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Aural Wars:

Race, Class, Politics and the Dilemmas of Free Jazzmen in Sixties France

1re version longue avant coupes

Jedediah Sklower

Musical worlds, apparatuses and the government of senses

Our ears often ignore the winding paths we follow when listening to music. The musical sense is a hybrid one, constantly hijacked by interventions of exogenous instances – other senses, ideas, environments, objects… Since Antoine Hennion's seminal work on musical passion (2007 [1993]), French research on musical experience has changed perspectives, nuancing traditional reception theory by emphasizing not only the activity of the receiver (or how subjects appropriate a stable object in various ways), but also the performativity of the act of listening. Music lovers inform the shape of the music they listen to in order to appreciate it, they "dress it to taste it" (*Ibid.*, 229) with ideas, representations, rituals, and within social interactions and environments. Form, reception and context mutually influence and design each other, in a circular, sequential co-production of the aesthetic experience.

In France, the history of listening to music is a new frontier in music studies. Sociologists, inspired either or jointly by American pragmatism (John Dewey, William James), art world or field theory (Howard Becker vs. Pierre Bourdieu) and the new social history of art (Michael Baxandall, Francis Haskell, Svetlana Alpers) – among others –, have published works on classical music, dealing with the nineteenth-century invention of Bach (Fauquet and Hennion 2000), the baroque revival in France (Hennion 2007), as well as the birth of discographic practices (Maisonneuve 2009) and experiences of popular music (Pecqueux and Roueff, 2009; Sklower, 2013)[1]. Similar approaches dealt with jazz in France. The history of its reception between the thirties and late fifties was treated by Ludovic Tournès (1999), who focused on Hugues Panassié and the Hot clubs de France movement,

[11] For a review of works on the history of listening in the English-speaking world, see Weber (1997); see also Maisonneuve (2002).

political scientist Denis-Constant Martin and sociologist Olivier Roueff (2002) tackled the first half of the XXth century; a recent book by the latter (2013) offers a history of the successive jazz worlds, from the discovery of cakewalk in 1902 to examples of avant-garde improvisation clubs nowadays, and how they contributed in forming "apparatuses of appreciation"[2].

My aim here is to follow these leads and push them one notch further, using Michel Foucault's concepts of "apparatus" [*dispositif*] and "governmentality" [*gouvernementalité*] (2001; 2004; 2005). A "musical apparatus" shall refer here to an assemblage of heterogeneous elements – the musical object and how it is discursively identified, relatively stabilized and practiced within cultural (aesthetic, ideological), social (fan groups, subcultures, scenes), institutional (art worlds, the State, the market) and material (listening spaces and devices) frames – that work to produce, without any necessary internal coherence, a set of possibilities "arranged"[3] for the experience of music[4]. I call "government of the senses" the productive result of this apparatus in peoples' experiences, or the way in which various elements of this system both induce and are appropriated by music lovers and musicians when they engage with music, and which draw the silhouette of a "regime of listening" (Szendy 2001, 41) and of music making. These elements include, for example, the listener's career as a music lover or performer, whether individual or within a fandom/an art world, and thus all the procedures he deploys to ritualize the musical actions; his heuristics, or how he selects the material which will constitute the basis for his experience: albums, tracks, riffs, themes, choruses, musemes (Tagg 1982) as well as images, gestures, styles and so forth; and his hermeneutics, or the semiotic tools and codes he uses to associate feelings and meanings to the information he has (*i.e.* pays attention to) on a performer, a performance, the production context etc. The apparatus (the multi-layered frame), the listener (the subjective configuration) and the nature of the experience (the individual or recurring event) obviously influence each other, in a systematic way. If portions of the musical apparatus can work "as one", its governmental effects are not the product of a unified, centralized source of power. The fact is, art worlds, fields or apparatuses function both as collaborative and antagonistic systems. The

[2] Jean-Louis Fabiani had already considered a few trends concerning the links between discourses and musical practices in an early article (1986). For a musicological approach to European free jazz, see Jost (1987), and to its French scene, see Cotro (1999).

[3] The French verb "*disposer*" is richer here, as its polysemic nuances include the idea of an external agent "arranging" certain elements, "inducing" someone into accepting them as they are, as well as the subject's own means of "disposing of" them.

[4] Olivier Roueff used a similar definition of this concept ["*dispositif musical*"] when analyzing the objectivation of jazz in France in the twenties (2001, 240-241).

consequences are not necessary, universal or complete: there can be partial, fleeting or contradicting effects, or even none of them, as well as diversions or "tactical resistances" to the "strategic" frame[5], as I shall illustrate further down.

France was one of the first countries in the world to revel in the wonders of Afro-American rhythms, with the cakewalk craze in the early XXth century, followed by the invasion of "jazz-bands" on 1920s Parisian music halls stages and the national dissemination of New Orleans jazz with the Hot Clubs de France movement in the 1930s, and so forth. Free jazz was no exception to this trend. Also, French intellectuals and middlemen played a major role in its formal definition and thus, of how it should be listened to, appreciated, what it should mean – racial elements being particularly important in the process. I will thus use the aforementioned conceptual framework to understand the relationships between representations of race and class, ideology and musical listening that the French free jazz world established in the sixties, and how these configurations set the stage for and eventually governed free jazzmen's discourses, practices and career choices. I will start with the political identification of free jazz and the ascetic ear sculpted by most militant critics in the second half of the sixties, then examine the career paths that two leading musicians, François Tusques and Michel Portal, followed in function of their relationship to this apparatus and according to their evolving conceptions of the relationship between music, its experience and practice and their cultural representations of jazz, politics, class and race.

The politics of the ascetic ear

I have described elsewhere (2006, 142-166) the birth of a free jazz world in France. I will only briefly recall here how the New Thing was politically identified, before focusing on how this discourse prescribed norms on how to listen to this music. From the mid-sixties on, free jazz was defended as radical form, both aesthetically and politically. Formal elements of the new style were construed as a modernist rupture and the sign of a revolutionary agenda (see Drott 2011, 131-135; Lehman 2005). The specific political dimension of the objectification of free jazz was accepted jointly by its sycophants and denigrators: whatever the reality of the meaning of such new aesthetic practices and how the performers themselves interpreted them, the French jazz world collectively agreed to joust within the frame of this

[5] Concerning the diverting of signs, I refer of course to classic cultural studies themes (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979); on the strategies/tactics dichotomy, see de Certeau (2011 [1990], 59-63).

particular identification[6]. The polemics took place within a common, accepted binary frame, the defendants arguing for the historical necessity of free jazz with regards to the new political conjuncture (the radicalization of Black politics in the United-States, the student and worker movements around the globe, decolonization and opposition to the American intervention in Vietnam), while the opponents denounced a mere rhetorical cloud used to camouflage musical nihilism. This is what I coined a "polemical collaboration", with regards to how Albert Ayler's music in particular was construed in France (2008, 195, 213).

The critics, in many articles in the jazz press and most systematically in Philippe Carles's and Jean-Louis Comolli's essay *Free Jazz/Black Power* (2000 [1971]), developed the idea that free jazz was the sign of a broader opposition than the one LeRoi Jones had set forth in *Blues People* (1963): not only the resistance of Black subjects against White oppression/commercial hijacking, but more globally of the oppressed against the oppressor, the colonized against the colonizer. Because of its historical, social and racial situation, free jazz could not be analyzed with the concepts of traditional idealist, universalist, bourgeois aesthetics. This interpretative frame thus broke with the project and structure of the previous generations of critics who had legitimized jazz by erecting a pantheon of individual outstanding performers expressing their genius via improvisation, whether via Panassié's amateur and subjectivist praise of hot jazz heroes from the thirties on, or Hodeir and Malson's avant-gardist defense of boppers from the mid-forties on. The new generation of jazz journalists, often university students who were under the influence of various facets of the 1960s French intellectual field (linguistics/semiology/structuralism for the method, Marxism and its political derivatives for the meaning), listened for something else in jazz and thus valued another experience of the music: not the charms of black primitive joy and creativity[7], but the oppressed's visceral rebellion against repression; not the universal art of the individual genius, but the collective political forces located in society: "It is jazz as a mirror of the established order that speaks through the musician, not the latter who expresses himself through jazz" as critic Michel Le Bris put it (1967, 18)[8]. Jean-Louis Comolli wrote that to "analyze the forms without analyzing the forces would be a fraud", adding that "one cannot enjoy the form without taking up the cause" (1966a, 28). An aural ethos was thus prescribed:

[6] As was the case also in the United States (see Anderson 2007, 132).
[7] For a nuanced critical discussion of Panassié's primitivism, see Guibert (2006, 188-195) and Perchard (2011).
[8] For Michel Le Bris's role at *Jazz Hot* during the "Mao" phase, see Sklower (2006, 187-190). This particular article refers in its footnotes (a practice significantly inaugurated by this new generation of critics) to Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, as well as to Edgar Morin and Jean-Paul Sartre.

orthodox listening practices were the condition of ethics, knowledge and – if need be – pleasure.

This more intellectualist, distanced ear, that saw music as a decipherable sign more than a pleasurable performance, depended less on the listening environment than had the Panassié phonographic and pantomimic regime of listening (the "*conférences-auditions*" within the Hot club de France network)[9], or the forties-fifties tamed jazz-club formula. In this sense, the first presentation of free jazz in disciplined spaces such as elite concert halls or silenced jazz-clubs was quite coherent with the project of the previous generation of jazz intermediaries (Charles Delaunay, André Hodeir, Lucien Malson and the likes), whose goal of canonizing jazz came with the domestication of the audience, *i.e.* the disqualification of the amateur, bodily experience and the valorization of the ascetic, expert ear (Roueff, 2013, 185-187). In this case, the focus however no longer was "graphocentric" (the formalist listening with an eye on the musical score), but "semiocentric" (the political reading of the sign revealing a social structure). For the former generation, jazz was a legitimate, universal expression, best understood with musicological skills; for the latter, jazz was a revolutionary, situated reflection, best construed with the right ideological tools. Yet in both cases, intellectual knowledge was the key to understanding and appreciating it, and any form of pleasure associated with the body was discredited as inferior. They may have engaged in an aesthetico-ideological controversy, in the end they both aimed at producing similar structures of auditory attention.

Carles and Comolli thus degraded the idea of "simple" aesthetic pleasure. They for example asserted that the "purity of the idea", the location of the "unrestrained pursuit of pleasure" – one of the popular Situationist slogans of those years, derided here – was a "capitalist fantasy" (2000, 389). Any element in jazz that could threaten to seduce the ear was considered a sign of a commercial colonization of jazz. Themes, for example, had become an object of "comfort and melodic security" before the birth of free jazz. With the new generation of musicians, the "commodity-theme" as an object of "aesthetic pleasure/consumption" was definitely put aside, in favor of dissolutions or ironic "mimicking" and "deconstructions" thereof (Carles and Comolli, 2000, 347). To refuse or to freely work on themes, as Eric Dolphy, Albert Ayler, or the Art Ensemble of Chicago did

[9] For an analysis of how Hugues Panassié developed his own brand of such a government of the ear in the thirties, thanks to conferences during which, while playing records, he would mime the instruments and stress the musical elements or moments one should pay attention to, in order to understand what authentic hot jazz was, see Tournès (1999, 44-45), Perchard (2012, 384-386) and Roueff (2013, 145-146).

(348-350) was to revolt against a whole ideological, aesthetic and commercial system. The contrary was to submit to the empire of the bourgeoisie and to flatter its lazy contemplative ear.

Indeed, according to Jean-Louis Comolli, contrarily to the "music of Miles Davis, Art Farmer or of John Coltrane" and "classic jazz" which could be considered as an "art of seduction", free jazz was one of "frustration", which, as it "never fulfills" his usual aural desires, "requires that the auditor be acutely attentive, present in each instant, that he never get carried away by a dream, nor look for a state of semi-sleep." (1966b, 33) As it looked to interpret the music more than feel it, to find the means by which free jazz would "provoke a realization" (*Ibid.*), this "aural logos" valued a formalist experience rather than one that could be influenced by other extrinsic factors associated with bodily experience, made up of collective reactions and how they defined the environment (an ardent militant atmosphere, for that matter). Many "neo"[10]-purist critics for example specifically dismissed hippie reactions to free jazz concerts they could observe as "petit bourgeois" jouissance[11] – they were supposed to remain within the confines of pop environments. Indeed, countercultural manifestations of emotional pleasure and pointless *rêverie* were considered as diametrically opposed to the aware, militant ear these critics associated to free jazz. Comolli did defend hippies in one article inasmuch as they were "beatniks, vietniks and […] long-haired killjoys" (1966, 28), but never the pop or psychedelic experience and its manifestations (drug-infused trance, noisy and fidgety demonstrations of extasy and the likes). For, within this aural logos, immediate, emotional, choreographic experiences of free jazz were once again failed ones or a "fraud": the true message was not received nor understood when blurred by the senses. Such an ear for the enjoyable was almost the aural equivalent of the LeRoi Jones-inspired dialectic – another expropriation of the Afro-American's culture by White colonialist aesthetics, which reduced the musicians to their never-ending role as minstrels. Some Black performers, of course, were guilty of leniently adopting the blackface mask: for Michel Le Bris, "the time of the fool who rolls his eyes to amuse the audience is long gone, the revolution is coming" (1967, 17), and for Carles and Comolli, Sidney Bechet and Louis Armstrong "perpetuate the ideal image of

[10] The first purists were Hugues Panassié and his followers.

[11] The same type of exclusion had hit the "zazous" during the Second World War – the hot jazz amateurs (among which Charles Delaunay, Boris Vian, André Hodeir) despised their extravagant, uncivilized behavior during concerts, a sign of their lack of culture. See Régnier (2009, 137-140) and Legrand (2009, 149-150).

the 'good Black man who has more than one trick up his sleeve'" (2000, 318). In the sixties, decoding the ambiguities of tricksterism and signifyin' was not part of the intellectual game.[12]

Music as agit-prop: the political efficiency of music according to François Tusques

From the mid-sixties on, free jazz was performed in a variety of settings that could appear as the adequate environment for the political government of the ears: concerts were often organized by equally politicized mediators, which took place in specific places associated with the struggles of the moment or the counterculture. This was the case especially after May 68, mostly in universities such as the highly-politicized Nanterre campus, in *cafés-théâtres* or at the American Center in Paris. But to stage music in a political environment is to give clues as to how to interpret it, less how to experience it. And there was indeed another conception of the experience associated with the idea of a direct political effectiveness of music. In this case, the ear did not necessarily have to refer to a system of interpretation in order only to *understand what* was at stake, but had to be *driven by* the music, its context of representation and their conspicuous meaning so as to enhance the listener's political consciousness. In this case, music was no longer a sign meant to be analyzed by prior knowledge, it became an *in situ* emotional weapon.

Here is how pianist François Tusques, during a debate on Albert Ayler's music and untimely death, considered the political effectiveness of militant music:

> "For me, Albert Ayler is just another musician. I don't see any interest in talking about him today. We should rather be talking about people who are taking action now, of Elaine Brown, for example. A minister of the BPP in California, she recorded *Seize the Time*, and now that's true revolutionary music, music that serves the revolution… When people hear her talk about Black exploitation in the USA, when she sings 'Be a man, take a gun'[13], they want to make a revolution…" (in Caux *et al.* 1971, 5)

In this stance, the reflexive, distant aesthesic[14] ethos is disqualified as elitist and politically inefficient. Music performed by socially and racially oppressed and yet militant people is supposed to have some sort of a magical influence on listeners – which means, in fact, its aura

[12] Here, Carles and Comolli share LeRoi Jones's disdain for mainstream jazz and its entertainers. For a debate in the U.S. between the latter and Ralph Ellison concerning blues and jazz, and specifically the meaning of "Armstrong's smile", see Parent (2007, 144-146).

[13] "*Sois un homme, prends un fusil*": an approximate translation of: "We'll just have to get guns and be men", the last verse of the chorus in "The End of Silence" (1969, track n° 4).

[14] Aesthesic: relating to sensation. I use this term here in a more global sense: everything dealing with musical reception (sensation as well as aural heuristics and hermeneutics). In musical semantics, the term was defined by Jean Molino (2009) and Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1996).

had an effective power on François Tusques's ears. There is influence where one sees magic: *Seize the Time* is a typical "factish", as Bruno Latour would have it (2009). Then, the economy of the musical sign has to be fluid, homogenous, with no room for polysemy or ambiguity. The ear is offered an immediate path to the affects the music contains and produces – and in this sense, there is a partial similarity with Panassié's conception of the jazz experience. In a certain way, from this perspective there is more authentic, revolutionary potential in the popular, passive militant listener than in the intellectually active one, especially when you add representations of class agency into the equation (true people rebel against injustice, they don't think about it). We thus have two different aesthesic ethoses, which define two types of subjects and their agencies. What is interesting here, is that intellectual passivity, despised by the ascetic stance, is considered positively by the agit-prop one: forget the books, the elite mumbo-jumb, listen to Elaine Brown and you'll start a riot. The (non intellectual, popular) ear is conceived as a sympathetic annex to transparently signifying sound, it functions homogenously with it and enacts its virtualities.

However, there is something else at play here. Recorded with jazz pianist Horace Tapscott, *Seize the Time* was not a free jazz album, more a collection of gospel-inspired vocal tracks with Tapscott's piano accompaniment, and a few more rhythm'n'blues tunes with members of his Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra. The fact that, in 1971, François Tusques would pick this example rather than challenging, avant-garde music of his scene is significant of course of the political efficiency of less more mainstream Afro-American music in the USA, but also of a shift in the pianist's own aesthetico-political career. After being a pioneer of free jazz in France in the early sixties[15], he had later on started looking for new artistic interactions between music and theater (for example, in 1967, he staged a musical version of Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark* at the *café-théâtre* La Vieille Grille in Paris), poetry (Afro-American author Hart Leroy Bibbs participated in several of his performances) or *chanson française* (he played and recorded with militant singer-songwriter Colette Magny, 1972). The inclusion of textual elements first served aesthetic purposes, as he looked for "intermedial"[16] correspondences, was "attracted to contradictions"[17] and surrealist explorations of the unconscious. But it soon also had the function of helping his music explicitly signify political messages, as did his more constant use of paratexts[18] in his later recordings[19] as well as his

[15] Particularly, he recorded the first French free jazz album in 1965, simply entitled *Free jazz*.
[16] Fluxus was an important influence on French free jazz performers.
[17] Private interview with F. Tusques, 3 May 2004.
[18] Term coined by Gérard Genette: titles, epigraphs, dedications, prefaces and postfaces, author commentaries, illustrations – all the elements that are part of a book without being part of the main narrative. See Genette, 1997.

attempts to reduce his music's "semiotic indeterminacy" (Drott 2009, 140-149). Such an ostentatious stance clearly sets Tusques's choices on the agit-prop side of musical activism: truth reveals itself directly through action, it is not discovered via distant analysis.

The desire to find the best way for music to have a political role, the search for alternatives to free jazz to escape its growing stylistic petrifaction and its unpopularity as well as the symbolic and economic domination of Afro-American jazzmen in France[20] and the aesthetic and cultural circulations typical of the late sixties and seventies are some of the factors that explain many of the new directions taken by the first generation of French free jazzmen, as well as the choices made by the "collectives" (Cohelmec, Dharma, Perception, Machi Oul…) of the second, younger generation. In the seventies, François Tusques decided to cut himself loose from the jazz world, because he felt free jazz had become too elitist. Looking back at his career in 1981, he explained that "musical creativity comes from folk music"; he wanted to "find popular roots", "after playing free jazz" (Lecomte 1981, 38, 39). Significantly, one of the key moments in this change was when he discovered fan reactions to a pop performance: "the relations that existed between this group and the audience seemed to me much more important than what we were doing" (quoted in Drott 2009, 151). "What" they were doing also means *for whom*: he was most probably not satisfied with the sociology of his audience – mostly Parisian students, not industrial workers or immigrants – and how it expressed its relationship to music (silent, concentrated listening). He did not however choose to play pop music, unlike other musicians of the scene (Barney Wilen and his Amazing Free Rock Group, Henri Texier, Aldo Romano and Georges Locatelli with Total Issue, François Jeanneau with Triangle…); it would have been too much of a commercial and political leap.

His Intercommunal Free Dance Music Orchestra[21] thus incorporated folk musicians from various regions in France and African ones (Adolf Winkler, Jo Maka, Guem)[22], played in new places, such as immigrant hostels, factories, prisons, and self-produced the music within the "Temps des Cerises" [23] collective. Several free improvisation "collectives" started doing the same (politicization, self-production, new performance settings…) in the seventies.

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[19] Both *Piano Dazibao* solo discs (1970, 1971) and *Intercommunal Music* (1971); see Sklower (2006, 181).

[20] On how French musicians developed an aesthetics of their own, see Cotro (1999, 225-228; *passim*). On the symbolic domination of American musicians, the French musicians' emancipation and legitimization, see Sklower (2006, 200-243).

[21] In Black Panther ideology, intercommunalism was a change from "revolutionary internationalism": imperialism had destroyed nations, and socialism therefore would have to be based upon a network of communities.

[22] See for example: Intercommunal Free Dance Music Orchestra 1974a, 1974b, 1974c.

[23] A very well known militant French song, written in 1866 by Jean-Baptiste Clément, arranged by Antoine Renard, and later associated to the Paris 1871 Commune.

The fascination with the communal atmosphere of pop concerts, which strongly contrasted with the more silent free jazz audiences in small, half-filled clubs, the "return" to a repertoire of folk and protest songs to the detriment of collective improvisation and the desire to bring the music directly to the people indicate a greater influence of the auditory "superego", so to speak. The idea here is that political efficiency is the product of a dialogue, not of aesthetic substantial power on its own, that the musician cannot expect people to decode the music as he encodes it: the popular ear – how it functions, what it expects, how it reacts – is at the center of the musician's aesthetic practice. Thus, the assessment of free jazz's failure to clearly signify politics and exert a useful influence, plus representations of workers' militant needs affected aesthetic and performance choices. The integration of the (perceived) popular ear (the shift from "art" to "folk" via the spectacle of "pop"[24]) in musical practice meant severing the link with free jazz's avant-gardism, otherness and more austere aesthesic apparatus, something several other musicians of the first generation would do, crossing over to pop (cf. *supra*), not to mention the more eclectic practices of the generation of the "collectives". Tusques's political options here were also, in a certain way, the French version of the solutions American musicians had developed to try and "fulfill a genuinely populist function", as "greater social commitment in the art itself" was supposed to "facilitate connection with the masses" (Anderson 2007, 124). Free jazz had not reversed the ongoing demographic trend, especially with the new competition of *yéyé* music and then rock and its various ramifications. It had not become a music of the masses. It was popular within a certain Parisian scene – college students, intellectuals, artists, hippies and the likes, but clearly did not manage to take root in the working class. The situation was all the more difficult, considering the fact that free jazz was "imported" into France, and performed mostly be petit-bourgeois musicians. The coordinates were not the same as in the USA – although it did not either benefit from a huge popularity among the working class.

Michel Portal and the burden of authenticity

The reference to folk and immigrants, as well as the integration of African performers in Tusques's Intercommunal projects hints at the ethnocultural taint the class question took in this new phase of his career. As philosopher Christian Béthune wrote, with jazz, "*double consciousness*[*] covertly became the common fate of Blacks and Whites." (2008, 320) And

[24] On this classic classification, see Tagg 1982.
[*] In English in the text.

this is more explicitly revealed in the career of saxophonist Michel Portal. An important member of the Parisian free jazz scene, although less central than Tusques, Portal had started his career within the classical music world, and constantly kept a foot in it throughout his career, also playing works by contemporary composers such as Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio or Mauricio Kagel. He was joined in 1969 by Vinko Globokar, Carlos Alsina and Jean-Pierre Drouet to for "New Phonic Art", a formation dedicated to collective improvisation, sonic research and instantaneous creation (Marmande, 1994, 948). His "Portal Unit" would shortly thereafter confirm his appeal for such forms of crossover between Afro-American idioms and European contemporary classical forms, which makes him one of the key figures in the evolution of French free jazz towards "European improvised music".

These cultural, aesthetic and professional elements are important to understand his ethical dilemmas within the free jazz scene, which I will look into now thanks to a few quotes from his interviews in the press. In 1968, he felt that French jazzmen were playing a "stolen music", which was "born in a specific context, in reaction to a specific political and ideological situation", a situation which "is not ours". White performers were both "rootless" (he dismissed French folklore – mentioning "bourrée auvergnate" –as "pitiful") and had no good reason to revolt: while Afro-American music had always been a "protest" music, their own adoption of it was inauthentic (1968, 15-16). Such comments, which weren't that unfamiliar amongst French musicians in those years[25], clearly demonstrate the productiveness of the French jazz world's identification of jazz and its "distribution of the sensible"[26] according to which Afro-Americans, being oppressed socially and racially, created authentically revolutionary music. Here, the politicized free jazz apparatus, by efficiently radicalizing social and racial assignations as we have demonstrated earlier, contributed in governing Portal's representations of music and thus his relationship to the jazz world. These uncomfortable feelings of inauthenticity probably contributed in his exploration of improvisation beyond jazz[27] – the condition to find relative musical autonomy and actually fulfill free jazz's individualist promise (to play one's own music: to find individual ways of

[25] Aldo Romano and Henry Texier, for example, dismissed Tusques's "hijacking" of Albert Ayler's death.
[26] Jacques Rancière uses this concept to refer both to the "sharing" of common spaces, times and activities and the discriminations the definition of such a common ground imply (see Rancière, 2000, 12-13; 2008). In French, the term "*partage*" is both a "sharing" and a "division/distribution".
[27] Fusions with other improvisatory traditions: African, Indian, for example, Barney Wilen (Schoof *et al*., 1967) being an example of both; experimental music, *musique concrète* – Bernard Vitet (1967) as well as Barney Wilen (1968) again; or contemporary classical music, which was a common feature of the French (see Cotro, 1999) as well as the German, the Italian or the British scene (see Jost, 1987; Saladin, 2014).

improvising with one's own musical or cultural material). Combined with his prior musical training and career, his needs in terms of experimentation, it sheds light on his commitments to projects linking free form improvisation and contemporary classical music, with New Phonic Art from 1969 on (1971) and later with his Michel Portal Unit (1973). This perceived inadequacy of the White, Western performer within the "jazzistic field"[28] is one of the reasons that can explain the development in the Old Continent of "European improvised music", *i.e.* improvisatory experimentations that integrated contemporary classical music and the jazz tradition while socially and culturally establishing a certain musical and symbolic distance from the latter. A musical trend quite specific to 1970s Europe, which does not mean some Afro-American free jazz performers weren't influenced by contemporary classical music – Anthony Braxton, for example.

But paradoxically, in another interview five years later, he recanted his puzzled feelings and adopted an absolute opposite stance:

> "I believe there is a negritude of jazz, when I play this music, I am a negro. You might find this silly, but since I started playing jazz, I looked back into my genealogy to see if I didn't belong to other races. Well, I found Moroccan blood. It makes me very happy. Although I feel perfectly fine within this music, I think its negro component is an absolutely essential element." (Portal 1973, 9)

This racial conception of jazz goes back to the early twentieth century and beyond, yet the reference to "negritude" – an essentialist discourse on African culture too but from a Black, anti-colonialist perspective – gives it a legitimizing black left-wing edge. So to feel authorized (and no longer uncomfortable) to play Black music, this White, classically-trained performer locates a foreign racialized presence (the "Moroccan blood") within himself, which acts once again as a "factish", a productive totem whose efficiency depends on the faith invested in it. Finally, although the political and class elements are less important here, in an ideological context marked by decolonization and Third-Worldism, the blood's "nationality" is also significant. Indeed, Morocco was a former French (and Spanish) protectorate: this self-orientalization thus plays the double function of "negritude" as a less distant, more relevant racial and a political myth.

Conclusion

[28] Concept developed by ethnologist Alexandre Pierrepont (2002), to expand the sources of Afro-American musical creation beyond "jazz" and to consider the social dynamics that underpin it.

The discovery and reception/appropriation of free jazz in France offered musicians the classic tools for a politicized, modernist agenda in cultural production. On the one hand, it enabled them to position themselves as aesthetic revolutionaries and to try and conquer a space of their own within the bop-dominated French jazz scene; on the other hand, within the political context of the sixties, they could also posit themselves as militants who challenged the French cultural and political system as a whole. They thus adopted a symbolic, discursive bias to express and feel solidarity for a people whose social, political and ethnocultural background they did not share materially. But that balance did not resist beyond the intense political phase and the Afro-American free jazzmen's stay in Paris in the late sixties. In a career sequence typical of artistic empowerment, they used the libertarian aesthetico-ethic resources of free jazz to experiment with other possibilities offered by the surrounding cultural landscape. For some, to depart from jazz while acknowledging its input in their musical practices meant they also had to justify severing the ties to the symbols associated to Afro-American avant-garde performers – lest their appropriation be interpreted as another example of cultural "colonization". Michel Portal's felt racial irrelevancy within the free jazz idiom, as well his and others' later search for other (ethno)cultural roots hint at the validity of my introductory hypotheses.

Indeed, the career paths taken by Tusques and Portal demonstrate the relative efficiency of the politicized sixties apparatus within the free jazz world, not so much in terms of musical experience, but of musical ethics and evaluations of the experience. The best clues to the active existence of a "government of the senses", are the musical and simultaneously ethical interrogations these musicians felt they had to confront in order to make aesthetic, and thus professional choices – and for musicians, these are also often existential ones. Behind the variety of paths, there is a common set of aesthetico-ethic norms, and injunctions they had to consider when making aesthetic and career choices. Tacit, difficult and ambiguous questions on musical practice such as "am I capable of playing free jazz?", "am I entitled to doing so", "how can I relate to someone else's experience", "what should I play", "is my music serving the right cause?", "what does it mean?", "where does it come from" and so forth, were decisive in how these musicians not only practiced music, but also lived their lives.

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