TRIUMPHANT EVOCATIONS:

THE VISUALIZATION AND TEXTUALIZATION OF POST-BOP JAZZ

IN THE 1950S

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IN THE 1950S

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Triumphant Evocations:

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Jazz, since its early conception has always played a definitive role in American arts and culture. In the tumultuous post-war era of the 1950s that simultaneously cherished mass consumption, the avant-garde turn jazz took resonated with the influences of minorities that fell outside the racial, social and economical norms of American society. Visual and literary artists were influenced by the unusual rhythms and spontaneous virtuosity of jazz musicians and began to emulate them in their respective genres. Jazz, as an abstract music form, defied accurate verbal or visual illustration, however. This thesis argues, that what is inherently an abstracted language in modern jazz achieved representation both through the intermedial experiments of the Abstract Expressionist visuals on album covers and some schools of poetry in the 1950s. The thesis examines album covers of post-bop jazz and determines its main audience, while simultaneously studying patterns of modern jazz in the poetry of Bob Kaufman, Frank O'Hara and Langston Hughes within the context of the "new listener".

ÖZET

Muzaffer Çağrışımlar:

1950'lerde Bop Sonrası Cazın

Görselleştirilmesi ve Metinleştirilmesi

Caz müziği, Afro-Amerikan anlatısını incelemek adına önemli bir yere sahiptir. Ancak buhranlı olduğu kadar tüketim toplumunun da oluştuğu 1950'lerin gelişiyle birlikte caz da avangart bir yola girmiş ve bu yeni anlatı tarzıyla sadece Afro-Amerikanların değil, kendini ırksal, sosyal ve ekonomik normların dışında bulan tüm azınlıkların temsili haline gelmiştir. Görsel sanatçılar ve edebiyatçılar cazın alışılagelmedik ritimlerinden ve spontane yeteneklerinden etkilenmiş ve cazın kullandığı biçimleri taklit etmeye başlamışlardır. Ancak caz, diğer müzik formları gibi birebir sözlü ve görsel temsili zorlaştıran bir soyutluğa sahiptir. Bu tez, aslında soyutlaştırılmış bir dil olan modern cazın, 1950'lerin şiir ekollerinin medyalar arası deneyimlemeleri ve albüm kapaklarında kullanılan soyut görseller sayesinde kazandığı temsili incelemektedir. Bu yüzden de tezin ana amacı modern caz albüm kapaklarını inceleyerek dinleyici kitlesini belirlemek ve yeni "dinleyici" bağlamında Bob Kaufman, Frank O'Hara ve Langston Hughes'un şiirlerinde kullanılmış caz elementlerini incelemektir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> All I know about music is that not many people ever really hear it. And even then, on the rare occasions when something opens within, and the music enters, what we mainly hear, or hear corroborated, are personal, private, vanishing evocations. But the man who creates the music is hearing something else, is dealing with the roar rising from the void and imposing order on it as it hits the air. What is evoked in him, then, is of another order, more terrible because it has no words, and triumphant, too, for that same reason. And his triumph, when he triumphs, is ours.
>
> James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

Jazz. A word so infused with meaning and ambiguity at the same time that as a genre, what it encapsulates is difficult to identify. From the turn of the century onwards, it has developed into an amalgamation of various music styles, seemingly incompatible traditions. It has undergone constant renovation engendered by political and social issues. From its arguably debased cultural meaning to its domination of a generation of dancers, it re-manifested and reinvented itself multiple times in the twentieth century. It was a rostrum for the black community to protest on; it was the perfect platform to experiment with the flow of spontaneity, a means of both supporting and defying tradition, sometimes a return to roots, but mostly, a creation of a narrative that has persistently stretched the boundaries of music, art and aesthetics in general. With the bop revolution of the 1940s, however, jazz became in sync with modernity and its troubles, and its status underwent a reconstruction from "an act of entertainment" to "high-art".

In the aftermath of the Second World War, a sense of relief and hopeful anticipation were in the air simultaneously. Embodying both "popular and avant-garde music; of abstract and commercial art . . . of ballet and westerns; of bus boycotts and B-52 bombers; and of the growth of big corporations and increased membership of workers' unions" (Halliwell, 2007, p. 3), the 1950s, very simply put,

characterized binaries. Since it was a decade of "parallel emergences", it would be fallacious to constrain the ethos of the era within an all-encompassing culture, as it would be better described as a culture "of dualities, tensions and contradictions" (Halliwell, 2007, p. 3). Free market reigned economics in the States; consumption of goods, especially cars, TVs rocketed; "[a]dvertising and the mass media were instrumental as cultural proponents of the corporate-liberal system" and [a]dvertisements, mass-circulation magazines, Hollywood movies, and radio and television programs celebrated American technology and the suburban 'standard of living'" (Halliwell, 2007, p. 4). Corporate liberalism, which had been prevalent since the 1920s and which had plummeted with the Great Depression and forced many Americans "to question the socioeconomic arrangement of the twenties", made a comeback after the Second World War (Belgrad, 1998, p. 3). Politically, the United States was in a cold war with Communism, and was trying to establish her place as a heavy advocate for freedom and democracy. In the 1950s jazz became a mouthpiece for the United States to symbolize "American freedom, racial harmony, and individual achievement" (Yudkin, 2009, p. 106) and sponsored musicians like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington to tour to the eastern parts of the world, however ironical it sounded to ask "a maligned minority to travel the world showing off the open-mindedness of American society" (Yudkin, 2009, p. 106). The idea of freedom was not in congruence with her domestic politics, as racial tension climbed throughout the decade and triggered the Civil Rights Movement.

Within this phase, which Hannah Arendt would identify as "between past and future," artistic experimentation supervened (as cited in Halliwell, 2007, p. 4). The world needed new outlooks and the modernist inclination of the previous decades, especially in between the wars, would have to diverge into new routes. With

painting, this came in the form of Abstract Expressionism; with literature, it was in the form of projective verse and Beat writing, and in music, or specifically jazz, it was through the experiments of bebop and hard bop. These artistic endeavors, even though they were "not an organized cultural movement but a loose coherence of individually unique artists, writers and musicians" (Belgrad, 1998, p. 5), had something in common: They all put spontaneity to the forefront of their ideas. Miles Davis' motto "the first take is the best take" would echo in the Beat writers' common agenda as "the first thought is the best thought". The extreme improvisational features of bebop would reverberate in the gesture-painting of Jackson Pollock. Jazz, as a nexus of inspiration and appreciation, incited painters and poets to "actively pursu[e] the aesthetic of spontaneity in their own media" (Belgrad, 1998, p. 194).

The pioneers of these innovative avant-garde explorations appealed to different social strata. Jazz started off as "black music" and was heavily based on African rhythms and blues. Then with the intervention of white (and predominantly Jewish) musicians, it turned into an "American music," nourished not only by blues but also European avant-garde, classical music and native music, until finally taking a nonpareil path of its own. Hence jazz reached various social and cultural groups through its alterations and adaptations. Abstract art, and precisely Abstract Expressionism, was only "understood" by a certain group of people, however, and was often thought to beguile academia and the intelligentsia. While the literature of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s was mainly consumed by black readers, the late 1940s and 1950s' Beat Generation, Black Mountain poets and the New York School poets appealed to bohemians of both races and white liberals. This variety in the audience groups also enabled the different art forms to address a wider audience through intermediality.

This thesis seeks to investigate the features of modern jazz in the poetry of the 1950s and common trademarks of cultural inclinations through their relation to each other. The first chapter therefore delves into the intricate social and cultural milieu of the 1950s up until the mid-1960s. According to Ben Sidran, "a phase of 'new visibility' for black music came about between 1949 and 1969," and this 'new visibility', as opposed to "Ralph Ellison's assertion in *Invisible Man* that Louis Armstrong had 'made poetry out of being invisible'" (Sidran quoted in Halliwell, 2007, p. 45) put the new generation of jazz musicians in the spotlight, good as well as bad. The bop revolution and its echoes clanged in the ears of a new generation of artistic experimentalists who would cite jazz rhythms as a source of inspiration and hang out in the galvanizing underground clubs filled with saxophone melodies and smoke. The concept of "taste" divided communities into the loosely-termed categories as high-brow and middle-brow. Pushed away by both the popular mass culture and by academia, artists of in-between forms like jazz showcased not only their talents, but also their political stances to a limited audience comprised of other artists and bohemians. Yet sometimes even bad publicity reached out to help them: Unbeknownst to the critics, these very same artistic expressions would become the insignia of the 1950s in contemporary culture.

Jazz music of the 1950s diversified within itself; engendering modern styles as the decade prevailed. The Bebop movement, pioneered by Charlie Parker and Dizzie Gillespie turned jazz, which existed in the popular form of Big Band Swing of the 1920s, into something other than mere dance music by redefining concepts of melody and rhythm. Paralleling to this movement and right after, a jazz style known as 'West Coast jazz' due to its San Francisco origins and white band leaders, but

factually credited to Miles Davis' 1949[1] album "Birth of the Cool" emerged: Cool jazz. This style could be dubbed "an elaboration of the tone and the phrasing of Lester Young" (Belgrad, 1998, p. 193) instead of the bebop infused with African and avant-garde European elements, pioneered by Parker and Gillespie. The most important aspect of cool jazz was its marketability for white audiences. Since it did not have the dexterous and swift phrasings and rhythmical complexities of bop, cool jazz helped in the outreach to white audience once again. However, another style was about to emerge: Hard bop. Scott Saul (2003), in his book *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* characterizes it as the "music of cultural burial and cultural awakening" (p. 2). Writer and music critic Amiri Baraka, in his *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* published in 1963 considers hard bop to be an inevitable result of the circumstances, saying that "the fifties took on their own peculiar foreboding shape because of the grim catalyst of the Korean War and the emotional chaos that went with it. The Negro could not help but be affected; neither could his music" (p. 215). This change that was brought about was not random, and it was "a conscious, and many times affected, return to the roots" among African American musicians "amidst the cellos, flutes, fugues, and warmed-over popular ballads of the cool" (p. 216). This inclination to go back to the roots of "black music" was a giant step in reclaiming African American identity, both musically, specifically in terms of rhythm and chord progression as well as politically: It was "not so much a return as a conscious re-evaluation of those roots" (p. 218). The main transformation happened in the state of mind; the "idea of the Negro's having 'roots' and that they are a valuable possession, rather than the source of ineradicable shame, [was] perhaps the profoundest change within the Negro

[1] The album was recorded in 1949, however was published in 1957. Most jazz historians take the starting of the cool jazz as 1949.

consciousness since the early part of the century" (p. 218). For Saul, "[h]ard bop was the music of a generation . . . who imaginatively tried to recapture the roots of jazz in gospel and the blues while extending its ambition in the realms of art, politics, and spirituality (and often some combination of the three)" (Saul, 2003, p. 2). Simultaneously, another style named "Third Stream jazz" came into being. A journey towards the intellectualization of jazz music, it drew elements of classical music and jazz and advocated sophisticated art. Free jazz, on the other hand, instigated by Ornette Coleman's vision, blurred the defining lines of jazz, if there were any, even further by eliminating tonality all together and relying on collective improvisation. This synchronic versatility of jazz in the 1950s epitomized the aesthetics of the era.

The "black consciousness" which started manifesting itself through bebop and hard bop, found its counterpart in the literary scene in the writings of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. In their works, not only issues of racial and sexual identity and the political, economic and social status of the blacks were addressed, but also a certain inclination to imitate jazz musicians emerged. This narrative attitude was hardly new: The predilection towards the expression of opinions through the help of black music can also be found in the Harlem Renaissance writers of the mid-1920s, in the blues infused writings of Sterling Brown and jazz rhythms of Langston Hughes. However, in the 1950s, this tendency materialized in the form of emulating rhythmic patterns in prose. Baldwin, for instance, aspired "to write like black musicians' sound, to turn his writing instrument into a musical one" and this desire "was rooted in his belief in the power of black music as a mechanism of liberation and survival in the face of racial subjugation and oppression" (Kun, 2005, p. 88). On the other hand, Ralph Ellison's recognition,

according to Scott Saul, "of both the strength of African-American culture and the futility of race-hardened thinking" marks "the jazz of the 1950s and 1960s" which was "energized by an Ellisonian desire to marry virtuosity and community involvement" (Saul, 2003, p. xiii). Yet this enchantment with modern jazz was not only applicable to black writers of the era, but also white bohemian poets who were dubbed the "Beat Generation". Not only they were influenced by the syncopated rhythms of bebop, but they also, much like the black population, felt alienated from the society. "For blacks as well as the legion of immigrant Jews . . . being an outsider was a given," comments Jed Rasula (2005), but this turns into an opportunity "in the cultural pluralism of the postwar years" (p. 162).

One of the many consequences and by-products of post-war culture affiliated with this improvisational jazz aesthetic, and one which extended its own ambition of protest 'in the realms of art and politics' emanated in the shape of Abstract Expressionism. According to Anna Moszynska (1990), it was "the first and most celebrated international American art movement" (p. 141). A successor to European modernism and most importantly Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism found its essence in and through the works of names such as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko and Franz Kline. Much like modern jazz styles, it was influenced by the avant-garde aspirations of European counterparts of the time and was considered to be a "desire both for personal expression and for the freedom to break away from past traditions" (p. 155). Moreover, the demise of the leftist ideas of the 1930s, for instance, necessitated painters to distance themselves from the art associated with Communist propaganda, hence their predilection towards abstraction (Belgrad, 1998). Jean Baudrillard associates the predisposition to abstract improvisation with the Cold War: "Cold War is abstract, it is something suspended,

it does not break out, it is simultaneously conflict and deterrence, just as pictorial abstraction is simultaneously forms and forms deferred, a play of signs and a violent dissuasion of the signs of reality" (as cited in Halliwell, 2007, p. 195). But Martin Halliwell (2007) challenges this idea by pointing out the different painting styles of the decade, and suggests a different interpretation by taking "1954 . . . as a moment when 'nervous, pathetic, and explosive abstraction' gave way to a different kind of art more attuned to the consumerist impulses of the mid-1950s" (p. 195). Amiri Baraka (1963) identifies this "feeling of rapport between the jazz of the forties, fifties, and sixties with the rest of contemporary American art" not only as a *modus operandi* of the post-war social life, but also argues that there "are aesthetic analogies, persistent similarities of stance that also create identifiable relationships. And these relationships seem valid whether they are found in the most vital contemporary American poetry or the best new American painting" (p. 233). According to Daniel Belgrad (1998), both of these art forms were products of a "culture of spontaneity," and were opposed by both "the commercial mass media and the established intellectuals", in other words, "middle-brow" and "high-brow" cultures, which was the main reason why bebop musicians were not "accord[ed] the status of serious artists" (p. 182). The artists of the "spontaneous avant-garde did not identify themselves with either side, and so drew the fire of both" (p. 223). While on the one hand the "intelligentsia" considered "bebop jazz, abstract expressionist painting, and beat writing . . . as forms of 'mindless self indulgence'," on the other side of the argument, "mass-circulation magazines and newspapers made it clear that they would not be taken in by charlatans posing as avant-garde artists" as they "def[ied] what they perceived as a highbrow penchant for incomprehensible art" (p. 236-42).

Record covers, which transformed along with the music itself, are one of the more intriguing yet seldom studied aspects of jazz history. With its surface area, it can be regarded as a canvas for the music it stretches on. For that reason, chapter two addresses the intermedial relations of jazz album covers with the music and the consumers of that music towards the visualization process that helped make difficult jazz an association point for the general consumer. Musician Tony Bennett, in the preface of Eric Kohler's extensive coverage of album covers between 1940 and 1960, stated that "[the album covers] were large enough to make you feel like you were taking home your very own work of art" (as cited in Jones & Sorger, 1999). Although essentially a marketing strategy for the record companies, album covers facilitated advancement in design and – intentionally or not - generated a direct dialogue between the visual representation and of the music it corresponds to.

As cool jazz and hard bop of the 1950s' gradually shifted in the direction of the avant-garde jazz of the 1960s', album covers, along with photos and drawings which "depict[ed] the musician playing his or her instrument" (Pinson, 2010, p. 28), or seductive women, started incorporating abstract images influenced by various artists such as Jackson Pollock, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian. For instance, while Blue Note's designer Reid Miles adopted a modernist attitude in his designs, Columbia Records' Jim Flora had "a frenetic style that was laced with surreal visual humor" (Margolin, 2015, n.p). Alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman picked Jackson Pollock's *White Light* painting himself as the cover of his album *Free Jazz*, an album that boldly dictated the new direction jazz was to take. Famous for making the artwork for numerous iconic albums, Columbia Records' Neil Fujita drew heavily upon the style of avant-garde art in his designs. His decision to make an aesthetic

reform in album covers by working with art photographers and applying avant-garde models affected the strategy of the market, and more albums followed this trend.

Chapter two therefore studies the real impetus behind this decision by asking the following questions: Why bring abstract art and modern jazz together in the first place? How does the artwork on the cover reflect the music it envelops? Moreover, how successful is this as a marketing strategy? Can we claim that abstract art thus found its way to black subculture, or is it the other way around: Was hard bop, and perhaps later free jazz, introduced to the addressees of avant-garde/abstract art? How does that relate to the audience and how they perceive art and how, in return, does this make it easier for jazz poetry?

David Yaffe (2006) begins his work, *Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing*, with Donald Barthelme's short story "The King of Jazz," in which descriptions of Hokie Mokie's trombone solo fail with each simile. In doing so Yaffe reiterates Barthelme's attempt to "demonstrat[e] the pomposity, hubris and failure of language when it is applied to jazz" (p. 2). Yet how inaccurate is language when we take the rhythms of post-bop jazz into account? Can the effect of a trombone solo be emulated through syncopated phrases and incessant run-on improvisations? After all, jazz also echoes the call-and-response of the hymns, the shrieks of everyday objects and the yelling of street vendors; sonic representation could be more veracious than descriptive ones. Chapter three thus analyzes the rhythmical effects of jazz on contemporary poetry and the notion of the "new listener". It mainly focuses on the 1950s and the first half of 1960s in an attempt to achieve contemporariness with the jazz music of the time, while using the precursors, contemporaries and followers of the same strategies as secondary sources. The argument chiefly rests on the rhythmic similarities of poetry to jazz in the works of

Bob Kaufman, a rarely studied Beat poet who not only treats jazz thematically but also successfully employs its syncopations; the bodily movement inherent in Frank O'Hara's poetry, a New York School poet who is more influenced by abstract painting than jazz, and to put it in his own words does not "really get the jazz stimulus but it is probably what [he] get[s] from painting and probably similar at least"; and performance of poetry Langston Hughes, who was not only a prominent name of the Harlem Renaissance but continued to be a prolific poet well into the 1960s, especially with his *Ask Your Mama*, in which he collaborated with jazz musicians (Shaw, 2006).

Having started off with a James Baldwin quote that urges and necessitates listening, this thesis addresses two main senses, 'seeing' and 'listening' – as distinguished from 'looking' and 'hearing' - through the intermedial relations of the arts of the 1950s and its audiences in the American culture, with jazz as a common ground. This, however, is not a study on black culture, or "black aesthetics" per se, nor a study on the bohemian culture. Rather, it reflects research that is inspired by a desire to highlight the reciprocal quality of artistic aspirations, in terms of not only race, but of media, genres and senses. Its aim is to see the visual image of jazz portrayed on album covers as a canvas, and listen to the sonic image of jazz articulated in the unusual rhythms of poetry, much like the listener of the era does. By doing this, I would like to pay tribute to Baldwin, and as an audience, turn 'vanishing evocations' into 'triumphant' ones.

CHAPTER 2

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE SPONTANEOUS CULTURAL FORMS OF THE 1950S

The consumer boom of the 1950s was hardly a novelty. The American society had in fact engaged in an anxious golden age long before the Cold War. According to Daniel Belgrad (1998), corporate liberalism had governed in the United States since the 1920s and corporate liberals successfully combined “mass leisure and consumption” with “scientifically managed work” (p. 3). The nascent consumer culture, claims Charles McGovern (2008), can even be traced back to the period of urbanization after the Civil War, amid which a deluge of immigrants, both foreign and Southern, to cities can be observed. Thus since at least the mid-nineteenth century, mass culture and consumer culture have had an immediate bond, with breaks of crisis in between, in the United States. The birth of jazz was therefore coincidental with the burgeoning consumer culture.

Such a buoyant mass culture entailed a “high culture” against which it could be measured. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1944), in their work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* devise an argument which separates “art” from the “culture industry”, which, in this context, roughly correspond to “high culture” and “mass culture,” respectively. By differentiating between the two entities, Adorno and Horkheimer pursue the resuscitation of art against a culture industry that provided the American people with uniform products, lest the American society obliterates its values (Halliwell, 2007). Although their surmise of the soaring mass culture’s effects proved accurate to some extent, the very same decades - especially the post-war era - witnessed the blurring of the line between high culture and mass culture with the

availability and ubiquity of art forms thanks to mass production.

Jazz locates itself on the blurred lines between these bifurcate cultural categories. Having grown out of the blues at the turn of the century, jazz became the most popular music of the 1920s. Blues, as one of the precursors of jazz, verbalized the burdens of African slaves and their antecedents. It encapsulated the true Negro experience. For Amiri Baraka (1963), the emergence of blues was concurrent with the presence of the African-Americans; the blues was not African nor American, it was African-American. The influx of immigrants from the south to the north had not only caused a culture in which consumption was encouraged, but also helped disseminate the blues and hence jazz, out of the Southern states. Traveling for vaudeville shows and entertainment purposes, jazz reached audiences relatively rapidly. The initial reactions, however, discredited jazz, and attributed sexual connotations to the music, since it came from a "lower" culture, both racially and economically. A sense of paranoia was evident in "Progressive reformers in the 1920s who held jazz responsible for rising rates of dope addiction and illegitimate birth, and Protestant ministers who labeled it the 'Devil's music'" (Gennari, 1991, p. 451). Jeremy Yudkin (2009) presents evidence that even in New Orleans, where jazz originated, the magazines were prone to weigh on the negative side of criticism, defining jazz as "manifestations of a low streak in man's tastes" (p. 93). [2] Nevertheless, the danceable rhythms and the unusual virtuosity of the instrumentalists drew the attention of white musicians, thus jazz began to be played, copied, recorded and concomitantly altered by them. Meanwhile as the new purveyor of mass culture, the radio achieved a remarkable status within the entertainment industry, and black musicians could play for the radio without facing the

[2] This particular editorial was published in the "New Orleans Times-Picayune".

discrimination they would otherwise encounter. The big bands of the swing era, which would be hired to play at ballrooms, were now on the radio, thereby reaching a wider audience without having to tour as in the vaudeville days.

Although reverberations of the Great Depression created an aura of crisis in the corporate liberal system, which in turn prompted the idea of communism to gain leverage, the war years, according to Daniel Belgrad (1998), "ushered in a new era of corporate-liberal predominance" (p. 3). After the war, corporate liberalism bolstered its presence through visual stimulants such as advertisements and the pervasiveness of mass media, which, in turn, promoted and celebrated the "American technology and the suburban 'standard of living'" (Belgrad, 1998, p. 4). Since this newly emerging "standard of living" entailed conspicuous consumption, jazz was to reinforce its position in the mainstream again. Yet unsurprisingly, the music scene had changed during the second world war. From blackouts to twenty percent entertainment tax, various mishaps compelled dancehalls and venues to shut down. Most of the musicians were drafted during the war, enabling the rise of women musicians and vocalists as a result[3]. Another pivotal move, according to Heather Pinson (2010), was the American Federation of Musicians' order to the union members: They demanded the record companies to pay the musicians whenever their songs were played on the radio, and to halt any recording activities until an agreement was reached. Since this recording ban exempted vocalists, their ascent would inevitably decrease demand for big band music. Furthermore, Pinson argues,

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[3] The war years witnessed a rise in all-girl bands, but these women were mostly white, commercialized and sexualized. Their popularity decreased after the war, when the GIs returned home and picked up their instruments again. Some black jazz musicians that were outside the all-girl band trend, such as pianist Mary Lou Williams, vocalists Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan did continue – and successfully – their careers, but generally there was little women activity within the jazz scene in the 1950s as improvised creation was seen as an activity within the male sphere (Stewart, 2011). According to Halliwell (2007), black women were not to have an extensive effect in the industry until the early 1960s, through the Motown label. For more on women and jazz see McGee, K. (2009). *Some liked it hot*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

the upcoming generation had developed a different taste from that of the previous one, hence to market new sounds depending on these infant tastes became a necessity. Bearing the impetus in consumption in mind, these new music styles had to be memorable, thus widely played on the radio and on TV (Pinson, 2010).

Jazz musicians, facing the adversities of tough competition over gig bookings, began to base their performances on what occupied them after a concert: Jam sessions. A perfect platform for younger musicians to play with more experienced ones, or giants challenging each other, these jam sessions provided a gateway for the improvement of technical ability and did not have to constrain themselves to the penchants of the general public. Jazz musicians slowly retracted to smaller jazz clubs with smaller combos, rather than the great ballrooms and crowded big band orchestra format of the swing era. With such transformation, they drastically changed the way instruments were played, especially in terms of harmonic complexity, rhythmic unpredictability and physical dexterity. Soloist improvisations leaned on longer and nimble phrases now; as Ted Gioia (1997), in *The History of Jazz* explains, jazz solos included “a steady stream of eighth or sixteenth notes executed with quasi-mechanical precision, occasionally broken by a triplet, a pregnant pause, an interpolation of dotted eighths or whirlwind thirty-second notes, or a piercing offbeat phrase” (p. 200). The brevity of the notes per bar meant swift phrases that went up and down the musical scales had to be played in shorter time frames, thereby suggesting intricacy. Syncopations in rhythm tallied with the foresight that audiences would have a difficult time trying to dance to the music, as the accents of the beats moved away from pellucidity. However, according to Mervyn Cooke (2004), what played an important role in bop’s reverberation in the following decades was its simplicity rather than its harmonic complexity:

> [P]art of bop's appeal to younger performers, who later adopted it as their *lingua franca*, came from the idiom's essential simplicity: its harmonic structures were mostly decorations of standard chord progressions borrowed from existing songs, its 'complex' chords were often created merely by superimposing dissonant added notes on familiar harmonies (and by improvising more on these extensions than the triads underpinning them), and its infamous rhythmic unpredictability – pioneered in the work of drummers Kenny Clarke and Max Roach – was conceived as local disruptions of an unwaveringly secure underlying pulse. (p. 398-9)

Yet the ability to decorate standard chord progressions without abandoning tonality and to improvise in a mercurial and dissonant way, in other words, to achieve this novel style of producing music, necessitated black musicians to have a superior command of their instruments and musical theory. Each jam session was a blank canvas for the musician to paint through the process of spontaneity; they only had a general idea and a repertoire of phrases beforehand, but the melodies they played on the bandstand were often impromptu and of fecund imagination each time.

One of the reasons why bebop required technical ability corresponds to the purpose of changing the image of the jazz musician as a "public entertainer". Robert Washington (2001) advocates that having been "[r]epelled by the racially subservient images associated with jazz's earlier entertainment functions, these young black musicians demanded that their audiences sit and quietly listen to their music as an art form" (p. 320). Belgrad (1998) suggests that this music encapsulated the representation of "a younger generation of urban blacks who demanded a wider recognition of their contributions to American society and refused to concede the superiority of the Anglo-American symphonic tradition" (p. 41). In order to convey this demand, the form of expression had to change: Black jazz musicians would prefer to employ the European avant-garde rather than their otherwise celebrated heritage, the blues (Yaffe, 2006).

The European avant-garde, a term that is analogous with exploration of

unorthodox form and content in arts, and specifically painting, had not only become essential for the expression of bebop musicians, but also had manifested itself as an area of experimentation in other art forms. Renato Poggioli[4] (1968) defines avant-garde movements in his *The Theory of the Avant-garde* as unswervingly recalcitrant, as they both attack the public and the tradition. Yet its anti-conventional approach eventually becomes the convention, and consequently, the avant-garde attacks itself and self-destructs. The avant-garde, while being rebellious against the society, presupposes camaraderie within its own ranks, "within the community of rebels and libertarians" (as cited in Epstein, 2006, p. 32). Peter Bürger (1984), in his widely acclaimed *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, distinguishes between the terms 'modernist' and the 'avant-garde', locutions that are usually used interchangeably, centered on their approach towards the autonomy of art. While the former finds itself pining for aesthetic autonomy, realizing that it can achieve it due to the abated status of artistic patronage in the twentieth century, the latter aspires "to reintegrate art into the praxis of life" (as cited in Barnhisel, 2015, p. 37). However, the modernist separation of arts from the society, while resulting in its autonomy, also made it "socially, culturally, and politically impotent" (Büyükokutan, 2010, p. 92). As the epitome of the avant-garde, Marcel Duchamp, by placing his name on a urinal, questioned the meta and the notion of individual production, and hence ridiculed the very concepts, thereby showing that the "impulse to avant-garde and individual production do not go together" (Epstein, 2006, p. 32).

Referencing Bürger, Jesse Stewart (2011) construes the inquisition of the medium of the work as a means of "self-criticism," or in Poggioli's terms, self-destruction, and argues that this self-critical approach took "the form of a

[4] Who was, interestingly, one of Frank O'Hara's professors at Harvard, says Epstein (2006).

pronounced emphasis on, and exploration of, abstraction" (p. 337), much like that of the modernists. The modernists often favored music as a non-representational form in their pursuit of abstraction, for which merging of the form and content was crucial. The self-critical tendency of the avant-garde by way of abstraction was mostly spotted in both European and American modernism, and in the American culture especially in Abstract Expressionism. In fact, upon scrutiny, it is possible to realize that during the mid-1940s painters such as Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock eliminated representation altogether (Halliwell, 2007).

Since it is devoid of concrete forms or recognizable shapes, abstract art comes from and appeals to an inner and a more metaphysical realm. In other words, it "refers only to the invisible" (Moszynska, 1990, p. 7), for the visible and the physical realms were captured in their most accurate form with the advent and advancement of photography. As Barthes (1977) avers, the photograph constituted a "message without a code," as opposed to drawing (here, painting), which bears a coded message (p. 43). The rise of abstraction, as happened with jazz music, was galvanized by the European avant-garde, as a means of distancing itself from the accurate representation photography had already achieved. It was specifically inspired by Piet Mondrian's calculated squares with only three colors of the palette (fig. 1), by Paul Klee's meditative color quilts (Rewald, 2004) (fig. 2) and Wassily Kandinsky's scattered geometrical shapes that often repeat themselves in his other works (fig. 3). Moreover, a horde of European *émigré*s that escaped from the Nazis aggrandized the cultural scene of the United States (Lucie-Smith, 1980). Cubist and Surrealist influences were carefully tailored within the abstract expressionist artworks: Excessive employment of geometrical shapes, a variety of color fields and brush strokes were dominant features of the era. Lucie-Smith further argues that the

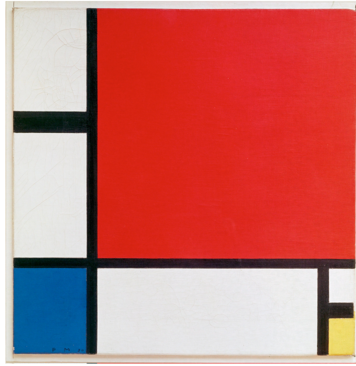

Fig. 1 Piet Mondrian, 1930, “Composition II in Red, Blue, and Yellow”. Source: [Public Domain, 20 May 2016]

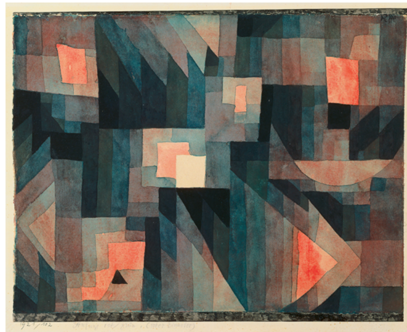

Fig. 2 Paul Klee, 1921, “Gradation, Red-Green”. Source: [Pierpont Morgan Library via artnet.com, 20. May 2016]

Fig. 3 Wassily Kandinsky, 1925, “Yellow-Red-Blue”. Source: [wassilykandinsky.net, 20 May 2016]

abstract expressionists can be divided into two main groups, one being the active and bodily, gestural works of Willem de Kooning, Pollock or Franz Kline (fig. 4), the other the halcyon abstraction typified in the works of Mark Rothko (Lucie-Smith, 1980). As a matter of fact, direct correlations can be proposed with the modal and serene sound of Miles Davis' composition “Blue in Green” from his 1959 album, *Kind of Blue* with Rothko's blue and green color field (fig. 5), whereas the continuous dynamic of Pollock's gestures may refer to bop's intricacy (fig. 6), or the

linear repetition of Frank Stella's works may mirror the repetition of a lick (fig. 7).

Fig. 4 Franz Kline, 1956, "Mahoning". Source: [Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase, with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art via collection.whitney.org, 20 May 2016]

Fig. 5 Mark Rothko, 1957, No. 15, "Dark Greens on Blue with Green Band". Source: [Collection Christopher Rothko © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2008 via pinterest.com, 20 May 2016]

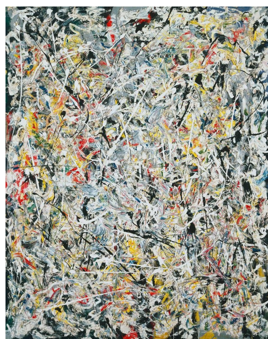

Fig. 6 Jackson Pollock, 1954, "White Light". Source [The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection © 2016 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York via moma.org, 20 May 2016]

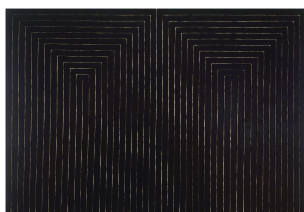

Fig. 7 Frank Stella, 1959, "The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II". Source: [Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund, © 2016 Frank Stella / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York via moma.org, 20 May 2016]

Whatever the style, they stressed the individuality of the artist, and mostly, this very "individuality, or sense of uniqueness, has become the subject of the work of art" (Lucie-Smith, 1980, p. 9). Individuality did not mean that abstract expressionism "incapable of dealing with historical or social issues, but that these issues had to be approached in personal terms, and obliquely" (Lucie-Smith, 1980, p. 39). A great example is Motherwell's abstract paintings that he named after the Spanish Civil War (fig. 8). He, by ascribing clues of his subjective state on his artwork, translates a political opinion to a visual form. Therefore, he transmutes concrete reality to an abstract and distanced concept, away from the representational realm.

Fig. 8. Robert Motherwell, 1961, "Elegy to the Spanish Republic, 70". Source: [Anonymous Gift to the Met Museum, 1965, Art © Dedalus Foundation /Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY via metmuseum.org, 20 May 2016]

The question whether music, the art form to which these modernist artists aspired, is representational or not has been an ongoing debate. Kendall Walton (1994) suggests that music is "ready to take on an explicit representational function at the slightest provocation" (p. 47). As opposed to both visual and literary representations, which create fictional realms, Walton claims, music could be categorized as representative if we deem abstract paintings as representative as well (p. 48). Lydia Goehr (1994) similarly argues that music is the most "paradigmatically able" (p. 138) to serve a political function, compared to all other art styles, because of the absence of representation or concept. Goehr further states that its "content is least likely to be confused with ideological 'causes'. Music is the art of pure sound

and pure motion, and thereby pure emotion and pure thought" (p. 138). As ideal as it sounds, however, this purist attitude can be challenged in various ways. In fact, in *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History*, Lawrence Kramer (2002) asks two critical questions: "How does the explicit interpretation of music compare with that of texts and pictures?" and "[h]ow is the value of interpretation affected by the loss of a rich representational content in its object?" (p. 168). Although theory answers these questions with the limitedness of music, Kramer suggests an alternative reading, asserting that by supposedly eliminating content, one "strips away the illusion that representation and meaning are necessarily, or even typically, coextensive. The apparently defective case is actually the defining one. Not only does music not lack meaning: musical meaning is the paradigm of meaning in general" (p. 168).

Through these perspectives, i.e. the idea that its abstraction enables music an ideology-free essence on the one hand, and the notion of a "musical meaning" within itself on the other, the reason why black musicians turn to avant-garde as a means of communication is justified. Indeed, the music of the late 1940s and 1950s carry a musical meaning, through the use of certain notes, chord progressions and rhythmical patterns that are marginally different from the popular swing of the previous decades. Jazz generally is nourished by narrative methods such as paraphrasing, using motifs from previous tunes, certain formulaic phrases (licks) and modal improvisation (Bresnahan, 2015). These particular differences, moreover, help the audience stamp the category of the music style. For instance, not only off-beat rhythms and a myriad of sixteenth notes carry the information that a particular track can be bebop jazz, but also a re-interpretation of old compositions that completely depart from the original melody. Hence, jazz music takes on new representational

faculties through the invocation of other musical styles and conventions (p. 336). Moreover, these representational faculties do not imply that the abstract value is sacrificed. On the contrary, experimentation with previous codes and conventions turn those exact conventions to abstractions (Stewart, 2011):

> Many of the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic innovations of bebop can be seen as patterns of abstraction. Numerous bebop compositions based complicated melodies on pre-existing chord changes and harmonic forms drawn from the Tin Pan Alley tradition. Ray Noble's "Cherokee," for example, furnished the chord changes for Parker's "KoKo." . . . Thelonious Monk's "Evidence," a piece based on the chord changes to the Klages and Greer standard "Just You, Just me," presents another example of this practice. From "Just You, Just me," Monk derived "Just us." Phonetically, it is a short step from "Just us" to "Justice," under which title Monk's composition has been recorded several times. For Monk, however, there could be no "Justice" without "Evidence"— hence the name of the tune. The creative wordplay involved in this transformation is akin to the processes of abstraction involved in the music. The melodic and harmonic inventions of bebop offer sufficiently abstracted versions of the "original" compositions that in many cases only the most trained of listeners can recognize the original piece. (Stewart, 2011, p. 336)

This specific close-reading done by Stewart, and how he evinces that abstraction can be reached through deconstructing old forms by creating a form unfamiliar from the familiar, foreshadows the main intention of this thesis, which is to analyze the play on language in comparison with the jazz compositions of the time. The impulse of language to invoke previous styles while simultaneously challenging them through deconstruction and spontaneous abstraction coincides with the general tendencies of the literary scene of the 1950s. Not only the whites appropriated black tropes to their music and writing, but also blacks incorporated avant-garde European music and re-interpreted mainstream popular tunes, which were two pivotal instances towards the hybridity. Lawrence Kramer (2002) dubs the recycling of old forms "debricolage" or "dissemblage". Debricolage adapts old resources to new forms "as both a response to scarcity and a measure of inventiveness," (p. 245) and for Kramer, forms the basis of African-American thinking and manifests itself in a variety of art forms created by

them (p. 245). In the literary milieu, debricolage is integral to the writings of Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. Their prose is fed by myth and ritual, as the Afro-American novel moves towards expressing “the double-consciousness, socialized ambivalence, and the double vision of the modern black experience” (Bell, 1987, p. 189) in this decade.

The abstraction of the avant-garde seen in music, painting and novels was also rampant in poetry. These avant-garde influences could be traced back to the new directions that had been pointed to by previous modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound coupled with the emergence of New Critics, who in the spirit of their founding father Eliot defended the autonomy of the text from the historical context. Yet a pivotal moment was reached when Charles Olson’s 1950 essay “Projective Verse” was published. Olson dictated that a poem must be “a high energy-construct and, at all points, an energy discharge” and advocated a “field composition” (as cited in Halliwell, 2007, p. 58). Olson’s manifesto instigated a process of rejection of the now antiquated notion that a poem had to be an artifact carefully carved, through his predisposition to fuse “form and content” with “an emphasis on ‘process’ and ‘energy’” (as cited in Halliwell, 2007, p. 58). Olson’s ideas also had an impact on Black Mountain College, an experimental college that was steered by John Dewey’s principles, which valued art education. Especially during the second world war, Black Mountain College had metamorphosed into a center for experimentation in the arts and literature, through which “[m]any members of the avant-garde would pass” (Belgrad, 1998, p.33) in the 1940s and 1950s. An earlier fascination towards jazz was evident in “a disparate group of [poets who were inspired] to capture, transpose, appropriate, and attempt to embody it” (Yaffe, 2006, p. 101), from T. S. Eliot to William Carlos Williams, but by approaching the poem as “a field of action,” Olson

considerably influenced the direction poetry was to take in congruence with jazz. The center of his argument that rested on the belief that syntax should be shaped by sound instead of meaning and that the poet needed "to register both the acquisitions of his ear *and* the pressure of his breath" (Olson, 1950, p. 2) corresponded to the dominion jazz, and especially bebop thrived in. So much so that Robert Creeley, a poet who was a contemporary to the Beats and a graduate of Black Mountain, sent a letter to Olson, stating that "Charlie Parker, Max Roach, Miles Davis and Bud Powell were undertaking extensions of form analogous to those that Olson was proposing for verse" (Belgrad, 1998, p. 217).

The particular emphasis on ear (listening) and breath (rhythm) is indispensable when connecting jazz with poetry, for it insinuates there needs to be something to listen to. This by default necessitates a performative gist to poetry itself, which will be discussed further in this thesis. Suffice to say, the American poetry scene of the 1950s was not solely a swarm of Olson's votaries, but it still wanted to purge itself from the modernist legacy. Confessional poetry became the dominant medium of the era, but even within this medium, deviations were present, as in the more complex confessional works of Frank O'Hara and Elizabeth Bishop (Halliwell, 2007). John Ashbery and John Berryman also pursued a novel method of approaching modernist aesthetics (Halliwell, 2007). Whichever way it diverged, the recurrent motif of the newfangled poetic routes crossed paths with the impulse of subjectivity, as was the case in painting. Their take on the world was coming from within; whatever the condition of the phenomenal realm, these poets sieved and articulated it through their standpoint. The subjective compositions of the poetic domain of the late 1940s and 1950s mainly belonged to the following circles besides the Black Mountain poets: The Beat poets, the San Francisco Renaissance and the

New York School poets. Combining free verse with themes of the quotidian, these four schools experimented with various literary techniques, and shared "element[s] of antiacademic dissent" (Büyükokutan, 2000, p. 82) against the New Critics, who supported an integration of form and content, but judged "the lack of rhyme and predetermined meter" as "the lack of care and mastery" (p. 80).

The avant-garde culture of the previous decades carried its legacy to the 1950s not only by mutinying conventions and strict formalizations, but also by "creating an "alternative 'reality' outside the mental disciplines of corporate liberalism and mass culture" (Belgrad, 1998, p. 3). However, careful consideration is of utmost importance when positing post-bop jazz in the aforementioned categories of consumption. As previously discussed, by the swing era, with the aid of the radio exposure and white band leaders on the scene, jazz had grown to be the music of the masses. It sold records; its outreach was unmatched due to the popularity of the radio, which was a part of the mass/consumer culture dichotomy. While it entertained, it also supposedly fueled a rebellious and corrupt attitude in youngsters. The sexual connotations of the music and its association with lowly pleasures defied its position as an art form. Theodor Adorno (1936), for instance, deems jazz as a commodity in his infamous[5] article, "On Jazz":

> Jazz is a commodity in the strict sense: its suitability for use permeates its production in terms none other than its marketability, in the most extreme contradiction to the immediacy of its use not merely in addition to but also within the work process itself. It is subordinate to the laws and also to the arbitrary nature of the market, as well as the distribution of its competition or even its followers. (as cited in in Laver, 2014, p. 205)

For Mark Laver (2014), Adorno belabors a common perspective that often associates jazz with "sex, commerce, and social decay (and implicitly, race)" (p. 206). It is

[5] This article alongside Adorno's other writings on jazz are now considered rather trivial and are predominantly criticized in contemporary theory. See for example Mark Laver's "Rebels and Volkswagens: Charles Mingus and the Commodification of Dissent" (2014) or Robert Witkin's "Why did Adorno 'Hate' Jazz?" (2000) or Witkin's *Adorno on Music* (1998).

crucial to bear in mind that Adorno is writing this in 1936, a time during which jazz indeed is a “commodity”, since its popular recognition attains its status in the mass culture. Moreover, it is debated that his generalizations were constrained to the limits of the jazz scene in Germany, and was “fundamentally ignoran[t] about American jazz” (p. 206). Nevertheless, Robert Witkin (2000) observes that Adorno, unlike his critics claim, indeed experienced and had the capacity to differentiate between good and bad when it came to jazz since he lived in the States, wrote about jazz until 1953 and lived until 1960 amid the nascent jazz styles that were emerging beyond the commercial scene. Furthermore, Witkin says, Adorno’s purpose of resuscitating high culture was not confined to ostracizing jazz as an element of mass culture; for him, all artworks needed to reflect the social context from which it sprung. His formalist approach supported the autonomy of art, much like art critic Clement Greenberg’s did. Greenberg (1939) argued that the avant-garde aspired to liberate art from the mass culture – in his terms, “kitsch”:

> Kitsch, using for raw material the debased and academicized simulacra of genuine culture, welcomes and cultivates this insensibility. It is the source of its profits. Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money – not even their time. (p. 32)

Adorno and Greenberg both support the same ideal, which is antithetical to Peter Bürger’s argument, as the latter maintains that art should engage in social praxis rather than be saved from it (Witkin, 2000). Yet once again, it is difficult to decide where jazz stands in the midst of these terms. Adorno, while deeming the avant-garde way of expression as the only way for the American society, simultaneously shuns groundbreaking post-bop jazz as a product of popular/mass culture and not as avant-garde.

Regardless of Adorno's claim, bop is hardly "kitsch". Played only in underground clubs and apartment parties, bebop musicians were able to introduce their music to the mainstream audiences only after the recording ban lifted (Pinson 2010). Yet "bebop did not fare well in either the popular or the intellectual press" (Belgrad, 1998, p.182), remaining constrained to its own audience. Gioia (1997) states that bop was at an "embryonic stage" for mass consumption, adding the idea that "at a time when jazz was sweeping the nation, the music's next generation was moving farther and farther outside the mainstream of popular culture," and remained as an underground movement (p. 200). Jonathan Kamin (1975) argues that this is due to bop's inability to fulfill a social function for the black population. While blues and embryonic jazz constituted collective rituals and modern jazz provided a two-fold role both as popular music (cool jazz, soul jazz) and avant-garde (free jazz), bebop "lost its following in the black community as a whole and maintained virtually no popular following, becoming an art form for the avant-garde intellectuals and hipsters of both races" (p. 286).

The shift from the mainstream popular culture did not mean that bop was a part of the high culture, either. Bebop jazz indeed worked towards recognition and desired to uncouple itself from its entertainment quality: "with the advent of bebop, a whole generation of black musicians was asserting itself as co-equals with the purveyors of highbrow culture, the classical composers, the dramatists, the poets, the painters, and sculptors" (Gioia, 1997, p. 204), yet highbrow culture did not embrace bebop with open arms, nor it celebrated bebop musicians, at least not immediately. The interesting dynamics of highbrow-middlebrow cultures and how jazz aesthetics resides in both cultural milieus will be further studied within the parameters of album sales in this thesis. Yet it should be noted now that there indeed was an audience

laudatory towards modern jazz, and it included artists and bohemians of both races as Kamin (1975) denotes. A portion of this audience is the *fons et origo* of the rhythmic adventures American poetry takes on in the 1950s.

The support from black artists and writers for bebop musicians can be partially attributed to a larger social goal they shared: The enhancement of black cultural products would advance the black race in their desire to obtain equality. The endorsement that came from white intelligentsia, on the other hand, is more intriguing. Amiri Baraka (1963), in his *Blues People*, suggests that bebop was the embodiment of an era of "nonconformity," and "for many young Negroes the irony of being thought 'weird' or 'deep' by white Americans was as satisfying as it was amusing" (as cited in Cooke, 2004, p. 400). This, according to Baraka (1963), helped blacks' seclusion (or their "invisibility", as Ellison would have argued) achieve a gratifying status, both psychologically and intellectually. Similarly, Heather Pinson (2010) puts forward the idea that African American music that "was on a different level" and that "could not be imitated by white musicians" also tied in with the notion of the "fascination with the Other" (p. 27). It reinforced the notion of Afro-Americans posing as a "social threat" to white Americans as well:

> He, meaning the African American man, was captured in the white imagination much like a caged animal; in both textual and visual media, he was examined, prodded, and poked, and held many fascinations by the white audience (none of which were legitimate skills or intellectual achievements, but instead focused on the craft and intuitive power of the black musician)." (Pinson, 2010, p. 27)

This fascination can be considered as an illustration of the mystifying or mythicizing of jazz and jazz musicians. White bohemia, and particularly the Beat writers were accused of revering jazz musicians not because they understood the intellectual ability and talent of the musicians, but because of the above-mentioned fascination with their "craft and intuitive power". A famous instance of this fascination could be

Allen Ginsberg's commentary of bebop in Ken Burns' (2001) 10-episode documentary, *Jazz*: "Jazz gives us a way of expressing the spontaneous motions of the heart," Ginsberg says, "it's like a fountain of instantaneous inspiration that's available to everybody. All you have to do is turn on the radio or put on a record or pick up an axe yourself and blow." Right after Ginsberg's comment, the narrator jumps in and says that "it was not the first time that jazz enthusiasts had misunderstood both the music, and the musicians who made it. It would not be the last." Although Ginsberg rightfully observes the "instantaneous inspiration" of the bebop musician, by suggesting that it is "available to everybody," he falls short of acknowledging the artist's command of musical conventions and practice that is necessary to corroborate that impromptu invention. His fallacious interpretation thus resonates with Roland Barthes' (1972) reading of myth. In his famous collection of essays *Mythologies*, Barthes argues that myth obliterates the intricacy of human actions and reduces their essence to simplicity. By attributing jazz musicians' skill to a natural (divine) element, Ginsberg omits the human faculty present in the process. In order to break away from the mythicizing of jazz and its experience, Peter Townsend (2000) in his *Jazz in American Culture* advocates the meticulous study of jazz in a particular context (Pinson, 2010). Once studied closely, it is impossible not to become cognizant of what musicians face on a daily basis, for instance "when they do their own booking or play in front of four audience members" (Pinson 2010, p. 61). The mere fact that the rapid development of jazz to some extent relied on the need to earn money suffices to break away from the myth, as expounded by Geoff Dyer (1996) in the afterword of his imaginative fiction, *But Beautiful*:

> One of the reasons jazz evolved so fast is that musicians have been obliged, if for no other reason than to earn decent money, to play night after night, two or three shows a night, six or seven nights a week. Not just to play but improvise, to invent as they play. This has some apparently contradictory

> results. Rilke waited ten years for the gale of inspiration that led him to begin the *Duino Elegies* to sweep through him again and enable him to complete them. For jazz musicians there is no question of waiting for inspiration to strike. Inspired or not, they have to get on with the job of making music. Paradoxically, then the commitment to nightly improvisation to play safe, to rely on tried and tested formulas. Yet the demands of constant improvisation mean that jazz musicians are in a state of constant creative alert, of habitual readiness to invent. (p. 198)

The inspiration, then, not only was *un*available to everybody, but also was supplemented with assiduous practice stimulated by obligation. The "habitual readiness" Dyer references was also fueled by the dynamics between the musicians on stage, which was an on-the-spot dialogue that fostered mutual improvisation.

Though myth attributed them the role of the hero, presenting them as individuals endowed with distinctive genius, jazz musicians pursued a utopia of freedom through their democratic playing[6] (Pinson, 2010). Their music, and the objective of their music depended on collectivity. The efforts of bop musicians and hence their music became analogous with the strife for equal rights. This strife was not only constrained to the ethos of black culture but also was embraced by other marginalized groups: "Fused with modernist zeal, the image of the jazz musician as a talented black man, underrepresented by the majority's taste in music, sprouted legs and began accumulating issues, ideas, and beliefs surrounding the beatnik group" (Pinson, 2010, p. 53). Phil Virden and Trevor Wishart (2008) also argue similarly in their article "Some Observations on the Social Stratification of the Twentieth-Century Music":

> [The] explosion of Afro-American and Afro-American influenced musics [sic] during this century may be seen as strongly related changes and

[6] The term "democratic playing" roughly corresponds to the idea that the instruments all have a chance to improvise their solo in a certain number of bars and are in constant dialogue with each other through the trading of solos e.g. the drummer plays for four bars and the piano responds back in four bars, in turn the drummer takes another four bars, as if challenging the saxophone player. An ensemble gives equal voice to all instruments and one does not overshadow the other, except when a particular musician is soloing, during which time the other musicians play in a lower volume, supporting the main soloist.

> developments in social relations. The electrification of communication, through recording and broadcasting devices, has brought the whole of the industrial world face-to-face in sound. Sounds competed in the market and, despite the opposition of the dominant culture, the music of those *within* the culture but not *of* it, the blacks, found resonance with the experience of others who felt alienated from the established order. (p. 164)

As it represented the idea of freedom outside the borders of the United States (see Introduction), the collaborative efforts of jazz were also prevalent and demonstrative of the idea of domestic freedom, especially the freedom of African Americans from a devalued identity imposed by those in social and political power. Moreover, this joint approach was in line with Bürger's theory of a collaborative art, since jazz is a microcosm of democratic contribution to the production of an art form, with a social ideal in mind. Although discrepancies can be spotted within the Adorno-Greenberg versus Bürger debate in terms of what constitutes avant-garde art and how it is placed within the social praxis, those very divergences further support the argument that post-bop jazz is located between the nebulous distinction of the high culture/mass culture dichotomy. Collectivity and collaborative improvisation present in the music create a metaphor for the cultural stance of the marginalized.

Yet even then, David Ake (2002) suggests, the meaning of jazz stretched further than binaries of black and white: There were complex paradigms just as there were protean interactions between different cultural codes and practices. His argument hollows out however when he presents contradictions by presupposing another point of view in his *Jazz Matters*, arguing that jazz, as a platform, was never a "social utopia":

> Whether or not we want to admit it, the jazz world is not now, nor was it ever, an artistic or social utopia. Like all music (and every other human activity), jazz always relates to individual and cultural senses of "you" or "them" as much as it helps to express and celebrate notions of "me" or "us." Indeed, one reason that jazz continues to fascinate and to make for such a rich area of study is that it so often serves as a crowded, even contentious, forum for what are widely called issues of *identity*. (2010, p. 3)

Both of his analyses are veracious in themselves. Identity matters, especially racial ones, constitute a huge part of jazz music. Even though it is rooted in African-American experience, its maturity hinges on the constant dialogue between races. Moreover, these musicians were not constrained within one style of music; Miles Davis played both cool and bebop, Charlie Haden played free jazz as an alumnus of Ornette Coleman (Pond, 2003). When matters of identity are placed within and against the agenda of consumption culture along with the racial politics of the time, a solid explanation with regards to why bebop, besides the propensity to 'other'ing, appealed to a certain group of people may be attained.

When bebop, as the epitome of post-war abstractness, was succeeded, or rather, rivaled by cool jazz with its mellow tunes, familiar rhythms, well-groomed musicians and memorable melodies, jazz reached out to the white audience, and thereby to the mass culture, once again. Dave Brubeck Quartet, for instance, was followed both by black and white audiences, selling more than a million copies with their single "Take Five" (Burns, 2001; Bernays 2009). Ben Sidran claims that with the rise of the cool jazz, African-American musicians de facto withdrew from the cultural scene, especially since the competition of jazz musicians to book gigs carried racial undertones (as cited in Belgrad, 1998). However, as Sidran observed, a change in musical atmosphere was felt in the mid-1950s with the upsurge of new coming black musicians who did not enjoy the white musicians' appropriation of jazz. The music styles that emerged after the mid-1950s, apart from cool jazz, and partly in response to it, included hard bop, third-stream, funky jazz, soul jazz, R&B, to name a few. These innovative and noticeably black styles also triggered "new anticipations" in the listener, such as Miles Davis' album *Kind of Blue* (1959), by

shifting from "Western song forms" (as cited in Halliwell, 2007, p. 141).[7]

Bebop evolved into a more malleable style as the 1950s progressed. Hard bop arose as an amelioration to bebop, as it perfected the style without claiming bebop's instant detectability (Rosenthal, 1992). Hard bop was also the style most congruous with the socio-political preoccupations of bebop jazz. Scott Saul (2003) postulates that hard bop was almost the "alter ego" of the civil rights movement:

> Like the movement, it grounded new appeals for freedom in older idioms of black spirituality, challenging the nation's public account of itself and testifying to the black community's cultural power. And, like the movement again, it worked through a kind of orchestrated disruption—a musical version of what civil rights workers called "direct action," which jazz musicians experienced as a rhythmic assertiveness and a newly taut relation between the demands of composition and the possibilities of improvisation. (p. 2-3)

The notions such as "direct action", "improvisation" and "orchestrated disruption" all embody the common driving forces as well as themes ("form as content") of the 1950s' artistic exploration. Hard bop facilitated further experimentation in jazz with these ideas accompanied by the resurrection of popular gospels of previous generations. While the members of the Modern Jazz Quartet, a band that merged hard bop, cool jazz and classical music influences "had no qualms about presenting their live performances in the sanitized ambience of the classical concert hall" (Cooke, 2004, p. 403) in order to "enhance the position of the American Negro" (pianist John Lewis as cited in Burns, 2001), hard bop musicians strived for recognition among the mainstream audience as well, or as Saul (2003) phrases, they "needed to meet the commercial challenge of building an audience that would support their livelihood and, perhaps, redeem their hopes of an arts community" (p. 4). Supporting their income, therefore, meant that the avant-garde had to be institutionalized, for reasons no other than the involvement of white culture in what

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[7] Miles Davis' 1959 album *Kind of Blue* relied on modality. Modality can be best explained as a set of mode/scale form with different intervals, outside the harmonic chord progressions of Western music. Therefore, the chord progressions were unusual to and not readily anticipated by the listeners.

used to be predominantly black. Thus their musical inspirations came from a pining for earlier modes of expression, as well as experimentation within the audience's reach.

Nonetheless, hard bop jazz musicians were not holding back in writing protest songs in the conjuncture of the events of late 1950s, particularly of the Civil Rights Movement. Its critique of the post-war era "elevated the values of collaborative freedom and creative spontaneity over the values of rational administration and collective security" (Saul, 2003, p. 6). This trend was inaugurated in 1958 with Sonny Rollins' *Freedom Suite*, the first jazz album to deliberately and openly address racial discrimination since Billie Holliday's poignant song "Strange Fruit"[8] from 1939 (Henry, 2004). The next album to follow this was Charlie Mingus' *Mingus Ah Um*: Not only did it pay tribute to earlier African-American jazz musicians such as Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton and Lester Young, thus reinforcing the idea of reclaiming black identity, but it also reflected on the contemporary political troubles. The Little Rock crisis, during which Arkansas governor Orval Faubus went against the federal law of desegregation and used the National Guard to stop nine African American teenagers from attending school, was blatantly addressed in his piece "Fables of Faubus". This was not the only incident to be protested in the country by jazz musicians, as it was a turbulent time for racial politics. The same years witnessed the prohibition of the Jim Crow segregation; the ascent of the Southern Christian leadership conference orchestrated by Martin Luther King Jr. and the glorious bus boycott; and the homicide of Emmett Till on the grounds that he supposedly courted a white woman (Belgrad, 1998). The overt

[8] "Strange Fruit" was initially a poem written by Abel Meeropol after yet another lynching incident of four African-Americans. Lines such as "Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze / Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees" and "Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh / Then the sudden smell of burning flesh" found resonance in Holiday's passionate timbre.

political agenda of the musicians also denoted another "musical meaning" for the dictum "form as content," was also possible and moreover, important. Within this context, the political tone was achieved through the naming of the tunes. The naming, much like the paintings of Motherwell on the Spanish Civil War, assigned the artist's subjective state on to the art form. By translating linguistic meaning to musical meaning, the form in which they played also became associated with the very ideas the title represented. For instance, Max Roach's "Freedom Day" in his album *We Insist: Freedom Now!* (1960) incorporates unyielding vocals and a repetitive cymbal sound that never ceases the feeling of tension, as if asking for freedom. Or "Better Git it in Your Soul" by Charles Mingus (1959) embodies the African-Americanness of the title with hollers, clapping and stomping that are integral to church-singing. Both this method and alluding to previous codes, enabled abstraction and reiterated the position of jazz on the blurred lines between high art and art for the masses inherent in Adorno-Bürger debate.

In the midst of the aesthetic upsurge of jazz and a bohemian penchant for casual-intellectual gatherings, it is not difficult to ascertain how American poetry of the 1950s adopted a generous portion of the aesthetical elements of jazz. David Yaffe (2006) observes that "jazz and American poetry has often involved an *unheimlich* masquerade in which they each recognized the Other in themselves" (p. 102). This supports the claim that the relation between jazz and poetry in the 1950s was not solely a race issue, but a dialogue between the marginalized, the underrepresented groups. The four literary groups who shared the aforementioned "element of antiacademic dissent" Büyükokutan (2000) has suggested, were also composed of marginalized ethnic and sexual subcultures. Their subjective voices were therefore palpably a direct consequence of the period, when identity matters surfaced. For

instance, Josh Kun (2005) traces writer James Baldwin's interest in blues and jazz to his refuge in the apartment of black gay painter Beauford Delaney in Greenwich Village, where "he made the first substantial conscious connection between blues and jazz, the construction of black identities, and the possibilities of a desire that transcends the limits and traps of heteronormative identifications" (p. 96). Similarly, the political awareness of the musicians was not in the monopoly of black artists only, and "just because someone play[ed] 'inside' d[id] not mean that that person lack[ed] a strong political conscience" (Ake, 2010, p. 8), since most of them were actively involved in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Ake also points out that "['Cannonball' Julian] Adderley's two biggest gospel-inflected tunes, 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy' and 'Country Preacher,' were composed by the white, Austrian-born pianist Joe Zawinul", therefore "[f]urther complicating how we understand the intersections of sound, ethnicity, and location" (p. 172). As a black painter who was born in 1960, Jean-Michel Basquiat would be influenced by bebop and its syncopation almost three decades after its appearance, by "the way it used repetition, reproduction, and improvisation to transform, or 'artistically other,' the shape and meaning of somebody else's originals, and to do so in the name of black protest against the restrictive social structures of American racism" (Kun, 2005, p. 124-5). Examples can be multiplied to support the idea that accolades to post-bop jazz were mostly from either other artists or other subcultures that fell outside the social norms. The overall idea was that these outsiders shared a "dissonant" way of life (Duke Ellington as cited in Kun, 2005).

The predilection of the literary milieu towards post-bop jazz, besides the expression of intersubjective realities through their works by way of *abstraction* and the process of *action* that is embodied in *free expression*, may also be explained by

the language-like characteristic of it. From the trumpet sound that tried to imitate the shouts of street vendors, to the scatted syllables of nonsense words, jazz abstracted language. Virden & Wishart (2008) argue that in music, the meaning is contingent on not "*what* is uttered but . . . *how* it is uttered in the context of performance" (p. 163). Poetry of the era, with its profound emphasis on "form as content", adheres to the same motto and abstracts language through jazz. A succinct example can be the reverberation of the word "who" in Allen Ginsberg's *magnum opus* "Howl." Belgrad (1998) suggests that the repetition of the word "enabled Ginsberg to add phrase upon phrase, in the same way a bebop ensemble can continue from chorus to chorus indefinitely, each chorus building on the others" (p. 216). By assigning "who" the role of the beat, he is able to freely improvise until the next "who" is reached. In that sense, "who" keeps the improvising instrument (the voice of the poet's persona, in this case) on beat.

The same device is evident the poetry of another Beat writer, Bob Kaufman. Fluent in bop syncopations, Kaufman thought the rhythms and modes of jazz addressed "socio-political paradoxes of black life in America and the paradox of the true relation of a black art to a white mainstream while leading the way to a new resolution" (Kohli, 2002, p. 166). He questioned those paradoxes and "structures of racial normativity existing in the midst of a subculture dedicated to nonconformity" (p. 166) through jazz rhythms. A further example of the conspicuous relation between jazz and language with regards to the significance of 'how' a thing is uttered in achieving a musical meaning in and of itself could be located Frank O'Hara's language and its focus on bodily movement. David Ake (2010) associates Eurocentric music with Cartesian duality and argues that it venerates the mind over the body, which is not the case for jazz. African-American music cultures, he argues,

never obliterated the body from the equation; on the contrary, jazz musicians "have always prided themselves on creating sounds that inspire listeners both to cogitate and to actuate" (p. 52). After all, jazz reached its apex as a dance music. Moreover, we can spot in the vernacular, says Ake, that physicality is interwoven in jazz:

> Designations such as "hot," "sweet," "cool," and "hard (bop)" draw on people's experiences in the world to shape how we understand certain sounds and styles. The same goes for any number of song and album titles, including Miles Davis's own "Walkin'" [sic] and *Cookin'*. Musicians regularly use terms like *rushing*, *dragging*, *laying back*, or *pushing* to describe rhythmic momentum. Honorific titles such as *monster*, *giant*, and *heavyweight* reflect the imposing, even intimidating, presence of highly skilled jazz performers . . . When all is said and done, how we conceive of jazz is as much about the body as it is about the 'soul.'" (Ake, 2010, p. 52)

This analysis also reveals that even when jazz forwent the easy-to-accompany rhythms of swing (which abetted its popularity as a dance music in the first place), its shift to the intellectual realm did not intervene with the accentuation of physicality. Substantial reliance on body as much as soul, or action as much as emotion, inexorably traces us back to the gesture or action-painting of Jackson Pollock. The bodily involvement of Pollock – literally – in the canvas had stipulated body as an instrument in the process of creation. Subjective presence and immediacy found in O'Hara's poetry and artworks of abstract expressionists were, therefore also primary components of jazz.

Bodily involvement in the process of artwork was also rife when the San Francisco poets Kenneth Rexoth and Lawrence Ferlinghetti began the "Poetry-and-Jazz" movement in 1957, which promptly became a trend on the West Coast (Wilson, 1966). This experimental movement, despite encountering mixed receptions, would physically incorporate poetry into jazz performance. Although pre-composed, "how the words were uttered" would deliver an improvisatory quality to the over-all performance. Langston Hughes, however, had already preceded the

movement in the 1930s (Wilson, 1966). Branded as the pioneer of jazz poetry, Hughes was a prominent name in the black intellectual movement "the Harlem Renaissance" that flourished in the 1930s led by the teachings of Alain Locke and W. E. B. Du Bois, both of whom intended the advancement of "Negro expression." Josh Kun (2005) observes that Hughes' "public word-jazz performances and the release of the *Weary Blues* album were virtually coterminous with the birth of the white dominated 'Poetry-and-Jazz' movement" (p. 168). Only three years after the release of the *Weary Blues,* narrated over the compositions of musicians Charles Mingus and Leonard Feather, Hughes would publish *Ask Your Mama*, which was considered to be "a racial turning point in jazz-poetry performance" (p. 168). The evolution of poetry to a performance entwined with jazz elevated the spoken word to an element of collective improvisation. The lone gestures of a painter, or a penning of a poem by the poet on a piece of paper often lacked a fundamental component extant in jazz performance: The interchange between the musicians. Now, the poet had an opportunity to step outside the soliloquys and shape his 'solo' in relation to the other band members. This, meant that the ear (listening to other members) and breath (the act of uttering words in a certain rhythm) are coalesced and further intermingled with each other across disciplines and genres.

Jazz, as an art form which is situated amid the hazy borders of various dichotomies such as mass culture versus high culture, social praxis versus aesthetic autonomy, representation versus abstraction, spontaneity versus practice and collectivity versus subjectivity provides a common denominator point for both visual and textual arts in the 1950s. Jazz after the bop revolution enabled poetry and painting to reach the abstraction intrinsic to music, firstly by the amalgamation of form and content; secondly, through the deconstruction of old forms; and thirdly,

through rhythm and syncopation. Action, physicality and dialogue became elements of the process of art, thereby forming a collaborative action that resonates with political reaction.

One may find the direct correlation of the visual with jazz on the record covers of the time. Bearing in mind the common grounds of jazz-poetry and jazz-visuals discussed so far, the second chapter will analyze the plane on which painting and poetry meet, to whom they address themselves and in return, how this effects poetry.

CHAPTER 3

THE VISUAL IMAGE OF JAZZ AND THE NEW LISTENER

To zoom in from the macrocosm of the cultural interplay between the musical, literary and visual dispositions of the 1950s to the microcosm of specific interactions within these components is essential. The rampant existence of visual consumption, as thus far discussed, was stimulated by elements such as television, cinema, photographs and advertisements. Since the visual image had been as important as text in shaping the common tastes of a society, jazz similarly needed its own visual image (Pinson, 2010). One of the most imperative aspects of this image was the package in which an album was presented to the audience. Therefore, much like David Ake (2002) does in his *Jazz Cultures*, I will examine album covers as a part of the jazz imagery, for nonsonic features of jazz are as indispensable a part as the sonic denotations. The packaging of a product, as Roland Barthes (1977) pronounces, is intentional: "the signifieds of the advertising message are formed *a priori* by certain attributes of the product and these signifieds have to be transmitted as clearly as possible" (p. 33). The album cover, then, establishes a premeditated imagery for the music in its goal to reach an audience, as well as help visualize the product in the most unambiguous manner possible. Thus a specific analysis of the album cover can illuminate the relation between post-bop jazz and why abstract art is preferred in its depiction. Once this is examined, the impact of the visual on the 'new' listener and how that, in turn, insinuates itself within the realms of jazz-influenced modern poetry will be easier to grasp.

In Burns' 2001 documentary *Jazz*, violinist Matt Glaser opines that "music expresses things that cannot be expressed any other way. When you attempt to find language to describe that, the words fall short." While there are qualms about the capacity of language to justly represent musical meaning, the power of images is also debated in terms of its aptitude to transmit meaning. Roland Barthes (1977) reveals that "there are those who think that the image is an extremely rudimentary system in comparison with language and those who think that signification cannot exhaust the image's ineffable richness" (p. 32). His essay "Rhetoric of the Image" underscores the nexus of text and image and inquires what the "signifying structure of illustration" is. "Does the image duplicate certain of the informations [sic] given in the text by a phenomenon of redundancy," Barthes asks, "or does the text add a fresh information to the image" (p. 38)? The same question is appropriate for the node between music and image, too. Does the album cover augment the meaning of music, or condense it with hackneyed symbols? Or does it stipulate an alternative code with which music can be identified, therefore made easier to fathom?

John Gennari (1991) marks the decade as a crucial one, not only because "the music itself was in the process of assimilating and transforming the momentous aesthetic advances of bebop; not only because the cool, Third Stream and free experiments were taking jazz to places it had never been before," but because of the visibility and status achieved by jazz with the introduction of elements that facilitated mass consumption, the creation of the Newport Jazz Festival and an "exemplary recording and packaging of the music" (p. 478). Indeed, during the years when television was not yet dominated by video clips, record covers were the ultimate embodiment of the visual description of the music it wrapped. Moreover, the image, if repeated enough, became the thing it embodied:

> [T]he more an image is repeated in any culture, the more it becomes associated with the information it provides to the viewer. This process of disseminating an image—and then analyzing, interpreting, and learning from that image—becomes instinctual. Instead of reading about experience in order to become knowledgeable, we experience something by visualizing it as knowledge. Therefore, visual culture "does not depend on pictures themselves but the modern tendency to picture or visualize something"[9] and, then, the dissemination of that knowledge into society. (Pinson, 2010, p. 18)

Since this era is an era of burgeoning visual culture and images are disseminated frequently and freely, the repetitive encounters with an image inscribe the meaning of a certain product in the mode of the image. Art image therefore constitutes an enormous part of the consumer culture. John Berger (1972), in his famous collection of essays *Ways of Seeing* argues that the modern means of reproduction destroyed the authority of art and that "images of art have become ephemeral, ubiquitous, insubstantial, available, valueless, free. They surround us in the same way as a language surrounds us. They have entered the mainstream of life which they no longer, in themselves, have power" (p. 32). The supposition of image becoming omnipresent is factual yet his greater proposition can be contested. Since the image is more "available," it permeates a larger portion of life, thereby taking more responsibility for the dissemination of intangible forms to a wider audience. Moreover, "hierarchically" image had been lower than music throughout history, hence its ubiquity could be considered more powerful. The hierarchy has long been debated by philosophers since Plato; unlike spatial arts, music existed in time and hence, was inaccessible (Pinson, 2010). Its detachment from the spatial realm prompted philosophers Martin Heidegger and Arthur Schopenhauer to place music above visual art forms. Yet, even though it had existed as an upper class concern before the war, the ubiquity of images indeed came about with the post war years. It especially appealed to the new generation, "and not necessarily only the middle-class

[9] Cited by Heather Pinson (2010) from Mirzoeff, N. (1999). *An introduction to visual culture*. New York: Routledge. p. 5.

young, because it was something by tradition rebellious" (Lucie-Smith, 1980, p. 20). Nonetheless, the expansion of images does not correspond to the fact that we are a civilization of image, says Barthes (1977). We are "a civilization of writing, writing and speech continuing to be the full terms of the informational structure" (p. 38) since "the linguistic message is indeed present in every image: as title, caption, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon" (p. 38). That is why the naming of the tunes is as important as the visual design of the cover.

Kendall Walton (1994) positions the spatial portrayal of music and painting on different levels. They both can present spatiality (and music does it, for instance, through the movement from one key to another). But their main difference is the fact that music is "perspective-less" (p. 53). The same "perspective-less"ness is a focal point in Jacques Rancière's argument as well. Rancière (2011) suggests that the two-dimensionality of the modern approach to painting is a re-interpretation of the three-dimensional approach that debouched during the Renaissance to capture action. Therefore, classical poetics "established a relationship of correspondence at a distance between speech and painting, between the sayable and the visible, which gave 'imitation' its own specific space" (p. 15):

> To a large extent, the ground was laid for painting's 'anti-representative revolution' by the flat surface of the page, in the change in how literature's 'images' function or the change in the discourse on painting, but also in the ways in which typography, posters, and the decorative arts became interlaced . . . Its flatness is linked to the flatness of pages, posters, and tapestries. It is the flatness of an interface. Moreover, its anti-representative 'purity' is inscribed in a context where pure art and decorative art are intertwined, a context that straight away gives it a political signification. (p. 16)

The abstraction, then, both obtained a decorative function and the role of high-art simultaneously. This entails the usage of products with abstract designs as decorative items: If a jazz album cover were to have an abstract design on it, it would cater to the avant-garde aspirations of one group, as well as to the decorative enjoyment of

another. Not surprisingly, this turned out to be precisely the case.

Album covers indeed constituted a visual gateway for an abstract form of art, jazz. Brown sleeve package was the industry standard by 1910, but was replaced by specially designed paper covers by the late 1930s (Jones & Sorger, 1999). Especially in 1938, when Columbia Records decided to hire Alex Steinweiss as an art director, the notion of an 'album cover' came alive. With this groundbreaking initiative, album sales increased 800 percent (Heller, 2010). Furthermore, the rise of LPs enabled he expansion of the surface area on which the artistic designs were created. With the emergence of the record stores' self-service selection in which albums faced the customers, the vitality of the visual was brought to the attention of record labels (Jones & Sorger, 1999). With the coming of the 1950s, however, a change was visible in selected designs: While the previous designs were overwhelmingly modernist cartoon-like figures (fig. 9) and featured photographs of musicians usually with their instruments (fig. 10), influences of abstract expressionism were to take prevalence as the music itself metamorphosed. This change was too discernible to be arbitrary.

Fig. 9 *Louis Armstrong´s Hot Five*, Label: Columbia. 1940s. Design: Jim Flora. Source [Birka Jazz Archive via birkajazz.com]

Fig. 10 Lee Konitz - Stan Getz: *The New Sounds*, 1951. Label: Prestige 108. Source: [Birka Jazz Archive via birkajazz.com]

Heather Pinson (2010) suggests that the visual representation of the avant-garde artist is based on his philosophical or political stance in life, or detectable in "the more tangible disciplines of poetry, literature, theater, cover art, or fashion" (p. 146). For cool jazz, it was easier to reach out to the audience. Yet for the black musician, a strategy to sell more records had to be devised. The hard bop base, due to the gospel effect, was mainly black, so an exclusive marketing strategy had to be pursued for the avant-garde artist who was at a disadvantage with this audience that may not find his rendition of the music easy to consume, despite its black roots. Neil S. Fujita, who was hired by Columbia Records and who designed the covers of various best-selling jazz albums, including Dave Brubeck's million-selling album *Time Out* (fig. 11) and Charles Mingus' *Mingus Ah Um* (fig. 12), states in an interview that he carried out an extensive research before styling the album artwork. He suggests that the simulacrum of jazz required abstraction that could be achieved through the styles of modernist painters:

> I would travel across the country speaking to record sellers. I would ask them how they sold records because I felt that we needed a new approach. In those days, clerks would spend a lot more time actually selling records to customers. We thought about how we could use images or pictures in a more creative way. We thought about what the picture was saying about the music and how we could use that to sell the record. And abstract art was getting popular so we

> used a lot more abstraction in the designs—with jazz records especially but also with classical when there was a way for it to fit, like with the more modern composers (as cited in Heller, 2007, n.p).

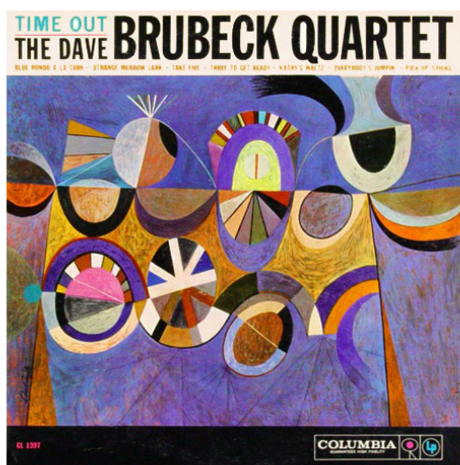

Fig. 11 Dave Brubeck, *Time Out*, 1959. Label: Columbia 1397. Design and illustration: Neil Fujita. Source: [Birka Jazz Archive via birkajazz.com]

Fig.12 Charles Mingus, *Mingus Ah Um*, 1959. Label: Columbia 1370. Design and painting: Neil Fujita. Source: [Birka Jazz Archive via birkajazz.com]

The common approaches discussed in the previous chapter are echoed in Fujita's lines. It is correct that art is more within reach and available. But how popular is it? And if so, for whom is it popular? Before attempting to answer these questions, it is essential to emphasize that Fujita takes the notion of "what the picture says about the music" as the focal point and feels that jazz needs "abstraction". The sound patterns of jazz must have been equated with a non-figurative, non-physical realm. He illustrated this realm he thought worthy of jazz through his "playful lyrical

abstractions with swirling shapes on different colored fields" (Margolin, n.p). Fujita was the art director in Columbia by then, and the label included a stellar group of famous jazz musicians such as Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers and Dave Brubeck. Margolin (2015) indicates that Fujita was put there to achieve the same level of virtuosity in visual representation of their music. He also achieved a fresh approach in designing album covers by emphasizing the impact of the design of the typography in achieving an overall coherence in design (fig. 13 and 14). The lack of reliance solely on the image and the introduction of the importance of the text as a part of the artwork points to the importance of the intermingling and cross-referencing of these elements. Moreover, the alternative to the rising image of the jazz musician with his instrument on covers as the individual, heroic subject broke away from the mystified and mythical image of the musician and took the music not as the product of a sole genius but as the collective result of a more abstract, collaborative realm.

Fig 13 *The Jazz Messengers*, 1956. Label: Columbia 897. Design: Neil Fujita. Photo: Don Hunstein Source: [Birka Jazz Archive via birkajazz.com]

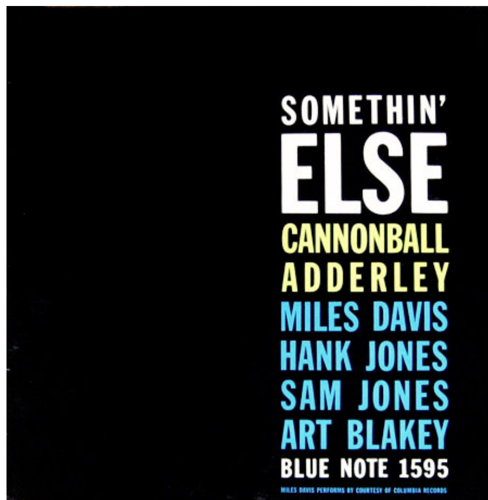

Fig. 14 Cannonball Adderley, *Something Else*, 1958. Label: Blue Note 1595. Design: Reid Miles. Source: [Birka Jazz Archive via birkajazz.com]

Not only did designs embark on a novel route towards abstract influences, designers sometimes used the direct sources of those inspiring artists. As an avant-garde musician whose paintings decorated his own album covers, Muhal Richard Abrams was asked how much the tonal quality of his music affected his painting. His answer relied on the semblance of the core elements despite the difference in media:

> There's color in painting, there's rhythm in painting, and tone, and it parallels the same situation in music. So the correlation or the use of the same parameters or properties in both media is a natural phenomenon. And I think that's more or less where everything comes from—it's a natural situation. I paint because I love to paint. I play music because I love to play music. So it all is coming from an individual creative action. (as cited in Pinson, p. 171)

Abrams' notion of "individual creative action" or, in other words, free expression through abstraction, takes its power from its subjective state, thus an intimate link between the visual-textual and musical is once again reaffirmed. Similarly, Steve Jones and Martin Sorger's (1999) article published in *Popular Music Studies* magazine traces the nexus between the visual and the music, saying that up until the rock'n roll boom in the 1960s, "jazz inspired the most sophisticated and varied group of covers" (p. 74). Since some record company owners of the time had a strong sense of musical history, they wanted to purchase that sense of history and culture when

they bought an album. Consequently, the "progressive nature of jazz as it developed in the 1950s was reflected in an avant-garde approach to photography, illustration, and typography" and deliberate "attempts were made to link visuals and music (Jones & Sorger, 1999, p. 74). The packaging of jazz, in other words, constructed an identity and a history to the music itself; both the music and the cover contributed to the image of a certain cultural category. Moreover, the image that is consciously linked to the music entailed that "part of the process of understanding 'difficult' music [wa]s to assign presuppositions onto an image" (Pinson, 2010, p. 147).

It is rather difficult to pinpoint the exact position of jazz and its audience in the 1950s. On the one hand, jazz after bop is blatantly political and requires its audience to have a more sophisticated understanding of the music, hence is not easily placed within mass consumption. Moreover, the increase in articles and books written about jazz, in other words, its literary criticism *ipso facto* exalted jazz's status (Yudkin, 2009). On the other hand, it stretches the boundaries of the mainstream, with the newly emerging jazz festival culture that lures great crowds as well as with "the massive sale of jazz records (estimated at eighty million dollars annually by the end of the fifties)" (Wilson, 1966, p. 154) [10]. Jazz festivals therefore transformed the secluded and private experience of club-going to a collective experience of rebellion and art. On the one hand hard boppers tried to erase the image of the alienated musician by returning to gospel forms, on the other hand jazz albums of the decade were directly marketed to a "socially conscious jazz listener" (Pinson, 2010, p. 48) who disliked popular taste and opinion. The record labels profited from the individual and mythicized role of the bop musician, and this was "simply the next step in a line of commercialized music" (p. 48). The only difference from an

[10] Although, this number most probably includes the sales of cool jazz and big band swing records and not solely the avant-garde styles.

ephemeral pop music, says Pinson, is that bebop "sprang out of the modern era of jazz and created a complex infrastructure of music for generations of musicians to study" (p. 48) and remained at the center of jazz, further branching out to the different forms of jazz we have today. Moreover, its outreach went further than the United States; jazz went all the way behind the Iron Curtain (Clegg, 2015). The communist East German government felt distressed because the demand for jazz was ever increasing. Eventually, jazz was allowed, for they did not consider it a product of commercial culture but the folk music of the "American Negro" (p. 248).

In such a complex landscape, it is once again hard to correctly estimate who the audience of this politically charged afro-centric music was. As it was previously regarded as the "alter ego" of the Civil Rights Movement, its main addressees were predominantly the black and marginalized communities. Moreover, with the coming of the 1960s, jazz was to be out of demand due to "the 'rock explosion' and the mass exodus of black listeners from more commercial types of jazz to R & B" (Rosenthal, 1992, p. 169). The simpler rhythms of rock were appealing to mass audiences as opposed to the syncopated and relatively challenging rhythms of post-bop. One of the aims of hard bop, argues Scott DeVaux therefore, was to pursue a more commercial path (as cited in Cooke, 2004, p. 402):

> The difference between bebop and hard bop . . . lied in the mentality of gaining audience. Whereas bebop took the status of jazz to the realms of intelligence, hard bop wanted to keep on creating their own music, reiterating the contribution to the American society while maintaining the intelligent tinge, yet also needed the popular approbation. (Saul, 2003, p. 5).

Finding the perfect balance between maintaining the intelligent posture while earning a living was an arduous task. Scott DeVaux speculates that bebop perhaps came off as pretentious due to its alienation of the uninitiated audience and hard bop musicians had to amend that distant image of the jazz musician. Still "hard bop was

dismissed as another ‘sell-out’” (as cited in Cooke p. 402) by some musicians for aiming to please the audience. Unfortunately, as pointed out by Graham Vulliamy (2008), the system itself pushed those who resisted to yield to the mainstream:

> The ideological nature of the high culture/mass culture distinction is also maintained through the establishment’s attitude to the financing of the arts. Whilst the establishment castigates all ‘popular’ music for being commercial, its heavy subsidisation [sic] of European ‘serious’ music ensures that much of the latter need nor even be concerned with commercial considerations. Thus much classical music (especially opera) which might not otherwise prove profitable is helped by government grants and subsidies, whilst both jazz and rock music, to survive at all, have to be commercially viable, which leads to less commercial and more experimental works in these genres being discouraged. (p. 196)

From an impartial point of view, hard bop’s return to familiar forms for the audience does not mean that its musical intellectuality is inferior to that of bebop. Quite the contrary, hard bop, as discussed before, improved and challenged bebop and opened the gate to even more complex styles of jazz. However, no matter how sophisticated, it had to reach an audience base more than its own. At this point, the utilization of abstract designs on album covers requires further exploration.

If we can establish that the declining popularity of jazz from the mid-1960s onwards is correlated to the “mass exodus of black listeners”, then we can claim that during the mid-1950s, the initial audience for the jazz albums were black listeners, who, in the socio-economical milieu of the early 1960s, represented middle and lower classes. Then how might we account for why abstract art was introduced and used as a market strategy to reach out to black audiences when abstract art “has been idealized in much twentieth century theory” and which has been considered an “elite taste” (Halle, 1992)? Pierre Bourdieu (1984) argues, in his *Distinction* that a “work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, to which it is encoded” (p. 2), further asserting that “the working class requires art to be practical, an attitude incompatible with the

‘detachment and disinterestedness’ needed to relate abstract art” (as cited in Halle, 1992, p. 131). Paul DiMaggio (1987) treads the same lines with a minor difference, according to Halle: While the former argues that each taste is coupled with a specific social class, the latter claims that the “taste for popular culture is common among all social classes but that only members of the higher social classes also have a taste for higher culture” (Halle, 1992, p. 148). Based on this argument, hard bop jazz either has to be popular, or the listeners need to step up their consumption preferences.

In order to put theory to the test, Richard A. Peterson and Albert Simkus (1992) conducted a study to observe the correlation between social status and cultural tastes by forming occupational status groups and comparing their music tastes. The results show that higher occupational groups choose classical music, which is considered to be representative of the high culture, whereas lower occupational groups choose country music, which has low aesthetic value. The second and third preferences of high occupational groups are folk music and musicals respectively, while jazz takes the fourth place. But when the research considers race, the findings deviate. According to data, black participants, no matter what the status, pick jazz or R&B/soul/blues over other music styles in order to identify with the black heritage. At the same time, some white high occupational groups pick jazz and to some degree, soul and blues, but whites of lower occupations completely eschew these styles. Peterson states that whites with higher-level occupations pick jazz because they deem jazz to be a component of high culture. Once again, jazz falls between two antithetic notions. Moreover, the question of why post-bop jazz resonates with the black population despite its difficulty remains unanswered, unless “solidarity with one’s culture” is sufficient for an explanation.

Falling between the highbrow and middlebrow cultures as it claimed solidarity with neither groups, abstract art later evolved into a popular style:

> [I]n the world of mass media, as abstract expressionists discovered, even bad reviews make good publicity. *Life* magazine's satirical articles on Jackson Pollock (1949) and the Irascibles[11] (1950) contributed to a growing public curiosity about abstract expressionism. Museums and wealthy collectors took note […] By the mid-1950s, gesture-field painting had become accepted among the taste makers to such an extent that it indeed began to seem like a new national style. (Belgrad, 1998, p. 249)

Once considered a sham, abstract art manifested itself as an American narrative in time. In 1989, David Halle conducted research to see if the reactions to abstract are in fact congruous with what the sociological theory claims, as the audience of abstract art was somehow put on a pedestal. As mentioned before, theories of Bourdieu and DiMaggio conclude that to comprehend an art work, one requires cultural capital, and in order to have that, one needs to belong to an upper/upper-middle class or participate in high cultural activities:

> Those who like abstract art do so because of their 'cultural capital' - the extensive intellectual and experiential training that they bring to bear on the works. In turn, viewing and liking abstract art (as a component of high culture) is used by the dominant class as a criterion for access to, and strengthening solidarity within, its own ranks. (Halle, 1992, p. 133)

Indeed, strengthening solidarity or aspiring to belong to a social group seems to be a convenient reason[12]. In fact, Tolstoy's ideas on aesthetic theory become a cue for Robert Kraut (2005): "the role of art helps people achieve solidarity —grounded in the idea that art is subservient to sociopolitical ends" (p. 8). After some thorough interviews done with individuals from various economic and educational strata on the amount of abstract artworks they own, how they feel about it and what are the

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[11] Abstract expressionists who boycotted the MET exhibition were named "The Irascibles".

[12] For instance, Brian Longhurst (1995) suggests that there could be various reasons behind purchasing a CD – which, I will replace with the word "vinyl" for the sake of the argument. "The consumer might be looking to its subsequent value" and "might see it as an investment which may offer profit at some point in the future", or it may just "make them happy", or it "might be consumed in relation to identity [...to] identify [themselves] as a rock fan or someone who can understand and appreciate avant-garde jazz." (p. 243)

reasons behind their inclination to like or dislike it, Halle (1992) observes that abstract art is usually appreciated for its decorative qualities. His findings "cast doubt on the claim of cultural capital theorists that it is lengthy training acquired in one's family of origin or in the educational system that produces the tastes, knowledge and capacities that underpin an interest in high culture" (p. 146). It is not possible to aver an ostensible difference between those who enjoy abstract art and those who do not care for it, if the main reason for a predilection for abstract art is its decorative role (Halle, 1992). What can be deduced from these studies is therefore that abstract designs on album covers can appeal to both poles of consumption and aesthetics. Moreover, the more abstract designs are seen on album covers, the more it will be associated with jazz.

Allocating assumptions onto images aids the apperception process of difficult music (Pinson, 2010, p. 147). Thus visualizing modern jazz helps us associate its abstractions with relatively tangible forms. Still, hearing, or rather the psychological act of "listening" (Barthes, 1985) "is something we cannot easily turn off; we can't close our ears as we can close our eyes" (Walton, 1994, p. 57). The coming of the 1950s and the upsurge of avant-garde movements, and to an extent the institutionalization and therefore the pitfall of a minority of listeners necessitated the audiences to listen to the music in an intellectual and sensory fashion. James Young (2010), much like Bourdieu, advocates that the audience can acquire that sensory and intellectual capacity to appreciate the aesthetic value of a work by way of experiencing art works. A regular participation, he says, will enable the individual to recognize certain patterns in the works they have encountered and experienced.

The educated audience Young refers to is now also found within the margins of jazz. Josh Kun, for instance, deems writer James Baldwin as a listener "who

actively interprets, deploys, and engages with the music he chooses to make a central part of his life" (p. 90). As the art audience has grown, the music listener has also evolved: She is "no longer passively analytical: he is an associate whose tastes, preferences, and inclinations even now alter peripherally the experiences to which he gives his attention" (Glenn Gould as cited in Kun, 2005, p. 91). Active listening therefore necessitates the audience to partake in the performance, and to create the artwork along with the musician, as if a call-and-response takes place. Through listening, "the voice inaugurates [its] relation to the Other: The voice by which we recognize others" (Barthes, 1985, p. 255). Listening to music, listening to jazz, therefore is a dialogue, and jazz is an abstracted language. Indeed, Robert Kraut (2005) argues that although aesthetic elements of jazz can be found in other art forms, jazz primarily "presents itself to engaged performers and listeners as a mode of linguistic activity: The phenomenology of musical conversation dominates the genre" (p. 13). Therefore, he proposes that "[f]ocus upon jazz thus encourages the idea that art forms—even those that appear to be understandable in isolation— must be approached as instances of conversational, linguistic phenomena" (p. 13). A familiar revelation can be witnessed in James Baldwin's story, which is the inspiration for the title of this thesis. "Sonny's Blues" urges us to take on the role of this new listener, since the musician lives, survives and becomes free through music; emancipation comes with it (Kun, 2005).

Appropriately, the cross-racial and cross-disciplinary status of abstract and spontaneous forms of the 1950s carried further on with the emergence of "free" jazz. Growing out of bebop and hard bop, free jazz inclined towards dissonance and collective improvisation, and filled the position of a new marginalized style, as "[t]he late fifties and early sixties were the moment of hip's ascent from the underground to

the mainstream, the moment when hipsters suddenly started making grand entrances in venues of high, low, and middlebrow culture” (Pinson, 2010, p. 152). The same years would inspire Amiri Baraka (1967) to state that poetry should be as musical as it could be: “Poetry, first of all, was and still must be a musical form. It is speech musicked. . . reading with music would only enhance and extend its meanings and give new strength to its form” (p. 243).

Having attained visual agency and having augmented its audience base with the rise of the new listener, jazz had already made its way into poetry long before Baraka admits. The next chapter delves into three main methods in which modern jazz, an abstracted language form, penetrates its way back to poetry through syncopation, movement and performance.

CHAPTER 4

LISTENING TO, SEEING AND EXPERIENCING JAZZ IN MODERN POETRY

The prevailing idea in this thesis has been that the abstraction of music, and specifically jazz, is profoundly correlated to its untranslatability to language. Some studies on music and emotion indicate that "music could mean something to people. . . but this something rarely seemed reducible to any definite verbal equivalent" (Wishart, p. 128). Echoing Matt Glaser's statement "words fall short when describing jazz," Brent Hayes Edwards asks how do "the graphic techniques of black literacy translate, or transport, the particularities of black orality onto the page?" (as cited in Jones, 2002, p. 66). Particularly jazz after bop – even its name is an onomatopoeic syllable – has been a creator of its own neologisms through its "blue notes, microtones, polyrhythms, and extended harmonies," (Gennari, 1991, p. 449) thus preserving a musical vocabulary of its own outside the lexicon of Western music. Similarly, the practice of scat singing embodies a unique meaning by "dissent[ing] from the logocentric tyranny of standard English, eschew[ing] referential lyrics in favor of vocalized sounds (e.g., 'geef-gaf gee-bap-beda-dedo d-da-do') whose meaning is their own sound" (Gennari, 1991, p. 449). The emphasis on 'process' in jazz's semantics helps jazz spawn new definitions with every act (Gennari, 1991).

If it is possible to emulate, or at least attain a familiar gist of the music through the visual as studied in the previous chapter, a corresponding coupling is achievable for the textual and the musical. Having hitherto established that the consumption of art forms requires an understanding of that art form – and not

necessarily aesthetically, but historically - and that the audience complements the artwork with her interpretations, it is possible to gain insight to the dynamics between poetry and jazz. Much like the new role thrust upon the listener equips her with a surplus of previous codes and meanings, and engages her in active listening, poetry readers are expected to trace the allusions to the restiveness, the insurgency and the inequality embedded in the narrative of jazz.

An examination of the decade within the scope of literary criticism requires that we locate the role of the reader. New Critics' approach to poetry, which was rejected by all of the poets that will be studied in this chapter, was to directly concentrate on the poem, on what it said and in which form it said it: It disregarded the idea of a reader presuming further meanings. In contrast, reader-response criticism opposed the formalism of the New Criticism and their treatment of the poem as a separate entity. Although divergent within its approaches, reader-response criticism rested on the premise of the reader as the architect of the text. Terry Eagleton (2007) explains that for some theorists, "poems are just meaningless black marks on a page, and it is the reader who constructs them into sense" (p. 108). Yet his argument builds on the notion that what is presented on the page already signifies something and therefore includes what he calls "labour" [sic] from both the author and the reader. The labor of interpreting can be achieved by "listening" to the text. Roland Barthes (1985) in his essay "Listening" argues that listening precipitates undiscovered meanings for all art forms. He uses the analogy of "*shimmering* of signifiers," which continuously produce new meanings without restraining the "signification" itself:

> ["L]istening" to a piece of classical music the listener is called upon to "decipher" this piece, i.e. to recognize (by his culture, his application, his sensibility) its construction, quite as coded (predetermined) as that of the palace at a certain period; but "listening" to a composition (taking the word

> here in its etymological sense) by John Cage, it is each sound one after the next that I listen to, not in its syntagmatic extension, but in its raw and as though vertical *signifying*: by deconstructing itself, listening at externalized, it compels the subject to renounce his "inwardness". This is valid, *mutatis mutandis*, for many other forms of contemporary art, from "painting" to the "text" . . . (p. 259)

By dragging other art forms into the discussion, Barthes reaffirms the synesthetic nature of text-music. A text, much like a jazz performance, needs to be listened to, in other words, deciphered through deconstruction. Such a correspondence has already been inherent in the language-based quality of jazz. The call-and-response quality of the African American experience on the forefront, for instance, gives the music a verbal quality. In turn, poetry affected by post-bop jazz perhaps recycles the oral tradition the African American expression contains. Jazz pianist Vijay Iyer (2004) wonderfully condenses the commonalities of jazz performance with language to three bullet points:

> • Like speech, musical performance is a process, a salient mental and physical activity that takes place in time.
> • Like speech, musical performance is interactive, characterized by dialogue, call-and-response, and collective synchronization.
> • Like speech, music has semiotic dimensions, which enable sonic symbols to refer actively to other parts of the same piece, to other music, or to contextual and extramusical phenomena—as with the rhythmic correspondences between finger motion and speech itself. (p. 398)

Coupling Iyer's position with Barthes' emphasis on listening, as well as Olson's dictum that demands from the poet both "the acquisitions of his ear *and* the pressure of his breath" (Olson, 1950, p. 2), I would like to 'listen to' three different poets of the 1950s who all embody one or more aspects of the common denominators of text with modern jazz.

The modern black experience and its vocalization had arisen with the Harlem Renaissance, where the jazz and poetry liaison was first seen through the poetry of Langston Hughes and Paul Dunbar. Then with bop's coming, the Beats adopted it,

despite their dominantly white population. Yet a few names in the Beat environment had marginally political and racial concerns that often go unnoticed. Bob Kaufman was one of those names. Since Kaufman wrote predominantly for white circles, he was often ignored in African-American literary history, but also was overlooked in the Beat history, for he was black. His origins are mostly unknown, as he sought anonymity and "freely fabricated a past that probably did not exist, complicating and even contradicting the whole notion of wanting to be anonymous" (Rice, 2014, p. 404). His anonymity was precipitated by different versions of his life that circulated around; in one version his father has Jewish ancestry, and mother Catholic African-American, in another his father was an African American with no Jewish ancestry (Rice, 2014). This anonymity, coupled with his in-between marginal ethnicity, contributed to his "invisibility" in an essentially white circle. The general claim that Beat generation writers consisted of white males, which was not far from the truth, instigated "commonplace, conclusive assertions that the Beats were non- or anti-political" when it came to race and thereby "completely disregard[ed] Beats such as Kaufman, Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones, and Ted Joans each of whose poems clearly involve political engagements of racial issues" (Falla, 2002, p. 185). Moreover, these affirmations helped eschew the uncomfortable confrontation of white America with the "racial divisiveness" (p. 185).

Kaufman particularly focused on the subcultures (bohemian, African-American, immigrant, gay) that are alienated from the society or who willingly distance themselves from mass culture as a means of resistance (Smethurst, 2002). Kaufman's resistance was that he, much like jazz, relied on oral tradition and rarely wrote down his poems. He initially did not publish his works but performed them: "He lived it and spoke it," Rice (2014) says, "often finding himself arrested in the

North Beach area of San Francisco for screaming and shouting poems at cars" (p. 405). With the urging of his wife, he wrote some of his poems down, some of them he never bothered to publish and some, other people transcripted for him.

Kaufman's performing of his poetry instead of writing them down was the first major sign of his jazz approach. Spontaneous rhythms manifested themselves like that of an instrument solo; his poetry, like jazz, existed in time and was a work in progress that was never complete. Normally, music through its tense and relief moments creates a certain amount of expectation in the listener. Even with modern jazz – free jazz could be an exception to this – the melody is "established before any rhythmic elaboration takes place" thereby procuring a norm to the artwork. In Meyer's (1956) terms, this tactic "makes the break a clear deviation from a norm". The listener therefore expects to return to the norm at one point; whichever adventures the soloist takes after the norm will entail an expectancy that the returning point will be the "head," the melody. Thus, even though jazz pieces were unfinished, unperfected forms, they balanced the "tension" in the music with a "relief," with a familiar theme that the audience had heard at the beginning of the composition. In one of Kaufman's better known poems, "Walking Parker Home" (1965) in which there are double references to his son, Parker, and the bebop musician Charlie Parker who he is named after, the poet throws off the anticipation of the audience by starting the poem with "sweet beats of jazz":

> Sweet beats of jazz impaled on slivers of wind
> Kansas Black Morning/ First Horn Eyes/
> Historical sound pictures on New Bird wings
> . . .
> Gold belled pipe of stops and future Blues Times
> Lurking Hawkins/ shadows of Lester/ realization
> Bronze fingers—brain extensions seeking trapped sounds
> Ghetto thoughts/ bandstand courage/ solo flight (Kaufman, 1965, p. 5)

The references to Kansas City, a central point to jazz and blues, the references of tenor saxophone players Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young, as well as “Bird” Charlie Parker, immediately invoke the *patres familias* of jazz. The unusually placed dashes that separate the lines’ accents prematurely, causing syncopation awakens the anti-rhythms of their music. The usage of slashes instead of regular punctuation such as commas and periods adumbrates the feeling that the narration is continuous; these slashes are not for natural breaks but for intentional syncopations. “Ghetto thoughts” embank African-Americans in a specific, segregated neighborhood separated, both economically and socially, from the general population. The poem continues with the evocation of the elements of jazz:

> New York alter city/ black tears/ secret disciples
> Hammer horn pounding soul marks on unswinging gates
> Culture gods/ mob sounds/ visions of spikes
> Panic excursions to tribal Jazz wombs and transfusions
> Heroin nights of birth/ and soaring/ over boppy new ground.
> Smothered rage covering pyramids of notes spontaneously exploding
> Cool revelations/ shrill hopes/ beauty speared into greedy ears
> Birdland nights on bop mountains, windy saxophone revolutions.
> Dayrooms of junk/ and melting walls and circling vultures/
> Money cancer/ remembered pain/ terror flights/
> Death and indestructible existence (p. 5)

Kaufman’s lines trace the birth of jazz to the commodification of it, the white-washing of jazz with “unswinging gates” and the “mob sounds”, to the avant-garde transfusions that came with bop. Apparently this perspective does not resist mass culture or high culture, “but sees a continuum of folk, popular, and ‘high’ African-American culture in which the new avant-gardism is distinguished from more sterile versions of formal radicalism by its grounding in African-American popular culture” (Smethurst, 2002, p. 156-157). “Boppy new ground” reverberates the inception of a novel genre that is full of the resistance, the “rage” of African-Americans, that is insinuated by the word “pyramids” as if the rage is traced back to ancient Kemet.

The line trails a continuous rhythm by omitting the slashes of syncopation and imitates a "spontaneous explosion" befitting to its ending, and comes to a halt only with "cool revelations," much like bebop does with the rise of cool jazz. The ascent of cool jazz might suggest criticism towards the listener with the phrase "beauty speared into greedy ears," connoting the "consumption" of white audiences. Up until the coming of "death and indestructible existence," in other words, a finality, syncopated rhythms dominate the poem. The last stanza, however, is distinguished from the previous lines with a calmer, non-syncopated punctuation, as if providing a relief moment after a tense solo, a shift in the rhythmic pattern; a finality:

> In that Jazz corner of life
> Wrapped in a mist of sound
> His legacy, our Jazz-tinted dawn
> Wailing his triumphs of oddly begotten dreams
> Inviting the nerveless to feel once more
> That fierce dying of humans consumed
> In raging fires of Love. (p. 5)

Kaufman seems to suggest that jazz embodies life, it was the past and it will be the future, our "Jazz-tinted dawn." That future metaphorically embodied in his son, named after Parker, is his own "jazz-tinted dawn". The wailing of his son is compared to Parker's saxophone, thereby assigning jazz an "elemental, spontaneous, and fraught with fear, doubt, hope, and anticipation as the wailing of a newborn baby" (Rice, 2014, p. 406).

Another of Kaufman's poems, "Abomunist Manifesto" (1959), is a play on the words communist – much like the "Communist Manifesto" (1850) of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and the "a-bomb". How Kaufman tackles the concept of rhythm in this poem is akin to Allen Ginsberg's "who" in *Howl*, in that the word "abominists" keeps the beat. This idea is analogous to bassist Charles Mingus' theory of "'rotary perception' in which, he says, the musician, thinking of the beat as a circular unit,

could come anywhere within the four beats of a measure and still be in the right place" (Wilson, 1966, p. 71). This concept permits musicians in the ensemble to play freely in an illusory circle that is drawn within the periphery of the song. For Mingus, the center could alter by drawing another circle, thereby relocating the downbeat in another section of the bar, which would modify and adopt a discrete groove (Gordon, n.d). Therefore, the word "abominists" acts as the first beat of a bar, as the visual representation of slash ("/") acts as a bar ("|") in "Walking Parker Home." The time value of what is uttered in between depends on when the next "abominists" arrives:

> ABOMUNISTS JOIN NOTHING BUT THEIR HANDS OR
> LEGS,
> OR OTHER SAME.
> ABOMUNIST SPIT ANTI-POETRY FOR POETIC REASONS
> AND FRINK.
> ABOMUNISTS DO NOT LOOK AT PICTURES PAINTED
> BY PRESIDENTS AND UNEMPLOYED PRIME
> MINISTERS. (Kaufman, 1965, p. 77)

The whole poem can be approached as if it is a bebop solo: The capitalization both reflects the obstinacy of the speech and amplifies the political message of it, like the "wailing" of a saxophone in the very chaotic moment of the solo. The poem carries out its tension throughout, never resolving. In fact, most of Kaufman's poems are in capital letters, which, in some sense, is more in line with Ornette Coleman *Free Jazz* album – a song that goes on for both sides of the album without losing anything from its dynamic experimentation for forty-five minutes:

> ABOMUNISTS DO NOT USE THE WORD SQUARE EXCEPT
>
> WHEN
> TALKING TO SQUARES.
> ABOMUNISTS READ NEWSPAPERS ONLY TO ASCERTAIN
> THEIR
> ABOMINUBILITY. (p. 77)

While the spacing of the run-on lines also underscores the alliteration and thus visualizes the parallelism, Kaufman also semantically creates a subculture that is distinct and peripheral to the society. David Ake's (2002) previously referred to notion that jazz helps situate senses of "you and them" versus "me and us" is exemplified through the contrast between "hip" and "square." Abomunists ascertain their identity by reaffirming the stereotypes labelled on them by the "other group". These lines therefore emulate not only the rhythmical allegories of jazz but also social role it bears.

> ABOMUNIST POETS, CONFIDENT THAT THE NEW LITERARY
> FORM "FOOT-PRINTISM' HAS FREED THE ARTIST
> OF OUTMODED RESTRICTIONS, SUCH AS: THE ABILITY TO
> READ AND WRITE, OR THE DESIRE TO COMMUNICATE,
> MUST BE PREPARED TO READ THEIR WORK AT DENTAL
> COLLEGES, EMBALMING SCHOOLS, HOMES FOR UNWED
> MOTHERS, HOMES FOR WED MOTHERS, INSANE ASYLUMS,
> USO CANTEENS, KINDERGARTENS, AND COUNTY JAILS.
> ABOMUNISTS NEVER COMPROMISE THEIR REJECTIONARY
> PHILOSOPHY.
>
> ABOMUNISTS REJECT EVERYTHING EXCEPT SNOWMEN. (Kaufman, 1965, p. 77-8)

The fragmentation of Kaufman's lines in this poem renders punctuations arbitrary; while commas set a rhythm within the norm, the anticipation of the reader/listener is capsized each time a word is broken into parts seemingly at random. His free play with fragmentation, in other words "how" he says it, duly corresponds to "what" he says: Here it is the freedom of the artist from outmoded restrictions. The new poetry for Kaufman, much like the new jazz, should not rely on pretentious formalism.

Intrinsically reiterating the features of the avant-garde by “rejecting everything but snowmen,” Kaufman stands both against the society by not “communicating” with people, and embraces the alienated groups in the society such as divorcees, prisoners, the mentally challenged and cherishes, or rather necessitates, *performing* to them.

Kaufman’s “Bagel Shop Jazz,” in which he discerns the commodity value of jazz, suggests a similar narrative. The “greedy ears” of “Walking Parker Home” reappear in the circadian chattering heard in the bagel shop, and the reader is faced with Kaufman’s awareness of “the possibility of jazz itself becoming one more consumable product in a society that consumes and commoditizes art just as it silences and commoditizes the enemy” (Rice, 2014, p. 411):

> Shadow people, projected on coffee-shop walls
> Memory formed echoes of a generation past
> Beating into now. (Kaufman, 1965, p. 14)

Run-on lines start the poem’s half-critical tone, with “shadow people” corresponding to the Beat milieu. In fact, Maria Damon (2005) argues that the poem elucidates the conflicts and mutual appreciation “between the three groups described in the three stanzas that comprise the poem's substance: the non-ethnoracialized [sic] ‘Beat chicks,’ the presumed-male ‘white ethnic’ Beats, and the presumed-male hip African-Americans (Black Beats)” (p. 36):

> Turtle-neck angel guys, black-haired dungaree guys,
> Caesar-jawed, with synagogue eyes,
> World travelers on the forty-one bus,
> Mixing jazz with paint talk,
> High rent, Bartok, classical murders,
> The pot shortage and last night's bust.
>
> Lost in a dream world,
> Where time is told with a beat. (Kaufman, 1965, p. 14)

With a “s”/ “st” rhyme repeating at the end of almost every line, he shifts the beat point to the end of the sentences as opposed to the beginning of them, while

thematically referring to the intermedial dialogue that surrounded the cultural circle of the time. Maria Damon (2002) argues that the particular group described in the above stanza is the "white ethnic (Jewish) male," the emulators of Ginsberg whose concerns include "high rents" and "pot shortage." Kaufman's tone is condescending towards the stereotype of those whose primary concerns in the "dream world" they live in do not align with the troubles of reality as Kaufman sees it. The hipsters come and go like T. S. Eliot's women, "Talking of Michelangelo," but here they mix "jazz with paint talk", "high rent" with "Bartok." In these rooms we have "Talking of Bird and Diz and Miles" but now the talkers who appropriate culture are white and male.

> Talking of Bird and Diz and Miles,
> The secret terrible hurts,
> Wrapped in cool hipster smiles,
> Telling themselves, under the talk,
> This shot must be the end,
> Hoping the beat is really the truth.
>
> The guilty police arrive. (Kaufman, 1965, p. 15)

After the striking line "hoping the beat is really the truth" comes a break, as if the truth is hidden in that silence, or not present at all. Kaufman references the the superficiality of the interest in jazz, and coupled with the Beats' failure to really understand the African-American experience, Kaufman's invisibility between categories become once more evident. His transitive position between these subcultures disorient the reader too, since his criticisms, his "anti" stances apply for the cultural categories he himself can be situated in. Therefore, the anticipation of the reader/listener is seemingly inverted as in the case of modern jazz.

Another aspect of jazz transacted to poetry was the physicality of it. That is when Frank O'Hara comes into the picture. Unlike the other two poets discussed in the thesis, he is white, and does not belong to the Beats or the San Francisco poets that are primarily composed of white jazz aficionados. The New York School, which

he was a part of, favored a cosmopolitan style of writing that entailed vivid observations of urban life. It is a title applied loosely to the poets who emulated O'Hara's style and ethos (Damon, 2005):

> The term "New York School" is itself a loose, unofficial catch-all rubric for the poets who adopted his breathless, conversational, verging-on-trivial paeans to the everyday minutiae of urban social life: dinner or chance encounters with friends, gallery and bar news, street sights garnered en route to the subway en route to casual but thrilling assignations, passing notations on the weather, political events, and others' lives. Buoyant randomness, charming self-deflation, wit, and cosmopolitan delight – in short, a sophisticated campiness and lighthearted irreverence – suffuse this affective mode that blends casual observation with whimsy and poignant hints at an emotional "inner" life glimpsed like a view into a lit floor-level apartment living room as one hurries by: enough to give the poem an auratic glow of warmth and life, but not enough to overwhelm or draw the reader in to the poet's psychoemotional interior. (p. 105)

One of their influences were contemporary avant-garde movements**,** and Frank O'Hara was considered a connection point between the artistic and literary circles. Then a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, O'Hara was drawn "towards the painterly abstraction of Jackson Pollock" (Halliwell, 2007, p. 59) in his poetry. He thought that painting, as an inspiration, did not intrude with poetry, unlike jazz, which made the poems sound rhythmically interesting[13] (Shaw, 2006). Jazz, says O'Hara, "is fleeting (in time) and therefore poignant" (Shaw, 2006, p. 266) as opposed to the finality (and therefore the tragedy) of painting. However, O'Hara's poetry is also imbued with the immediacy of jazz. Bernard Epstein (2006) views that O'Hara's poetry is, indeed, an archetypal specimen of Belgrad's proposed culture of spontaneity of the postwar era. O'Hara's writing, much like the Beats, esteems "the same 'cult of energy' and motion that the Beats were busy snapping their fingers about" (p. 88), yet he also acknowledges the deeper problems that accompany the "mind-set predicated on movement's heady rush" (p. 88). The immediacy of his narration and the action/movement that is ensued in the quotidian is consistent with

[13] Excerpt taken by Lytle Shaw from O'Hara's letter to Gregory Corso from March 20, 1958.

the physicality of jazz, as much as it is with abstract expressionism.

O'Hara's air of "I do this I do that" takes the reader on a physical journey. Jazz, as we have seen, is also a bodily act. Maria Damon (1993) calls this bodily act an "energy," arguing that "O'Hara's seemingly random musings on city life, train schedules and catalogues of books, friends, and works of art are about energy" (p. 271). This physical energy is referred to in Vijay Iyer's (2004) article "Exploding the Narrative in Jazz Improvisation" in which he raises a recent study that affirms the "cognitive role of body motion in music perception and production" (p. 396).

Table 1 Correlation of bodily actions to musical perception. Source: [Iyer, V. (2004). Exploding the narrative in jazz improvisation. In R. O'Meally, B. Edwards & F. Griffin, *Uptown Conversation: The new jazz studies* (1st ed.). New York: Columbia University Press, p. 396]

Bodily activities	Musical correlates	Timescale
Breathing, moderate arm gesture, body sway	Phrase, meter, harmonic rhythm, dynamics, vocal utterances	1–10 seconds
Heartbeat, walking, and running, sexual intercourse, head bob, toe tap	Pulse, "walking" basslines, dance rhythms	0.3–1 second (approximately 60–180 beats per minute)
Speech, lingual motion, syllables, rapid hand gesture, finger motion	Fast rhythmic activity, "bebop" melodies, etc	0.1–0.3 second (3–10 notes per second)

Epstein (2006) suggests that even though O'Hara partakes in the ethos of mobility of the avant-garde of the 1950, he "never unequivocally worships the myth of the open road: He doesn't buy into (intellectually or physically) the romantic idea of escape via speeding cars down lonely highways of the vast American night, à la Jack Kerouac" (p. 88). Yet his mobility includes a matter-of-fact, urban observation. For instance, "A Step Away from Them" (1956) is one of his poems that perfectly epitomize that bodily movement:

> It's my lunch hour, so I go
> for a walk among the hum-colored
> cabs. First, down the sidewalk
> where laborers feed their dirty
> glistening torsos sandwiches
> and Coca-Cola, with yellow helmets
> on. They protect them from falling
> bricks, I guess. Then onto the

> avenue where skirts are flipping
> above heels and blow up over
> grates. The sun is hot, but the
> cabs stir up the air. I look
> at bargains in wristwatches. There
> are cats playing in sawdust. (O'Hara & Allen, 1995, p. 257)

His going "for a walk" corresponds to the pulse of a jazz piece; the double bass accompanying the music is literally dubbed "walking bass". Laborers who have their lunch, the repetitive motion of biting a sandwich and drinking cola adds to a background dynamic. The blowing up of skirts denote unexpected movement that happens rather randomly, defying anticipation. The second stanza begins with a syncopation since the first word of the sentence is placed on a different "bar":

>   On
> to Times Square, where the sign
> blows smoke over my head, and higher
> the waterfall pours lightly. A
> Negro stands in a doorway with a
> toothpick, languorously agitating.
> A blonde chorus girl clicks: he
> smiles and rubs his chin. Everything
> suddenly honks: it is 12:40 of
> a Thursday. (O'Hara & Allen, 1995, p. 257)

Various movements of several stimuli come together and each meet at the point at "12.40 of a Thursday" when "everything suddenly honks", reaching synchronization, as if all the instruments meet a unison, or the "head" of a composition, the recognizable melody. This synchronization is not constrained to the poem itself; by assigning a specific timeframe, the poem also establishes a shared time with the reader. The same method can be observed in another poem of his, "Song (I am stuck in traffic in a taxicab)" (1960), in which the reader is sharing the same time frame with the first line:

> I am stuck in traffic in a taxicab
> which is typical
> and not just of modern life

> mud clambers up the trellis of my nerves
> must lovers of Eros end up with Venus
> muss es sein? es muss nicht sein, I tell you (p. 361)

Omitting of punctuation again implies movement, although the narrator is "stuck in traffic" (and takes the reader with him). The second stanza and the alliteration of mud-must-muss each echo a different concern, yet stem from the same root, "mu-", similar to a "lick" that reminds the listener of a previous musical phrase while developing into a different pattern. In "Personal Poem" (1964), the reader is once again taken on a physical journey with the narrator:

> I walk through the luminous humidity
> passing the House of Seagram with its wet
> and its loungers and the construction to
> the left that closed the sidewalk if
> I ever get to be a construction worker
> I'd like to have a silver hat please
> and get to Moriarty's where I wait for
> LeRoi and hear who wants to be a mover and
> shaker the last five years my batting average
> is .016 that's that, and LeRoi comes in
> and tells me Miles Davis was clubbed 12
> times last night outside BIRDLAND by a cop (p. 335)

Urban instances are salient once again; he invokes the image of a construction worker and this time there is a real-life reference to Miles Davis' infamous beating by a cop in front of the famous New York jazz club. LeRoi (Jones)'s speaking corresponds to the bebop melodies as suggested by the study Iyer cites. The number 12 echoes like a twelve-time drum kick behind the incessant narration of a saxophone. There are no breaks nor punctuation in between the incessant narration, hence it conjures the agility of bop tunes playing the sixteenth notes. The poem ends with his returning to work, without ever actually resolving:

> I wonder if one person out of the 8,000,000 is
> thinking of me as I shake hands with LeRoi
> and buy a strap for my wristwatch and go
> back to work happy at the thought possibly so (p. 336)

His going back does not imply relief – the narration is complete on page but without punctuation to finalize it, as if the activity resumes beyond the poem itself.

A different way to resume activity beyond the poem is to perform it. When performed, poetry is created once again through the nuances, the way of using one's voice and bodily movement. Therefore, like action painting and modern jazz, it relies on the process of spontaneity. Hughes' transportation of poetry to a platform where he can recite it enables bodily presence as if in a jazz performance. Moreover, poetry becomes a three dimensional dialogue as opposed to the dialogues of O'Hara on the flat surface of the paper. Pinson (2010) therefore deems Hughes' poetry one of the "best synesthetic examples of jazz and poetry," especially in his earlier work *The Weary Blues* (1926) and *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), a lengthy poetical account of the African American experience in the modern urban scene through historical and musical allusions (Yudkin, 2009). On the musical scene, bassist Charles Mingus had started using poetry in his own music, as well as collaborating with Langston Hughes. "These collaborations", Salim Washington (2004) observes, "eventually produced hybrid forms in which the musical, improvisatory, and textual aspects were in dialogue with each other, exceeding earlier efforts by the beatniks in which the poetry and the music remained discrete elements" (p. 37). Thereby they paved the way for the more integrated efforts made in the late 60s, during the Black Arts movement (Washington, 2004, p. 37).

One of the most eminent performance poetry pieces of Hughes comes in his book-length poem, "*Ask Your Mama*: 12 Modes for Jazz". Published in 1961, it was written to be performed along with a jazz band, as Hughes tailored the tone of the performance to change with the mode of the music. Structured in twelve different sections, each part examines "different aspects of Afro-diasporic blackness and

international civil rights struggles" (Kun, 2005, p. 162). It can indeed be observed from a variety of critical of views to embody the "civil rights polemics" of the time as well as the critique of the mass culture and "exploitation of black musical forms by white-run corporations and power structures; an African American response to the white-dominated jazz-poetry movement of the 1950s" (Kun, 2005, p. 162). Yet most importantly, this poem becomes a performance, thereby creating a "'shared time' between the listener and the performer" (Iyer, 2004, p. 401) that is marginally different from O'Hara's shared time. Taking the poetry from its individual and silent realm, it transforms it to a mutual experience shared by the listener and the performer, much like a jazz performance. Moreover, the performance of the poems in such a way resonates with Bürger's idea of the avant-garde as a collective production, "which often foreground the communal ethos, creative energy, and heroic resistance embodied in such marginal arts enclaves" (Epstein, 2006, p. 33).

The performance quality of a poem can also be deconstructed within the context of hip hop. Although this thesis does not dwell on a genre that emerged roughly thirty-five years after hard bop did, the poetry and jazz movement undeniably affected the performative spoken word which in turn triggered the hip-hop culture. Hence the need to mention it when discussing performance poetry. Saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings (2016) opines that jazz and hip-hop both should be examined outside the parameters of the antiquated discourse. Dialogues between instruments, Hutchings says, carry an informational network based on accents rather than conventional harmonies. His practice therefore relies on transcribing bebop solos and playing with the accentuations within each transcription:

> Firstly, I recite them note for note, as played originally. Then I perform the solos using only one or two notes but clearly following the contour and rhythmic trajectory. This takes my listening squarely into a place where the harmonic flow is of secondary consequence. I become open to new points of

rhythmic emphasis throughout the music.

> I've tried to apply a similar logic to my appraisal of rap music . . . rappers are employing the same abstract aesthetics in developing and altering rhythmic ideas, albeit using somewhat limited materials, as in classical minimal music. It's no coincidence that the societal positioning of hip-hop's main proponents historically concurs with the marginalisation [sic] of their art form in the view of the musical establishment. (n.p)

Since rap is intrinsically spoken word over a musical sample track (and intriguingly and increasingly samples from jazz music and its variations), Hutchings' abstraction of language and rhythms of poetry can be reversed in the poetry of Langston Hughes:

> Let us take away the notion of lyricism in hip-hop, or at least shift it from the central position. To do this, I employ the same process I use with jazz music. I learn a hip-hop solo word for word and then take it through a number of stages. First I play along to it, my sax mimicking exactly what the rapper is saying but using a single note. Secondly, I add the accentuated emphasis, which the rapper places on certain words, to my single note. Finally, I expand the range of notes I allow myself to use, while still playing exactly what the rapper is doing rhythmically and accent-wise. My note choices come from the jazz vernacular, and how they are structured harmonically is dictated by the accents. The accents therefore become agents which signal either the beginning of a new harmonic phrase proclamation, or a reaction to/acknowledgement of something else within the music. (Hutchings, 2016, n.p)

The interrelation between poetry and jazz music emphasizing the mimicry of each other is at work in Hughes' *Ask Your Mama*. The poem starts with a repetition, much like the "sweet beats" of Kaufman, establishing a beat before the melody:

> IN THE
> IN THE QUARTER
> IN THE QUARTER OF THE NEGROES
> WHERE THE DOORS ARE DOORS OF PAPER
> DUST OF DINGY ATOMS (1960, p. 477)

The repetition of the phrase "in the" corresponds to "exactly transcribing" a bebop solo note for note; not a division of thirty-two or sixteen is ignored and it eventually builds up to what the totality of the message is: "in the - in the quarter – in the quarter of the Negroes." Alliteration establishes a further beat to the music that is accompanying it: Hughes describes the opening accompaniment of music as

"rhythmically rough scraping of a guira" until "a lonely flute call, high and far away" builds on the rhythm.

> IN THE SHADOW OF THE NEGROES
> NKRUMAH
> IN THE SHADOW OF THE NEGROES
> NASSER NASSER
> IN THE SHADOW OF THE NEGROES
> ZIK AZIKIWE (p. 479)

The capital letters are akin to Kaufman's tense resistance that never resolves. Referring to African roots, Hughes is ensuring that the reader/listener is aware of identities that often go unrecognized because they are invisible. This invisibility is also invoked with the word "shadow," an expression that is historically associated with darkness, vagueness and the unknown, terms that usually apply to African-Americans in the historical narrative.

> AND THEY ASKED ME RIGHT AT CHRISTMAS
> IF MY BLACKNESS, WOULD I RUB OFF?
> I SAID, ASK YOUR MAMA. (p. 480)

The timing of the question "Christmas" can be construed as the assimilation of African Americans into the "White-American" culture and thus religion. Even though the black population participates in American customs and the values they represent, they are still considered as "the Other". With the insult "ASK YOUR MAMA," the poem, says Kun (2005), "is largely regarded as Hughes's most direct and vociferous denunciation of institutionalized racism" (p. 163):

> As a phrase, "ASK YOUR MAMA," or more simply, "YOUR MAMA," becomes Hughes's *de rigueur* answer to any question posed about his blackness; no matter the question ("WHERE DID I GET MY MONEY," "IS IT TRUE THAT NEGROES—?", "DID I KNOW CHARLIE MINGUS?"), no matter the questioner . . . the response remains the same: "Ask your mama." To perhaps *Ask Your Mama*'s most central question, "IF MY BLACKNESS, WOULD IT RUB OFF?" the answer is left equally indeterminate: "I SAID, ASK YOUR MAMA." (p. 163-4)

As the poem progresses, it maps the African American evolution from Louis Armstrong's early modernism to Ornette Coleman's post-bop experiments that radicalized the route future jazz would take (Kun, 2005). While tracing the accomplishments, it simultaneously condemns the rejection of those very achievements through its insulting answer to every question.

Paralleling the history, Hughes also resounds a saxophone in some parts of the poem; his repetitions of syllables become concurrent with the swift sixteenth notes of the saxophone: While Hutchings transcribes the spoken word to saxophone melodies, Hughes transliterates saxophone phrases to his poetry. This method is also analogous to John Coltrane's saxophone patterns heard in his composition "Alabama," which was written after the church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama:

> Coltrane patterned his saxophone lines on the cadences of Martin Luther King's oration at the funeral of the four girls who died. Midway through the song, mirroring the part of the sermon where King transforms mourning into statement of renewed determination, Elvin Jones's [sic] drums rise up from a whisper to a tumult of directed anger. (Werner, 1998, p. 130)

Hughes' *Ask Your Mama* reverses this practice and in turn, re-abstracts what is already an abstracted version of language.

What these three poets have in common, besides their encounter with the same literary and artistic milieus, is their superb application of the elements of jazz within their narrative. Utilizing every component available in order to achieve the rhythmic emulation of jazz, Kaufman, O'Hara and Hughes introduce special aspects of jazz into the literary scene, and into the overall understanding of the place of art and literature aesthetically and historically. Bearing in mind that these poets do not belong to the same school, same economic background, or even the same race, the perpetual dialogue that is fused in jazz is even more accentuated and the back-and-forth quality of art forms is further driven home.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis strives to prove that modern jazz, an avant-garde art form that relied on African American history but in time took its shape through the interchange between art forms and subcultures, transformed in radical ways the very elements of which it was composed. Most of the time located in the nebulous space between binary opposites such as mass culture-popular culture, high art-low art and abstraction-representation, it found echoes in the form of abstract design and jazz poetry. The emergence of the new listener and the new reader that is conscious in her consumption, that is aware of the historical background of the art work she ingests sprouted as a result. The way we read, see, listen to and participate in art forms have been molded by the very changes of the era. While jazz internalized the role of a social commentary, its audiences were attuned to understand and actively participate in the process (Alperson, 2010).

Following the thread from bebop to the beginnings of free jazz, an improvisatory jazz aesthetic emerged in the arts, mostly accommodating the protest voice of marginalized groups. Sexual, racial and political identities found their vocalization through the subjective artworks of these groups, yet never completely produced concrete, tangible shapes, but instead, in whatever form they practiced, pursued abstraction.

With poetry, this abstraction was reached through another nonconcrete art form: Modern jazz. Patterns of rhythmic movement, referring to older forms and re-interpreting them, bodily involvement and a simulacrum of musical performance contribute to the poetic devices used by these poets in the 1950s. Moreover, these

experiments would continue to influence and galvanize upcoming generations to write by adopting the musical correlates of bodily movement and syncopation both in prose and in verse. Examples of such writers include Toni Morrison, Yusef Komunyakaa, Michael Harper and Ishmael Reed. In fact, much like bop jazz continues to nourish current routes taken by contemporary musicians, the writings of jazz poets inspire literature and poetics to discover new territories and play with the ear, the breath and gestures of the sound.

Although the notion of album covers faded into oblivion with the advent of the first CDs, then MP3s and lastly, online streaming of music, musical representation is still based on the visualization of musical forms, through artist's images, video clips, and now, video albums. Therefore, the idea of marketing music by attributing a representative medium to it still perseveres, and can be traced back to the jazz album covers that took a rampant turn in the 1950s.

It is therefore crucial to deem these art forms not as hierarchical entities but rather intersectional, intermedial and interdisciplinary entities that nourish from each other. As the parameters of what is considered "aesthetical" changes throughout time, the altered definition applies to all art forms, since not one art form prospers in seclusion. Now, historical, social, cultural and political realities are inevitably embedded in the aesthetic ideas and art forms engage in a concurrent dialogue that cater to these very ideas. Thus an attentive "listening" to art forms will be enough to decipher these dialogues and make it easier for Baldwin's reverie to became a reality. We have learned how to see and listen to jazz and its poetry.

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