that he was in danger of being consigned to the museum of "art for art's sake."

Similarly, the late 1930s saw ground-breaking concerts by Benny Goodman (Carnegie Hall, New York 1938) and Marian Anderson (Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C. 1939) that could be seen as redefinitions of their respective fields. Goodman's brought jazz music, and black performers, to the stage of a major classical concert venue,[164] and Anderson's affirmed—in fact, insisted—that black performers could be full members of the classical field.[165] Since the 1980s, Wynton Marsalis, a New York-based trumpeter and composer who has also become a powerful mediator in the jazz field, has loudly asserted a definition of jazz that confines the music to the strict forms and steady rhythms that Coleman altered so radically. In effect, Marsalis champions a field *without* an avant-garde: a definition that contradicts Bourdieu's definition of a field where, despite the concern of its members to maintain their positions, or at least to maintain the appearance of upward movement, there is constant, if not always rapid, change and innovation.

These are fruitful areas for inquiry and discovery, especially insofar as they might prompt the researcher to examine and reexamine his or her own

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[164] Carr, et al., p. 195.

[165] Marian Anderson, *My Lord, What A Morning* (New York: The Viking Press, 1956), pp. 184–196.

position. After all, whether as reader, listener, scholar, critic, producer, publisher, player or composer, we are all contributing members of the jazz field.

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Discography & Related Recordings

This thesis covers the period from 1958 to 1960 which was, of course, only the beginning of Ornette Coleman's recording career. Recordings from this time by no means define this artist's ever-evolving style.

In the mid-1960s, Coleman emerged from a period of retirement playing trumpet and violin as well as saxophone. In the 1970s, he made his first electric recordings, forming his group Prime Time. The 1980s brought Shirley Clarke's film "Ornette: Made in America," and a successful collaboration with the popular jazz guitarist Pat Metheny. During these years, fans who yearned for the original acoustic quartet could listen to Old and New Dreams, a quartet formed by Coleman's erstwhile collaborators Dewey Redman, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Edward Blackwell that played original compositions as well as Coleman's.

Coleman began the 1990s working with Howard Shore on the soundtrack to David Cronenberg's film adaptation of the William Burroughs novel *Naked Lunch*. Later in the decade, he returned to the acoustic format in his working groups, adding pianist Geri Allen. At this writing (summer 2004) he is touring with a quartet of two basses (acoustic and electric) and drums.

During all these years, Coleman has continued to produce through-composed works for a variety of ensembles.

On the internet, more complete discographic information can be found at http://www.jazzdisco.org/ornette/dis/c/, as well as Robert Stubenrauch's discography at http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Quarter/7055/Ornette/Disco-ornette.htm. A greater variety of information, including an essay on references to the Five Spot engagements in Thomas Pynchon's novel *V*, is offered by musician and critic David Wild at http://home.att.net/~dawild/ornette_coleman.htm. For the most up-to-date information, Coleman himself has a home page: http://harmolodic.com.

Recordings which are directly referred to in the text of this thesis are marked with an asterisk. Others have been chosen because they are directly relevant to Coleman's music, or because they offer excellent examples of styles or influences referred to herein. Of course no jazz artist's work can be fully comprehended from a single recording, and certainly these selections should not be accepted as "definitive" samplings of each artist. Rather, for readers unfamiliar with jazz who want to acquaint themselves with the music and the milieu, it is hoped that these selections might help cover a lot of ground in a short time. *Thelonious Monk Quartet Live at the Five Spot Discovery!*, for example, presents not only Monk's compositions and playing, but an insight into John Coltrane's style before Coleman appeared on the scene. It was also recorded in concert at the Five Spot. The Dolphy recording, incidentally, is also from the Five Spot, as well as having long been accepted as one of the best recorded examples of Dolphy's music.

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