Musical Borrowing as an Act of Self-Definition in John Coltrane's *Impressions*

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Historically, jazz has had a mixed reception in the classical world. For example, during the 1930s and 1940s critics often disparaged classical composers for borrowing from jazz, yet simultaneously complemented those same pieces for their catchiness and popularity. Inversely, when jazz musicians began to borrow classical themes, critics often rejoiced that jazz musicians were working to legitimize jazz. For example, in a 1940 *New York Times* interview, Paul Lavalle of the NBC Orchestra said, «The proof that jazz writers are at present trying to make their tunes more highbrow, is that pieces of great composers are being used and with great success. Debussy's *Reverie*, has become 'My Reverie' and Ravel's *Pavane pour l'infant defunte* has developed into *The Lamp Is Low*…» [Rasponi 1940, X10]. The tendency among classical and white jazz critics has been that the distinctly African traits, such as repetition and musical borrowing, are often derided, while those associated with European classical music are often lauded. One should not discount the rhetorical significance of repetition and musical borrowing as a vital tool in the analysis of jazz and popular styles. In this article, I focus on the motives within John Coltrane's composition *Impressions* to illustrate the influence of African American oral traditions and their rhetorical significance in jazz. Coltrane makes his musical statement through his use of borrowed melodies from Maurice Ravel, Morton Gould, and Peter DeRose/Bert Shefter/Mitchell Parish. In this social context, the rhetorical redefining of familiar melodies is an act of self-definition.

To what extent should the theorist or musicologist delve into the sociological history of popular styles?[1] In Stephen F. Pond's analysis of the criticisms of Ken Burns's *Jazz*, he points to an online American Musicological Society discussion in which William H. Rosar questions its inclusion of social history in musicology. According to Rosar, «Of course, social historians are convinced that all history is first social history… I for one find, though, that somehow the '[music] history' often seems to get lost in works created from this perspective. As for whether musicology could (or should) rise to the occasion to mount a social history like Burns's *Jazz*, I would ask: Is it the purview of musicology to take on large social issues, or is that not better left to social scientists?» [Pond 2003, 40-41].

Rosar's comments represent an often-held view on the social history of popular music. For example, in Theodore Adorno's denunciations against popular music he similarly argued that the internal aspects of music should be of the highest concern. Further, that sociological meaning should be derived from the work itself instead of becoming too entranced by the external ideological aspects of music [Adorno 1978, 9]. Adorno concludes, «Neither a composer's origins nor his life history, nor even the impact of his music on a particular social stratum, yields any compelling sociological insights».

The question with jazz, however, is whether or not issues of social history can be extricated from its music history. In the aforementioned AMS discussion Gayle Murchison responded to this question by saying this is not a standard we apply to areas of musicology. Murchison says, «To look at matters of style, musical systems, or pitch structures alone reveals only one facet of this musical tradition… Then why, when we confront jazz, do we tend to want to relieve ourselves of the responsibility of confronting race? Why do we collectively make the caveat that race and segregation are properly the province of historians and that 'musical style' alone is our domain?» [Pond 2003, 41].

I contend that this social context is important to deciphering a work's rhetorical meaning. While classical rhetoric is arguably less relevant when applied to jazz, Henry Louis Gates's concept of *signifyin'*, influenced by Jacques Derrida's Deconstructionism, W.E.B. Du Bois's double consciousness, and his reading of African oral traditions, is a vital rhetorical structure in African American arts. *Signifyin'* is the process in which the meaning of stock borrowed material is strategically altered. In recent years, *signifyin'* and racial context has been applied to jazz analysis on a generally metaphorical level, whereas my analysis specifically concerns the lineage and meaning of specific tropes and their revision.[2]

Signifyin' has its roots metaphorically in African folklore, sociological history, as well as concrete improvising techniques. One of the often-relayed stories among early African American is the story of the trickster. This trickster, who sometimes goes by the name of Legba in the Americas or Esu Elegbara from Yorban mythology, is first represented in stories as an intermediary god-like character that translates the messages from the gods to humans. Variants of this story include Esu Elegbara being transformed into or accompanied by a "signifying monkey" that creates havoc by pretending to relay the words of an elephant to a lion. In doing so, the signifying monkey manages to trick the

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lion into thinking the elephant has been insulting it, which leads the two to war [Gates 1988, 3-5].[3] According to Henry Louis Gates, Esu can be considered a metaphor for how Africans making the passage to the New World would tell stories and improvise upon them in an effort to relive their collective history. Gates says that because the history itself was unwritten, the process and creativity in story telling is more important than its fidelity to historical accuracy. More specifically, Gates says, «Esu, god of indeterminacy, rules this interpretative process [telling and listening to stories]; he is the god of interpretation because he embodies ambiguity of figurative language… then Esu is a metaphor for the uncertainties of explication, for the open-endedness of every literary text» [Gates 1988, 21].

It is possible that this trickster storyline may have been an inspiration for some of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century minstrel songs of Charles Dibden and Charles Matthews, and more specifically Thomas "Daddy" Rice's character Jim Crow[Gioia 2009, 25–31]. While the Jim Crow character is at its most derogatory just after Reconstruction, the earliest versions of the character appear to place more emphasis on its trickster *persona*. In the nineteenth century, this trickster trope reemerges as the Br'er Rabbit character in Joel Chandler Harris's 1880 collection of African American folklore, *Uncle Reamus and his Song and Stories*.

According to Gates, in African American arts the oral traditions of the trickster becomes entwined with cultural double-consciousness. W.E.B. Du Bois first wrote about double-consciousness in the 1903 publication, *The Souls of Black Folk*, in which he discusses the struggle of how African Americans reconcile the dual identity of being both African and American. It is the cognitive dissonance of contending with forced assimilation in a country that treats their cultural traditions and language with disdain and racism. Accordingly, African Americans essentially hide those traditions within a façade of accepted Eurocentric language, which are cleverly unveiled through *signifyin'*. The practice is most easily seen in verbal dueling, such as the African American game of "The Dozens," in which double meanings, puns, and word play are used to best one's opponent [Gates 1988, 56].[4] In this sense use of word play is the weapon of the trickster - their way to best their opponent and more importantly retain one's history and traditions when they are at risk of being lost. «The roots of African American culture are inextricably intertwined [African and American traditions], and one can denounce the legacy of racism but not deny its complexity... When slaves were separated from their compatriots and forced to adopt the English language, it was a form of intentional linguicide».[5]

According to Gates, *signifyin'* is particularly relevant to jazz,

> There are so many examples of *signifyin'* in jazz… Improvisation, of course, so fundamental to the very idea of jazz, is "nothing more" than repetition and revision. In this sort of revision, again where meaning is fixed, it is the realignment of the signifier that is the signal trait of expressive genius…jazz - and even its antecedents, the blues, the spirituals, and ragtime - and which is the source of my trope for black intertextuality [Gates 1988, 64].

While Gates identifies borrowing as a fundamental aspect of African American music and literature, he has left the study of musical structures to musicologists.[6] Because *signifyin'* has been applied to so many different types of art, sometimes some adaption of terms is necessary. For example, when Gates says "fixed", he is referring to borrowed material, and what Gates calls "tropological revision", translates as melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic variations on a trope. While signfyin' has a long history in African American discourse, Gates explains *signifyin'* in terms of Derrida's philosophy of Deconstructionism and Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics.[7] Specifically, Gates is primarily concerned with how intertexts and the altering of familiar tropes can be used to "defer the meaning" (or rather double meanings and innuendo), which has rhetorical signification. [8]

About the process of *signifyin'* Gates says, «The artistry of the oral narrator… does not depend of his or her capacity to dream up new character or events… rather it depends on his or her display of the ability to group two lines that end in words that sound alike, that bear phonetic similarity… This challenge is greater when key terms are fixed» [Gates 1988, 60]. In simplest terms, it is the cleverness in which an artist uses borrowed material and is able to manipulate it. In this regard, I cannot help but see similarities between Gates's *signifyin'* and the topoi and elecutio from classical rhetoric. For example, the elecutio is where the orator or performer would be expected to use a list of appropriate stock phrases, words, or well-worn tropes to ornament one's point. Both Gates's *signifyin'* and Quintilian's use of fixed material are dependent on the ingenuity of the orator. According to Quintilian, «discrimination is necessary in the acquisition of stock words; for we are aiming at true oratory, not at the fluency of a cheapjack» [Quintilian 1995, 7]. In the Renaissance, Joachim Burmeister and Johann Mattheson reinterpreted classical rhetoric to apply to analyzing musical structures. More recently, scholars such as John Bass and Jeff Erickson have pointed out analogs between using stock motives in classical rhetoric to jazz improvisation [Bass 2009].[9] Unlike classical rhetoric, however, *signifyin'* has the added elements of cultural identity, defiance, and self-identity [Borgo 2004].

Small permutations of repeated material are a vital part of tropological revision. According to Gates, repetition is one of the dominant traits within African American art, literature, and music. This repetition is also one of the core complaints made by white jazz and blues

scholars and journalists in newspaper reviews, jazz scholarship, and aesthetic criticism through the 1960s. While attitudes have changed since the 1960s, long held attitudes cannot help but to have had an impact on jazz scholarship.[10] About this Leonard L. Brown says, «Up to this time, jazz criticism had primarily been a white-created and dominated industry, with many white critics illustrating little to no knowledge of or respect for Black American history and culture».[11] Amiri Baraka, a founder of the Black Arts Movement, describes the importance of evaluating jazz in its cultural context in the following manner:

> In jazz criticism, no reliance on European tradition or theory will help at all. Negro music, like the Negro himself, is strictly an American phenomenon, and we have got to set up standards of judgment and aesthetic excellence that depend on our native knowledge and understanding of the underlying philosophies and local cultural references that produced blues and jazz in order to produce valid critical writing or commentary about it.[12]

Therefore, one argument is that while white classical musicians and white jazz critics sought to attain a more widespread acceptance of jazz, they were appropriating the style while rejecting its blackness [Thomas 1995, 227-240].

Another such example can be seen in a review by Ira Gitler of Coltrane's performance of *Chasing the Trane*, which was recorded during the same sessions as *Impressions* at the Village Vanguard. Gitler wrote, «This form of yawp, squawks, and countless repetitious runs…should be confined to the woodshed».[13] These types of criticism, however, might say less about Coltrane's playing and more about the cultural tone-deafness of some white critics. Robert Snead, like Gates, considers repetition to be a vital part of black oral history [Snead 1991, 146-154]. Snead argues that the Eurocentric bias is to emphasize "transformation" rather than repetition. Snead says that European culture is often concerned with series of documented moments to show progress, whereas in African culture, repetition - such as in dance and ring shouts - is used to show respect to an important moment, relive it, and attain a spiritual balance. This repetition, however, is not static: «Black music sets up expectations [through repetition] and disturbs them at irregular intervals: That it will do this, however, is itself an expectation. This peculiarity of black music that it draws attention to its own repetitions extends to the way it does not hide the fact that these repetitions take place on the level».[14]

Accordingly, these African American musical traditions found their way into Coltrane's playing. Brown says, «Coltrane's use of harmonics, swoops, overtones, slurs, bends, multiphonics, yawps, and squawks are rooted in the aesthetics of the language of black American music culture that can be found in performances of spirituals, sankey's, shouts, as well as gospel, rhythm and blues, fusion, and even today's rap» [Brown 2010, 14-15].[15]

Ingrid Monson describes this use of fixed versus free rhythm and the use of tropes as a method of creating a musical conversation - the essentials of storytelling.[16] Rhythmically, West African music is built upon the role of one group maintaining a fixed rhythm or pattern while the other group or soloist is able to vary freely. Within jazz there are fixed structures, such as the head and the underlying pulse and patterns, while the performers also have the freedom to vary their rhythms and melodies spontaneously. Within this musical conversation ideas are traded, fragmented, and transformed.

These techniques, or types of tropes, of intertextual associations, repetition, and novel revision or variation are at the heart of what Gates defines as *signifyin'*. Consequently, Gates considers *signifyin'* as a semiotic tool as well as a cultural signifier of black identity and a statement of resilience against oppression. In practice Gates best describes *signifyin'* as a sort of celebration of the differences between African American and white American culture and language:

> That [about *signifyin'*, black culture, and English], it seems to me, is inherent in the nature of metaphorical substitution, particularly those rhetorical tropes dependent on the letter (agnominatio), and in homonymic puns (antanaclasis). These tropes luxuriate in the chaos of ambiguity that repetition and difference…yield in either an aural or visual pun.

Therefore, *signifyin'* can be considered as a rhetorical trope that is meant as a sort of a pun [Gates 1988, 60-61]. In other words, *signifyin'* is a pun using borrowed material in which the pun is generated through variation and the differences within the trope. As part of black culture, this trope takes on great sociological meaning because it is also a way of taking ownership of one's language, art, and culture. Therefore, *signifyin'* on tropes is a way to claim ownership and pride of a black culture that has been traditionally disregarded. About this Gates says,

> Black people vacated this signifier, then - incredibly - substituted as its concept a signified that stands for the system of rhetorical strategies peculiar to their own vernacular tradition…What's more, they undertook this act of self-definition, implicit in a (re)naming ritual, within the process of signification that the English language had inscribed for itself [Gates 1988, 47].

In less technical terms, the response of African Americans who were forced to abandon their own language and customs was often to strip the European word or idea of its meaning and replace it with their own. Gates contends this practice has become a defining feature of African

American art and literature. Similarly, Coltrane frequently had to defend his "act of self-definition" in his music, such as when *DownBeat* editor Don DeMichael sent him Aaron Copland's *Music and Imagination*. In his response to DeMichael, Coltrane wrote back,

> This book seems to be written more for the American classical or semi-classical composer who has the problem… of not finding himself an integral part of the musical community, or having difficulty in finding a positive justification for his art. The "jazz" musician (you can have this term along with several other that have been foisted upon us) does not have this problem at all. We have absolutely no reason to worry about lack of positive and affirmative philosophy. It's built in us. The phrasing, the sound of the music attest to this fact. We are naturally endowed with it. You can believe all of us would have perished long ago if this were not so [Brown 2010, 17-18].

While this statement initially appears to concern the role of jazz musicians, the rest of the letter clearly references the subjugated role that African Americans have held in the United States. The subtext of Coltrane's letter is that he defiantly accepts the criticisms of his work in order to promote social change. Coltrane goes on, «Change is always so hard to accept. We also see that these innovators always seek to revitalize, extend, and reconstruct the status quo in their given fields» [Brown 2010, 18]. In another interview, Coltrane said, «In music I make or I have tried to make a conscious attempt to change what I've found…music is an instrument [that] can change the initial thought patterns that can change the thinking of the people» [Brown 2010, 162].

Coltrane's *Impressions* exemplifies *signifyin'* through its use of musical borrowing and motivic variation.[17] *Impressions* was first recorded live in 1961 at the Village Vanguard and later in the studio in 1962 (posthumously released). *Impressions* signifies through its use of direct and indirect allusions to Maurice Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte*, *Idylle* by Emmanuel Chabrier, *Pavane* by Gabriel Fauré, *Pavanne* by Morton Gould, *So What* by Miles Davis, and *The Lamp Is Low* by Shefter/DeRose/Parish, which was subtitled, "*Based on a Theme from Maurice Ravel's 'Pavane'*."

In addition to the underlying harmony being based on *So What*, over which Coltrane performed solos on the recording, the theme for Coltrane's *Impressions* is made up of two direct quotations. The first eight measures are a quotation from Gould's *Pavanne*, which is then repeated, and the second eight measures are largely based on *The Lamp Is Low* by Shefter/DeRose/Parish. The lineage from the Impressionists to Coltrane can be seen in Gould's *Pavanne* (1939), which is an homage to the pavanes by Maurice Ravel and Gabriel Fauré.[18] When Miles Davis composed *So What*, the generally accepted story is that he loosely based it on the harmonic techniques used in Ahmad Jamal's version of *Pavanne*.[19]

To what extent Ravel directly influenced Coltrane and *Impressions* is questionable, but it is clear that Coltrane had performed arrangements of Ravel in his younger years and Miles Davis was clear that Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand* was influential during the making of *Kind of Blue* [Lewis Porter 2000, 69 and 217]..[20] While Ravel and Fauré were influential on Gould's *Pavanne*, existing analyses between Gould and Ravel's works, however, only refer to surface similarities between the two works. Oddly, all of the analyses I have seen have neglected to identify the most obvious connection, which is that Gould places a direct quotation from *Pavane pour une infant défunte* in his *Pavanne* immediately before the B section, which Coltrane later uses as the basis of *Impressions*.[21] Whether or not Davis or Coltrane knew this is conjecture, but Gould's use of direct borrowing through quotation of Ravel is undeniable and they indirectly find their way into *Impressions*.

The various examples of musical borrowing that find their way into *Impressions* can most easily be seen through concept maps. Ex. 1 illustrates how Ravel uses the melody from *Idylle* by Chabrier for the melody of the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* [Chabrier 1881; Ravel 1899]. At the top of Ex. 1, *Idylle* is shown with arrows pointing to the first two measures of Ravel's *Pavane*, which share the same melodic contour. The bottom middle example shows Ravel's nearly direct quotation from *Idylle* in mm. 9–11; while measures 3 and 4 from *Idylle* are also similar to the melody used in Ravel's section C, which is shown on the bottom left.

Chabrier, *Idylle*

Allegretto avec fraîcheur et naïveté

mm. 1–3

Ravel, *Pavane*

En mesure

1er Mouvement.

mm. 1–2

mm. 7–9

mm. 37

Example 1. Chabrier to Ravel musical borrowing concept map

Ravel's accompaniment alludes to Fauré's *Pavane* by using the same arpeggiated pattern. The accompaniment patterns are most clearly seen in the orchestral versions that are shown in Ex. 2 and 3 [Fauré 1901; Ravel 1910].

Example 2. Fauré: orchestral accompaniment. *Pavane*, mm. 1–4

Example 3. Ravel: orchestral accompaniment. *Pavane*, mm. 1–6

Morton Gould's *Pavanne*, begins by alluding to the accompaniment pattern used by Fauré in his *Pavane*, seen in Ex. 4 [Gould 1938]. Instead of copying the exact arpeggio patterns heard in Ravel and Fauré, Gould increases the registral spacing rather than arpeggiating a triad in closed voicing thus creating an extended 11th chord.

Example 4. Gould: opening accompaniment. *Pavanne*, mm. 1–2

Ex. 5 is a concept map that outlines use of musical borrowing from Chabrier's *Idylle* to Ravel's *Pavane*, Gould's *Pavanne*, DeRose/Shefter's *The Lamp Is Low*, and then finally to John Coltrane's *Impressions* [DeRose-Shefter-Parish 1939; Coltrane 2002]. Ex. 5 illustrates how Gould's *Pavanne* almost directly quotes Ravel's *Pavane* just before the introduction of the second theme. Ravel's melody is listed as mm. 1–2 and Gould's quotation can be seen at mm. 36–7. While Gould ornaments the quotation, it is clearly the same melody. Gould also borrows a related theme from Ravel's *Pavane*, seen in Ravel's mm. 13–15 and then in Gould's mm. 60–65. Gould has altered the rhythm of the quotation, but the overall contour is unmistakable. Gould ornaments this melody throughout m. 64, but both melodies contain the motive that uses an upper neighboring tone, followed by an ascending line, which then resolves down a perfect fourth in relation to the first note of the melody in m. 65. In Ravel's *Pavane*, mm. 13–15, this perfect fourth occurs between the *f#* and the *c#*; in Gould this motion occurs between the *c* natural and the *g* natural.

In the fourth line of Ex. 5, we can see that Shefter/ DeRose/Parish based *The Lamp Is Low* on the melody from Ravel's *Pavane* (mm. 7–10) (also the melody from Idylle by from Chabrier mm. 1–2). In the fifth line of Ex. 5, we can see that *Impressions* is made up from the Gould *Pavanne* melody and *The Lamp is Low* melody. Of course both of these melodies are adapted quotations from both Ravel and Chabrier.

Example 5. Musical borrowing from Chabrier through Coltrane concept map

In succession it is clear that all of these pieces are derived from similar source material but treated in very different ways. As such, the alterations of the tropes take on rhetorical significance. Coltrane signifies in *Impressions* through the repetition of source material and extensive permutation of four-note melodic patterns [Porter 1985, 595-598]. In effect, Coltrane uses this technique to redefine the source material as his own and tell his own metaphorical story.[22] Coltrane began using these techniques around 1955 and by *Kind of Blue* they were a staple of his improvisational technique. It is through Coltrane's motivic variation that the borrowed material is slowly metamorphosed. For example, according to Lewis Porter, a repeated pattern within *Impressions* is the descending fourth motive that begins with the pickup to m. 130 - the *a* to *e* and then *g* to *d* - seen in Ex. 6 and 7.[23] While Porter identifies this descending fourth motive, the motive is immediately followed by either an ascending third or fourth motive. Porter's motive is the inverse of *The Lamp Is Low* motive, while the ascending motive is the actual motive. The first note of this figure is highlighted with an arrow and the rest of the notes are highlighted with a bracket.

123

126

130

Example 6. Coltrane: solo. *Impressions*, mm. 123–33

134

137

139

142

145

149

152

Example 7. Coltrane: solo. *Impressions*, mm. 134–53

In a 1963 interview, Coltrane said that his interest in the transformation of melodic patterns fully emerged around 1960–61: «I haven't forgotten about harmony altogether, but I am not as interested in it as I was two years ago» [Lott 2010, 116]. For example, Coltrane's solos in *Impressions* appear to be based on two main types of *signifyin'*: variants on borrowed melodic and harmonic material.

Coltrane's most direct type of *signifyin'* can be found within his variations of the borrowed melodies used within *Impressions*. Of course, creating melodic variations of motives is hardly unique to jazz or blues; the point is how they are varied and for what purpose. Within Coltrane's *Impressions* there are at least five primary motives that he uses to generate his solos. These motives are consistent through most released and unreleased recordings of *Impressions*.

The system I use to analyze these motives is an adaptation of the methods discussed by Rudolph Reti and Nicolas Ruwet [Reti 1961; Ruwet 1987, 3-36; Dunsby 2002, 907-926].[24] To meet my criteria to be labeled a primary motive, it must be frequently used and it must be recursive - in other words, they can be combined to create new motives. In isolation, the variants of the motives may not initially appear to be similar; but, within the performance they are easily identified by their context, frequency of use, and relationship to previous iterations of motive. For example, the most identifiable feature of the Type 4 "Lamp is Low" motive is the opening leap of an augmented fourth, seen in example 8. Because Coltrane will frequently use augmentation of the opening tritone motive to a fifth or sixth, as well as diminution of the interval to a third, identifying the motive by this leap or even just the melodic contour might be ambiguous. The motive is easily identifiable, however, because Coltrane consistently uses the motive in twenty-three of the thirty-two sections in E-flat and he performs it in at least nine of the D minor sections.[25] In these sections the motive is often being continued from or preceding the E-flat section, or it is played continuously through multiple sections. Within these sections, Coltrane uses the motive at least once, but most often is performed repeatedly with progressive variations in interval sizes and rhythm. For example, in example 6, mm. 129–30, the motive may not be immediately identifiable, but this type was first seen within an earlier E-flat section as a variation of the original motive. Similarly, the motive returns, such as in m. 667, but instead leaps by a third. Further, despite slight melodic changes, the motive retains the same articulated, syncopated rhythmic patterns seen in mm. 129-130. This process occurs with all of the motive types.

These motive types, which I label by source material, may also be related. For example, Types 1, 2, and 3 are all variations of the melody from Gould's *Pavanne*, seen in Ex. 8. While these three motives are based on the same source material, I have delineated them because Coltrane treats them as separate motives throughout the solos. Type 4, shown in Ex. 8, is the motive from *The Lamp Is Low*. Unlike the original source material, which is from Ravel, the first leap is an augmented fourth rather than a perfect fourth. Type 5 is a descending leap motive. This motive tends to be used in conjunction with other motives, typically at the end of a short phrase - like an exclamation mark or a period. This one is somewhat unique in that it could also be considered an inversion of the ascending *The Lamp Is Low* motive.

Type 1: Altered Pavanne
Type 2: Pavanne
Type 3: Arp. Pavanne
Type 4: Lamp is Low
Type Five: The Drop

Example 8. *Impressions*, main motives

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Within Coltrane's solos, he frequently extends or combines these motives in short, repeated, percussive phrases. When Coltrane repeats these figures, they are continually altered and ornamented. Example 9 provides several examples of variations of the Type 1 altered *Pavanne* motive. As with any thematic variations, sometimes intervals are augmented but the melodic contour is left intact. Sometimes there are rhythmic variations, such as in the last variation from the Stockholm 1961 performance, but generally Coltrane sticks to fast eighth notes for this particular figure. While I have provided seven examples from the Village Vanguard and Stockholm performances, there are too many reiterations and variants to list.[26]

Village Vanguard
Type 1: Altered Pavanne
Var. mm. 40
Var. mm. 45
Var. mm.88
5
Var. mm.90
Var. mm. 137
Stockholm
Var. mm. 69

Example 9. Type 1 variants

Variations of the Type 2 *Pavanne* motive can be seen in Ex. 10.[27] This motive contains a sort of Type 5 "drop" motive, but it is treated as part of the overall motive. The first Type 2 motive is rhythmically identifiable by its long notes - just as in Gould's *Pavanne*. This rhythm becomes used as a sort of declarative statement within the beginning of Coltrane's solo as well as during the climax of the piece

Type 2: Pavanne
Var. mm. 26
6
Var. mm. 29
Var. mm. 39
Var. mm56
Var. mm. 57
Var. mm. 60

Example 10. Type 2 variants

The Type 3 motive, like motives 1 and 2, is another variant of the *Pavanne* theme, which can be seen in Ex. 11. This motive is defined by its arpeggiation of the theme, which also includes the Type 5 "drop" motive at the end. The Type 3 motive is not used with the prevalence of the other motives, but it is reoccurring throughout all the versions of *Impressions* I have consulted.

Type 3: Arp
Var. mm.21
Var. mm. 23
Var. mm. 24
Var. mm. 676

Example 11. Type 3 variants, from Village Vanguard Nov. 3 performance

The Type 4 motive, seen in Ex. 12, is one of the most frequently used. This motive passes by quickly in the head, but it used often and its variants are often inverted.

Type 4: "Lamp"
Var. mm. 50
Var. mm. 81
Var. mm. 243

Example 12. Type 4 *Lamp* variants

While it would be easy to just label the Type 5 motive, seen in Ex. 13, as part of the other motives, it deserves separate identification because this two-note motive becomes obsessed over within the development of the solo.[28] In many respects, this motive could be considered the ultimate deconstruction of all of the other motives because it is often used within the other motives. The climactic moments in solo are punctuated with the Type 5 motive and are identifiable because Coltrane often pushes the saxophone to the point of squawking or nearly squawking. In isolation, these variants do not appear to be similar, but as with other variations, these are often the evolutions of motive that occur as the motive is repeated over and over.

Type 5: The Drop
mm. 15
Var. mm. 26
Var. mm. 52
Var. mm. 384
Var.
Var. mm. 680

Example 13. Type 5 variants

These few examples are used throughout *Impressions*, but it is through their repetition, variations, and how they are recursively reassembled into new motives that help qualify them as examples of *signifyin'*.

The harmonic accompaniment of *Impressions* is the second type of *signifyin'*. Specifically, the *Impressions* accompaniment pattern is an inversion of the hook in *So What*. This creates a sort of question and answer between the works. The So What accompaniment can be seen in Ex. 14, while the *Impressions* accompaniment can be seen in Ex. 15.

Piano

Example 14. *So What* piano accompaniment

Piano

Example 15. *Impressions* piano accompaniment

These two figures show how the pianist, McCoy Tyner, takes Bill Evans's accompaniment from *So What* and tropologically revises it. This is a very simple, but direct, type of *signifyin'*. On a deeper but less direct level, the piano also embodies Ravel's complex harmony and Ahmad Jamal's piano playing in *Pavanne*. This type of *signifyin'* may not be intentional, but it is there nevertheless.

At first appearance, John Coltrane simply takes several preexisting melodies and uses them to create variations within his improvisation. On an interpretive level, however, one can see that Coltrane is clearly taking fixed material and making it his own. In this sense, his variations are a way of not only making claim to it, but also showing his cleverness in both his moments of faithfulness to the original material, as well as his subversion of its meaning though evolving novel motivic variations. While this type of musical borrowing can be found in African oral traditions and concepts of double-consciousness, I contend that Coltrane is using this material is an act of self-definition for several more immediate reasons. *Impressions* was written in 1961 - only one year after Coltrane's last tour with Miles Davis. Before working with Davis, Coltrane had largely been a sideman [Davis 1990, 195-197].[29] Consider Coltrane's use of the harmonic pattern from *So What*, as well as borrowing the theme from *Pavanne*, considered to be the inspiration for the same piece [MacArthur 1963; Sunil 2015].[30] This can be interpreted as Coltrane taking these themes and redefining them in his own language. In other words, metaphorically tipping his hat to his predecessors while making those tunes his own. The recording of *Impressions* coincides with the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Arts Movement. While Coltrane was not always overt in his position, his recording of *Alabama*, which was inspired by the Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech following the bombing the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, makes a clear statement. Accordingly, Coltrane is often considered peripherally with the Black Arts Movement, whose underlying philosophy was not to ask for equal rights, but rather to take those rights [Thomas 1995, 237]. In jazz, Coltrane and artists like Nina Simone, a classically trained pianist, bridge the classical world with jazz, while intentionally embracing African customs and acting in defiance of expected norms [Ruth Feldstein 2005]. Further, while borrowing and tropological revision was not referred to as "*signifyin'*" until the 1980s, the underlying concept was consciously embraced and well documented by 1960s black activists [Kochman 1972].[31] Accordingly, Coltrane was not always accepted even among critics. John Tynan of *DownBeat* magazine 1961 referred to the Village Vanguard performances "nihilistic," "anarchism," and ultimately «a horrifying demonstration of what appears to be a growing anti-jazz trend» [DeMichael 1962]. Nevertheless, such criticsms did little to deter Coltrane from letting his experimentation define him as an artist.

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[1] Sections of this article are derived from my unpublished dissertation, Grall [2017].

[2] A few relatively recent sources that delve in aspects of social history and theory include Medwin [2008], Medwin [2009], Goodheart [2001], Borgo [2004], and Iyer [2004]. While Goodheart, Borgo, and Iyer specifically discuss *signifyin'* in regard to performance and musical analysis, Medwin does not. Iyer discusses *signifyin'* in the context of narrativity within performance, while Goodheart applies the concept more specifically in his analysis of Coltrane's use of cyclic major 3rds in *Giant Steps*. Borgo discusses how the albums and performances of *A Love Supreme* by Coltrane and *Freedom Suite* by Sonny Rollins can be considered as *signifyin'* in relation to each other.

[3] This quotation is from Oriki Esu, quoted by Ogundipe [1978, 135]. Specifically, when the signifying monkey tells relays the elephant's words to the lion, he keeps most of them, but changes others. This revision (*signifyin'*) changes the meaning of the message from the elephant into an insult and the lion and elephant battle. After the lion and elephant discover the deception, the lion returns to assault the monkey and castrate it.

[4] I first encountered this example from Neal [2016].

[5] While I only briefly discuss the Dozens, the game continues to be prevalent and is considered an important part of African American narrative structure. One of the most famous examples can be seen in Langston Hughes's poem entitled *Ask Your Mama*. For more information see Wald [2014, 179].

[6] Just one such example includes ethnomusicologist David Borgo's extensive analysis of *signifyin'* in Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. See Borgo [2004,174-190].

[7] Gates' explanation of double-meanings in language is directly related to Derrida's "différance", which is Derrida's argument against Saussure's structural linguistics. Derrida explains *différance* in the context of the correct spelling of the word *différence*. Both words sound exactly the same, but the meaning is different. Accordingly, as Derrida's *différance* is to *différence*; Gates's *signifyin'* is to Saussure's *signifying*. The difference between the two words, as with all words, is deferred meaning. In the simplest terms possible, language is a system of signs but the system itself is inadequate. Therefore, we can look to the differences, the space between the words and their concepts, to find meaning. Further, meaning is derived as much by what a concept is as it is derived from what it is not. For more information, see Derrida [1978].

[8] See Greimas [1984]. The concept of double meanings and the "space" between are also extensively discussed by Greimas. This is most evident in his semiotic square in which he contends that the opposite meanings of a word are also included within the meaning of the word. Greimas's linguistic concepts have been adapted to music by Eero Tarasti [1994] and Tarasti [2002].

[9] Bass compares the study and practice of ornamentation manuals in the Renaissance to jazz musicians learning figures aurally as well as through similar jazz method books. While Bass does not explicitly attribute these figures to the elocutio, it is implied. There have been very effective at bridging the areas of classical rhetoric and African American rhetorical practices (*signifyin'*) to contextualize jazz improvisation. A few of these works include: Dorchak [2016]; Stedman [2012]; Smitherman [1977]; Bonds [1981]; Jackson and Richardson [2003]; and Erickson [2015].

[10] In Gioia [1989, 134-137] he discusses how many of the earliest scholarship is largely contextualized around the primitivist myth. This myth is built upon period scholars' fascination, particularly those in France, with the arts of Africa and the perceptions of black artists as having an artistry was not gained through work and intellectualism, but rather through their innate primitivism driven by unrestrained emotion. At the time this was considered a compliment and is pervasive throughout many of the earliest jazz scholarship by Hugues Panassié, Robert Goffin, and Charles Delaunay.

[11] See Brown [2010, 13].

[12] See Baraka [1991, 186].

[13] Brown [2010, 14–15] attributes this information to Lewis Porter, Coltrane, 196. In regard to the squawks that Gitler mentions, consider Eugene Holland's characterization of squawks, "Classical music abhors contingency; jazz improvisation thrives on it. If a saxophonist squawks in the middle of the symphony, it's a mistake; if a saxophone squawks in the course of a jazz performance, that can become part of the performance…jazz musicians follow a process of creation that they are part of, yet do not entirely control…" in Holland [2008, 196¬-205].

[14] In Snead [1991, 151] he considers practices within black music, literature, and social customs to be analogous. While Snead's point is repetition in literature, he actually discusses repetition in African American music more than literature. Snead concludes that European culture has more recently embraced repetition in the arts, which he seems to be saying is a rebuff of Hegelian/traditional European thought. He says that this can be seen through the interest in folk themes. Further, he seems to imply that this may be also be a sort of influence of African American culture. I think his conclusions are a bit overreaching - repetition is a big part of classical music. His points about process versus experience and repetition as a communal experience that creates and subverts expectation appears to be a common theme among the literature on African American music and literature.

[15] "Sankey's" refers to African American renditions of Gospel hymns originally composed by Ira D. Sankey.

[16] See Monson [1999, 76 and 87–90]. To be clear, Monson does not immediately connect troping with *signifyin'*; instead she classifies *signifyin'* as a type of intertextuality, which she says Gates classifies as a "master musical trope." For simplicity I stick to the term *signifyin'*; however, Monson provides an excellent survey of the terminology, hierarchy, and their nuances within the scholarship. For example, Floyd [1998] prefers to just call these techniques call-response while Thomas Kochman [1983] refers to it as "indeterminate strategic ambiguity" and types of verbal dueling. Gates's *signifyin'* encompasses all of these components.

[17] My transcriptions of *Impressions* used in the following examples are from *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*, Impulse, April 16, 2002; *Impressions*, Impulse, 1963 (recorded November, 1961); and a transcription by Carl Coan, which I transcribed into concert C, of an unreleased performance in Stockholm 1961 provided by Ravi Coltrane that is found in *John Coltrane Solos* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1995).

[18] *Pavanne* is the second movement of Gould's *American Symphonette No. 2*. It is likely that Gould was trying to extend the success he had with his piano arrangement of Ravel's *Bolero*.

[19] The most well known version of *Pavanne* was recorded in 1955 and can be found on *The Piano Scene of Ahmad Jamal*, Epic Records LN 3631, 1959, but there may have been an even earlier version of *Pavanne* released by Jamal in 1951 on Okeh Records.

[20] Porter relays an interview with James Foreman, who Coltrane played with in the Johnny Lynch Quintet, "Trane wrote some original music…but Lynch wrote almost everything. We had arrangements of things like Ravel's *Pavane*. We had a jazz arrangement on that, and it was gorgeous." Davis also confirms the influence of Ravel's concerto on *Kind of Blue* in his autobiography, Davis [1990, 234].

[21] It is possible that because scholarship on Gould's *Pavanne* is primarily concerned with Coltrane's *Impressions*, it has caused many scholars to overlook the several direct quotations from Ravel's *Pavane* in Gould's *Pavanne*. For example, in an interview with Lewis Porter, he says, "I no longer believe Ravel's composition is a source for Coltrane's "Impressions," for two reasons. The first is that while what Coltrane plays over the bridge in his most famous recording of this piece does vaguely resemble Ravel's phrase, it is not identical to it; in the case of the theme he borrows from Gould's 'Pavanne,' it is." Chabrier [1881] and Ravel [1899].

[22] Monson [1996, 82] more elaborately discusses how motivic variation is analogous to devices in oral storytelling.

[23] The identification of the fourth motive is found in Porter [1985, 595-598]. This example is described in the JAMS article; however, this is from my transcription, which is an amalgam of other unpublished sources and my own transcription. Both sources are transcribed in Concert C.

[24] It should come as no surprise that Ruwet was also a linguist and these methods could be considered to be an extension of structural linguistics. In this short paper I have purposely left out discussion of the influence of Nicolas Slominsky's *Thesaurus of Scales*, Yusef Lateef's *Repository of Scales and Patterns*, and Alain Daniélou's *Introduction to the Study of Scales*. The reason for the omission is best summarized by Schott [2002, 354], "Coltrane's extensive study during this period of Slonimsky's *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns* is well known, but we must put to rest the myth that he cut and pasted patterns from it in his solos." A view that counters Schott can be seen in Bair [2003]. In regard to *Impressions*, however, little to no direct Slonimsky patterns can be found.

[25] In my analysis, I have omitted instances in which the motive may be present but is too ambiguous. These instances include moments in which the motive is found in an A and A' section of the piece and does not appear to be a purposeful allusion to the pattern. Accordingly, an isolated tritone or fourth leap does not constitute a repetition of the pattern unless it is used repeatedly, was seen proximally to a previous evolution of the motive, or is not proximal or connected to the E-flat section.

[26] The transcription from the Stockholm performance can be found in Coltrane [1995]. Only the variations listed as "Stockholm" are from this transcription, all others, unless noted otherwise, are from my transcription of *Impressions* from Coltrane [1963].

[27] These variations are from John Coltrane [1963].

[28] The first example is from *The Real Book* [2004], while the remainders of the examples are from my transcription of Coltrane [1963].

[29] Here Davis recounts stories of recording engineers not understanding why Coltrane was chosen for the quintet. He also said that *Kind of Blue* is what launched both Davis and Coltrane's career. As to Coltrane's status as a sideman, Wilson [1961], wrote "Mr. Coltrane is now 35 years old, relatively ancient for a newly arrived star by normal jazz standards. However, until about five years ago Mr. Coltrane appeared content to be a journeyman jazzman. Then, while he was a member of the Miles Davis Quintet, he began an exploration of the resources of his saxophone…"

[30] In these interviews Jamal was asked about the similarities between *So What* and his *Pavanne*. In both interviews, he acknowledges the similarities, but neither confirms nor denies the connection.

[31] This book, written just outside the period of the Black Arts Movement, outlines the contemporary practices before they are later renamed *signifyin'*.