

Improvisation and Value in Rock, 1966

DAVID BRACKETT

Abstract

The mid-1960s has figured as a central period in the historiography of popular music, but the role of improvisation has been little discussed. This article argues that issues of improvisation and value are crucial to understanding the emergence of a high-low split within popular music, a division that figures prominently in criticism and fan discourse up to the present day. This new stratification within popular music made it possible for rock to acquire critical prestige relative to other popular music genres. The formation of rock also relied on its association with a primarily white, male, middle-class demographic. This article demonstrates that rock's prestige rests simultaneously on maintaining this narrow demographic profile while locating aesthetic and spiritual value in musical practices coming from elsewhere (in terms of geography, race, or cultural hierarchy): blues, Indian classical music, jazz. The socio-musical transformation in which improvisation played such an important role is explored through a survey of recordings and an analysis of the development of rock criticism in 1966, the year in which a new constellation of aesthetics, politics, and musical style crystallized.

Now the fate of the Beatles lies in the hands of those who someday will prepare the poetry textbooks of the future in which the songs of unrequited love and psychedelic philosophy will appear stripped of their music, raw material for doctoral dissertations, just as the songs of John Donne, William Shakespeare, and John Milton, once a special kind of 17th-century Top 40, are now locked inside the groves of the academy, armored in footnotes and frozen out flat on the dry, cold paper of expensive variorum editions.

—Jules Siegel¹

The epigraph comes from an article by Jules Siegel that appeared in the *Village Voice* in September 1966. Siegel contends that the music of the Beatles will soon be “resting in peace” due to a new seriousness in the reception of the music. This music is fated to be analyzed by academics while being divested of the element—music—that gives it life. Acceptance in the academy thus sounds a death knell for the music.

Siegel did not have a crystal ball, and he may well have imagined that readers would perceive his proposition that academics might be interested in popular music as outrageous. He could not have known that popular music would eventually achieve a foothold in the university, albeit with its music intact. The appearance of Siegel's article in 1966 is significant, as that year did indeed witness a significant shift

I would like to thank the friends, relatives, students, and colleagues who commented on earlier versions of this essay, including Lisa Barg, Ben Brackett, Bernard Gendron, Mimi Haddon, and the students in my historiography seminar in winter 2019. Special mention goes to three PhD advisees who finished dissertations on overlapping topics while I was working on this article: Melvin Backstrom, Sean Lorre, and Farley Miller; and to my research assistants Jennifer Messelink and Kaiya Smith-Blackburn. I also thank JSAM editor David Garcia and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. This research was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

¹ Jules Siegel, “Beatles, Teen Music: Requiescat in Pace—That's Where It's At,” *Village Voice*, September 1, 1966, 14.

in terms of the aesthetic and critical values shared by musicians, listeners, and journalists.² By January 1967, participants in the field of popular music could find music of greater formal complexity, with a large range of improvisatory techniques, more experimentation with electronics and new techniques of sound recording (especially *musique concrète*), the increasing use of modes and drones, pitch ornamentation associated with Indian music and music of the “East” more generally, and greater diversity of instrumentation.³ Changes in song lyrics also displayed a more self-conscious poetic quality focused on philosophical concerns, spiritual quests, and forms of altered consciousness, be they allusions to intense transformative experiences associated with romantic love, or to altered states of mind associated with psychedelic drugs.

Of the stylistic elements listed above, improvisation played a particularly important role. Contributing to the increased amount of improvisation in popular music was the cross-fertilization of many genres of music that were, up until this time, outside of popular music, but which, by the end of 1966, had become a part of it. Many of these non-popular genres of music featured types of improvisation that had been heretofore quite rare in post-1955 popular music. Such improvisatory practices, associated with Indian classical music, jazz, blues, and contemporary art music, would become a constitutive aspect of one branch of popular music, rock.⁴

² The focus on 1966 in this article is a methodological nod to the historiographical practice of “annualism” used primarily by literary scholars. For a short sample, see Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); North, “Virtual Histories: The Year as Literary Period,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (December 2001): 407–24; and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In 1926: Living at the Edge of Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). A few fellow travelers have proclaimed the importance of 1966: Brian McHale, looking across the arts and different media, argues that it was the year when postmodernism began (“1966 Nervous Breakdown; or, When Did Postmodernism Begin?,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 69, no. 3 [September 2008]: 391–413); for Jon Savage—focused on 45 rpm popular music singles, the histories that open up from these, and their synchronicity with historical events—“1966 was the sixties peak, the year the decade exploded,” and “a year when audacious ideas and experiments were at a premium in the mass market and in youth culture” (Savage, *1966: The Year the Decade Exploded* [London: Faber and Faber, 2015], xi).

³ For overviews of the influence of Indian music on rock, see Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 168–200; David B. Reck, “Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Form,” *Asian Music* 15, no. 1 (1985): 83–150; Jonathan Bellman, “Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965–1968,” in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 292–306; and Brian Ireland and Sharif Gemie, “Raga Rock: Popular Music and the Turn to the East in the 1960s,” *Journal of American Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019): 57–94. Ravi Shankar’s recollections of this period (which includes the statement, “What I call the great sitar explosion began in early 1966”) may be found in his *My Music, My Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 92–95.

⁴ The concept of improvisation as used in this article should be understood as existing along a spectrum of practices, from the spontaneous variations in rhythm, phrasing and pitch inflection that occur with notated music, to music in which no parameters are explicitly agreed upon beforehand. A large literature exists in improvisation studies that explores the cultural value of improvisation, and how improvisation as a practice is defined in opposition to “non-improvisation,” which is frequently encapsulated in the concept of composition. Such an opposition is characterized by Bruno Nettl as creating a “continuum of improvisation” (“Introduction: An Art Neglected in Scholarship,” in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998], 6). For further discussion of meta-issues around improvisation, see Stephen Blum, “Recognizing Improvisation,” in *In the Course of Performance*, 27–45; Stephen Blum, “Representations of Music Making,” in *Musical Improvisation:*

In parallel with these musical developments, changes occurred in the audience, media, and performance setting for certain forms of popular music. One of the most significant of these changes involved a group of young intellectuals in the United States who attempted to create a new mode of music criticism that responded to (and, in turn, influenced) these musical-social developments. According to one of their cohort, these critics were responding to the “patterns rock has learned to speak without words . . . in ways that words never could.”⁵ The development of a mode of criticism specific to popular music, as well as self-conscious musical dialogues between popular musicians and references to popular music among avant-garde artists working in other media, created a mechanism for legitimizing certain forms of popular music.⁶ The shift in critical value responded to the growth in formal variety and instrumental competence that formed a part of the expansion of improvisation in rock. Rock music became the dominant musical genre for white, middle-class youth in the United States during this period, in part because of its economic success, but also in part due to its growth in cultural prestige.

The reference to a connection between a type of music and a demographic group leads to the following proposition: music genres circulate more than a mere stylistic combination of sounds; they also connote categories of people, a property that is strikingly clear in the case of popular music genres.⁷ As will become clear from the following discussion, the consolidation of rock as a type of popular music also came with an increasingly clear association of rock with a white, male, middle-class demographic. Such an association marked a dramatic shift with the previous genres to which rock owed the clearest allegiance: rock ’n’ roll and the urban folk revival.⁸ The relative cultural prestige of rock music and, hence, its cultural

Art, Education, and Society, ed. Gabriel Solis and Bruno Nettle (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 239–62; Bruno Nettle, “Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach,” *Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (1974): 1–19.

⁵ Sandy Pearlman, “Patterns and Sounds: The Uses of Raga in Rock,” *Crawdaddy!* 7 (January 1967): 10.

⁶ Brian McHale discusses the “intra-art” dialogues among popular musicians and the increasing references to rock in other avant-garde media in “1966 Nervous Breakdown,” 401–2. For previous studies of the emergence of rock criticism, see Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002); Ulf Lindberg et al., *Rock Criticism from the Beginning: Amusers, Bruisers, & Cool-Headed Cruisers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005); Steve Jones, ed., *Pop Music and the Press* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Devon Powers, *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); and Laura Sikes, “In the Groove: American Rock Criticism, 1966–1978” (PhD Diss., University of Rochester, 2017).

⁷ For more on this property of popular music genres, see Georgina Born, “Music and the Materialization of Identities,” *Journal of Material Culture* 16, no. 4 (2011): 376–88; David Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 16–27; David Hesmondhalgh, “Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes? None of the Above,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 8, no. 1 (2005): 21–40; Fabian Holt, *Genre in Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Robin James, “Is the Post- in Post-Identity the Post- in Post-Genre,” *Popular Music* 36, no. 1 (2017): 21–32; Keith Negus, *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1999); and Jason Toynbee, *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity and Institutions* (London: Arnold, 2000).

⁸ The approach to popular music genres taken here, in addition to analyzing their propensity to connote group identities, is *relational*. That is, genres are not understood to consist of music-stylistic essences but rather to become legible via their relations to other genres. Arguments for a relational

dominance relied on and reinforced the implied dominance of its associated audience, as well as on the simultaneous obviousness and invisibility of this connection. At the same time, the importance of improvisation and instrumental prowess was established via a chain of associations that linked rock with types of music outside the popular music field. These non-rock genres thus also brought with them associations with people outside of the dominant rock demographic, an element that I will argue was crucial to the critical value they acquired in 1966 and the period thereafter. The consolidation of rock's association with white identity relied on evocations of exoticized otherness even as it reduced the diversity of actual physical participants.

This article explores the interrelationship of musical practices, journalistic discourse, and racial politics. A presentation of a framework for analyzing politics, race, and genre will be followed by a survey of recordings emphasizing new modes of improvisation, after which I will turn to a discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's formulation of "symbolic capital" and how this concept illuminates the formation of rock criticism.

Rock and Race: Towards a Politics of Improvisation?

The separation of rock from the rest of popular music relied on an aura of greater cultural prestige or "symbolic capital" (i.e., the value of an art work independent of its economic value), on its citation of a range of previous musics, on a negative relation to other types of popular music (such as R&B, country, mainstream pop, easy listening, etc.), and on a critical apparatus, developed in part as a response to a perceived increase in formal and technical complexity. Yet another element formed a crucial part of what differentiated rock from other popular genres at this time: the adoption of particular musical techniques from sources outside of folk, pop, and early rock 'n' roll. Musicians, critics, and fans derived expressive authenticity in rock music from realms beyond mass taste: in jazz, in high art, and in the classical music of the East. The attitude adopted by rock musicians did not insist merely on autonomy from mass taste and commerce, as in the urban folk revival, but also, on occasion, on autonomy from the demands of pleasing an audience as well. That is, unlike folk, part of the value of rock derived from the challenge, or difficulty, of this music.⁹ The challenge of this music to audiences demanded an increased focus on the music's aesthetic qualities, which ranged in style from the experimental yet still

understanding of genre may be found in the following: John Frow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 2006); Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*; Eric Drott, "The End(s) of Genre" *Journal of Music Theory*, 57, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 1–45; Steve Waksman, *This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Holt, *Genre in Popular Music*; Matt Brennan, *When Genres Collide: Down Beat, Rolling Stone, and the Struggle Between Jazz and Rock* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017); and Kevin Fellez, *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁹ For a critical account from the late 1960s of the value of difficulty in popular music, see Ellen Willis, "Musical Events—Records, Rock, etc.," *New Yorker* (July 6, 1968): 56–58. See also Keir Keightley's analysis of rock music as an "anti-mass mass form" in "Reconsidering Rock," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* ed. Frith, Straw, and Street, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 109–42.

extremely popular music of the Beatles to the occasionally confrontational manipulation of noise by the Velvet Underground.

The “art-for-art’s-sake” ideology of rock underscores and complements the important distinction between urban folk and rock in the role of politics. These two genres were fairly similar in terms of the makeup of audiences and performers, consisting as they did largely of a white, middle-class, college-educated or college-age demographic, although rock limited the age range with its emphasis on “youth.” Despite demographic similarities between musicians and audience members, the two genres generated very different processes of identification. A strong strain of urban folk was explicitly political, with important performers playing active roles in the civil rights movement in the United States. The Newport Folk Festivals of the early 1960s presented themselves as models of harmony and integration in terms of both race and gender. The urban folk revival also included many significant participants who were either women, African American, or both.

In contrast with this, rock circa 1966 eschewed an explicit political agenda, its social rebellion marked primarily by liberal attitudes towards drugs and sex and by anti-materialism, in which politics were linked with a more generalized social rebellion. While the range of engagements with music outside the popular music mainstream expanded in rock, the demographic diversity of the physical participants declined, marking the emergence of identifications that could be understood as imaginary or exoticist.¹⁰ Yet diversity returned in a variety of ways, primarily in the form of an eclecticism that located aesthetic and spiritual value in musical practices coming from elsewhere (in terms of geography or cultural hierarchy).

The shift from urban folk to rock thus occurred across several registers: musical, aesthetic, and social. The changes in how these categories of music related to (and evoked) categories of people was anything but straightforward. We can view the relationships between genres and their racialized associations as taking place along a spectrum of possibilities, as Georgina Born has argued, from those that are either homologous (i.e., a genre of music evokes an extant demographic group and is presumed to have a direct, one-to-one relationship with it) or primarily fantasized, such as those involved in exoticism. In-between these two poles lie two other ways of conceptualizing music-identity relations: a nostalgic or retroactive relation, in which an identification is mapped onto the past, as in what occurs with many nationalist uses of folk music; and imaginary identifications that prefigure an emergent, and potentially homologous, social grouping.¹¹

¹⁰ While this aspect of rock largely passed without notice, early in 1966 a debate erupted in the *New York Times* in response to an article by Robert Shelton that included one of the earliest reviews of a “folk-rock” album (“On Records: The Folk-Rock Rage,” *New York Times* [January 30, 1966]). The debate took the form of an exchange between the editor of *Sing Out!*, Irwin Silber—who decried the “whiteness” of folk-rock—and Shelton, Nat Hentoff, and Paul Nelson (an early defender of Bob Dylan’s move to performing and recording with amplified instruments)—who supported the transition away from the urban folk revival on the basis of artistic growth. See “A Symposium: Is Folk Rock Really ‘White Rock?’” *New York Times* (February 20, 1966).

¹¹ Georgina Born, “Music and the Representation/Articulation of Sociocultural Identities,” and “Techniques of the Musical Imaginary,” in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 31–47.

Another factor in Western music that relies on an encounter with a real or imagined other is how a musical event models the social relations that produce it, and how this event is inflected by the power relations between the actors involved with it. Thus, it follows that not all encounters between Western and non-Western musicians are equally appropriative or exploitative.¹²

The specter of exoticism, especially in relation to largely fantasized notions of the “East,” evokes the concept of Orientalism as theorized famously by Edward Said.¹³ Said analyzed several centuries worth of colonial discourse for how it reified ideas about the “East” and the “Orient.” This discourse was produced across an array of institutional sites, including military journals, literature, and academic writing. Subsequent discussion and criticism of Said has not challenged the description of the stereotypes that Said detailed; rather, it has shifted the discussion to the process through which such stereotypes are produced; or, in the words of Homi Bhabha, to “an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse,”¹⁴ and how the idea of the Orient as Other results from an ambivalent, conflictual economy within European discourse itself. Other approaches have analyzed colonial discourse as a mixture of desire and disavowal, as resulting from the interactions of the colonized with the colonizer, and as a technique for solidifying concepts of the West.¹⁵

Several of these tropes were clearly in play during the period in which the predominantly white, male musicians from the United States and the United Kingdom produced the identity-genre category of rock music. Most prominent among them is the use of the “other” to solidify a sense of the “self.” At the same time, as indicated above in the discussion of music-identity possibilities, the “othered” music—in this case, Indian classical music, jazz, blues, and avant-garde art music—is not necessarily only an empty result of a “negative” relation. Varying degrees of engagement with music imbued with difference demonstrate how these types of music exhibit their own positivity, and do not merely exist as the negative other of white-identified music.¹⁶ The events discussed in this article

¹² Here I follow the work of ethnomusicologists in the 1990s on “World Music” who called for an analysis of cultural appropriation in terms of the specific social relations responsible for a collaboration between a Western and a non-Western musician, the actions of the participants, and the ways in which the “othered” music is represented in a particular performance or recording. See, for example, Steven Feld, “From Schizophonia to Schismogenesis: On the Discourses and Commodification Practices of ‘World Music’ and ‘World Beat,’” in *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues*, ed. Charles Keil and Steven Feld (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 257–89; Veit Erlmann, “The Aesthetics of the Global Imagination: Reflections on World Music in the 1990s,” *Public Culture* 8, no. 3 (1996): 467–87; Timothy D. Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

¹⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 67.

¹⁵ For responses to Said, see Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, especially 66–92; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 255–76; Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990), 119–56; and Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), 159–219.

¹⁶ Lawrence Grossberg, in his discussion of Said, proposes that the Occident and the Orient each possess their own “positivity” in *Bringing It All Back Home: Essays on Cultural Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 353.

cannot help but allude to Orientalism as a persistent historical construct. The emphasis here, however, will not be on the truth or falsity of a given stereotypical representation but rather on the specific ways in which these case studies facilitate an “an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse.”¹⁷

One further point can be illustrated by referring to some of the larger historical currents of the period. The post–World War II period in general, and the 1960s in particular, could be viewed as a period of decolonization and neo-colonialism.¹⁸ As such, awareness of formerly colonized people took on a higher profile among those who may have identified with former colonizers. Another material factor was the greater flow of people from former colonies to European and North American metropolises, a development that facilitated encounters between people who were previously separated, and one that played a role in several of the stories to follow.

Raga Rock, Jazz Rock, Psychedelic Rock: A History of Sound Recordings

The Raga Rock Connection

Beginning in 1966 a group of rock sub-genres expanded the role of improvisation, attracting attention from and becoming held in the highest esteem by critics. These sub-genres now go by the name of blues rock, psychedelic rock, jazz rock, progressive rock, and raga rock. Of these, by far the most recognized by name at the time was raga rock.

Raga rock was a diverse genre. Prominent among these recordings were the Beatles’ take on North Indian “light classical” music in tunes written by George Harrison, such as “Love You Too” (1966), “Within You, Without You,” “Blue Jay Way” (both 1967), and “The Inner Light” (1968). While partaking of the distinctive rhythmic and melodic practices of Indian music, these tunes featured little improvisation, except for melodic ornamentation of a pre-composed melody. The Beatles presented another approach in “Norwegian Wood” (1965), their first recording to use a sitar. In this song, the band substituted a sitar playing a part that could have easily been played by a guitar in a song whose only other connection to South Asian music might be its modal quality in the verse sections of the tune. In this respect, songs such as “Norwegian Wood” represent the strain of raga-rock that uses instruments such as the sitar to provide a novel instrumental timbre to what is otherwise a fairly standard pop-rock song of the period.¹⁹ Another device would be the use of modally derived ornamentation, such as that found in the fade-out to the Beatles’ “I Want to Tell You” (1966). Yet another strain of raga-rock

¹⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 67.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the 1960s in these terms, see Fredric Jameson, “Periodizing the 60s,” in *The Ideologies of Theory, Essays 1971–1986, Volume 2: The Syntax of History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 178–208.

¹⁹ For a more detailed account of the sitar in popular music during this period, see Farley Miller, “Popular Music and Instrument Technology in an Electronic Age, 1960–1969” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2018), 170–94.

blends with the beginnings of another rock sub-genre, psychedelic rock: in a song like “Tomorrow Never Knows” (1966) drones and tamburas combine with an overtly experimental, electronic texture featuring *musique concrète* and other forms of sound processing to create a kind of pop avant-garde.

The Kinks’ “See My Friends” (released July 1965) also features in discussions of the beginnings of raga rock. This song, like many of the others discussed here, relies on drones, the mixolydian mode, and vocal slides evoking a generalized “Eastern” musical trope. Another mode of otherness, queer sexuality, is also evoked by “See My Friends,” a topic that would have been absolutely verboten within the discourse of popular music in 1965. This use of stylistic features with exotic connotations illustrates how exoticism could act as a conduit for sexual, as well as racial, otherness.²⁰ For our purposes here, however, the most interesting forms of raga rock, in terms of its contribution to the growth of improvisation in rock, were found in the work of other popular musicians of the time, including the Byrds and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band.

For example, the sources of the Byrds’ “Eight Miles High” (released March 1966) exemplify the multiple paths through which extended improvisation entered the world of rock in early 1966. The Byrds recorded “Eight Miles High” following a tour during which the group listened repeatedly to the virtuosi Ravi Shankar and John Coltrane.²¹ One of the tracks in heavy rotation in the bands’ van was Coltrane’s “India,” which Coltrane recorded after a period of study of North Indian music and religion.²²

The improvisational sections of “Eight Miles High” borrow from the opening motive of Coltrane’s “India,” and the Byrds’ bass player, Chris Hillman, plausibly derived his part from the alternating perfect fifths played by Coltrane’s bass player, Jimmy Garrison. However, the Byrds’ recording simplifies the harmonic relationship between melody and drone: Coltrane’s initial melodic motive, C–A–F unfolds over a drone on G, making these pitches the implied eleventh, ninth, and seventh of an imaginary chord built in thirds above the bass (see [Example 1](#)—the brackets

²⁰ Jonathan Bellman stresses the significance of “See My Friends,” as well as the idea of a shared interest in South Asian and Middle Eastern musical resources, and the connotations of various forms of otherness in “Indian Resonances.” On the queerness of “See My Friends,” see Bellman, “Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965–1968,” 302; and Jon Savage, *The Kinks: The Official Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 60.

²¹ The Byrds discussed this in a press conference for the release of “Eight Miles High,” in which they labeled their music “raga rock,” appeared with a sitar (which they did not play on the recording), and described the influence of Indian music, J. S. Bach, and John Coltrane. Sally Kempton, “Raga Rock: It’s Not Moonlight on the Ganges,” *Village Voice* (March 31, 1966): 23–24. See also Christopher Hjort, *So You Want to Be a Rock ‘n’ Roll Star: The Byrds Day by Day 1965–1973* (London: Jawbone Press, 2008), 88–90. A transcript of the Byrds’ March 1966 press conference can be found in the liner notes to the Byrds’ *Another Dimension* (Sundazed Records SEP2 10–168, 2005). For a scholarly account of the reaction to “Eight Miles High” based on allegations of drug references, see Mark Teehan, “The Byrds, ‘Eight Miles High,’ the Gavin Report, and Media Censorship of Alleged ‘Drug Songs’ in 1966: An Assessment,” *Popular Musicology Online* (2010), <http://www.popular-musicology-online.com/issues/04/teehan.html>.

²² For more on Coltrane’s engagement with the music of North India, see Eric Nisenson, *Ascension: John Coltrane and His Quest* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 107–14, 124–25; and Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 300–302.

G mixolydian
♩ = 188

Soprano Sax

11 — 9-7

5

Example 1. John Coltrane, “India,” opening, 0:12–0:19.

outline the motive); the Byrds retain the intervallic relationship but transpose it to D–B–G, and play this over a drone on E, creating relationships of a seventh, fifth, and third (see [Example 2](#)). In terms of rhythm, “Eight Miles High” replaces the ambling, polyrhythmic swing of Coltrane’s recording with a faster tempo and a somewhat simpler groove, albeit one that was unusual for the rock music of the era. Coltrane’s rhythmically elusive phrases are replaced by rhythms that fall more squarely on the beat, although the Byrds’ guitarist, Roger (then Jim) McGuinn comes closer in the second phrase to some of Coltrane’s rhythmic complexity (and the melodic motive is now transposed to emphasize the eleventh, ninth, and seventh as in Coltrane’s opening), including flurries that suggest Coltrane’s famed “sheets of sound” approach to rhythm.²³

These efforts at musical expansion resulted in novel approaches to rock performance practice of the time. McGuinn’s solos, and the rest of the band’s playing during these sections, suggest a profound reorientation of the group compared to what they had recorded previously. These open-ended solo sections, which are based on two alternating chords that project the Dorian mode in E, reveal the influence of Coltrane’s approach to songs such as “My Favorite Things” or “Afro Blue” and are a far cry from the previous instrumental interludes played by the group. The Byrds’ earlier guitar solos had more or less followed the rock ‘n’ roll convention of improvising over the harmonic progression of the verse and/or chorus of the song, while the other instrumentalists in the band closely mimicked the parts played as accompaniment to the vocals.

“Eight Miles High,” labeled “raga-rock” and “jazz-rock” at the time, also provides an excellent example of the iterative process in the production of genre.²⁴ For

²³ The term “sheets of sound” is often credited to critic Ira Gitler in his liner notes to Coltrane’s album *Soultrane* (Prestige LP 7142, 1958). Coltrane himself explained how the asymmetrical grouping in his phrasing from that period resulted from trying to imply harmonic density in a limited span of time (John Coltrane with Don DeMicheal, “Coltrane on Coltrane,” *Down Beat* [September 29, 1960]: 26–27). See also the discussion in Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1998), 132–34.

²⁴ By “iterative process in the production of genre,” I am referring to how a recording is heard to participate in a genre in part due to how it cites the conventions of genres that precede it. Genres thus come into being via a process of repetition and difference, in which conventions previously associated with other genres are cited with enough regularity that they gradually acquire their own label. For more on the iterative process in the production of genre, see Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 11–15. On the role

E dorian
♩ = 132

Electric 12-String Guitar

8 7 — 5 - 3 7 - 5 - 3 11-9-7

Example 2. The Byrds, "Eight Miles High," opening, 0:10–0:16.

instance, the use of modal improvisation over unchanging harmony and a drone can be traced to both South Asian classical music and to modal jazz (through both aural evidence and the accounts of participants in the recording), as well as to earlier folk and rock artists such as Sandy Bull (heard in his *Fantasias* from 1963) and the Yardbirds. The harmony vocals draw on the Byrds' own previous work, as well as that of the Beatles and traditions of shape-note vocal harmonizing from the US South. The lyrics draw on the surrealism of Bob Dylan's work, which in turn draws upon Beat poetry. The instrumentation cites the makeup of a rock 'n' roll band that had become standard since the early 1960s with surf groups and the Beach Boys, followed by the Beatles, which in turn drew upon the ensembles led by electric guitars found in R&B and honky-tonk/Western swing ensembles of the 1940s.

The Byrds' "Eight Miles High" figures prominently in histories of psychedelic rock and acid rock as a foundational moment, yet only a few months following its release, the Butterfield Blues Band released a recording with similar influences that has received much less attention.²⁵ This recording, *East-West* (released August 1966), represented a significant departure from the Butterfield Blues Band's only previous album, *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band*, released in October 1965, which featured tight, swinging electric blues numbers. The instrumental solo sections of the earlier album contained no more than three choruses, and none of the recordings lasted longer than four-and-a-half minutes. *East-West* continued the previous album's focus on the blues while expanding into adjacent genres, including Indian classical music, proto-soul and proto-funk, soul jazz, and rock. The title track of *East-West* lasts over thirteen minutes (live versions could last up to one-half hour) and presents its own ambitious synthesis of disparate musics.

In addition to Indian musical influences, the recording blends bossa nova-derived rhythms with group interactions adapted from small jazz groups and long textural buildups reminiscent of the rave-ups (discussed below) of British bands such as the Yardbirds. A section from the end of guitarist Michael

of repetition and difference in the process of genre formation, see Stephen Neale, *Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1980), 48–51; and Jason Toynebee, *Making Popular Music*, 106–7.

²⁵ Strangely enough, at almost the precise moment that the Butterfield Band was recording *East-West* in July 1966, Ravi Shankar was recording an album with Yehudi Menuhin that would be released in January 1967 with the title, *West Meets East*. For background on this collaboration, see Shankar, *My Music*, 85. A continued interest in Indian classical music by jazz musicians is illustrated by another 1966 recording: the UK release of *Indo-Jazz Suite* by the Joe Harriott Double Quintet under the direction of John Mayer, an Indian violinist. The recording featured the Jamaican-born Harriott's free jazz quintet, and a quintet of classically trained Indian musicians (Fellesz, *Birds of Fire*, 125).

Bloomfield's first solo in "East-West," beginning at about 5:00, displays faux-raga inspired guitar lines, tambura-like drones by the second guitar (played by Elvin Bishop), and a frenzied crescendo abetted by the harp (harmonica) work of Paul Butterfield. Scalar passages influenced by a conglomeration of Middle Eastern, Arabic, and South Asian musics serve as the basis for several sections of improvisation. In addition to the modal/scalar quality (in what sounds like the Phrygian mode on D with a raised third scale degree), the prominent use of the augmented second, slides and microtonal ornaments convey a sense of "Eastern-ness" (see [Example 3](#); augmented seconds are outlined by brackets). Other passages are derived from minor-based modes, such as the Dorian mode; and the emphasis on pitches implying extended chord tones, such as the ninth and eleventh, recall the pitch selection of artists such as Miles Davis on a track like "So What" from the Davis Sextet's epochal 1959 album, *Kind of Blue*. As reminiscences of participants make clear, the Butterfield band's tour of the West Coast in early 1966 and their relatively advanced abilities as improvisers played a major role in the spread of improvisational practices, and in the blending of blues, jazz, and classical Indian music, especially in the San Francisco Bay area.²⁶

The different examples of music indebted to South Asian music and using extended improvisation display a range of identifications. John Coltrane's "India" and George Harrison's Beatle recordings clearly exhibited an emergent form of identification with Indian music through these musicians' long-term investment in the music and its attendant spiritual practices to the point where what may have initially sounded exotic became absorbed into the music associated with these artists. In regards to Harrison, Ravi Shankar himself noted that "I have accepted George as my disciple. He is not at all like other pop musicians."²⁷ A significant difference between Harrison and Coltrane is that Coltrane could not benefit from his "discovery" of this raw material from the East to nearly the same degree as Harrison, due to the far more limited circulation of the genre ("jazz," or "modal jazz," or "avant-garde jazz") in which he participated. Harrison, on the other hand, was a member of the most successful group of pop musicians in the world up to that point. Having said that, Harrison used his resources to try to raise awareness of Indian classical music, promoting Shankar in concerts and recordings and displaying a lifelong commitment to the music and to Indian spiritual practices.

However sincere the enthusiasm of the Byrds, the Yardbirds, or Bloomfield might have been, the history of their encounter seems superficial and opportunistic by comparison. Quotes from the musicians involved reveal attitudes that could be read as exoticist. For example, the experience of Butterfield guitarist Michael Bloomfield with Indian music, contrasted mightily with the approaches of Coltrane and Harrison. The Butterfield Band's keyboard player, Mark Naftalin presents the following description of the genesis of the song, "East-West": "Mike sequestered himself for a few hours. . . . Around daybreak he joined me. . . . This

²⁶ For an oral history account of Michael Bloomfield's life and career, see Jan Mark Wolkin and Bill Keenom, *Michael Bloomfield—If You Love These Blues: An Oral History* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman Books, 2000), 119–31.

²⁷ Richard Goldstein, "Pop Eye: Ravi and the Teenie Satori," *Village Voice*, January 5, 1967, 24.

Electric Guitar $\text{♩} = 152$

Example 3. Butterfield Blues Band, “East-West,” 5:47–6:07.

was when he told me that he had had a revelation and that he now understood how Indian music worked. On our next gigs, while we were still in Boston, we began performing the improvisation we called ‘The Raga’ for a while, until it was given the name: ‘East-West’.²⁸ The study of Indian classical music, frequently assumed to require at least twenty years of intense practice to acquire proficiency, is condensed into a single evening (although, to be fair, Bloomfield, in his own statements, was extremely modest when comparing his abilities to great blues, jazz, and Indian musicians). Along similar lines, guitarist Jeff Beck described “mass hysteria in the studio” when he recorded the solo to the Yardbirds’ “Shapes of Things”: “They weren’t expecting it and it was just some weird mist coming from the East out of an amp. Giorgio [Gomelsky, the producer] was freaking out and dancing about like some tribal witch doctor.”²⁹

The Rave-Up, Blues Rock, and the Blues Raga Connection

The Butterfield Blues Band’s background in electrified Chicago blues and their connection to the rave-ups associated with the Yardbirds suggest two other important strands in this genealogy, one connected specifically to the Yardbirds, and the other

²⁸ Wolkin and Keenom, *Michael Bloomfield*, 116. Bloomfield’s own statements on the matter are less naïve, stressing the influence of John Coltrane, and Coltrane’s own explorations of North Indian music, recalling the influences adumbrated by the Byrds.

²⁹ Alan Perna, *Guitar Masters: Intimate Portraits* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2012), e-book.

encompassing a broad range of artists who shared an approach to improvisation. The first of these is the engagement of white musicians with various forms of electrified blues and rhythm and blues (R&B) on both sides of the Atlantic. Blues recordings by white musicians in the United Kingdom, many of whom would figure prominently in discussions of rock music a few years later, predated by several years their white counterparts in the United States, such as the Butterfield Blues Band.

Unlike the members of the Butterfield Blues Band, who were either African American participants in the Chicago electric blues scene (e.g., Sam Lay, Jerome Arnold, and Billy Davenport), or younger white musicians whose initial musical affiliations were guided by an attraction to that scene (e.g., Paul Butterfield, Mark Naftalin, Nick Gravenites, Elvin Bishop, and Michael Bloomfield), many of the British musicians who began performing electric blues in the early 1960s arrived at the genre via “trad jazz,” a British category akin to “New Orleans” or “Dixieland” jazz in the United States. Within this scene, both the folk/country blues and then urban/electric blues were accepted as part of a complex of African American-associated genres.³⁰ The initial attitude toward electric blues shared much with the folkloristic purism associated with white aficionados of folk blues in the United States. A group of younger musicians, many of whom gained their initial public performance experiences through participation in this scene, however, did not share this conservationist sensibility. Alexis Korner’s Blues Incorporated featured a veritable “Who’s Who” of British blues rock musicians who would later achieve global notoriety, including members of what would become the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, Fleetwood Mac, Cream, and many others.³¹

The Yardbirds form one of the earliest and strongest links between the different threads discussed thus far. Deriving their name from their admiration for bebop virtuoso, Charlie “Yardbird” Parker, their earliest recordings show them strongly rooted in the British R&B scene. *Five Live Yardbirds* (recorded in March 1964) consists almost entirely of 12-bar blues or blues-based songs based on a repeating riff and unchanging harmony. A remarkable recording for the era, several of the tracks exceed the then-almost-unassailable 3:30-time barrier for popular music by featuring extended improvisations, usually led by either Eric Clapton on electric guitar or by vocalist/harmonica player Keith Relf. Although some of these songs, such as the slow blues “Five Long Years,” follow the practice of African American blues musicians established (both in live performances and recordings dating back several

³⁰ For more on this history, see Roberta Freund Schwartz, *How Britain Got the Blues: The Transmission and Reception of American Blues Style in the United Kingdom* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2007); and Sean Lorre, “British R&B: A Study of Black Popular Music Revivalism in the United Kingdom, 1960–1964” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2017). For a historical account from 1966 that detailed the importance of the British blues musicians for the current rock scene in the United States, see David Harris, “The British Blues Scene,” *Mojo Navigator* 1, no. 12 (December 22, 1966): 1–3.

³¹ For an example of this blend of blues purism with a practical attitude toward commercialism, see Giorgio Gomelsky, “The Rolling Stones Stake a Claim in the R&B Race (Part One),” *Jazzbeat* (January 1964): 22–23; and Gomelsky, “The Rolling Stones Stake a Claim in the R&B Race (Part Two),” *Jazzbeat* (February 1964), 24. Both articles are reprinted in *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*, 4th ed., ed. David Brackett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 216–19.

years) by artists like B. B. King, one of the most innovative features of these extended tracks was what came to be called the rave-up. Often occurring over an unchanging single chord, or a rapid alternation of two chords, the rave-up featured rhythmic intensification in all the instruments, often moving to a double-time effect, resulting in a build-up that was then resolved by returning to the original tempo.

One of the main sources of this practice can be found in the work of Bo Diddley, whose songs “I’m a Man” and “Here ’Tis” were given the rave-up treatment on *Five Live Yardbirds*, along with “Respectable,” an Isley Brothers song that was played by the Yardbirds with the “Bo Diddley” rhythm derived from the R&B master’s famous eponymous 1955 hit.³² In addition to the Bo Diddley-influenced numbers, songs based on a one-chord blues-riff, such as Howlin’ Wolf’s “Smokestack Lightning,” which was also recorded on *Five Live Yardbirds*, were to play a role in the extended improvisations of other rock bands during the 1965–66 period.

The Yardbirds, beginning with the replacement of Eric Clapton by Jeff Beck, began to merge their interest in extended improvisation over unchanging harmony with an interest in “Eastern” musical sounds featuring modal harmony and drones. One of the first and most widely circulated examples of musical elements that were heard as “Indian” in a popular music recording was the Yardbirds’ “Heart Full of Soul” (released June 1965). Beck used a “tone-bender” distortion device to produce something that may have recalled the sound of a sitar for some. In fact, the band first attempted to use a sitar to play the part eventually played by Beck, only to abandon it when they encountered difficulty achieving a decent recorded sound. The track begins with Beck’s “tone-bender” guitar accompanied by a percussion instrument that sounds like a tabla but could also be bongos, and the melody has a modal quality. The band’s interest in Eastern-associated sounds continued with “Shapes of Things” (released February 1966), and “Over, Under, Sideways, Down” (released May 1966), both of which used fuzz tone on the guitar, modes created by the alternation of two chords or unchanging harmony, and lyrics that refer to some sort of psychic transformation.

The point here is not to posit an origin for raga-rock, but rather to observe that many musicians were interested in similar musical elements associated with South Asia and the Middle East, and that these in turn acquired (or brought with them) connotations of exoticism, spirituality, experimentalism, psychic interiority, and alternative sexualities. These interests overlapped with musical practices derived from African American musics, such as the blues and one-chord rhythmic patterns associated with Bo Diddley.

Droning On: Western Art Music—Avant-Garde or Otherwise

In addition to Indian classical music, jazz, and blues, Western art music—in the form of both historical idioms and the post-war avant-garde—also played a role in the newfound focus on improvisation in rock music. The Yardbirds again took

³² William Echard discusses rave-ups as one of a bundle of topics that contribute to the Yardbirds’ psychedelic sound in *Psychedelic Popular Music: A History through Musical Topic Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 49–53.

the lead: their “Still I’m Sad” (released October 1965) references medieval music.³³ As with South Asian music (or “Eastern” music more broadly), the Beatles attracted the most attention for their incorporation of Western art music. “In My Life” (from *Rubber Soul*, released December 1965), for example, cites a kind of figuration associated with Baroque keyboard music in the middle instrumental section. “Eleanor Rigby” (from *Revolver*, released August 1966) employs a modernist-influenced arrangement for string octet derived from Bernard Herrmann’s score for the film *Psycho*.³⁴ The Byrds also participated in this trend: in “She Don’t Care About Time” (released October 1965), Roger McGuinn bases his guitar solo on a quotation of the melody from the last movement of the Bach cantata, *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV 147 (popularly known as “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”).

The influences of Western art music thus far described made themselves felt in ways that were not necessarily related to the growth of improvisation. These influences could extend beyond the individual song: artists such as Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys absorbed musical values associated with Western art music, such as cyclic unity, harmonic complexity, formal irregularity, timbral experimentation and textural variety. This development can be traced from the Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* (released in May 1966), sometimes called the first “concept album” due to how the songs on the album seem related to one another and to trace a coherent narrative.

This use of pre-twentieth-century art music sources resembles the use of Indian classical music in that it is an attempt to create or locate musical value in the use of non-rock genres that are outside the ambit of early rock ’n’ roll or blues. In some of these cases, as in the references to medieval music, the Western art music in question predates “functional” harmony, thus sharing much with the drones of South Asian music, and the one-chord blues-based songs with unchanging harmony that served as a basis for rave-ups and modal jazz.

In addition to the Beatles’ “Tomorrow Never Knows,” *musique concrète* had already appeared in other recordings released in 1966, including (most prominently) Frank Zappa’s *Freak Out!* The use of *musique concrète* points to another important element in the citations of Western art music in the popular music of the time: the flirtation with elements of the avant-garde. A brief discussion of two groups—the Grateful Dead and the Velvet Underground—will help tease out the sometimes-subliminal effect of the avant-garde on the associations then forming between Western art music and types of music associated with improvisation, including South Asian music, jazz, blues, bluegrass, and country music.³⁵

³³ Echard terms this reference to medieval music the “Gregorian chant topic” (see Echard, *Psychedelic Popular Music*, 37).

³⁴ Producer George Martin was originally quoted as saying he was inspired by Herrmann’s score for *Fahrenheit 451*. As that film had not yet been released at the time “Eleanor Rigby” was recorded, he later emended his statement to credit *Psycho*, an earlier score by Herrmann from 1960. See Mark Lewisohn, *The Beatles: Recording Sessions* (New York: Harmony, 1988), 77; and interview for the PBS documentary, *Soundbreaking: Stories from the Cutting Edge of Recorded Music* (Silver Spring, MD: Athena, 2016).

³⁵ See also Doyle Greene’s account of the relationship between rock and the avant-garde during this period, focused on the Beatles, Zappa, and the Velvet Underground (but not the Grateful

A comparison between a Velvet Underground recording such as “European Son” and a Grateful Dead tune from the same time, such as “Viola Lee Blues” (both released in March 1967 but performed and recorded in 1966) reveals a good number of similarities, particularly in the near-atonal, improvised climaxes of both songs. The difference lies more in the way of arriving at these sounds: for the Velvet Underground, the path runs through avant-garde minimalism and the rejection of conventional virtuosity; a group like the Dead arrives at noise through the evolution of dissonance within a trajectory of increasing musical complexity during a performance. The connection with the Dead is highlighted here because statements from those associated with the Velvet Underground about their total rejection of West Coast psychedelia are so often taken at face value. While there may have indeed been an ideological rejection, often musicians operating during the same period share practices that only become obvious retroactively.

As much as one can point to differences in context—the nascent “peace and love” ethos of the San Francisco counterculture versus the ironic cool of Andy Warhol’s Factory with which the Velvet Underground were associated—one can also find striking resemblances in connection with avant-garde composition and performance art. John Cale of the Velvet Underground collaborated with John Cage and LaMonte Young and was associated with Fluxus. Phil Lesh of the Grateful Dead studied composition with Luciano Berio at Mills College. The Velvet Underground performed in multimedia presentations with Warhol’s “Exploding Plastic Inevitable”; and the Dead were featured in productions such as Ken Kesey’s Acid Tests and the Human Be-In. Free jazz also represented an important influence for both bands, as it did for avant-garde art music’s incorporation of improvisation.³⁶ The problematic nature of a generalized “coastal” separation of improvisational practice is highlighted by bands such as the Blues Project from New York, whose approach to extended improvisation in recordings such as their eleven-and-a-half-minute-version of Muddy Waters’ “Two Trains Running” resembles the Dead’s approach on “Viola Lee” much more closely than anything recorded by the Velvet Underground.

Given the associations with South Asian music, jazz, and blues, the appropriation of stylistic features from Western art music presents as an outlier of sorts. Western

Dead) in *Rock, Counterculture and the Avant-Garde, 1966–1970* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016).

³⁶ For the connections between exploratory rock and the avant-garde in the Bay Area focused around the San Francisco Tape Music Center, see David Bernstein’s oral history, *The San Francisco Tape Music Center: 1960s Counterculture and the Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); and Melvin Backstrom, “The Grateful Dead and Their World: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1965–1975” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2017). Lesh’s own recollections of this period can be found in *Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2005) 63–76. Savage, in *1966*, provides an excellent overview of the Velvet Underground’s involvement with Warhol, and the mass reaction to Warhol, Pop Art, and the Exploding Plastic Inevitable (189–232). For the oft-unacknowledged connections between avant-garde indeterminacy and improvisation in Western art music and jazz, see George Lewis, “Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives,” *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 91–122.

art music would likely be understood as the other in this context on the basis of its association with high culture, and not due to racialized differences.

Symbolic Capital and Rock Criticism

Within the emerging rock music aesthetic of the mid- to late-1960s, improvisation was one of the qualities perceived to create distinction between artistically autonomous, newly christened rock, and old-style, commercially dependent pop. Rock critics agreed that improvisation differentiated rock from pop even as they disagreed about whether this was a positive development or not. It is clear, however, that the growth of improvisation within rock was part of a larger shift in the internal differentiation of the popular music field, aided and abetted by a range of other material and discursive practices such as the formation of accrediting institutions specific to rock (i.e., rock criticism and “serious” rock-oriented publications); the appearance of new media able to disseminate extended improvisations in the guise of free-form, underground FM radio; and a shift in old media, including the ascendance of the LP (album) over the single, 45 rpm recording, and changes in concert rituals.³⁷

Of these changes in the popular music field, many of the most significant can be associated with an increase in cultural prestige or “symbolic capital.” The idea of symbolic capital—along with other forms of capital, such as “cultural capital” and “economic capital”—is most closely associated with the work of Pierre Bourdieu.³⁸ Much of the analysis of how cultural prestige functioned in the criticism of rock music during this period relies on the opposition of symbolic capital vs. economic capital. The value of the opposition, symbolic capital/economic capital, is not that it describes an unvarying truth of the social world; rather, it is useful if it aids in the analysis of empirical data. It helps clarify not just that events and statements exist in a local, momentary context, but also that such data are part of longer-range historical discourses and that they can be viewed as specific instantiations of historically recurrent power relations. The relation within the popular field between music that was valued for its autonomy from economic forces and music that was applauded for its popularity was not unique. Such a spectrum of possibilities also existed in the mid-1960s in jazz between avant-garde (or “free”) jazz, mainstream-bop-derived jazz, and R&B-friendly “soul” jazz; as well as in Western art music between contemporary art music, on the one hand, and mainstream concert performances and music tarnished by its associations with commercialism and popularity, on the other. The employment of Bourdieu’s theoretical

³⁷ For more on underground radio, see Michael C. Keith, *Voices in the Purple Haze: Underground Radio and the Sixties* (London: Praeger Publishers, 1997); Susan J. Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 256–83; Richard Neer, *The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio* (New York: Random House, 2001).

³⁸ For the clearest and most concise discussion of the opposition of symbolic capital to economic capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production: or The Economic World Reversed,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29–73. A later work that consolidates many of his principles of cultural production is Bourdieu’s *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). Bourdieu’s fullest treatment of consumption and “cultural capital” can be found in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

framework does not come without its own set of contradictions, as Bourdieu himself did not entertain the possibility that an artwork could accrue symbolic and economic capital simultaneously. As we will see, such contradictions informed the criticism of the period, as critics lauded the artistic autonomy of recordings that sold millions of copies.³⁹

If the use of elements from South Asian music, jazz, and blues transferred cultural prestige to rock due, in part, to the associations of these musics with demographic categories outside of the white, middle-class, then the use of Western art music transferred cultural prestige in a more direct manner. In other words, Western art music's effect on rock conforms more to Bourdieu's model than does the accumulation of cultural prestige via exoticism. If exotic stereotypes function as a kind of fetish, and thus evoke both desire and disavowal, then "desire" (i.e., the positive valence of the other) is figured in the interactions of white US/UK musicians with music from the "East" as a distinct kind of capital.⁴⁰ The same could be said of the form of symbolic capital, what could be called "subcultural capital" or "hipness," accumulated by white musicians via their emulation of musical styles associated with African Americans, such as blues or jazz.⁴¹

To put it briefly, the shift in popular music during 1966 marked the entrance of an art/non-art distinction into the popular music field, whereas before this distinction divided popular music from jazz and classical music. The new stratification within popular music made it possible for one genre within the popular music field, rock, to acquire critical prestige relative to other pop music genres.⁴²

One of the arenas in which the symbolic/economic divide appeared, that of musical style, has already been explored in some detail earlier in this article. Musical developments associated with the formation of rock music featured a new-found intellectual approach to making music, the exploration of music that already possessed greater symbolic capital (such as jazz, classical music, and to a lesser extent, Indian music), and an interest in greater formal complexity and technical

³⁹ For more on the relation between different sub-genres of jazz, popularity, and critical prestige, see David Brackett, "Jazz at the Crossroads of Art and Popular Music Discourses in the 1960s," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, ed. Gebhardt, Rustin, and Whyton (New York: Routledge, 2019), 347–56. David Hesmondhalgh presents a sharp critique of Bourdieu for his failure to account for the introduction of symbolic capital into the field of mass production in "Bourdieu, the Media and Cultural Production," *Media, Culture & Society* 28, no. 2 (2006): 211–31.

⁴⁰ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 73–83.

⁴¹ The notion of "subcultural capital" was coined by Sarah Thornton in her extension of Bourdieu's theories of consumption to 1990s British electronic dance music. See Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996). See also Ingrid Monson, "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 393–422.

⁴² Keightley, in "Reconsidering Rock," stresses how the ability of rock to function as an anti-mass, mass cultural form in the United States was derived largely from the urban folk revival of the early 1960s; in the United Kingdom this worked somewhat differently where rock music's anti-commercialism came about through its historical connection with trad jazz via British "R&B." On the connection between trad jazz and British R&B, see Schwartz, *How Britain Got the Blues*; and Lorre, "British R&B."

virtuosity. The area of activity in which changing *attitudes* can be most clearly tracked, however, is in the discourse of the new field of rock criticism.

Early Rock Criticism and Its Antecedents

Connoisseurship of popular music had its precedents: a critical apparatus for the assessment of jazz arose in the 1930s during the swing era when the popularity of jazz-associated music was at its peak. As jazz slowly detached from the mainstream during the 1940s, critical writing about popular music went with it. With the move of R&B- and country-associated musics into the popular mainstream during the mid-1950s, and the subsequent articulation of the label “rock ’n’ roll” with a synthesis of these genres combined with mainstream pop, media appraisal became limited to sociological explanations that depicted the various moral panics accompanying the early days of rock ’n’ roll. If the value of popular music was discussed at all in the mass media, it tended to be in terms of its economic value, not its artistic merit.

In the period 1955–65, some critics—such as Robert Shelton with the *New York Times*, Nat Hentoff with the *New Yorker* (among others), Ralph J. Gleason with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and William Mann of the London *Times*—did stray from assessing popular music strictly in economic terms, especially in discussions of Bob Dylan and the urban folk revival of the early 1960s (or, in the case of Mann, the Beatles).⁴³ Even when writing sympathetically, however, the work of these writers often conveyed a sense of distance from the objects of their criticism. The new development in 1966 was the emergence of criticism written by participants in the popular music field about which they were writing. Given that one of the strongest markers of post-rock ’n’ roll-popular music was its association with the demographic category of youth, the appearance in print of critics who were the same age as the musicians and audience was a key moment in the formation of a critical discourse specific to the music. The founding of the magazine *Crawdaddy!*, the work of Richard Goldstein at the *Village Voice*, the music criticism at ’zines focused on local music scenes such as *Mojo Navigator* in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the work of writers such as Chris Welch at *Melody Maker* in the United Kingdom all contributed to a nascent form of criticism that attempted to assess value in popular music that was autonomous from its economic impact.⁴⁴

These contributions to the emergence of rock criticism were far from homogeneous. During the course of 1966, *Crawdaddy!* devoted itself entirely to the criticism

⁴³ For examples, see Robert Shelton, “Bob Dylan: A Distinctive Folk-Song Stylist,” *New York Times*, September 29, 1961; Ralph J. Gleason, “Bob Dylan: A Folk-Singing Social Critic,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 23, 1964; Nat Hentoff, “The Crackin’, Shakin’, Breakin’ Sounds,” *New Yorker*, October 24, 1964; William Mann, “What Songs the Beatles Sang. . .,” *The Times*, December 27, 1963, reprinted in *The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader*, 4th ed., ed. Brackett, 194–96. Shelton also earned the distinction (in January 1966) of being the first critic at a major publication to review rock recordings (“On Records”).

⁴⁴ Lindberg et al. make the argument that journalistic criticism specific to rock developed first in the United Kingdom at *Melody Maker* in the work of writers such as Chris Welch and Ray Coleman (Lindberg et al., *Rock Criticism from the Beginning*, 76–106). The following discussion, however, will focus on rock criticism in the United States.

of popular music (mainly rock) and featured several critics in dialogue with one another. Goldstein, along with a few colleagues at the *Village Voice*, operated in a milieu in which rock music was presented as marginal, although this began to shift by the end of the year. *Mojo Navigator* did not begin publishing until September 1966, only published consistently for three months, and was largely the work of two writers, although during that period it did function as a kind of *Crawdaddy!* West.

Paul Williams, a first-year student at Swarthmore College, produced the first issue of *Crawdaddy!* in February 1966. It was clear from the opening editorial of its first issue that the *raison d'être* of *Crawdaddy!* was the projection of "autonomous value." In the words of Williams, "We fully expect and intend to be of great use to the trade: by pushing new 45s that might have otherwise been overlooked, by aiding radio stations in deciding on their playlists, by giving manufacturers some indication of response to a record other than sales."⁴⁵ At this stage, the emphasis on symbolic capital was still allied to its utility as an aid to institutions organized around economic capital, that is, the music industry and, in particular, Top 40 radio and the singles' market. Similarly, the range of recordings discussed in *Crawdaddy!* was quite broad, from the work of easy listening artists like Tom Jones to underground groups such as the Blues Project. Such eclecticism indicates that the Top 40 radio format and popular 45s (i.e., single recordings targeted for a mass audience) were as much the basis for the field of criticism as were recordings that were potentially rich in symbolic capital but weak in economic capital. The same is true of terminology, in which the term "rock 'n' roll" was used as a synonym for popular music.

Such critical broad-mindedness would change toward the end of the year. For example, here is the opening of Williams's review of albums by the Mamas & the Papas, the Blues Project, and Love, in the August 1966 issue of *Crawdaddy!*:

Sometimes the only way to feel better, after looking at the top 100 charts, is to remember that they have practically nothing to do with rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll, or the big beat, whatever clumsy term we want to use, is a musical idiom quite apart from what is selling at the moment, i.e., quite apart from pop music. Money and popularity serve as important influences on the field, inevitably; but they aren't in control. Barry Sadler is about as significant an influence on r 'n' r as Harold Robbins is on American literature.⁴⁶

The article continues in this vein: the way value is conferred is not by sales but "influences" from "the really vital musicians . . . those who never stop introducing new sounds, new ideas: The Beatles, the Stones, Dylan, the Spoonful, the Byrds: Nancy Sinatra will never make an impact on the history of music. . . . With this in mind, we can . . . look down and even off the charts for the songs that really are new."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Paul Williams, "Get Off of My Cloud," *Crawdaddy!* (February 7, 1966): 2.

⁴⁶ Paul Williams, "The Mama's & the Papa's * The Blues Project * Love," *Crawdaddy!*, no. 4 (August 1966): 15. Barry Sadler was currently riding high on the mainstream popularity charts with his "Ballad of the Green Berets," a paean to the US military that draws on musical conventions then current in country music. *Billboard* ranked this recording as the #1 record of the year for 1966. Harold Robbins was one of the best-selling authors of all time, and at the peak of his popularity in the mid-1960s.

⁴⁷ Williams, "The Mama's & the Papa's * The Blues Project * Love." Richard Goldstein made a similar shift away from mainstream popular music during the course of 1966; compare the earlier

I cite this article at length because it encapsulates the opposition between symbolic and economic capital in contrast to earlier in the year, when Williams did not oppose so clearly the two types of capital. He does not, of course, explain how the Beatles, the Stones, and Dylan have all managed to succeed on the pop charts while other innovators have not.

By the March 1967 issue of *Crawdaddy!*, Williams had become more explicit about the stakes involved in carving out an anti-commercial form of popular music. In his “What Goes On” column, a regular feature that provided news about artists deemed significant by the *Crawdaddy!* staff, Williams asserts that a chasm divides “quality” popular music from commercially-driven pap:

Something good is happening. Never mind Aaron Neville, Micky Dolenz, the bl**dy red baron or whatever else is on the radio. Go down to your friendly (maybe) record man and pick up the Doors album, the Youngbloods album, the new Stones, the new Donovan, the John Mayall Bluesbreakers lp . . . all of which came out in the last week as I write this. Never have there been so many different good things going on all at once—never have there been so many more good things promised for the immediate future. And this album activity comes at a time when we are just entering the millennia of performing rock, with college concerts replacing the teeny-bop hits, with the San Francisco scene beginning to spread across the country, with groups like the Airplane, the Springfield, Moby Grape, the Doors, who interact with an audience and present live rock in a manner that cuts absolutely everything that had gone before.⁴⁸

Table 1 summarizes the oppositions used by Williams in this article to outline the symbolic/economic divide in popular music at this time:

A couple of things are notable here: the villains are named more clearly than the heroes in terms of the audience and the media through which the music is disseminated. The consecrated demographic becomes, by default, white (by virtue of the preferred artists), male (due to the denigration of housewives), and focused on young adults (note the disparagement of teeny-boppers and easy listening, a genre associated with the middle-aged). Other pieces written around the same time, such as those by Richard Goldstein, make the antidote to the malaise associated with commercialism explicit by mentioning the rise of “underground” FM radio and a shift towards LPs instead of 45s as complementary developments.⁴⁹ Although improvisation is not listed explicitly in the “For Us” column, it arises via association with many of the artists (The Doors, Eric Clapton, Jefferson

“Pop Eye: Evaluating Media” (July) and “Pop Eye: Revolver” (August) with his “Pop Eye: 69 with a Bullet” (November) and “Pop Eye: 69 with a Bullet (Part II)” (December). Greg Shaw and David Harris of *Mojo Navigator* also made clear the importance of the art-commerce opposition. See, for example, Greg Shaw, “Bill Graham Revisited,” *Mojo Navigator* 1, no. 4 (August 30, 1966): 7.

⁴⁸ Paul Williams, “What Goes On,” *Crawdaddy!* (March 1967): 22.

⁴⁹ See Goldstein’s “69 with a Bullet,” *Village Voice*, November 24, 1966, 10, 12; and “69 with a Bullet (Part II),” *Village Voice*, December 1, 1966, 32, 34. Other articles from *Crawdaddy!* and the *Village Voice* provide more examples of a growing sense of distinction between popular music that possessed autonomous value and that which did not: Gene Sculatti, “San Francisco Bay Rock,” *Crawdaddy!* 6 (November 1966): 24–26; Paul Williams, “Rock Is Rock: A Discussion of a Doors Song,” *Crawdaddy!* 9 (May 1967): 42–46; Richard Goldstein, “Pop Eye: Flak,” *Village Voice*, January 12, 1967, 8, 12, 32; and Jack Newfield, “Bob Dylan: Brecht of the Juke Box, Poet of Electric Guitar,” *Village Voice*, January 26, 1967, 1, 12.

Table 1. Oppositions derived from the March 1967 “What Goes On” column, *Crawdaddy!*

Criterion	For Us	Against Us
Bands/artists	Doors, Youngbloods, John Mayall, Eric Clapton, Jefferson Airplane, Buffalo Springfield, Moby Grape, Beatles, Beach Boys/Brian Wilson, Spencer Davis Group	Aaron Neville, Micky Dolenz/Monkees, Herb Alpert, Nancy Sinatra, Royal Guardsmen
Audience make-up	College students	Teeny boppers, housewives, subteens
Affect, motivation for listening	“music,” interaction	Pleasure
Media/listening context	listening to a recording with a couple of friends in a dimly lit room; live concerts	AM radio, top 100, transistor radio
Genre format	creative rock ten-minute rock track	Silly, bouncy rock; pop Easy-to-listen to, dull, catchy, two-minute thing

Airplane, etc.) and through the invocation of “creative rock” and formats such the “10-minute rock track.”

For another view on these developments, it can be instructive to examine the music industry press. Contrary to a publication such as *Crawdaddy!*, a publication like *Billboard* was (and is) devoted to the bottom line and how the potential profit of artists and recordings might benefit record companies, record store owners, radio stations, and concert promoters, among others. Thus, we would not expect symbolic capital to interest this conglomeration of interests (which I will call the “music industry”) unless it could be converted into economic capital. Yet, as has already been argued here, one of the more fascinating developments in popular music during this time, and one of the most confusing for music industry agents, was how symbolic and economic capital were often conflated with the critical *and* commercial success of artists like Bob Dylan and the Beatles. Thus, enthusiasm existed for “underground” artists to the extent that a way could be found to monetize their bohemian qualities. These underground groups had an intellectual appeal, and, as one *Billboard* columnist wrote, were “getting nearly all their exposure in coffee houses.”⁵⁰

The process of consecration encountered a significant obstacle with underground music, however, due to its lacking both commercial success *and* approval from the institutional arbiter of symbolic capital, the university. (For the purposes of the music industry, rock criticism was not yet firmly enough established to confer prestige outside of a small group of connoisseurs.)⁵¹ Such consecration came from other sources: as Jerry Schoenbaum, head of Verve-Folkways Records (the label most active in signing underground acts as the Mothers of Invention and the Velvet

⁵⁰ Claude Hall, “Battle on for ‘Airless’ Acts,” *Billboard* (October 8, 1966): 1.

⁵¹ The need for a non-academic form of accreditation is taken up by several writers for the *Village Voice*, including the following: Richard Goldstein, “Pop Eye: Evaluating Media”; Newfield, “Bob Dylan”; Michael Zwerin, “Jazz Journal: Are You Serious?” *Village Voice*, May 4, 1967, 15.

Underground) put it, “their records sell through word-of-mouth among the customers of these coffee houses as well as the artists themselves.”⁵²

This statement as well as others in the same article recognize the principles of consecration in the autonomous field adumbrated by Bourdieu: appeal to timeless value, higher prestige of material forms (like the LP as opposed to the single record), longevity vs. transient appeal (typified by the “aim for a single record hit”), the appeal to cognoscenti (coffee house denizens), and, perhaps most importantly, the “specific principle” of the approval of other artists working in the “sub-field of restricted production” (i.e., the approval of other artists working in genres that were rich in symbolic capital but with little commercial appeal).⁵³ An article from slightly earlier in the year uses the term “Greenwich Village Establishment” to talk about the process of consecration of these underground artists. The Establishment is “a jet set of the college crowd” and “has an influence that extends for [*sic*] beyond the narrow geographical confines of the Village.” These jet setters, in turn, participate in a network that spreads their values: “Collegians who make their homes in the New York area attend virtually every major college in the country, and what is happening in the Village is of importance in college towns like Madison, Ann Arbor and Berkeley.”⁵⁴ The contradictions in such usages of the idea of an “underground” almost leap off the page and were not lost on a critic such as Richard Goldstein, who noted that such undergrounds tended to vanish as soon as they were discovered by the culture industry and subsequently recuperated as a novelty.⁵⁵

The Criticism of Rock Virtuosity/Improvisation

If cultural legitimation were all that was at stake, however, one would expect the unqualified valorization of notions of musical technique and virtuosity associated with more prestigious forms of music such as jazz and Indian classical music. As may already be apparent, that was patently not the case. Many passages in early rock criticism indicate a critical attitude toward the idea of virtuosity, formal complexity, or technique for its own sake. In these discussions, improvisation sometimes acquires negative value due to its associations with virtuosity in general, while at other times it is viewed positively because of its sources in jazz, blues, and Indian music, but some of its specific applications in rock are disparaged because of a failure to execute up to the standards of the other types of music.

Anti-elitist and anti-high-art attitudes can be found in numerous statements from the period. For example, Williams praised the Troggs’ album *Wild Thing* as the anti-*Revolver* and for its lack of virtuosity due to its “down home rock ’n’ roll,

⁵² Hall, “Battle on for ‘Airless’ Acts,” 8.

⁵³ Bourdieu, “Field of Cultural Production,” 46–55.

⁵⁴ Aaron Sternfield, “V/F Bows New Promotional Tacks,” *Billboard*, May 21, 1966, 50.

⁵⁵ Goldstein compares two scenes on the West Coast, one, in Southern California, already recuperated, the other, in the San Francisco Bay Area, still flourishing but in the process of being monetized by record companies. See Goldstein, “Pop Eye: The Vanishing Underground,” *Village Voice*, February 16, 1967, 5–6; and Goldstein, “Pop Eye: The Flourishing Underground,” *Village Voice*, March 2, 1967, 5, 7, 34.

tough vocals and hard, [and] clear accompaniments that ring like cold steel. . . . It is clear that the Troggs' guitarist, Chris Britton, prefers accurate harmony over flashy runs and the like. This might be because he can't really do fantastic Kalb-like runs; if that's the case, however, I hope he never learns how."⁵⁶

Inversely echoing Williams's praise of the Troggs, Jon Landau's comments in *Crawdaddy!* about the Butterfield Band's *East-West* and the Blues Project's *Projections* conveyed his criticisms of recordings in which lengthy improvisations were not properly "integrated" into the song, and the band (the Butterfield Band in this case) sounded more "like a collection of soloists than a group."⁵⁷ Landau's most explicit criticisms of long instrumental soloing in rock appear in the review of the Blues Project's album, in which he compares the role of the solo in rock to the work of two of the premier jazz guitarists of the time, George Benson and Johnny Smith. Landau considers these two guitarists "good because they can use their incredible technique to say something meaningful." This demonstration of meaningful soloing contrasts with "the absurdity of the approach to rock and roll that judges instrumentalists on the basis of their technical capabilities."⁵⁸ In this case, Landau denigrates improvisation in rock as pretentious—a failed attempt to emulate a more prestigious music, jazz.

Not too surprisingly, a counter-movement arose to those, like Williams and Landau, who were seeking an anti-elitist approach to establishing an aesthetic for elite popular music. In contrast to exhortations to limit solos to the minimum that might be judged essential to the overall expression of a recording, other writers argued that some instrumental solos should be *longer* and dominate the listening experience *more*.⁵⁹ Still others, like Ralph J. Gleason and Richard Goldstein, emphasized the importance of live performance and spontaneity, even if they were reluctant to give rock musicians *carte blanche* for endless soloing.⁶⁰

The restrained embrace of virtuosity, improvisation, and self-conscious approaches influenced by jazz, non-Western music, blues, and avant-garde Western art music tempers the process of legitimation instigated by rejecting

⁵⁶ Paul Williams, "Review of the Troggs, *Wild Thing* LP," *Crawdaddy!* 5 (September 1966): 31–32. The single recording of "Wild Thing" was released slightly before the album, in April 1966, and rose to #1 on the *Billboard* "Hot 100" in late July 1966. "Kalb-like runs" refers to Danny Kalb, virtuosic lead guitarist for the Blues Project. The idea that the anti-virtuosity of the Troggs might be experimental anticipates a strong thread that would develop in the 1970s in retrospective evaluations of the Velvet Underground, and the strain of criticism associated with the favorable appraisal of punk rock (for more on this connection, see Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club*, 227–47). Williams's reference to *Revolver* refers to the Beatles' album released in August 1966.

⁵⁷ Jon Landau, "Review of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, *East-West*," *Crawdaddy!* 6 (November 1966): 28–29.

⁵⁸ Jon Landau, "Review of The Blues Project: PROJECTIONS, Verve Folkways 3008," *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 18. Michael Zwerin, jazz critic of the *Village Voice*, provided another criticism of such improvisations due to the musicians' technical limitations; see "Jazz Journal: It's Happenin', Baby," *Village Voice*, March 23, 1967, 17.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Tim Jurgens, "Review of *The Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*," *Crawdaddy!* 7 (January 1967): 30–31.

⁶⁰ See Ralph J. Gleason, "Dead Like Live Thunder," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 19, 1967, repr., *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader*, ed. Brackett, 228–30; Goldstein, "Pop Eye: The Flourishing Underground."

commodification (albeit in a limited way) and the development of criticism designed to evaluate popular music as an autonomous art. In the words of Ellen Willis, writing retrospectively about the Velvet Underground in 1978, the aesthetic innovations prized the most by many critics, fans, and musicians were projected as “antiart art made by antielite elitists.”⁶¹

Race and New Rock Criticism

It comes as a great shock to discover that the country which is your birthplace, and to which you owe your life and your identity, has not in its whole system of reality evolved any place for you.

—James Baldwin⁶²

A parallel development to the positive aesthetic value given to music saturated with difference by rock musicians and critics was the disavowal of influence that surfaced repeatedly in early rock criticism, usually in the form of an uneasy assertion of the value of bands that did not rely on blues or R&B influences. Critics often shared aesthetic values and social beliefs with the musicians they were writing about, so it is not surprising that the most “underground” of bands were the strongest proponents of this denial; as late as 1995, Sterling Morrison of the Velvet Underground was still proclaiming that “Lou and I never saw blues as a religion, something where you had to learn every riff and play it just that. There was no danger that either Lou or I would become the next Mike Bloomfield. We didn’t care enough about the blues as a form.”⁶³

Similar attitudes found their way into the work of rock critics: a writer like Paul Williams could implicitly express pride that now African American musicians were being influenced by white rock musicians:

One of the curious things about the year 1966 is that for the first time in the history of America, the best contemporary music is not being made by the American Negro. In fact, much of what is now called “rhythm & blues” by the music trade . . . is watered-down formula stuff, from which all the “soul” which is so highly valued has been taken in order to make it more saleable. This is particularly true of the r&b that comes out of Detroit.⁶⁴

Elsewhere in the pages of *Crawdaddy!* or *Mojo Navigator* one could find disparaging comments on how soul music is “rather boring” because of its “unvarying beat” or on the “showbiz” routines of “Negro acts,” which were compared unfavorably to

⁶¹ Ellen Willis, “The Velvet Underground,” in *The Velvet Underground Companion: Four Decades of Commentary*, ed. Albin Zak III (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 70–81. The stance presented by Willis was by no means universally embraced. For a contrasting point of view, see the following comment by Phil Lesh in the documentary of the Grateful Dead, *Long Strange Trip* (Double E Pictures, 2017) at 22:48: “He [lead guitarist Jerry Garcia] wanted to make it art—like, high art—he would never admit to that, but I did.”

⁶² From the film, *I Am Not Your Negro*, dir. Raoul Peck (ARTE France, 2016). This excerpt is from a speech given in 1965 in Cambridge, United Kingdom and can be found at ca. 17:45 into the movie.

⁶³ David Fricke, liner notes to *Peel Slowly and See*, Polydor, 1995, 13. In an interview from 1989, Lou Reed spoke of fining anyone in the Velvet Underground who played a blues lick (David Fricke, “Lou Reed: The *Rolling Stone* Interview,” in *The Velvet Underground Companion*, ed. Albin Zak, 110).

⁶⁴ Paul Williams, “Gettin’ Ready: The Temptations,” *Crawdaddy!* 5 (September 1966): 29.

groups like the Rolling Stones, who, while clearly indebted to black R&B, did not apparently aim to please their audience.⁶⁵

Given the ease with which annualism (i.e., limiting an historical study to a single year) facilitates a study of the “immediacy of events”⁶⁶—the synchronic occurrence of concepts transpiring in realms that would otherwise be kept apart—the focus on 1966 makes such belittling discourse towards black music all the more striking, coming as it did from young, white, liberal countercultural writers who one might have presumed were sympathetic to the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement figured prominently in mass media discourse: 1966 was the year, after all, when the idea of “Black Power” entered into the mass media lexicon, and the year when the Black Panther party was founded; the year when “soul music” began to be used with some frequency as the genre label for black popular music; the year when Richard Nixon conceived of his “Southern Strategy” in the United States for consolidating support for the Republican Party based on appealing to white, working-class resentment towards African Americans; and the year that Ronald Reagan was first elected to public office (governor of California) on a platform “to send the welfare bums back to work.”⁶⁷ In other words, the year witnessed the advance of “dog whistle” politics, in which politicians used code to exploit racism in support of regressive economic policies.⁶⁸

This debate about the value of rejecting African American influence would continue for several years, and was never quite resolved, as new rock bands heavily and overtly indebted to the blues, such as Led Zeppelin, continued to appear well into the 1970s and up to the present day while often downplaying the degree of their indebtedness.⁶⁹ The legacy of such an attitude reared up prominently with punk in the mid-1970s by proclaiming its difference from mainstream rock, which punk musicians had come to perceive as ossified, via the strenuous rejection of

⁶⁵ See, for example, “Local D. J. Sounds,” *Mojo Navigator* 1, no. 2 (August 16, 1966): 3; Sandy Pearlman, “LIVE! (Four Tops, Rolling Stones)” *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 5; and Ted White, “Murray the K,” *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 9.

⁶⁶ This phrase comes from North, “Virtual Histories,” 420.

⁶⁷ George Packer, “The Uses of Division,” *New Yorker*, August 11 & 18, 2014. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/11/uses-division>; Jeffrey Kahn, “Ronald Reagan Launched Political Career Using the Berkeley Campus as a Target,” UC Berkeley News, June 8, 2004, https://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2004/06/08_reagan.shtml.

⁶⁸ A useful history and analysis of dog whistle politics can be found in Ian Haney López, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism & Wrecked the Middle Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶⁹ For examples of this “anxiety of (African American) influence,” see the following: Ralph J. Gleason, “Like a Rolling Stone,” *American Scholar* (1967; reprinted in Jonathan Eisen, ed., *The Age of Rock: Sounds of the American Cultural Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 61–76; the exchange between Gleason and Nick Gravenites in *Rolling Stone* over white bluesman Mike Bloomfield’s “cultural authenticity” in Gleason, “Perspectives: Stop This Shuck, Mike Bloomfield,” *Rolling Stone*, May 11, 1968, 10; and Gravenites, “Gravenites: Stop This Shuck, Ralph Gleason,” *Rolling Stone*, May 25, 1968, 17. Gendron discusses the negative attitude towards black popular music in the criticism of this period in *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club*, 219–21. On Led Zeppelin and questions of authorship and indebtedness (acknowledged or not) to black music, see Dave Headlam, “Does the Song Remain the Same?: Questions of Authorship and Identification in the Music of Led Zeppelin,” in *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945: Essays and Analytical Studies*, eds. Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 313–63.

any relationship to blues-derived music. The blindness to the debt owed to black music (even as its contemporary manifestations were denigrated by critics), its simultaneous invisibility even as it was omnipresent, forms part of what I think James Baldwin was referring to when he said (late in 1965): “that the country which is your birthplace . . . has not in its whole system of reality evolved any place for you.”⁷⁰

Echoes of Raga Rock, New Forms of Symbolic Capital: A Canon Emerges

Like the issue of the indebtedness of rock to African American music, the legacy of intra-musical and discursive dialogues around genre, race, colonialism, and cultural prestige reached well beyond the 1970s. In 1997, the Punjabi-British band, Cornershop, released their critically applauded album, *When I Was Born for the Seventh Time*. On the fifteenth and final track the band recorded a cover version of the Beatles’ “Norwegian Wood.” The band’s name already referenced a racist name for the convenience stores strongly identified with South Asian owners in British metropolitan areas; the appropriation of this name performs the kind of ironic, humorous reversal that has long functioned as a linguistic resource for marginalized communities. Now, with Cornershop’s remake of “Norwegian Wood,” featuring lyrics rewritten in Punjabi, the ambivalence of colonial musical discourse could come home to roost in the unsettling reversal of the sonic “gaze.” Such an act of mimicry confirmed both the power asymmetry that made possible the initial appropriation of a South Asian sonic trope and the unsettling power of recognition that remains a latent potential of colonial encounters. In the words of Homi Bhabha, “the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and ‘partial’ representation rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence.”⁷¹ The Beatles’ most exoticist use of an element of Indian music relied on the “strange” (the sound of the sitar) made familiar by being incorporated into a setting reminiscent of both British Isles traditional music (the gentle waltz and Mixolydian mode of the first section) and current popular music (the shift to the parallel minor and the use of the ii–V harmonic progression in the second section). Now Cornershop’s reappropriation of the song—an otherwise faithful cover version except for the translation of the lyrics—makes the familiar strange once again, exposing the routinized practices of the colonial relation that may have gone unnoticed.

Music journalists and audiences categorized Cornershop as an indie-rock band when they emerged during the 1990s, and aspects of this articulation of genre and identity were undoubtedly new: the ability of children of Punjabi immigrants to participate in a London-based rock scene would have been very unlikely to occur in the mid-1960s. Several aspects of indie rock, however, did harken back to that earlier time: the indie genre was merely one of the latest manifestations of

⁷⁰ *I Am Not Your Negro*, dir. Raoul Peck (ARTE France, 2016).

⁷¹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 89. Cornershop’s cover of “Norwegian Wood” was only the latest cover or reference to the Beatles’ song by South Asian musicians. Earlier musical references include R. D. Burman’s “Dil Se Kya Sahi” sung by Manna Dey from the 1974 film *Imaan*; and a version featuring lengthy improvisations by the Indo Jazz Fusion Group.

a hyphenated rock sub-genre that used its aura of anti-commercialism, of being outside of the “mainstream,” as a way of accruing cultural prestige. As such, Cornershop, and by extension, indie rock, drew on associations of genre with symbolic capital (and with allusions to music of the East) that reached back to the advent of the rock sub-genres underground rock, blues rock, jazz rock, raga rock, and psychedelic rock. These genres, which made the musical gestures and practices of extended improvisation commonplace, ushered in a new set of musical values and a new form of subjectivity associated with popular music. The significance of the identity of this new subject becomes clear when we consider that improvisation participated in the cultural legitimation of rock by relying on the prior connotations of the social identity of other genres, and the corresponding position of these identities in the field of economic and political power. To find examples of how musical practice and cultural prestige were mediated by race, one need only ponder the many examples of blues and rhythm and blues that featured improvisation prior to 1966. These recordings were arguably part of the popular music field, but a part that seemingly existed on a different plane from rock in terms of audience and critical approval. Particularly abundant examples may be found in live albums, such as James Brown’s extensive vocal extemporizations in *Live at the Apollo* from 1963, or B. B. King’s apparently limitless flow of ideas in *Live at the Regal* from 1964.

The consistent efforts of many critics through the latter part of the 1960s and into the 1970s to valorize certain genres of popular music eventually resulted in a canon of rock music, the prestige of which did not necessarily correspond to its popularity. This achievement made little initial impact in the institutions that confer legitimacy—the universities, the apparatus of public granting institutions, long-established highbrow periodicals, and even public television. The current situation differs considerably: academic journals specialize in popular music, specialists are hired in musicology programs, the BBC and National Public Television in the United States jointly sponsored the ten-part series *Rock & Roll* (US title) in 1995, and high-middlebrow publications, such as the *New Yorker*, have long featured their own popular music critic. As rock increasingly appears as one genre among others, as less relevant than ever to contemporary popular music, we may wonder if the prophecy of Jules Siegel in the epigraph for this essay will eventually come true. Will the canon of rock music one day “be locked inside the groves of the academy, armored in footnotes and frozen out flat on the dry, cold paper of expensive variorum editions”?⁷²

The context of popular music criticism has also shifted: in contrast to the debates over value that filled the pages of *Crawdaddy!* and the *Village Voice* in 1966, now we have Pitchfork and Allmusic: assessments of value minus the discussion of the aesthetic framework, meaning that the critical framework can now be assumed. Such sites for criticism give the strong impression that the struggle to acquire symbolic value for popular music is over. A shared framework for aesthetic judgment implies a shared notion of a canon of important artists and recordings/performances. The creation and stabilization of a canon help facilitate the institutionalization of an art

⁷² Siegel, “Beatles, Teen Music,” 14.

form, a process which in turn further reinforces the canon. What began to take tenuous hold among the critics, musicians, audiences, and other mediators in the mid-to-late 1960s now finds further consolidation in the narratives that fill popular music history textbooks, survey courses in universities, as well as the latest Top 500 list from *Rolling Stone*. Canonic narratives fill an important function, and they are not so much inaccurate as oversimple; and the lineages of how different important artists influenced one another can, in turn, seem too neat. By going back to 1966, attempting to suspend retroactive views of great artistry, and surveying the growth of improvisation in rock in counterpoint with the emergence of rock criticism, perhaps some of the messiness of this history—with all its exclusions and struggles between competing actors, aesthetic positions, and identities—can be restored.

References

Books and Articles

- Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Backstrom, Melvin. "The Grateful Dead and Their World: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1965–1975." PhD diss., McGill University, 2017.
- Bellman, Jonathan. "Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965–1968." In *The Exotic in Western Music*, edited by Jonathan Bellman, 292–306. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998.
- Bernstein, David. *The San Francisco Tape Music Center: 1960s Counterculture and the Avant-Garde*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Blum, Stephen. "Recognizing Improvisation." In *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, edited by Bruno Nettl with Melinda Russell, 27–45. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Blum, Stephen. "Representations of Music Making." In *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education, and Society*, edited by Gabriel Solis and Bruno Nettl, 239–62. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- Born, Georgina. "Music and the Materialization of Identities." *Journal of Material Culture* 16, no. 4 (December 2011): 376–88.
- Born, Georgina. "Music and the Representation/Articulation of Sociocultural Identities." In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 31–37. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Born, Georgina. "Techniques of the Musical Imaginary." In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 37–58. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Field of Cultural Production: or The Economic World Reversed." In *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 29–73. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Translated by Susan Emanuel. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Brackett, David. *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016.
- Brackett, David. "Jazz at the Crossroads of Art and Popular Music Discourses in the 1960s." In *The Routledge Companion to New Jazz Studies*, edited by Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rustin, and Tony Whyton, 347–56. New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Brackett, David, ed. *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Brennan, Matt. *When Genres Collide: Down Beat, Rolling Stone, and the Struggle Between Jazz and Rock*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
- The Byrds. *Another Dimension*. Sundazed Records SEP2 10-168, 2005. Liner notes.
- Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Coltrane, John (with Don DeMicheal). "Coltrane on Coltrane." *Down Beat*, September 29, 1960, 26–27.
- Douglas, Susan J. *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Drott, Eric. "The End(s) of Genre." *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 1–45.
- Echard, William. *Psychedelic Popular Music: A History Through Musical Topic Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.
- Erlmann, Veit. "The Aesthetics of the Global Imagination: Reflections on World Music in the 1990s." *Public Culture* 8, no. 3 (1996): 467–87.
- Farrell, Gerry. *Indian Music and the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Feld, Steven. "From Schizophonia to Schismogenesis: On the Discourses and Commodification Practices of 'World Music' and 'World Beat'." In *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues*, edited by Charles Keil and Steven Feld, 257–89. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Fellesz, Kevin. *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Fricke, David. *Peel Slowly and See*. Polydor 31452 7887-2, 1995. Liner notes.
- Fricke, David. "Lou Reed: The *Rolling Stone* Interview." In *The Velvet Underground Companion: Four Decades of Commentary*, edited by Albin Zak III, 106–20. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.
- Frow, John. *Genre*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Gendron, Bernard. *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Gitler, Ira. *Soultrane*. Prestige LP 7142, 1958. Liner notes.
- Gleason, Ralph J. "Bob Dylan: A Folk-Singing Social Critic." *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 23, 1964.
- Gleason, Ralph J. "Dead Like Live Thunder." *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 19, 1967. Reprinted in *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*, 4th ed., edited by David Brackett, 233–35. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

- Gleason, Ralph J. "Like a Rolling Stone." *The American Scholar*. 1967. Reprinted in *The Age of Rock: Sounds of the American Cultural Revolution*, edited by Jonathan Eisen, 61–76. New York: Vintage Books, 1969.
- Gleason, Ralph J. "Perspectives: Stop This Shuck, Mike Bloomfield." *Rolling Stone*, May 11, 1968, 10.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: Evaluating Media." *Village Voice*, July 14, 1966, 6–7.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: Flak." *Village Voice*, January 12, 1967, 8, 12, 32.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: The Flourishing Underground." *Village Voice*, March 2, 1967, 5, 7, 34.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: Ravi and the Teenie Satori." *Village Voice*, January 5, 1967, 23–25.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: Revolver." *Village Voice*, August 25, 1966, 23, 25.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: 69 with a Bullet." *Village Voice*, November 24, 1966, 10, 12.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: 69 with a Bullet (Part II)." *Village Voice*, December 1, 1966, 32, 34.
- Goldstein, Richard. "Pop Eye: The Vanishing Underground." *Village Voice*, February 16, 1967, 5–6.
- Gomelsky, Giorgio. "The Rolling Stones Stake a Claim in the R&B Race (Part One)." *Jazzbeat*, January 1964, 22–23. Reprinted in *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*. 4th ed., edited by David Brackett, 216–19. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Gomelsky, Giorgio. "The Rolling Stones Stake a Claim in the R&B Race (Part Two)." *Jazzbeat*, February 1964, 24. Reprinted in *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*. 4th ed., edited by David Brackett, 216–19. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Gravenites, Nick. "Gravenites: Stop This Shuck, Ralph Gleason." *Rolling Stone*, May 25, 1968, 17.
- Greene, Doyle. *Rock, Counterculture and the Avant-Garde, 1966–1970*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016.
- Grossberg, Lawrence. *Bringing It All Back Home: Essays on Cultural Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *In 1926: Living at the Edge of Time*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Hall, Claude. "Battle on for 'Airless' Acts." *Billboard*, October 8, 1966, 1, 8.
- Harris, David. "The British Blues Scene." *Mojo Navigator* 1, no. 12 (December 22, 1966): 1–3.
- Headlam, Dave. "Does the Song Remain the Same?: Questions of Authorship and Identification in the Music of Led Zeppelin." In *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945: Essays and Analytical Studies*, edited by Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann, 313–63. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1995.
- Hentoff, Nat. "The Crackin', Shakin', Breakin' Sounds." *New Yorker*, October 24, 1964. Reprinted in *Bob Dylan: The Early Years: A Retrospective*, edited by Craig McGregor, 44–61. New York: Da Capo Press, 1990.
- Hesmondhalgh, David. "Bourdieu, the Media and Cultural Production." *Media, Culture & Society* 28, no. 2 (March 2006): 211–31.

- Hesmondhalgh, David. "Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes? None of the Above." *Journal of Youth Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2005): 21–40.
- Hjort, Christopher. *So You Want to Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star: The Byrds Day by Day 1965–1973*. London: Jawbone Press, 2008.
- Holt, Fabian. *Genre in Popular Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Ireland, Brian, and Sharif Gemie. "Raga Rock: Popular Music and the Turn to the East in the 1960s." *Journal of American Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019): 57–94.
- James, Robin. "Is the Post- in Post-Identity the Post- in Post-Genre." *Popular Music* 36, no. 1 (January 2017): 21–32.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Periodizing the 60s." In *The Ideologies of Theory, Essays 1971–1986, Volume 2: The Syntax of History*, 178–208. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- Jones, Steve, ed. *Pop Music and the Press*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.
- Jurgens, Tim. "Review of *The Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*." *Crawdaddy!* 7 (January 1967): 30–31.
- Kahn, Jeffrey. "Ronald Reagan Launched Political Career Using the Berkeley Campus as a Target," *UC Berkeley News*, June 8, 2004. https://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2004/06/08_reagan.shtml.
- Keightley, Keir. "Reconsidering Rock." In *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, edited by Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street, 109–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Keith, Michael C. *Voices in the Purple Haze: Underground Radio and the Sixties*. London: Praeger Publishers, 1997.
- Kempton, Sally. "Raga Rock: It's Not Moonlight on the Ganges." *Village Voice*, March 31, 1966, 23–24.
- Landau, Jon. "Review of *The Blues Project: PROJECTIONS*, Verve Folkways 3008." *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 15–16.
- Landau, Jon. "Review of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, *East-West*." *Crawdaddy!* 6 (November 1966): 27–29.
- Lesh, Phil. *Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2005.
- Lewis, George. "Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 91–122.
- Lewisohn, Mark. *The Beatles: Recording Sessions*. New York: Harmony, 1988.
- Lindberg, Ulf, Gestur Gudmundsson, Morten Michelsen, and Hans Weisethaunet. *Rock Criticism from the Beginning: Amusers, Bruisers, & Cool-Headed Cruisers*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005.
- "Local D. J. Sounds." *Mojo Navigator* 1, no. 2 (August 16, 1966): 3.
- López, Ian Haney. *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism & Wrecked the Middle Class*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Lorre, Sean. "British R&B: A Study of Black Popular Music Revivalism in the United Kingdom, 1960–1964." PhD diss., McGill University, 2017.
- Mann, William. "What Songs the Beatles Sang. . ." *The Times*, December 27, 1963. Reprinted in *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader*, 4th ed., edited by David Brackett, 194–96. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

- McHale, Brian. "1966 Nervous Breakdown; or, When Did Postmodernism Begin?" *Modern Language Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (September 2008): 391–413.
- Miller, Farley. "Popular Music and Instrument Technology in an Electronic Age, 1960–1969." PhD diss., McGill University, 2018.
- Monson, Ingrid. *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Monson, Ingrid. "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 393–422.
- Neale, Stephen. *Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 1980.
- Neer, Richard. *The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio*. New York: Random House, 2001.
- Negus, Keith. *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Nettl, Bruno. "Introduction: An Art Neglected in Scholarship." In *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, edited by Bruno Nettl with Melinda Russell, 1–23. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Nettl, Bruno. "Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach." *Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (1974): 1–19.
- Newfield, Jack. "Bob Dylan: Brecht of the Juke Box, Poet of Electric Guitar." *Village Voice* (January 26, 1967): 1, 12.
- Nisenson, Eric. *Ascension: John Coltrane and His Quest*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- North, Michael. *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- North, Michael. "Virtual Histories: The Year as Literary Period." *Modern Language Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (December 2001): 407–24.
- Packer, George. "The Uses of Division," *New Yorker*, August 11 & 18, 2014. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/11/uses-division>.
- Pearlman, Sandy. "LIVE! (Four Tops, Rolling Stones)." *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 5–7.
- Pearlman, Sandy. "Patterns and Sounds: The Uses of Raga in Rock." *Crawdaddy!* 7 (January 1967): 5–10.
- Perna, Alan. *Guitar Masters: Intimate Portraits*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2012.
- Porter, Lewis. *John Coltrane: His Life and Music*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1998.
- Powers, Devon. *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013.
- Reck, David B. "Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Form." *Asian Music* 16, no. 1 (1985): 83–150.
- Russo, Greg. *Jeff Beck & the Yardbirds: The Yardbird Years*. Fuel 2000 Records, 2002. Liner notes.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Savage, Jon. *The Kinks: The Official Biography*. London: Faber and Faber, 1984.
- Savage, Jon. *1966: The Year the Decade Exploded*. London: Faber and Faber, 2015.

- Schwartz, Roberta Freund. *How Britain Got the Blues: The Transmission and Reception of American Blues Style in the United Kingdom*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.
- Sculatti, Gene. "San Francisco Bay Rock." *Crawdaddy!* 6 (November 1966): 24–26.
- Shankar, Ravi. *My Music, My Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.
- Shaw, Greg. "Bill Graham Revisited." *Mojo Navigator* 1, no. 4 (August 30, 1966): 7.
- Shelton, Robert. "Bob Dylan: A Distinctive Folk-Song Stylist." *New York Times*, September 29, 1961. Reprinted in *Bob Dylan: The Early Years: A Retrospective*, edited by Craig McGregor, 17–18. New York: Da Capo Press, 1990.
- Shelton, Robert. "On Records: The Folk-Rock Rage." *New York Times*, January 30, 1966.
- Siegel, Jules. "Beatles, Teen Music: Requiescat in Pace—That's Where It's At." *Village Voice*, September 1, 1966, 7, 14.
- Sikes, Laura. "In the Groove: American Rock Criticism, 1966–1978." PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2017.
- Sternfield, Aaron. "V/F Bows New Promotional Tacks." *Billboard*, May 21, 1966, 50.
- "A Symposium: Is Folk Rock Really 'White Rock?'" *New York Times*, February 20, 1966.
- Taylor, Timothy D. *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Teehan, Mark. "The Byrds, 'Eight Miles High,' the Gavin Report, and Media Censorship of Alleged 'Drug Songs' in 1966: An Assessment." *Popular Musicology Online* (2010). <http://www.popular-musicology-online.com/issues/04/teehan.html>.
- Thornton, Sarah. *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*. Hanover, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996.
- Toynbee, Jason. *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity and Institutions*. London: Arnold, 2000.
- Waksman, Steve. *This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- White, Ted. "Murray the K." *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 8–9, 41.
- Williams, Paul. "Get Off of My Cloud." *Crawdaddy!* 1 (February 1966): 2.
- Williams, Paul. "Gettin' Ready: The Temptations." *Crawdaddy!* 5 (September 1966): 29–31.
- Williams, Paul. "The Mama's & the Papa's * The Blues Project * Love." *Crawdaddy!* 4 (August 1966): 15–20.
- Williams, Paul. "Review of the Troggs, *Wild Thing* LP." *Crawdaddy!* 5, (September 1966): 31–32.
- Williams, Paul. "Rock Is Rock: A Discussion of a Doors Song." *Crawdaddy!* 9 (May 1967): 42–46.
- Williams, Paul. "What Goes On." *Crawdaddy!* 8 (March 1967): 19–23.
- Wolkin, Jan Mark, and Bill Keenom. *Michael Bloomfield—If You Love These Blues: An Oral History*. San Francisco: Miller Freeman Books, 2000.
- Willis, Ellen. "Musical Events—Records, Rock, Etc." *New Yorker*, July 6, 1968, 56–58.

- Willis, Ellen. "The Velvet Underground," in *The Velvet Underground Companion: Four Decades of Commentary*, edited by Albin Zak III, 70–81. New York: Schirmer Books, [1978] 1997.
- Young, Robert. *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Zwerin, Michael. "Jazz Journal: Are You Serious?" *Village Voice*, May 4, 1967, 15.
- Zwerin, Michael. "Jazz Journal: It's Happenin', Baby." *Village Voice*, March 23, 1967, 17.

Recordings

- The Beach Boys. *Pet Sounds*. Capitol T 2458, 1966.
- The Beatles. "Blue Jay Way." *Magical Mystery Tour*. Parlophone SMMT-1, 1967.
- The Beatles. "The Inner Light" b/w "Lady Madonna." Parlophone R-5675, 1968.
- The Beatles. "I Want to Tell You." *Revolver*. Parlophone PCS 7009, 1966.
- The Beatles. "Norwegian Wood." *Rubber Soul*. Parlophone PCS 3075, 1965.
- The Beatles. "Tomorrow Never Knows." *Revolver*. Parlophone PCS 7009, 1966.
- The Beatles. "Within You, Without You." *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Parlophone PMC 7027, 1967.
- Brown, James. *Live at the Apollo*. King Records K-826, 1963.
- Butterfield Blues Band. *The Butterfield Blues Band*. Elektra EKS 7294, 1965.
- Butterfield Blues Band. *East-West*. Elektra EKS-7315, 1966.
- The Byrds. "Turn, Turn, Turn" b/w "She Don't Care About Time." Columbia 4-43424, 1965.
- The Byrds. "Eight Miles High." CBS-202067, 1966.
- Coltrane, John. "India." *Impressions*. Impulse A-42, 1963.
- Cornershop. *When I Was Born for the Seventh Time*. Wiiiija Records WIJCD 1065, 1997.
- Davis, Miles. "So What." *Kind of Blue*. Columbia CL 1355, 1959.
- Dey, Manna. "Dil Se Kya Sahi." Composed by R. D. Burman. *Imaan* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack). Saregama, 1974.
- Diddley, Bo. "Bo Diddley." Checker Records 814, 1955.
- Grateful Dead. "Viola Lee Blues." *The Grateful Dead*. Warner Brothers WS 1689, 1967.
- Grateful Dead. Live performance from November 19, 1966 from the Avalon Ballroom. Available at <https://archive.org/details/gd1966-11-19.fm.9730.shnf>.
- Joe Harriott Double Quintet. *Indo-Jazz Suite*. Columbia SX 6025, 1966.
- King, B. B. *Live at the Regal*. Recorded November 21, 1964. ABC-Paramount ABC-509, 1965.
- The Kinks, "See My Friends." Pye Records 7N.15919, 1965.
- Menuhin, Yehudi, and Ravi Shankar. *West Meets East*. Angel Records 36418, 1966.
- The Mothers of Invention. *Freak Out!* Verve Records V6-5005-2, 1966.
- The Yardbirds. *Five Live Yardbirds*. Columbia 33SX 1677, 1964.
- The Yardbirds. "I'm a Man." Epic 5-9857, 1965.
- The Yardbirds. "Heart Full of Soul." Epic 5-9823, 1965.
- The Yardbirds. "Shapes of Things." Epic 5-9891, 1966.

The Yardbirds. "Over, Under, Sideways, Down." Epic 5-10035, 1966.

The Velvet Underground. *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. Verve Records V-5008, 1967.

The Velvet Underground. *Peel Slowly and See*, Polydor 31452 7887-2, 1995.

Films

Bar-Lev, Amir, dir. *Long Strange Trip*. New York: Double E Pictures, 2017.

Dupre, Jeff, and Maro Chermayeff, dir. *Soundbreaking: Stories from the Cutting Edge of Recorded Music*. Aired November 29, 2016, on PBS. Silver Spring, MD: Athena, 2016.

Peck, Raoul, dir. *I Am Not Your Negro*. Paris, France: Velvet Film, 2017.