Lacanian Musicology

Jackson Moore

2005

1 Introduction

Subjectively, music is preserved in three domains: in the auditory imagination, in notation, and in the body. It is registered in the memory of sound, in the structure of sound, and in the ability to execute sound. For instance, as a music teacher I have three areas to address, namely, how to play by ear, how to read music, and how to use the body in playing an instrument. Here one can recognize Jacques Lacan's partitioning of subjectivity into three registers - the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.

Our point of departure is the notion that in jazz these registers are tied together in a manner homologous to Lacan's medium, speech, and furthermore that jazz acquired the consistency of speech by founding a musical discourse upon free association.

Jazz shares the practice of free association - namely, soloing - with psychoanalysis. Jazz is therefore exemplary among musical practices in revealing the very problematics of subjectivity that psychoanalysts have attempted to conceptualize. In this regard, John Coltrane's notion that "you can improve as a player by improving as a person," and Charlie Parker's statement, "if you don't live it, it won't come out your horn" are more than inspirational platitudes. Buddy Bolden and Bertha Pappenheim independently pioneered free association in the early twentieth century, and jazz and psychoanalysis can be understood as parallel instantiations of the revolution in knowledge taking place at that time, namely, the advent of analytic discourse.

Lacan extracted a series of formal models from his practice that prescind from definitions and explanatory contexts, functioning independently of their interpretation in a manner comparable to symbolic logic. Our premise is that the structure extracted by Lacan is essentially determined by free association. Jazz therefore instantiates the same structure, despite inhabiting very different social trappings. As a result, we can articulate Lacan's formal models in strictly musicological terms. Under this premise, Lacan offers us a model for a synchronic musicology of jazz to complement the diachronic one currently in fashion. The pertinence of Lacan's formalism can be

judged in its efficiency in gathering and coordinating the diverse experiences of the jazz musician without leaving the latter's field of concerns.

We remember sound by imagining it anew, repeating it in the mind's ear. A musician can also do the reverse: he can turn what he imagines back into concrete sound. The auditory imagination is the site of melody in the sense of sound that can be remembered, that is, kept in the form of an imagined sound.

One could envision a misguided diagnostic for melodicism wherein subjects are allowed to hear a recording once, and are then asked to sing along, note-for-note, when it is played a second time. Singing is the prototypical imaginary music, because we can sing back what we hear without following instructions, as anybody does when they find themselves inadvertently humming a tune which is stuck in their head.

However, qua memory, melody cannot be reduced to catchiness. Rather, as Christian Wolff pointed out, anything will become melodic if it is repeated enough. What we can imagine is an artifact of what we have heard in the course of time: the history of sound. Our idealized diagnostic for melodicism is absurd for just this reason - what anybody could remember of a recording after just one hearing would be radically determined by the music they had encountered in their personal history.

History persists in thought willy-nilly, captivating the imagination and seemingly obstructing or precluding the imagination of original sound *ex nihilo*. It constitutes what would otherwise be a transcendental space of auditory imagination in exquisitely specific forms that are both arbitrary and ineluctable. The imagination, then, is the site of musical traditions and genres: music as the persistence of specific sounds. Without a symbolic or physical investment, our only intention can be to reproduce sounds that we've heard in the past.

While the imagination preserves historical artifacts, notation preserves structure, that is, what recurs in multiple instances of sound. Whereas the imagination registers the persistence of specific sounds, symbols register what recurs in different sounds. Music is registered symbolically regardless of whether it is actually notated; a symbol is already implied in the recognition of any recurring identity, whether or
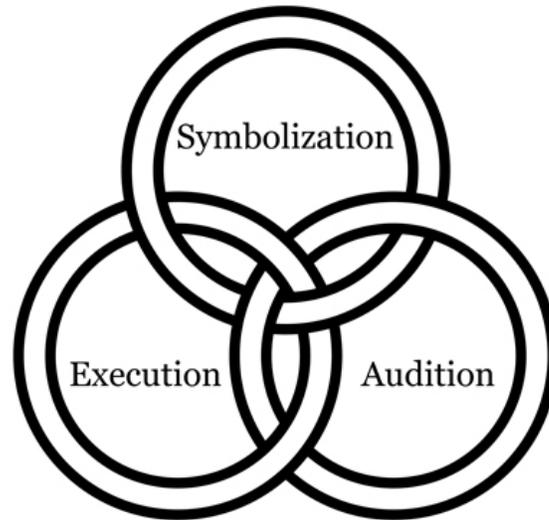
Figure 1: The Borromean Knot

not it is physically written.

Our musical imagination is largely out of our hands - in the final analysis, sounds seem to occur in thought involuntarily. On the other hand, the permutability of symbols provide the musician with a way of exercising preference or control. Musical instruments provide mechanical access to this permutability. Harmony is a prototypical symbolic domain: it encodes musical architecture in terms of the pitch categories that are registered symbolically in our instruments.

If imagination and symbolization are essential to music, its physical execution is essential *a fortiori*. We can sharpen our understanding of the register of execution by asking "where does the body stop, and the instrument begin?" When, for instance, one alters the vibration of a reed with a movement of the tongue, has not the tongue effectively become a portion of the instrument, insofar as it is commanded in symbolic terms along with the reed? This is in one respect true: one can treat body parts as an instrument, essentially instructing them to perform certain actions. The instrumental body, as exemplified by a musician who is reading notated music, is coextensive with symbolization. But there is always an intimate remainder in the

background - the body itself - executing even the instructions that treat one's own muscles as an instrument. The body itself executes imaginary and symbolic intentions, but it is not itself an instrument (although it would be if it were present). Subjectively, this remainder can be imagined as a pure kinesthesia that cannot itself be controlled or even perceived. The executive register would ostensibly be entirely reflex or 'muscle memory', if it weren't the very origin of intentional action, that which is controlling control. Prior to jazz, imaginary and symbolic gaps in which the body's execution assumed a determining role were largely marginal or inadvertent. They were no more than the nuances and subtleties that escaped the sieve of memory and text. To be sure, many European composers would have banished such lacunae and totalized their control had they been capable of doing so; in fact, this dream can now be virtually realized in computer music. By contrast, in jazz the body is essential to the synthesis of the musical statement, insofar as this synthesis occurs in its very execution.

Lacan proposes that speech ties together imagination, symbolization, and execution in the manner of a Borromean knot. Throughout this monograph, we will pursue the notion that jazz does so as well. The Borromean knot is characterized by the property that any two rings are unlinked but for the presence of the third, which ties them together. The result of this linking is that the constraints peculiar to each register are mitigated by the other two. It allows one to imagine musical statements that are not a mere memory, but a new combination of sounds, just as one can imagine a verbal statement that has never been uttered before. It allows one to articulate musical structure that is perceptually proximal, that is, structure that can be perceived in sound without the exegesis of composition notes. Lastly, it allows one to move in a non-autonomic way, to participate in one's reflexes, in that the body plays a vital role in linking parts into wholes.

However, the most striking implication of this Borromean structure for our purposes is that sound is not strictly foundational to music, because it does not precede two other fundamental operations, symbolization and execution.

2   Music as Speech and Language

To begin with, Jazz is musical speech insofar as it is formulated at the moment it is executed. While a speaker ordinarily wants to communicate something specific, the statement itself is assembled piece by piece. He anticipates what he means, but he doesn't know precisely how he is going to say it until he does so. His intention first takes the form of a gap, which is then momentarily specified with a verbal thread. It is precisely due to this perpetually reopening gap in intention that speech can ultimately accommodate unconscious thought alongside conscious thought, in the form of unintentional statements or slips.

The pioneers of jazz discovered a way to maintain this gap in intention or meaning in music. They dispensed with notation, and even more monumentally, transcended imaginary captivation with music they had heard in the past, both of which would have plugged the gap with a pre-determined statement. They did so with the body: they discovered a use of the body that carried them beyond both memory and text.

The body is the site of rhythm insofar as the latter is a transduction of the body's movements. Rhythmos means 'wave' in classical Greek, and indeed, an oscillation of the body is precisely what carries jazz musicians beyond memory and text. Swing, as its name implies, is a wavilinearity that propels the musician into unforeseen formations. This oscillation does not result from symbolic control - as any jazz musician will tell you, swing cannot be distilled in instructions. If anything, it comes from refraining from control: it is not so much a construction of the musician as the kinesthetic permission of the body's essential form of propulsion. It results when the musician gets out of the way, and lets the body assume the pattern of a wave. The iteration of a pulse is symbolic insofar as it is used to count time, but the way it physically oscillates is guided by the body's knowledge.

Where does this physical propulsion carry the musician? Succinctly put, into contingency. The moment when a musician executes something that has never been imagined or notated is precisely the moment when his intention lapses. Musical

speech, then, originates in this intentional lapse and the recovery that it provokes. Jazz musicians mine contingency by kinesthetically propelling into formations that they are not conscious of beforehand, and then trying to corroborate them in a response.

In the fullness of time an emergent battery of reflexive solutions or responses to these contingencies has accrued. Those who forged this battery - Armstrong, Parker, Coltrane, Coleman, Braxton, et al. - were masters both of inciting moments of pure risk, cutting into the stream of imaginary and symbolic consciousness, and of responding to the ensuing surprises as they occurred. In addition to being masters of exceeding their own conscious control, these musicians discovered responses that coherently determined the meaning of the resultant contingencies by reincorporating them into intention. Musical speech originates at the threshold of control, at the verge of its loss. It arises through a use of the body that escapes mere reproduction, and exploits the ensuing surprises to produce meaning.

Lapse and recovery confer a syntactic consistency to music. In musical speech, the meaning of an unconscious formation, that is to say, a contingency, depends on what comes after it, just as in verbal speech, the meaning of a sentence is not determined until the predicate is articulated, and even then is clarified by the statements that follow. Miles Davis observed that there are no mistakes, that is, failures to corroborate intention. Meaning is expressed not in the event itself, but in the supervention of the event. The instability introduced by the gap in intention is what makes this meaning provisional and dependent on further reference, leaning forward antisymmetrically just as a subject leans on a predicate. Music without this instability does not exhibit meaning syntactically. Syntax appears in musical speech to the extent that a response completes the incomplete meaning of a contingency, incorporating it into intentionality.

This is illustrated in the first stage of Lacan's "Graph of Desire" (fig. 1). The Graph of Desire, elaborated by Lacan in four increasingly complex stages, is a reformulation of a diagram proposed by Saussure that depicts speech as a stream of sound and a stream of meaning flowing through time in parallel. As in Saussure's diagram, the
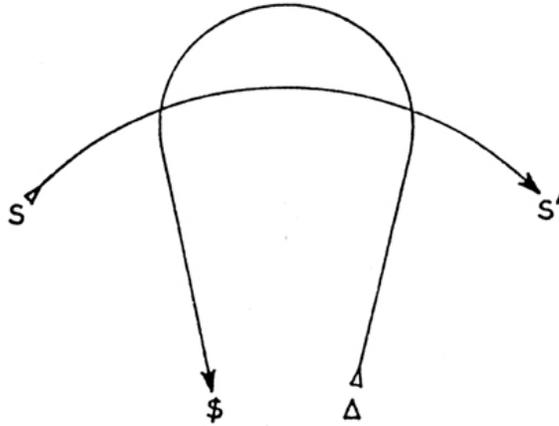
Figure 2: The Graph of Desire, Stage 1

stream of sound in Lacan's graph is depicted flowing forward in time, mutating from a prior state, S, to a posterior state, S'. The stream of meaning, however, does not run parallel to the stream of sound, but weaves around it, running backwards in time from the change in state created by the wavilinear propulsion of the body, Δ, to the musician himself, $. This reflects our observation that meaning is founded in the supervention of the event. Swing provokes syntactical meaning by producing a dependency between two points in time. This meaning is established in retrospect, as the propulsion of swing ties the consequent sound to the antecedent sound on behalf of the musician.

In the fullness of time, however, a given contingency is hardly a world unto itself. Responses are preserved in every register: they captivate the imagination, provide solvency within musical structure, and become comfortably installed in muscle memory. So while the genesis of musical speech resides in lapse and recovery, in the second instance it consists of an automaton: a battery of solutions to contingency that accrues from experience.

This automaton can produce music that is almost entirely deterministic. In musicians who lack the impulsiveness of an Armstrong or a Parker, the automaton becomes pervasive, attaining a total determinism whereby it functions autonomously

from the musician. A musician with no desire to communicate anything - say, a commercial hack - can still formulate music on the order of automatic speech.

While music always is always preserved in memory, structure, and reflex, it doesn't necessarily 'function' - that is, in general there is no recombinant hierarchy of parts and wholes. Jazz is exceptional in that it preserves music in a functional or recombinant form: if unconscious musical formations constitute musical speech, in that we do not know what we are going to say until we say it, then the automaton is the lexicon and grammar of that speech: it is musical language, properly speaking. Formations born of lapse and recovery are in essence solvent formations, those that are capable of resolving whatever contingencies arose in the lapse of intention. These solvent formations have a recombinant consistency because the things capable of resolving any or many contingencies are those likely to continue to arise an hence to be installed in the imaginary, symbolic, and executive registers. So the automaton is a homeostatic and self-sufficient network of compensatory or recovering actions. No matter which way you throw it, it lands cat-like on its feet. For instance, Charlie Parker found ways to recover a harmonically appropriate position at the end of a phrase, or any constituent thereof, regardless of what kind of trouble he had gotten himself into. But the vocabulary that allowed him to do so became the very substance of his language, constituting entire phrases and not just their resolutions. In a sense, the consequent of unconscious formations colonizes the antecedent, which in the first instance is simply a gap that asks to be filled. This consequent, born of contingency, is the latter's result. While it is genetically determined by its origins - a crucible of blind risk enacted in performance - it can thereafter be kept. Accordingly, in the second stage of Lacan's graph of desire, the automaton, A, occupies the consequent node in the vector of sound (fig. 2).

It is worth noting Lacan's implicit support of the notion of musical speech when he writes that the A symbolizes "the treasure trove of signifiers, which does not mean of the code, for the one-to-one correspondence between a sign and a thing is not preserved here, the signifier being constituted on the basis of a synchronic and countable collection in which none of the elements is sustained except in opposition to each of the others" (Lacan 1966). That is, this treasure trove does not hinge on se-
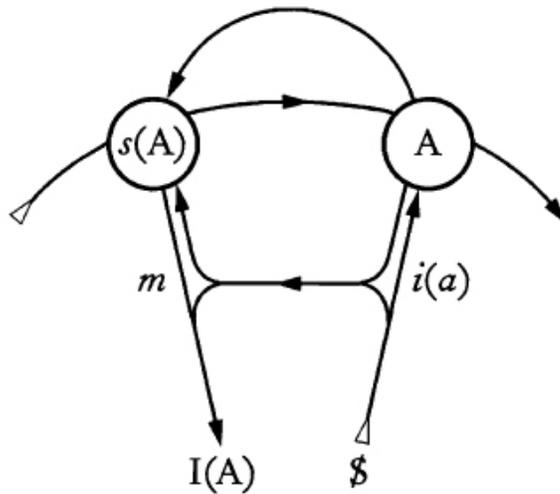
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Figure 3: The Graph of Desire, Stage 2

mantic reference, but on an autonomous functioning that derives from difference. It has long been established that the structural atoms of verbal language, phonemes, are not identified with an absolute acoustic value or with an absolute position of the organs that articulate them; rather, they are identified in their contrast to one another. Similarly, in music it is the intervals between pitches and not the pitches themselves that provide structural identity; thus, we identify the various transpositions of a musical statement with one another, even though different pitches are involved in each case.

The grammar of musical speech is situated in the circuit between A and s(A). The automaton is genetically determined by its efficacy in resolving contingencies; thus the origin of musical structure is the consequent, A, while the antecedent, s(A), is in the first place simply a gap waiting to be filled. However, A and s(A) operate in a circuit: s(A) is the point at which the chain of sound pauses and attains a provisional meaning, and equally the return to a gap that waits to be filled. Anthony Braxton has marveled that regardless of how involved his lines become, Warne Marsh "always lands" - that is, he always makes it to s(A). This anecdote sheds light on the circular yet non-reciprocal relation between A and s(A) - for a signature of Warne Marsh's

playing, inherited from Parker and Tristano, was the attempt to play the longest lines possible, thereby making $s(A)$ a function of the limits of fluency. In this understanding, even elegantly tailored pauses serve as lapses that demand a response. Insofar as it offers provisional meaning, $s(A)$ occupies the consequent position on the vector of meaning; but insofar as it constitutes a lapse, it occupies the antecedent position in the vector of sound.

The fact that meaning is determined at $s(A)$ rather than A is borne out by moments in which a soloist seems to end too soon or too late, in his own judgment or in the judgment of another listener. It is easy to feel that one has played one note too many, in the sense that the phrase had already reached a point of resolution whose effect was diminished by a reflexive addition. On the other hand, novices will at times become discouraged and end a phrase before it seems to amount to anything. In fact, either of these moments amount to roughly the same scenario - they are precisely the lapse that requires a response, which is to say, the essential opportunity to create new meaning in the form of a response whose necessity was not anticipated. This allows us to situate Miles Davis's statement that there are no mistakes at the logical conclusion of two premises: mistakes only occur when one stops at the wrong moment, and it is never too late to decide that one hasn't stopped yet. Indeed, the oscillation in jazz between provisional mistakes and provisional intention is precisely what produces not only syntactical consistency, but also a criterion for grammaticality.

The first, germinal version of the Graph of Desire depicts the genesis of speech; it provides a model of how Armstrong, for instance, opened the gap in intention through a bodily momentum. If this genesis is logically necessary, it is also mythical. Even Armstrong's responses were determined by the musical experiences he accrued before pioneering the extended solo. This second version of the graph takes account of this experience by placing the musician, S, posterior to them, in place of the indeterminate change symbolized by Δ. While he is now temporally posterior, the musician is also at the origin of the vector of meaning, which terminates at I(A). Furthermore, this vector now splays into a preliminary imaginary stage, running from $i(a)$ to m, that intervenes between the musician and the circuit of musical

structure.

To understand this imaginary stage we can invoke the obsession in the jazz world, or at least the journalistic discourse that surrounds it, with 'influences'. In fact, there is some justification for this obsession - after all, an influence is all one needs to get started in any creative idiom. At minimum, the prerequisite for becoming a jazz musician is the experience of being deeply affected by another jazz musician. While jazz could be researched in the spirit of idle curiosity, it cannot be played without the conviction that comes from falling in love with another musician. Such a response is tantamount to a germinal grasp of what the discipline grasps. This double grasp is thereby vicarious, however: in this moment of influence, one spontaneously adopts another's voice as one's own, and moreover before realizing that one has done so.

Thus, the first point the musician encounters in the way of meaning is $i(a)$, the audition of another musician's sound. Only via this point does he have access to m, the audition of his own sound. The logical priority of one's influences ensures that these two sounds remain locked in a permanent and mutual reflection. Note though that while $i(a)$ is logically prior, m is experienced as temporally prior: our influences captivate us so completely that we think we were always already of a piece with them. What was a contingency is understood as destiny. Proceeding downwards, we come to I(A), the terminal matheme of the Graph of Desire. While $i(a)$ is the auditory identification with another musician, the formative encounter characterized by a desire to sound like someone else, one can think of I(A) as the ethical identification with a prior musician. For instance, a young musician might hear Charlie Parker for the first time and think: "Holy shit. That's unbelievable. I want to be able to do that." - he is receiving Bird as $i(a)$. As he matures, he may pursue a different sort of imitation: "Hmm. Charlie Parker created a whole new kind of music. I want to do that too, even if I end up sounding nothing like him." - our friend is now receiving Bird as I(A).

In traversing the lowest level of the graph, the musician is still shy of the circuit of musical grammar. This imaginary screen is the mimetic stage that constitutes

musical tradition. My studies with the Bulgarian saxophone master Yuri Yunakov provide a fitting anecdote: he taught me songs one phrase at a time, having me - *m* - repeat each phrase after him - *i(a)* - until I was able to imitate him competently. My inability to speak Bulgarian and his inability to speak English were no impediment at all.

One can see why musicians who witnessed the genesis of jazz would have a hard time starting from scratch and creating their own language, when a preexisting one captivates the imagination, functions structurally, and not only accommodates the constraints of physical execution, but also inscribes the body of the performer in sound in a way that resonates with the body of the listener. And so it was that after Louis Armstrong made Buddy Bolden's lapse and recovery his fundamental rule, everybody else, rather than discovering it with him, discovered instead how to play like him. The emergent automaton was so seductive in its autonomous efficiency that it took fifteen years for someone, namely, Charlie Parker, to formulate an alternative.

Sonny Stitt, J.J. Johnson, Clifford Brown, and thousands of others have reworked the language they inherited on the imaginary stage stretched between *i(a)* and *m*. They fully embraced the emergent automaton of jazz language, and were free to hone nuances of execution. They had an understanding of where they were going to land comparable to verbal fluency, and were able to turn the predictability of the automaton to their advantage by investing themselves in the heartfelt deliberateness of their gestures. Perhaps the best exemplar of this approach is found in Sonny Rollins, who chose not to second guess *s*(A), the resolution of his phrases, on account of their inevitability, but instead inflect them with a deliberateness that was so pronounced that it was interpreted as sarcasm by some. On the other hand, Bird's stroke of genius was not rooted in this imaginary stage; rather, he clarified the kinesthesia of swing, the key to imaginary lapse, and in doing so, transformed lexicon of solvent responses. As Gillespie put it, "the way he got from one note to the other...fit what we were trying to do perfectly. We heard him and knew the music had to go his way."

The language that matured in Bird's wake was embraced in the eighties in a frequently polemic spirit, which has encouraged the misperception that its persistence can be ascribed to its doctrinaire proponents. But neither indoctrination nor commercialism can be credited for the persistence of language. Even if this language includes features that are to some degree arbitrary, and that could hypothetically could have taken a different form, the scope of this arbitrariness is permanently obscured due to the fact that hearing musical language from another ($i(a)$) before hearing it from oneself sets up a permanent screen between the musician, S, his sound, m, and solvent grammar, A.

What one has heard in the past sets the conditions for what one perceives as grammatical. Observing the graph, we see that the circuit between A and s(A) can circulate on its own, or incorporate the subordinate imaginary stage. In incorporating the lower imaginary circuit, the musician's understanding of what constitutes the resolution of a phrase - s(A) - is determined by what sounds 'correct' to him, as conditioned by how his influences - $i(a)$ - resolved their phrases. On the other hand, a soloist can also focus on purely symbolic aspects, for instance, harmonic devices. Presumably, singers tend to hew to a less complex harmonic vocabulary than instrumentalists due to a less direct interface with these symbolic aspects. At any rate, the implication is that autonomic musical speech need not incorporate hearing, on the condition that to remove hearing is to disconnect it from specifically musical intention.

The issue of symbolic improvisation brings to mind the trials of Lee Konitz. Konitz often concocted quite abstract intervallic patterns in the late forties; as a result, he was often accused of not actually hearing or intending what he was playing. Konitz gravitated towards a more conventional vocabulary in the mid-Fifties as he tried to disprove this charge. It has only become clearer since that time that a cultish respect for sound and hearing, to the exclusion of symbolization and execution, petrifies musical language. The cult of the 'good ear', together with the canonization of early recordings, has meant that contemporary performers are implicitly focusing their resources sounding 'correct'.
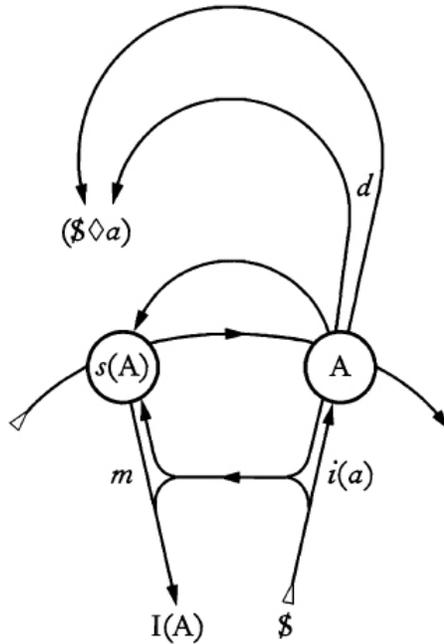
Figure 4: The Graph of Desire, Stage 3

The second stage of the Graph of Desire coordinates two stages: the imaginary reception and imitation of one's influences, $i(a){\rightarrow}m$, and the lexicon and grammar, $A{\rightarrow}s(A)$, which the former provides access to. It does not take account of what is unique in the music of a soloist. Put another way, it does not take account of what Roscoe Mitchell has suggested to be the most fundamental question for a musician: "why do you play music"?

To understand the weight of this question, we have only to take the designation 'automaton' literally; the vocabulary associated with Charlie Parker does indeed seem to play itself. The dissatisfaction of the musician intent on articulating his own meaning, but trapped in the homeostatic network of pre-existent musical solutions, cannot be overstated. The meaning experienced by such a musician exceeds what he is capable of playing.

The third version of the Graph of Desire (fig. 3) depicts this excess meaning over-

flowing the automaton in a second imaginary stage that lies beyond the intersection of meaning and sound: While sound attains a meaning at $s(A)$, it is only a provisional meaning, as noted above, for meaning is not based on the event but on the supervention of the event. Intention or meaning in musical speech is ultimately found not in the music itself but in the pursuit of further music - in the momentum that drives towards new sounds and so acts as the link between sounds. This meaning beyond sound is sustained in d: the desire to add something else, the ineluctable remainder of intention. It is sustained in the soloist's persistence. Coltrane's perpetual engagement with his music, playing for anybody or nobody, whether on stage or off, stands as an exemplar here. This desire is found in the threshold between boredom and fascination; one child may play around for hour at the piano, while another may find a relative lack of definition and quickly become bored. In moments of breakthrough in the history of jazz, the musicians in question would continue to play after finishing their paying gigs - this fascination with the music itself, and not the ulterior rewards that accompany it, reveal d. There is also the inverted scenario: a musician who decides not to play at all and then is led to play anyway by a sense of absolute necessity, thus experiencing a clarification of desire, d.

The fundamental objection to a comparison of music and speech would be that only speech has a referential function. Yet it is clearly not adequate to say that music is tautologous, that it refers only to itself. Meaning is an effect of differentiation: wherever there is an implicit identification of different things, a phantom of reference is produced. Thus Levi-Strauss can claim that myths express propositions simply because they instantiate binary oppositions. By concatenating dissimilar antecedents and consequents, music too creates a meaning effect. It means more than itself - it is more than sound. But while it does not refer to itself, neither does not refer to anything in particular. It seems only to refer to the necessity of more music. Musical meaning is found in desire. This is frequently clear in the demeanor of people under headphones - their animation indicates the renewal of their desire. Musical meaning is found in the inscrutable logic revealed by the soloist in his pursuit of what remains to be said. The referent of desire is essentially fugitive. It is precisely the missing conclusion that is implied when one experiences $s(A)$ as lapse. This object

becomes overt to the extent that a contingency introduces an instability or lack that needs a response to prop it up.

If $s(A)$ always constitutes a lapse that demands a further response, the responses that would satisfy this demand, thereby providing a definitive answer to the question "why do you play music", take the form $(\$ \diamond a)$ in the imagination.

This answer is obtained in sound to the extent that what the soloist plays attains an enigmatic unity. The transcription of a melody, by way of contrast, reveals only an indifferent sequence of self-sufficient particles, and cannot account for the unity that a melody exhibits. It is precisely the unity misplaced by the symbolic register that constitutes the meaning of a melody. The structure of the imaginary object misses precisely the latter's point. If the desire of the musician asks, "what's the point", that which makes a singularity out of a sequence of sounds provides a musical answer. So if the symbolic register supplies the framework of meaning, the imaginary register supplies the meaning itself in the form $(\$ \diamond a)$; if musical structure supplies a container for the point, the imagination supplies the point itself in the form $(\$ \diamond a)$. Insofar as a melody attains a unity, it supplies a plug for that hole in the imagination that constitutes the voice, becoming an avatar for the latter. That which makes a melody cohere as a singularity makes it possible to mistake that melody for the fugitive object itself. A pithy melody is satisfying precisely because it is held together by something unfathomable. As the answer to the question "what's the point", $(\$ \diamond a)$ refers to imaginary formations insofar as they seem to harbor in their consistency the fugitive reference that escapes the automaton.

The music of Thelonious Monk provides many exemplars of $(\$ \diamond a)$. Both his compositions and his vocabulary are almost entirely constituted by a collection of melodic fetishes that provide the definitive answer to his desire. These melodies display a seemingly magical consistency that captivates the listener. But here we must broach the final stage of Lacan's graph by asking whether this consistency derived from a privileged inner hearing that only Monk had access to. Was he simply gifted with a spontaneous auditory revelation, a demonic voice, that the rest of us lack? It is generally assumed without question that he did. Our understanding of Jazz thereby

remains mired in the same romanticist delusion that allowed Robert Schumann to believe that he was transcribing the voices of angels in his music.

It is easy to believe that Monk's music, or anybody else's, emerged in the form in which we receive it, as a vision in sound. But jazz is forged in its execution. The consistency of Monk's melodies was not given by angels but by his body. In this sense, $(\$\diamond a)$ is an illusory answer to the question, "what's the point?" because the point concerns the body. The body is implicated in musical meaning insofar as desire isn't discerned in sound but in the movement from one sound to the next, that is, in a rhythm that is strictly speaking a transduction of the body. If you eliminated the sound of a musical performance in favor of a video x-ray of the performer's body, you would retain precisely the rhythm of the music. And so the body is what ultimately answers the question 'why'. There can be no answer to this question except insofar as we hear the musician's desire as a side effect of his actions.

So the voice is determined by the progression of the body, which runs parallel to the progression of sound (fig. 4). Starting from right side of the graph, we note that in addition to leading to an imaginary answer in the form $(\$\diamond a)$, the desire of the musician, d, leads to $(\$\diamond D)$, which we can think of as the installation of musical language, A, in the body. This coupling of language with the body is the product of a musician's personal history. The very first time an aspiring musician picks up an instrument, it is an unwieldy foreign object; making any sound with it whatsoever, much less a coherent extemporaneous statement, is radically difficult. The organic, joyful performance of an advanced soloist is still tied to this germinal moment by the paths of proficiency that he has cleared within this thicket of difficulty, insofar as these paths constitute his manner of execution. To be more concrete, we can say that the proficiency of a soloist resembles a network of pathways, and not, for instance, an open clearing, insofar as it is established through repetition. In the first place, repetition characterizes the drills by which an aspiring musician trains his body. It is commonly said that over time an instrument becomes an extension of the body, but the reverse is also true: the body must merge with the instrument in order to use it proficiently (this is especially apparent in the case of singers, who must forge instrumentality within their bodies without the support of an external
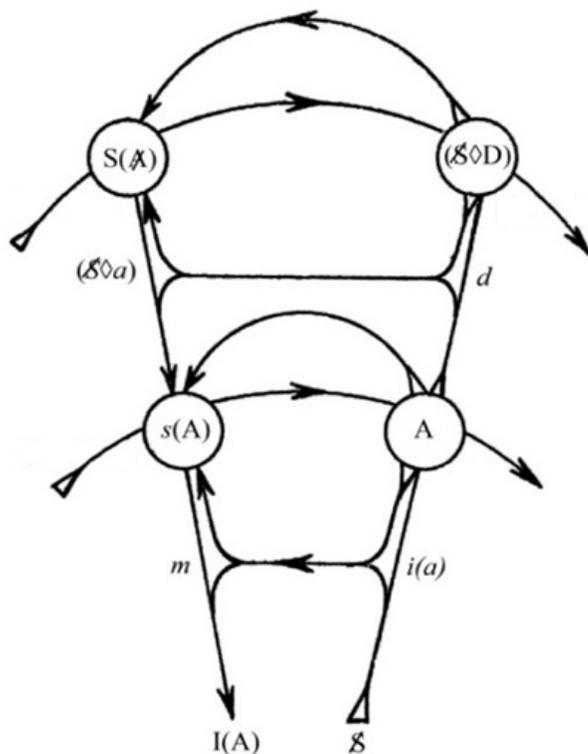
Figure 5: The Graph of Desire, Stage 4

apparatus). Repetition is what accomplishes the incorporation of the instrument and the instrumentalization of the body. This repetition goes on to characterize each and every performance of a soloist to the extent that he is forever traversing and extending these pathways. In this sense, every performance enacts the same venture. The soloist is compelled to return to this venture insofar as it never fully succeeds - his virtuosity never outstrips the pathways created in his development.

These pathways are anything but a straightforward road to mastery, for a soloist's freedom of movement requires that they intersect as much as possible. If they didn't a musician could only play things by rote. Rather, a soloist gathers facility by going back over his vocabulary again and again, looking for new connections within it. He attempts to clear a field of activity that would allow him to transcend repetition by crossing it again and again, thereby deepening the pathways therein and consigning

absolute mastery to a permanent abeyance.

The soloist testifies to his desire, discovering it for himself so as to lend it to his audience. This desire is conditioned by the fact that his development left definitive marks on his way of articulating. It is these marks that constitute ($\lozenge$D), the only substantive answer to why he in particular plays music, instead of leaving it to others - the only thing that makes his desire unique. If the coherence melodies display beyond their sheer structure bestows the enigmatic presence of the voice within them, then ($\lozenge$D) is the real glue of this coherence.

Returning to the example of Monk, we can say that the seductiveness of his melodies derives from the fact that they were born at the piano and not in thought. Monk himself provides ample evidence of this in the perpetual, fetishistic repetition of his melodies in his solos - this repetition is not simply the celebration of an auditory vision, but the persistence of the very desire that led him to forge them in the first place. And as an especially clear illustration of ($\lozenge$D) and ($\lozenge a$), Monk's compositions embody the prototypical jazz composition: a theme that crystallizes those little concretions of solo vocabulary known as licks.

($\lozenge$D), then, is the homeostatic network of execution that parallels the homeostatic network of significant sound, A. On the left side of the graph, in parallel to s(A), the punctuation of sound that produces a provisional meaning, we have S($\mathbb{A}$), the punctuation of execution.

This temporally prior, intentionally posterior point, like the silence that precedes and follows a phrase, is an absence, namely, the essential lack of forethought with which a soloist sets out to articulate music on his instrument. Sound becomes history as soon as it is registered in the auditory imagination, and what is happening for the first time is consequently lost to it. Likewise, anything that can be symbolized has happened before; as soon as we use symbols, we're referring to replicas of a general state. Even something that has never happened in a certain way before can only be expressed as a mere permutation of things that have happened before, without capturing what is essentially new. Indeed, what is happening for the first time is essentially a matheme - we can only talk about it as an unknown variable, by framing

an absence in discourse. We are framing this same absence when we say, "you had to be there". And yet, even if we can't quite isolate it, we can apprehend a new fact that is more than a permutation to the extent that it is enacted in a performance that abandons itself to contingency.

This abandonment, which we have been calling lapse, requires that the improviser not know what he's doing before he does it - it entails relinquishing both preconception (actual or virtual notation) and auditory memory. A more precise formula would account for recovery as well as lapse: "if an improviser doesn't know what they're doing, they know what they're doing (after the fact)". Ornette Coleman and Anthony Braxton were notable in developing this post-intentionality. If one's attention adheres to more nearly punctual magnitudes within the stream of sound, one's relative blindness to the larger architecture of phrases and chords opens the door to unconscious formations. In a sense, Coleman's notorious disposal of chord changes was no more than an effect of this approach: it was not a goal unto itself, but a consequence of his clarification of lapse. Although it was an effect rather than a cause, the elimination of the song-form was momentous, for when this underlying template was removed, jazz was exposed as speech: its autonomy from external determination complete, it could only be a language and not a code.

Jazz is a form of musical speech insofar as it captures this sense of driving at a sound that is not in the first instance given in advance by imagination or notation, that is, driving at what is now happening for the first time - $S(\mathbb{A})$. It is an impossible, or interminable, discipline: it seeks to capture desire by articulating it in music, which will never succeed insofar as there is always something now happening for the first time in history that determines the gap in intention or meaning, and that remains to be articulated.

$S(\mathbb{A})$ is the heir of that first moment in a musician's history which is characterized by a total lack of mastery. As with the progression of sound, in the progression of the body the consequent, $(\mathbb{S} \diamond D)$, colonizes the antecedent, $S(\mathbb{A})$, gradually establishing control in the place of this lack. While a musician learns over time to command the body in symbolic terms, controlling it as he controls his instrument, that which is ex-

ecuting these commands remains an obscurity located somewhere on the far side of kinesthesia. Lacan symbolizes this central point of control that eludes the musician even as it works on his behalf with the letter Φ. $S(\mathbb{A})$, then, is logically equivalent to the absence of Φ - if Φ were present, it would incarnate a total mastery in the place of $S(\mathbb{A})$. The execution of music that has been neither imagined nor symbolized before is accompanied by a use of the body which is experienced kinesthetically, that is, passively. So for instance, there is the sense that the wavilinear momentum of swing is not legislated but results when the musician relaxes and stops trying to control the body. When Charlie Parker said "don't play your saxophone - let it play you," his invoked the saxophone as an emblem of Φ.

How, then, does the jazz musician attain this use of the body if his role is a passive one? By enjoying himself - only enjoyment can compensate for this lack of control. The contingencies that result from the forfeiture of control become mistakes when they are not met with enjoyment. Piet Mondrian noted with fascination as early as the 1920's that the jazz musician's profession is unique in that he is paid precisely to enjoy himself: enjoyment is his task. One's success or failure as a soloist depends precisely upon whether one enjoys oneself: it is specifically the kinesthesia of enjoyment that allows a use of the body that surpasses memory and writing. This is, of course, a damning contradiction, and the necessity of enjoying oneself on demand explains the prevalence of drug addiction in the jazz community. Heroin, marijuana, and alcohol all have the same function in this light: they afford access to an enjoyment, in these cases something of an anesthesia, which allows Φ to take over in the stead of symbolic or imaginary intentions. Put another way, if enjoyment provides a substantive answer to the question "why do you play music?", it is also the essence of successful execution. So enjoyment is not a simple, straightforward end - it is a means as well. This peculiar coincidence of end and means is found in $(\$ \diamond D)$. If $(\$ \diamond D)$ is the locus of proficiency hard-won through repetition, the contingencies that shunted the repetition into the specific forms that it took derive from $S(\mathbb{A})$. In fact, the genetic priority of $S(\mathbb{A})$ is what ensures that the body is more than a battery of reflexes. The resultant installation of these contingencies in the body is what individuates a particular musician's desire, that is, what sustains an inscrutable but

palpable logic that answers to "why they play music". If musical speech did not mark the body, every jazz musician would be able to perfectly imitate every other jazz musician. A soloist's desire, as exposed in the locus of contingencies that arise through the risk of soloing, marks him with an irreducible individuality or idiosyncrasy - what is traditionally called his "sound".

A soloist's sound is the mark of his authenticity, or his willingness to become truly intimate with his addressees, to become vulnerable, and it is the abandonment to Φ that reveals this vulnerability. In fact, those innovators that forged the vocabulary of Jazz frequently display the most vivid idiosyncrasies as well.

The completed graph depicts the articulation of music as based on the intersection of the soloist's hearing with two processes: the precipitation of discursive structure, and the use of the body as oriented by enjoyment. It is an intersection that ties these processes together on behalf of the soloist.

While the graph does not give us a grammatical analysis of discursive structure in music, which it simply abbreviates as A, it does orient this enterprise in terms of the musician's experience of this structure. It suggests that the unmistakably coherent musical organization which is spontaneously available to a soloist appears as a function of where the music pauses. The point at which the soloist stops is more crucial than what he did along the way, but for the fact that yet this basic pulsation between A, the musical statement itself, and $s(A)$, the point at which it achieves at a grammatical coherence, infiltrates and parses every level of magnitude within the discursive structure of music. It does so insofar as every potential stopping produces a new antecedent in the form of a potential silence posing a new question.

Furthermore, the graph suggests that this discursive pulsation is tied to a homologous pulsation in the body. The new lapse that accompanies a resolution is equally the moment that enjoyment fills in for the musician as he leaps without the benefit of text or memory. As music pulses from suspension to resolution, it also pulses from the language that has become installed in the body to the oblivion carved out by the perpetual return of the body to the solutions that have already been hard won through practice, an oblivion that can only be left in a new moment of haste. Fi-

nally, the meaning of this pulsation of both structure and execution is established in two purely auditory stages. The first concerns the musician's audition of his influences and his identification with those influences. This identification serves as a screen upon which the determinate but formally opaque grammar is instantiated for a musician in the form of his predecessors. The audition of this grammar stands at a distance from the grammar itself in the sense that the musician doesn't understand it in formal terms any more than a speaker has conscious access to a generative grammar of his language.

The second auditory stage concerns the way this language is shaped by a soloist. This, in turn, is a screen upon which the musician's use of his body is instantiated in sound - a musician's sound is rooted in his body, the place where language is installed as he learns it. The audition of the body - the voice - stands at a distance from the body insofar as it is properly speaking a corrective that, far from simply illuminating the body, in fact masks the central lack found there. This lack, $S(\mathbb{A})$, is revealed when the musician's executive resources run dry; but it is not taken as a defect - the moment where the soloist stops short results in $(\$\diamond a)$, the hallucination of unity, which produces $s(A)$, provisional meaning, all of which informs m, the soloist's audition of himself. The soloist's foundational lack of control is always in some sense a disruption of mastery, and is experienced as such to the extent that $s(A)$ does not satiate desire and is experienced as lapse; however, at the same time this lack is also experienced as the soloist's 'sound' rather than as a deficiency insofar as it is fortified by the consistency of $(\$\diamond D)$. The fact that a musician does not know in advance what he is going to play, then, does not imply that his music is completely haphazard; rather, his music is determined by the experience that has been encoded in the body. However, we must be sure to qualify this body, not as the instrumental body, but as the body itself, which is subjectively an absence. Where this absent operator, Φ, would figure in the articulation of music, we find $S(\mathbb{A})$ instead. This lack is filled, not by conscious control, but only by enjoyment. It is from this enjoyment that the soloist's statements are determined, insofar as his language accumulates around it in the course of his development, in the form $(\$\diamond D)$.

So the most important conclusion we can draw from our exposition of the graph of

desire is that jazz is heard at a distance from the circuits in which it is executed and structured, for both the soloist and the audience. The reception of meaning stands at a distance from the pulsation of sound and the body. If music is received in sound, it is not therefore determined in sound. Sound is not the substance of music but rather the imaginary medium of structure created within the constraints of execution. This suggests a perspective which is the obverse of that which sought to organize new aspects of sound in the name of music throughout the twentieth century. This obverse perspective asks, not whether all sound is music, but rather whether music is all sound. Our exposition here suggests that sound is in some respects a peripheral aspect of music, or at least equi-peripheral with grammar and execution.

While 'a good ear' is commonly valorized above all else in musical society, jazz is equally the result of factors that aren't auditory at all: first, a discursive consistency which is determinate even if its generative grammar is opaque in the first instance; and second, a use of the body which is determinate even if it always escapes the control of the musician. Our exposition in this chapter suggests that a musician's abilities to visualize structure, and perceive kinesthetically are at least as important as his ability to identify sounds. Indeed, the lapse of primary memory and the deafness of formalism, that is, the deficiencies of the imaginary and symbolic registers, are supported by the kinesthesia of enjoyment as much as the haste of performance is.

But our exposition also suggests something more fundamental. If music is forged, not from a mystical vision in sound, but from an enjoyment which abandons sound to the moment of performance, this abandonment does not thereby produce musical chaos; it produces an exquisite and personal logic. The very fact that jazz musicians articulate their musical knowledge by refraining from planning it out in advance implies that the music surpasses the soloist's conscious knowledge, as captured in Whitney Balliett's perennially invoked description of Jazz as "the sound of surprise". It implies the existence of the unconscious.

A musician has two choices - he can forfeit mastery to pursue this knowledge beyond thought, or he can claim a total mastery by mimicking what he hears. Mimicry is im-

plied in the anecdote of Schumann's romanticist delusion, for if we are to take Schumann seriously we must believe that he merely imitated the voices of supernatural beings. Karlheinz Stockhausen gives us a contemporary version of this mysticism when he claims to be a sort of antenna that receives sound from the electromagnetic vibrations of the universe. What these accounts dissemble is the considerable symbolic investment that inevitably goes into the creations of western composers, and in those cases where composers write music at the piano or other instruments, the executive investment as well. The romantic worldview continues to dominate musical society in the more typical pretense that music originates in an inner hearing made possible by a mysterious force known as "musical talent". The strength of this superstition is strictly equal to the conviction of unity that occurs in $(\$ \diamond a)$; in fact, angels, electromagnetic radiation, and talent all assume the place of a.

The oblivion of the antecedent, both in sound and the body, which is implicit in the spontaneous articulation of music, isn't recognized because it is plugged in the imagination - the lapse in sound is experienced as meaning because it confers an enigmatic unity upon sound on the basis of a fugitive reference implied by the musician's desire. The falsity of the imaginary answer lies in the fact that the musician is not given music by angels, electromagnetic radiation, or talent - he alone is responsible for executing it, even though he has no other means than enjoyment or imitation.

In this light, the neo-traditionalists of our day are pulling a ruse on themselves. They pose as masters, as those who always know what are playing, who have a gift of inner hearing. They do indeed have the inner hearing that they claim, but in truth it is not a gift - they buy it at the cost of their own sound, for it is a mere memory of what they have heard from others, and they cling to it with no other resource than mimesis.

In each musician a unique musical truth waits to be articulated in sound, but the musician doesn't know what it is any more than his audience. It does not subsist in the imagination but in a logic which is as opaque as it is rigorous. As long as the musician believes that his business is sound, and not the birth of this logic in perfor-

mance, it languishes; for what he can imagine only blocks it. The soloist articulates an intention which he himself is unaware of. He can either borrow it from others or assume the place of his own by separating from it.