It may now be taken for granted in some circles that jazz is a marginal form of music. Even when not stated explicitly, such a formulation implies that if jazz is, in fact, marginal, it is marginal with respect to popular music. Yet as Scott DeVeaux (1991), David Ake (2002), and others (Ake, et al. 2012; Brackett 2016, 149–191) have indicated, it was not always thus, and jazz was understood as a form of popular music up until around 1950.

The idea of jazz as a marginal category of music will be explored in this chapter through a detailed study of a rather narrow historical moment, 1965–1967. I will argue that this period was crucial in the development of new ideas about the marginality of jazz. Through an analysis of jazz criticism and mass media discourse, this chapter will examine jazz in relation to popular music with a focus on the populist form of African American music, Rhythm and Blues (R&B). The increasing split between jazz and R&B, which dated back to the emergence of R&B in the 1940s, played a role in the decline of the audience for jazz, as did the legitimation of certain forms of rock music. The mid-1960s were crucial not only for the relation between jazz, R&B, and rock, but also for how struggles in the larger musical field inflected the field of jazz itself: during this period, some types of jazz (for example, “soul” jazz) could still be considered a form of R&B, even as the mainstream and avant-garde wings of jazz steadfastly rejected such associations or, at best, remained ambivalent. At the same time, the associations of free jazz with Black Nationalism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the place of soul jazz at the boundary between jazz and R&B, increased the sense of an internal divide within jazz. By studying jazz as a complexly differentiated field, it becomes possible to go beyond merely asserting that jazz is marginal in an abstract sense and to gain a sense of how it might be marginal as part of a larger musical field.

The Backstory

The sense of jazz as a type of music outside of popular music was nothing new in the mid-1960s. Dating back to the 1930s, early jazz critics and connoisseurs on both sides of the Atlantic distinguished between “authentic” hot jazz and commercialized swing music (see Frith 1988; Gennari 2006). Musicians, critics, and audiences carried this opposition forward into the 1940s with debates about “moldy figs,” “modernists,” “hot jazz,” and “swing” that were folded into early discussions about the merits of bebop (Gendron 2002). These debates played a role in redefining jazz from a form of popular music to a form of art music during the 1940s and 1950s, leading to

Matt Brennan, in his detailed discussion of *Downbeat’s* treatment of jazz and popular music, discusses the crucial period in the early to mid-1950s when the magazine tentatively included discussions of Rhythm and Blues (and country music) only to abruptly abandon R&B in 1956 (Brennan 2017, 60). The interest in country, R&B, and mainstream pop was spurred by the economic downturn in the fortunes of jazz musicians and swing bands at the end of the 1940s, and sprang from *Downbeat’s* desire to expand their readership. The magazine’s engagement with R&B at this time resembled discussions of popular music in music industry publications like *Billboard* and *Variety* in its focus on economic viability rather than aesthetics. This approach differed significantly with *Downbeat’s* approach to jazz at the time. As the introduction to the inaugural R&B record reviews section proclaimed, “records in the popular and rhythm-and-blues sections are reviewed and rated in terms of broad general appeal. Records in the jazz section are reviewed and rated in terms of their popular musical merit” (Record Reviews 1952, 10). Further discussions of R&B over the next few years by writers such as Ralph Gleason, bandleader Les Elgert, and Leonard Feather stressed the low musical quality (and what they saw as the banality of the lyrics) of R&B, but some averred that R&B might be useful as a way of eventually funneling listeners toward jazz. The staunchest defender of R&B in the pages of *Downbeat*, Ruth Cage, tried to use the musical similarity of R&B to jazz, the professional musical backgrounds of the players, their former affiliations with jazz, and their formal study, musical literacy, and status as composers of their own work as a way of legitimating R&B—the same techniques that had been used by defenders of jazz in previous decades (see Brennan 2017, 70–79). Cage interviewed Quincy Jones in 1955, who concisely offered his support of her advocacy:

> it used to be that r&b and jazz were pretty closely related . . . and we seem to be moving right back to that state . . . . As far as rhythm and blues is concerned, the words are really just for the sake of commercial convenience. The basic element of r&b is, in a sense, the basic emotional element in jazz.

*(Cage 1955, 42)*

Jones then proceeds to mention Ray Charles as an example of a “top r&b musician . . . as well as a very fine jazzman,” and to cite Count Basie’s “Everyday I Get the Blues” as an example of how jazz can be popular when married to the blues. Even Jones (and, by implication, Cage) can’t escape a whiff of condescension, however, when he declares that Charles, “like a lot of other great musicians . . . turned to the blues to make a living.” Despite this, it is beginning “to look as if he . . . might some day soon begin to make use of ALL [his] talents” (ibid.).

Despite Cage’s spirited defense of R&B, she remained *sui generis* at the time on *Downbeat’s* staff. Not only white jazz critics heaped approbation upon R&B; African American jazz musicians scorned the genre as well: Nat Hentoff published a survey of musicians including Billy Taylor and Milt Hinton whose approval of R&B was tepid at best. Taylor described R&B as a genre that “grew out of the race records” and “took the worse parts of that music—monotonous rhythm, bad harmonies, double-meaning lyrics—and capitalized on them.” Hinton spoke more optimistically about the potential for jazz players on R&B sessions to improve the quality of the sessions, but at the same time described R&B as a “lower form of music” (Hentoff 1956, 12, cited in Brennan 2017, 83).

By the end of the decade, *Downbeat* had dropped its coverage of R&B, and statements made by critics like Barry Ulanov resembled nothing so much as those by famed 1950s mass culture critics like Dwight MacDonald (Ulanov 1957, 40). Although coverage of popular music in general and R&B in particular declined in the jazz press during the late 1950s and early 1960s,
a populist wing of jazz—“funky” or “soul” jazz—did garner some attention. An article by John Tynan, “FUNKGROOVESOUl,” appeared in *Downbeat* in November 1960 that discussed a shift in terminology from “funky jazz” to “soul jazz.” Tynan tries to describe the difference between the two forms: “funk” is a “broad use of blue tonality,” whereas “‘soul’ simply means heart and conviction, an unconscious feeling for jazz roots that emerges in a musician’s playing and makes it authentic” (Tynan 1960, 18). Voicing what must have already been common associations between the idea of “soul” in music and African American gospel music that would become common by the end of the decade, Tynan disparages this connection “because gospel is musically limited,” taking its “inspiration . . . from a socially, and culturally limited area.” Gospel music contrasts with the blues, which is also “a limited form . . . but it is a form uniquely suited to secular artistic expression. It is the foundation of jazz” (ibid., 18–19). His disparagement springs from an aversion to connecting jazz to racial politics, a thread that was to become more prominent as the 1960s wore on:

“Holiness” influence . . . can be traced more to racialistic feelings . . . than to the further development of jazz as art. It is as if [Negroes] hurl the challenge at their white colleagues: “Copy this, if you can.” The Gospel feeling is indisputably theirs, and they know it.

( IBID., 19 )

Such feelings of white inferiority vis-à-vis black jazz musicians were nothing new, as the advocacy for a white jazz that would be free of African American influence can be found as far back as the late 1930s (Brackett 2016, 169–170). Tynan does praise the ability of gospel-influenced jazz to connect more to the audience than bebop, recalling the earlier discussions of Ruth Cage and Quincy Jones in their approval of Ray Charles: “Funk? Soul? Dirty blues? yes, Ray Charles embodies these terms. He is in fact, their personification. Jazz or Rhythm and Blues? Does it really matter?” (Tynan 1960, 19).

An *Ebony* article from December 1961, “The Soul of Soul,” clarifies the usage at this time. “Soul music,” according to the author, Lerone Bennett, Jr., is an “extraordinary movement in contemporary jazz” and an “outgrowth of a bitter musical war with muted racial undertones.” “Soul music” or “soul jazz” is contrasted with “the rather anemic West Coast school” and described as “stress[ing] a hard-swinging, gospel flavored blues feeling” (Bennett 1961, 112–116). Bennett observes that “qualities deemed soulful” could also be described as “funky” (ibid., 112). Yet the author of the article finds it necessary to qualify further this label:

Soul, to be sure, is not even a music. It is the feeling with which an artist invests his creation. And, above all, it is of the musical spirit rather than the letter. Guy Lombardo, for example, playing “See See Rider” is Guy Lombardo playing “See See Rider.” One and one, in this case are two. But Jimmy Smith [soul jazz organist] playing “See See Rider” is another thing. One and one are three. The man adds something. The added increment? Soul—a certain way of feeling, a certain way of expressing oneself, a certain way of being. Similarly, Ray Charles or Mahalia Jackson singing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” is soul par excellence. Soul is the interpretation, not the song.

(IBID.)

Bennett clarifies that soul is not a category of music but rather a component of African American-associated genres, an affect, a performance practice. The article closes with an observation that closely anticipates a connection between black popular music and the idea of “soul” that would become common by the late 1960s: “There is in the music a new note of racial pride, a celebration of ties to Africa and a defiant embrace of . . . all that middle-class America
condemns” (ibid., 116). Bennett, then, appears to agree with Tynan that “soul” had an undeniable association with African American identity—they differ strongly in whether or not this is a positive development.

The Discursive Field of Jazz: 1965–1966

Discussions of the racialized connotations of soul and the intense reactions occasioned by these discussions figured prominently in mid-1960s jazz journalism. Tynan’s comments, in fact, referenced a debate that had already commenced about the role of racial politics in the institutions that supported jazz and in jazz criticism. Indeed, debates about “reverse racism” or “Crow Jim” in the early 1960s revived assertions from the early 1950s that white musicians were suffering because black bandleaders were discriminating against them (see Porter 2002, 176–180; “Racial Prejudice in Jazz, Part I” 1962; “Racial Prejudice in Jazz, Part II” 1962; “Crow Jim” 1962). The two sub-genres that aroused the most controversy, soul jazz and avant-garde jazz, were connected to each other via attributions of their heightened sense of racial politics and their exclusion of white musicians, although this was not strictly true in practice (Brennan 2017, 94; Fellezs 2011, 38–39). At the same time, these two sub-genres could be differentiated by mapping them onto the opposition—developed in the work of Pierre Bourdieu—of economic capital (derived, in part, from commercial success) vs. symbolic capital (derived from the approval of other artists and the institutions of high art). Of these two sub-genres, avant-garde jazz attracted far more attention for its politicization and association with Black Nationalism (see Kofsky 1970; for an overview see Gennari 2006, 251–298; Porter 2002, 191–239). Soul jazz, for its part, tended to arouse debate both because of its heightened sense of African American identity and via its association with popular music in general. Debates about the place of avant-garde jazz and soul jazz codified how jazz remained poised between artistic autonomy and commercialism at this time.

Two publications in particular, Downbeat and Jazz, bore witness to these developments, as did less-specialized publications such as the New York Times and the Village Voice. The jazz publications’ reliance on young musicians, which had boosted sales in the late 1950s, had begun to falter, and new measures were instituted to attract young readers. Downbeat had targeted young musicians since the mid-1950s with advertisements of band instruments. Beginning in 1965, a series of instrument ads, promoting the sale of Kent electric guitars and Vox amplifiers, gestured toward a different sort of young musician (“Sooner or Later” 1965, “Vox: Sound of the Longhairs” 1965; see also Brennan 2017, 98–99). In addition to musical instrument ads directed toward younger fans of rock music, Downbeat featured a range of voices and opinions about both popular music and avant-garde jazz, echoing the magazine’s gestures toward even-handedness from the 1950s but with a bit more vigor. The overwhelming tone, however, in all forums for the discussion of jazz (except, perhaps, for the music industry press) was condescension toward popular music and bewilderment toward the avant-garde. Particularly from mid-1966 onwards, complaints about the inclusion of popular music competed with the fear of Black Nationalism in avant-garde jazz for domination in Downbeat’s letters-to-the-editor section, “Chords & Discords: A Forum for Readers.” Other hot topics included jazz covers of pop/rock tunes (with a mostly negative response), the dwindling audience for mainstream jazz, and discussions of the role of the proximity to classical music and higher education for the legitimation of jazz. Critics’ and readers’ polls exposed the porous boundaries between jazz and pop/rock via the range of artists who appeared in the rankings. Discussion of blues artists became a regular feature, although these artists were invariably discussed as progenitors of jazz, regardless of whether any empirical evidence could confirm the historical veracity of such formulations.
Herbie Hancock, Stanley Turrentine, and an Example of Soul Jazz

When Don Heckman interviewed Herbie Hancock in the fall of 1965 for *Downbeat*, Hancock had already achieved status as both a serious artist and a commercially successful one. His work with the Miles Davis quintet, beginning in 1963, catapulted him to the front ranks of the mainstream jazz world. This group, often referred to as “The Second Quintet,” blended certain conventions of the 1950s, such as the playing of standards, with techniques from the avant-garde, such as dispensing with chord changes and novel approaches to rhythm. Hancock also had an active career as a sideman and solo artist, balancing commercial success on recordings like the archetypal soul jazz track, “Watermelon Man” (a #10 pop hit in 1963 in a cover version by Mongo Santamaria), with songs that would become “post-bop” classics such as “Maiden Voyage” and “Dolphin Dance” (both 1965). Heckman, in his introduction to the article, recognized this delicate balancing act in words that might have been chosen by Bourdieu:

> The tenuous line between jazz-as-art and jazz-as-popular-entertainment is one that few jazz artists have successfully bridged. It is all the more unusual, therefore, that pianist Herbie Hancock, at 25, already has gathered fruits of both worlds. (Heckman 1965, 12)

Hancock, in response, seems to acknowledge that his commercial success might make him vulnerable to criticism by stating that “[I] didn’t want to prostitute myself. . . . I also wanted to write something that was actually authentic, something that I knew something about” (ibid.). He relates his search for the authentic to his racial identity by revealing how he had to explore “his own ‘personal American Negro background,’ to find within himself what he had gone through that could be projected musically.” While not arguing with Hancock’s explanation of this process, Heckman acknowledges the practical benefits of such a search: due to his use of “the most salable commodity at the time . . . soul music,” “Watermelon Man has given Hancock access to an audience far wider than that reached by most jazzmen” (ibid.). The tension between symbolic capital (“jazz-as-art,” “something authentic”) and economic capital (“jazz-as-popular-entertainment,” “a salable commodity,” “a wider audience”) is almost palpable.

Yet Hancock does not appear to accept the terms of the economic/symbolic opposition; he “recognizes that ‘popular’ does not have to mean ‘tasteless’ or ‘shoddy.’” In turn, he places himself within transformations occurring elsewhere within the musical field at this time by connecting his activity to “significant changes taking place in pop music” (ibid.). It appeared that shortly before the interview, some three years after the recording of “Watermelon Man,” he had a further revelation about the interconnection of jazz and R&B, and, by extension, of art and entertainment. It is worth quoting the following passage at length:

> “My sister Jean loves rhythm and blues, and she’s been playing a lot of these things,” he said. “At first I didn’t pay any attention to it. But once she had a record on by somebody, I think Dionne Warwick, and I was just passing through the living room when all of a sudden I said, ‘Wait a minute. What is this?’ I heard some strange chords being played and different kinds of phrases—three-bar phrases and 19-bar tunes. And pretty soon I began listening to these things. Through the technical interest that was stirred up in me, I finally got back to the emotional thing which is actually the basis for rhythm and blues. It just happens that certain tunes have 19 bars or have three-bar phrases. I think it’s becoming very artful, as a matter of fact. The Beatles, for example; some of their songs are very artful. And Dionne Warwick,
James Brown, Mary Wells, Smoky and the Miracles, the Supremes—I even know the names now.”

(ibid., 12–13)

Now, in addition to the conflation of “art” and “entertainment” that had already occurred, Hancock mixes up other elements that are often cordoned off from one another and assigned either to jazz or popular music: “technical interest” (associated more with jazz than R&B) helps him “get back to the emotional thing which is actually the basis for rhythm and blues.” His choice of artists illustrates how he is referencing a generic and stylistic hybridity that is already in process. The Beatles drew upon many of the same Tin Pan Alley harmonic and formal conventions that served as the basis for mainstream jazz; the instrumentation and organization of James Brown’s band derived from swing ensembles, and his performances were jazz-like in their reliance on improvisation (a recording like his “Night Train” [1962] could even pass for a soul jazz track); and the musicians who supported Mary Wells, the Miracles, and the Supremes in the Motown studios were all active performers in the Detroit jazz scene.

The reference to Dionne Warwick, however, points to the clearest interaction between mid-1960s popular music/R&B and mainstream jazz. It is not clear which recording of Warwick’s he might be referring to—one with “strange chords,” “three-bar phrases,” and “19-bar tunes.” But it is extremely likely that the song in question would have been written by Burt Bacharach, whose songs are filled with the kind of irregular phrasing referenced by Hancock. The jazz-influenced chord progressions of Bacharach’s songs are joined with Warwick’s vocal style—a marriage of gospel influences and jazz-cabaret sophistication, not unlike her near-contemporaries Nancy Wilson and Abbey Lincoln (prior to her avant-garde recordings).

Bacharach’s songs constitute a kind of musical prosody that feature overlapping and elided phrases in addition to phrases of varying lengths (often with changing meters so that the number of beats is not a multiple of two or four as in almost all other popular songs of the time). Warwick’s second hit, for example, “Anyone Who Had a Heart” (1963), begins with two two-measure phrases of nine beats, the second of which is extended by one 4/4 measure. This is followed by two more phrases that total five measures. The extended coda is eight bars long, including two measures of 7/8 and many chains of syncopations and elisions. The “strange chords” consist of harmonies outlining the Phrygian mode on A at the beginning; this is followed by a shift to A-flat major in bar 6.

The technically interesting features that Hancock might have found in “Anyone Who Had a Heart” are not anomalous within the recordings on which Warwick and Bacharach collaborated (which also included lyricist Hal David). The approach to harmony, if not the approach to phrasing, of these songs was already indebted to jazz: not only to the Tin Pan Alley approach found in standards, but even to relatively recent developments such as the modal jazz that emerged in the late 1950s. The use of the Phrygian mode at the beginning of “Anyone Who Had a Heart” is one example of this. Another can be found in Warwick’s biggest hit from the 1960s, “Walk On By” (1964). This tune begins with a vamp on A minor, which is clarified as the dorian mode on A when Warwick enters with her vocal. The fifth measure of the vocal introduces a modal shift with the appearance of a G-minor-7th chord, which initiates a movement that eventually reveals the key of the piece to be F major.

The phrasing of this song, however, is one of the more regular pieces in the Warwick/Bacharach canon, consisting of five four-measure phrases—divided into a twelve-measure verse, and an eight-measure refrain—albeit a piece filled with the elisions between phrases and sections that we have come to expect, along with free sounding recombinations of small melodic fragments. Why spend so much space discussing this song, then, if its phrasing is among the least remarkable of Bacharach’s compositions? Perhaps it is the very regularity of the song’s phrasing (relatively speaking) that recommended it to numerous jazz musicians during the 1965–1966 period. Versions of the song by Roland Kirk, Gabor Szabo, Brother Jack McDuff, and Stanley Turrentine all appeared and,
although significant differences can be heard among them, three (Szabo, McDuff, and Turrentine) tend toward soul jazz, and all make use of the Latin groove featured in Warwick’s recording.

In the controversy at *Downbeat* over the threat of popular music and the merits or dangers of economic capital, soul jazz played a major role. Although the term “soul jazz” was no longer in heavy circulation at *Downbeat* at this time (compared with its usage in the early 1960s), “Rhythm and Blues,” “rock and roll,” “soul,” and “rock” are all used more or less interchangeably. I will use “soul jazz” here to refer to a retroactive grouping that connects the work of Horace Silver, Lee Morgan, Hancock’s “Watermelon Man,” and numerous organists (including, most famously, Jimmy Smith) with the work of the period under discussion of artists like Cannonball Adderley, Brother Jack McDuff, Stanley Turrentine, and Ramsey Lewis (see Rosenthal 1992, 101–116). The latter’s recording of the “The ‘In’ Crowd” in 1965 ascended to #5 on the pop charts and #2 on the R&B charts late in 1965, sparking off debates in *Downbeat* that brought together matters of aesthetics, musical style, and popularity. 3

Much of the discussion centered on the recording as a touchstone for the success of jazz-related work and the possible motivations for performing/recording in such a style. Assessments based on the negative effects of the acquisition of economic capital (that is, “selling out”) included headlines such as “In Crowd: Nothing Succeeds Like Success” (*News and Views*, 1965: 11). Not all comments were negative, however. Leonard Feather, who returned to Lewis’s recordings in his “blindfold tests” like some sort of obsessive mantra, called “The ‘In’ Crowd” a record that “can rival the Beatles for the top spot, among all the hundreds of bundles of trash that litter the list of best-sellers week after week” (Feather 1966, 31).

A similar consideration of boundaries and the possible defilement via association with commerce can be found in the *Downbeat* review of Turrentine’s album, *Rough “n” Tumble*, which included his version of “Walk On By.” The album “falls somewhere between the jazz and rock categories,” and although “his playing is strong and catchy, it usually leaves much to be desired.” Furthermore, in a telling comparison with a genre on the other side of the art/commerce divide, the reviewer declares that Turrentine’s playing is “simple, melodically and rhythmically dull, and not as uninhibited as the best rock-and-roll tenor work.” The reviewer does allow that “the most enjoyable track is *Walk*” (Pekar 1966, 38).

Turrentine’s work lies somewhere in-between R&B honker and mainstream jazz; the album *Rough “n” Tumble* includes, in addition to “Walk On By,” a cover of Sam Cooke’s gospel-derived R&B/pop crossover hit, “Shake” (the “A” sections of which are a twelve-bar blues), Ray Charles’s “What Would I Do Without You,” and several other gospel and blues-influenced tunes. In trying to imagine what *Downbeat’s* reviewer might have been responding to, the performance of “Walk On By” could have seemed rather restrained compared to a straight-ahead “blowing” session of the time. The arrangement presents the melody of the song in a head arrangement very closely modeled on the arrangement heard on Warwick’s recording, with Turrentine sticking fairly closely to the tune. Two improvised choruses follow by Turrentine. These are again relatively restrained compared to a virtuosic hard bop solo of the time, although he does build to a few high register “screams” that refer both to the legacy of previous tenor sax “honkers” and to his hard bop contemporaries. Following a one-chorus trumpet solo, Turrentine returns to the melody, played again with subtle embellishments. Turrentine’s down-home style can be traced back to Southwestern territory bands of late 1930s in a lineage of tenor players that spans from Illinois Jacquet and Arnett Cobb through to Johnny Griffin, Gene Ammons, and Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis (Rosenthal, 103–104). In contrast to *Downbeat’s* reviewer, Turrentine’s tenor-sax-playing contemporary, Clifford Jordan, offered this assessment:

Some people can play that [soul jazz] and really extend that, like King Curtis or Stanley Turrentine. They can play that little snap. It’s right in their body and they’re not trying to imitate nobody. It’s a natural feeling that they project.
David Rosenthal, in his survey of hard bop, refers to Turrentine’s sweet yet muscular sound. . . . A flexible voice, it can deepen to a resonant honk, soar into one of the most piercingly full-throated cries in jazz, and broaden to a thick, sensuous vibrato on ballads. Turrentine tends to play on top of the beat, making for a deep, trancelike groove, and his phrasing draws on both modern jazz and R & B. (ibid., 109)

Rosenthal’s description captures how Turrentine’s playing looks forward to aspects of “smooth jazz” and his own later work with CTI records, an example of which can be found in his late soul jazz classic, *Sugar* (1970). Overall, the attitudes toward popular music (be it rock, pop, or soul) expressed in *Downbeat* during this time remained decidedly mixed, although when commentators defended popular music, positive views tended to emphasize the music’s social importance rather than its musical quality. A profile of Barney Kessel from July 1966 is indicative. He anticipates objections to his views but argues that “whether you like it or not, rock-and-roll is a valid form of music. It expresses the feelings of people who are living and breathing at this time.” Perhaps anticipating again possible criticisms of commercialism in rock-and-roll, he adds, “It is real—not manufactured” (Kessel 1966, 28). On the other hand, a negative attitude toward popular music surfaces repeatedly in *Downbeat’s* “Letter to the Editor” section, the aptly named “Chords & Discords.” Negative aesthetic evaluations merge with a critique of commercial success, as evidenced by comments like “great classical and jazz musicians are starving while these people eat off a silver platter” (Chords and Discords 1966a, 8). Another reader wondered whether the magazine was doing a sufficient job of patrolling the borders of jazz:

I have watched in recent months the decline of *Downbeat* as a jazz magazine. The increasing coverage and mention of various rock groups is beginning to become just a little disgusting, the recent critics poll issue being no exception. . . . We see many “critics” voting for such exciting “jazz talent” as the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Byrds, Supremes. (Chords and Discords 1966b, 8)

∗ ∗ ∗

Categories of music do not begin at a punctual moment in time and do not carry within themselves an unvarying essence of stylistic features. I have argued elsewhere that a grouping of stylistic features, images, performers’ social identities, and musical values becomes associated with a label gradually through a label’s continued citation in conjunction with a grouping of attributes (Brackett 2016). Perhaps more importantly for the discussion here, a category of music becomes meaningful in relation to other categories of music that are circulating at the same time. In the case of jazz in the mid-1960s, at the most general level its identity depended on its difference from popular music, on the one hand, and from Western art music, on the other. This differentiation can be understood in terms of how these categories relied on values associated with either symbolic capital (most clearly connected to Western art music) and economic capital (most clearly connected to popular music).

These large categories were also the site of internal struggles over value, and in no category did this appear more clearly than in jazz. To return to an assertion I made at the outset, jazz could be associated with marginality in a number of ways: jazz was marginal with respect to symbolic capital when it aspired to the kind of autonomy associated with Western art music, in comparison to which jazz lacked the institutional legitimacy that would create the same kind
of separation from commerce. Jazz was marginal with respect to economic capital as it lacked the audience share of popular music. Within jazz, the two controversial sub-fields, avant-garde jazz and soul jazz, represented the most extreme tendency towards either pole of the symbolic-economic opposition. These two sub-fields also aroused the ire of white critics because of their associations on the one hand, with African American political struggles in the case of avant-garde jazz and, on the other hand, with black identity, in the case of soul jazz. Even at *Downbeat*, however, the attention paid to these controversies was not symmetrical, with avant-garde jazz receiving far more attention. How curious, then, that jazz scholarship has reproduced the same asymmetry. Let the current study stand as a tentative step towards contributing to a better understanding of how jazz musicians, fans, and critics negotiated the boundary between jazz and popular music in the mid-1960s, and to understanding what was at stake in the controversies of the time.

Notes

1. For examples of American mass culture criticism, see MacDonald (1962) and Rosenberg and White (1957).
2. For the clearest exposition of this opposition, see Bourdieu (1993). For a critique of applications of Bourdieu’s theory that impose social theory onto empirical data and eviscerate the aesthetic qualities of specific works, see Latour (2005) and Born (2010).
3. Although the initial review of the album on “The ‘In’ Crowd” appeared (also titled *The ‘In’ Crowd*) only intimates that there might be a controversy of any kind in the most oblique way: “The mixture of a polished, deliberately dramatic surface over an insistently rhythmic beat continues to work well for Lewis’ group” (W. 1965, 39). It’s true that the reviewer thinks that the album “works well” but with a “polished . . . surface” and “an insistently rhythmic beat”—damning with faint praise, perhaps?
5. For more on the connections between soul jazz, CTI, and smooth jazz, see Carson 2008.

References


