

## The Explanatory Weakness of Power and the Open Ensemble

Allan J. SUTHERLAND\*

### Abstract:

Power appears to be one of the most transparent of concepts, is frequently used in social explanations, and yet, oddly, is never adequately conceptualised and theorised; this is because it is called upon for situations of inconsistent explanations. This paper examines how some recent jazz and improvised music researchers likewise invoke power inequalities to account for apparently contradictory behaviours, showing that, in truth, the behaviours contradict only their proffered explanations. This is illuminated by showing how the theorists draw upon the contradictory, confused conceptions of power in social theory. The paper then discusses the open ensemble as an ideal procedure for jazz and improvising musicians to harvest their creative capacities in stimulating, integrated, cooperative performance where they can potentially learn new musical ideas, instrumental techniques and advance the music.

**Keywords :** power, jazz, improvisation, open ensemble (English)

### Introduction

Power seems a simple, uncomplicated and transparent concept in social theory, and explanations; the ability to achieve ends, regardless of the resistance of others (1, 2, 3). Power, and its counterpart, empowerment are frequently employed in explanations of the gendering of occupations in medicine (4), and in social welfare, when speaking of discrimination and the relationships between service providers and their needy clients, where it is at times employed to overcome the difficulties attached with issues of ethics and knowledge which cannot be easily solved within relativistic explanatory frameworks, for example. Thus, power is drawn

on to account for behaviours inconsistent and contradictory; behaviours inconsistent with theoretical expectations and actors' own interests; free of power constraints actors would have chosen to act otherwise. As this paper shows, encountered difficulties bring movement from power as a means to obtain ends regardless of opposition, to power as collective action, to power as conflict and as consensus, to power as knowledge; usages that ensue from the non-productive explanatory purposes to which power is put and consequent incorrigible difficulties. Some studies of jazz and improvising musicians, particularly new critical theorists of jazz,

---

\* *Kyushu University of Nursing and Social Welfare*

<sup>1</sup>It is implied, if not stated, that jazz and improvising musicians select their occupations due to their powerlessness, through their lack of opportunity in the job market. However, occupational constraints and unequal incomes for categories of labour cannot be explained by resort to power; the resort to power is to compensate for failings in other explanations which usually rely on exploitation and market inequalities to explain differentiated labour markets, e.g., dual labour market theory.

similarly lean on power to account for social location, <sup>1</sup> performance procedures, meanings of musical improvisations, creative innovation, recording relations, and so on. While power plays a significant role in their work, they underpin their interpretations with existing statements of power, incorporating power's contradictions. This paper will contend that the open ensemble, as a demanding and creative organisation of musicians who participate as relative equals, with expectations to perform innovatively at their peak, improves upon explanations of musicians' organisation, performances and creativity without recourse to power. This paper focuses on the internal organisation of the open ensemble in jazz and improvised music as a musician driven organisation; that by requiring that each ensemble generates a unique musical sound, that all musicians contribute their unique musical voice, perform to their utmost ability, listen intently to, to integrate with, fellow musicians and perform inspirationally, while treating each performance as potentially innovative and allowing discovery and learning, the open ensemble creates an impetus for creativity and innovation. (This paper does not discuss the open ensemble's commercial contexts, of obtaining performances, recordings, recording contracts, management contracts, and the likes, which are examined elsewhere.)

### **Materials and methods**

The evidence for this study was obtained as on-going research through participant personal interviews (35), questionnaire survey responses (110) with currently working, and observations at concerts and rehearsals, with working

international professional jazz and improvising musicians, supplemented with data drawn from the writings of, interviews with, professional jazz and improvising musicians. The musicians observed, interviewed and surveyed lived and/or worked in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.

### **Power in Recent Jazz Studies and in Social Theory**

Inequalities of power often featured in early studies of jazz as a social, musical culture (e.g., 5, 6, 7), and continues to do so in some recent jazz studies, sometimes called the new critical theory of jazz (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) where considerable stress is laid on power discrepancies for understanding the musical culture, within contemporary society. While the latter focus more on racial or ethnic power differentials, it is unclear whether these racial or ethnic power differentials are the consequence of power inequalities or produced by power inequalities, indeed it is unclear why the issue is considered to be one of power at all. But this sort of confusion is not unique to the new critical theory of jazz; it is characteristic of their theoretical approach; drawing upon the synthetic tradition<sup>2</sup>, which attempts to overcome the inadequacies of any single theoretical approach by synthesising a variety of theoretical approaches. However, instead of resolving the explanatory difficulties, their efforts combine the contradiction and cycle of difficulties found within the synthetic approach. Perhaps Monson's ethnographic study exemplifies the difficulties in

such a project most clearly, striving as it does to find space for agency, for the musical creation within a poststructuralist, anti-authorial, interpretation of cultural, here musical, objects, whereby the powerless jazz musician, necessarily African-American, is signifyin' on a hegemonic concept of the arts and the social order (18). A clearer conception of the difficulties is found in the source theoretical material than in most of the new critical theorists writing themselves. The following argument relies heavily on the work of John Holmwood and Alexander Stewart (19)

On the surface, power seems the most transparent of concepts, it refers to the ability to do things, to achieve ends, to impose one's will. In truth the concept of power expresses fundamental explanatory problems, whereby power is expressed as agency, the exercise of people, **and** as structure, the exercise of systems. Treatments of power manifest the contradiction by insisting the need to combine opposed, mutually negating principles of explanation, whereupon power becomes increasingly nebulous and diffuse. Weber offers the classic, simple definition:

"Power' ... is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." (20)

Power here is the ability of individuals to attain their ends (see also 21) regardless of opposition; resistance is crucial. With agreement, without resistance we have the exercise of authority<sup>3</sup>.

From where does power come, though; Giddens considers power as, (a) means to prevail over the opposition of others, and (b) as a product of collective action, leading him to call for a 'duality' of power, as coercion and cooperative action.

As with structuration, the problem is not resolved by insisting both sides are necessary **and** mutually negating:

"The problem that causes 'action' to be invoked is the apparent occurrence of non-antagonistic behaviours involving incompatible understandings within a single social setting. 'Power' becomes the focus of attention when the interests of individuals or groups are perceived to be opposed.... In circumstances where 'action' is invoked... actors have no problems of understanding, only the social theorist has problems. Where 'power' is invoked, the social theorists of the perception of difficulties is apparently reflected in divisions in the population. The question is whether categories which derive from problems of understanding could provide an adequate account of such divisions." (22)

The new critical theory of jazz studies endure

---

<sup>2</sup>Writers in the synthetic tradition would include Adorno, Alexander, Baudrillard, Bauman, Bourdieu, Giddens, Habermas, Parsons, Weber (23), for example. What typifies the synthetic approach is a cyclic movement from attempting to combine dualistic oppositions, e.g., of structure and action, the material and the ideal, power and authority, cause and meaning, individual and society, culture and economy, and so on, to the view that these need to be kept separate for fear of losing their respective insights. Thus, they begin by attempting to combine oppositions and end by attempting to keep them apart; they start by trying to overcome their mutual explanatory problems by combining them, and return to separating them for fear of losing their respective insights into explanatory issues. What they fail to recognise is that the problems inhere with the concepts, and neither their separation nor combination will resolve these; richer explanations will resolve them.

<sup>3</sup>Weber conceives of rational, traditional and charismatic authority.

such difficulties and appeal to power for their solution. They avow the essence of jazz necessarily African-American, and commence to explain the development and performance of jazz from this necessary essence. In consequence a cycle of manoeuvres ensues, whereby the African-American history and experience is held simultaneously determinate and indeterminate.

Consequently, the new critical theory of jazz regularly invoke power differentials respecting musicians' social locations, social actions, ensemble performances, and, particularly, solo improvisations, within contemporary industrial or post-industrial societies. New critical theory of jazz firmly places the music in an African-American historical origin, social experience and social identity by stressing that African-Americans created jazz, reinvigorated improvisation in Western music, provided the major innovators, and expressed their social experience and identity through the music, while they highlight jazz musicians' powerlessness as enduring and primary. The music is held to be created and performed in opposition to discrimination in society and powerless oppression the essence of African-American experience; the most oppressed are the most authentically African-American. Performance, particularly of solos, are said to be constructed either through respectful comments on the music's history or as ironic, subversive comments on oppressive perceptions of African-Americans. The dynamics of performances and the music's history are described in these terms, and when musicians do not conform with this analysis their evident powerlessness is offered as explanation; that they would conform had they the power to act to choice. Thus, critical theorist of jazz have

little to offer to explain why the music changed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, except as successive efforts to subvert exploitative power inequalities. In consequence, a substantial body of music making is omitted from their analysis; often non-African-American musicians performing jazz are charged with cultural and commercial theft from African-American innovators powerless to benefit from their creations, In addition, the music's historical development is generally considered to have peaked in the 1960s with post-bop and modal jazz, sometimes including African-American free jazz. Later diversification in jazz and improvised music they tend to dismiss as derivative of, or as ersatz, jazz produced by more powerful ethnic groups within contemporary society, not of the ever-increasing social and economic diversity of African-Americans which they believe fragments, confuses and weakens African-Americans.

While power inequalities seem to state the obvious, with many questions remain unanswered, for which new critical theorist of jazz look to social values and understandings:

“...power not only needs to be backed like money (e.g., by gold or means of enforcement); it not only needs to be legally normed like money (e.g., in the forms of property rights or official positions); power needs an *additional* basis of confidence, namely *legitimation*. There is no structural analogy to this in the case of money.” (24)

“Legitimacy is something that may or may not be conferred on power by those subject to it. If it were otherwise, if power assumed the mantle of authority by definition, it would be impossible to define political opposition and democracy in a sociological way.” (25)

Of course, if legitimacy is conferred, there is authority not power, agreement not disagreement, consensus not conflict; the solution to the problem power poses cannot be definitional, but needs to account for the source of power. That source cannot be consensus, which as cooperation brings authority, and it cannot be the absence of consensus, as conflict undermines the resources of agreement and cooperation that can yield power; increasing conflict is the progressive exhaustion of power. Consequently, both consensus and conflict are held necessary, and new critical theorists of jazz follow that route.

To square this contradiction, new critical theorists of jazz offer power as knowledge (albeit as inadequate knowledge, though not as inadequate power), drawing on poststructuralism to account for the source and transmission of power in society (e.g., Bourdieu, Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard), where the powerful and powerless equally are duped about their best interests, yet somehow inadequate knowledge endures and reproduces power relations; power generating social norms and values are held deceptive for actions. As Parsons pointed out deception is forever liable to discovery:

“...so long as the activities that draw upon [trust] are consistent with the conditions of trust, those resources will be reproduced and, with them, the possibilities for more extensive cooperation. It is certainly the case that the existence of trust offers the possibility of its deceitful use. However, actions which abuse trust must always run the risk of being ‘found out’, and so, ‘deceit’, in the long run, cannot be in a stable relationship with the reproduction of the system it requires.” (26)

Poststructuralists and, following them, new

critical theorists of jazz, attempt to raise stable and enduring power relations on partial, if not erroneous, thereby unstable knowledge. While it is certainly true that potentially all knowledge can be found wanting and superseded, the post-positive critique of science offers criteria for succession whereby new knowledge must explain more than already accepted knowledge. For the new critical theorists of jazz and poststructuralists, there are no such criteria, and it is due to their inability to explain that power is called upon, and located in inadequate understandings. The inadequate explanation of jazz as an ensemble performance and its creative development leads to power and inadequate conceptions as stable and reproducing processes.

The French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu has undertaken extensive theoretical and empirical research in the fields of education, stratification, and consumption. For Bourdieu (27, 28, 29, 30) the determining causal factors in his explanations, in descending order of importance are economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital, each of which locates people in social space relative to each other. The possession of some combination of economic capital and cultural capital (sometimes educational qualifications are used as a measure of cultural capital) are offered in combination to account for the relative position of groups in social stratification and their lifestyles. For each capital Bourdieu presents its corresponding power, economic power, cultural power, social power, and symbolic power<sup>4</sup>. However, the addition of power to each concept either substitutes for explanation or is an unproductive attempt to overcome explanatory difficulties: In a market economy, why is not economic power the

exchange of equivalents? In culture why is not cultural power the effect of adequate knowledge? In a sense because neither is fully capable of accounting for the causal relations that are ascribed to them. Thus, social power is the ability to organise to increase one economic and cultural capital, and symbolic power is a power addition to that attributable to economic and cultural, expressed through the status symbol effects of consumer goods; but this has to be in addition to that created by the primary economic and cultural capital variable, otherwise it is uncalled for in the explanation. In that case, it is a gap expressing deception, Bourdieu uses the term misrecognition; why that deception should either prevail or not require more effort to sustain than the rewards it brings in the long term is something that Bourdieu never addresses, only implies or asserts.

A little thought then reveals that the deception upon which power is erected is the outcome of inadequate explanations of jazz and improvised music and the creativity of musicians. Nowhere is this more evident in the criteria whereby jazz is held necessarily African-American by new critical theorists; these are that the creative genius of individual African-American musicians has driven the music forward. Yet, this assertion is made simultaneously as its supporting criteria are undermined, when they render all knowledge as power inadequate and deceptive, and they wrest the musical performance's meaning from the intent of its creator. This cycle rests the value of musical performances, thus jazz, on power;

power elevates objects and performances to artistic status, thereby on power rests jazz's artistic status.

### The Open Ensemble

Jazz emerged in the US at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from a mixture of musics, of classical, dance musics, folk music, opera, popular music, spirituals, etc., performed for diverse social functions. This musical diversity is critical as much discussion of jazz simply contrasts it with European classical music, neglecting the musicological variations in the non-classical influences (31, 32, 33, 34, 35). Performing such extensive musics and social functions, musicians acquired equally extensive musical skills, knowledge and ambitions, and were evaluated on their instrumental and improvisational virtuosity, abilities manipulate rhythmic stress, their harmonic knowledge (36). As well as mastery of these elements, each musician was expected to create a unique, individually expressive sound on their instrument. As each musician was required to fashion their novel, personal, authentic musical identity, so to was each jazz ensemble. The creations of preceding musicians offered the resource, and musical problems, for succeeding musicians. Their musical creations were not simply disengaged value preferences; made within their times, they more or less adequately addressed the limitations of the music and did/did not expand its expressive capacities. Thus, the aesthetic imperative became that musicians study

---

<sup>4</sup> As each capital proves inadequate to full and coherent explanation additional capitals are created, that was the reason for the creation of social and symbolic capital, leading to linguistic capital, academic capital, scholastic capital, credentialed cultural capital, authority capital, scientific capital, university capital, and artistic capital, for example. The resemblance of any of these to aspects of either economic or cultural should of itself suggest their origins in explanatory difficulties.

jazz history to transcend, not to simply repeat, jazz history; musician or ensemble judged to closely mimic a predecessor was considered to have achieved little, at worst to have plagiarised. Thus, jazz aesthetics were directing the music toward constant innovation and change, and located it firmly within the aesthetics of modernism, of expression of an authentic self, creation of new elements of expression, new visions.

Over the first 50 years of jazz history ensembles and instrumentation changed, and their musicians' musical roles expanded from functionally differentiated, to freer roles; at first ensembles were functionally differentiated into rhythm and lead sections; after bebop (1940s) musicians could slip in and out of rhythm and lead roles in varying degrees.. This culminated in the open ensemble where all musicians in ensembles were expected to be creative contributors to the piece, as composed in (improvised) performance; all ensemble musicians were expected to do more than simply play their part, and to inspire expanding the music beyond its initial conception and parameters.

These developments created a situation equally liberating and demanding on musicians. The lead musician retains many prime responsibilities and authority (derivative, for example, from their recognised musical achievements and prime responsibilities for organising and underwriting ensemble concerts and tours), nevertheless the performance musician faces significantly higher demands than before, especially those in the rhythm section<sup>5</sup>. Musicians face more exacting

challenges to conceive inspirational ways to interact, to astonish and animate other ensemble musicians, and yet contribute to a cohesive musical sound satisfying to all. In the open ensemble, it is considered that the leader can take charge of each musician's performance only at the expense of emaciating their contribution to the ensemble. None of the musicians interviewed saw this a viable option; they considered that the musicians recruited to ensembles were potent sources of enhanced creativity and stimulation, deserved the respect due their instrumental skills and musical imaginations, and that the music was the outcome of each ensemble performance anew. Attempting to be dominate and dictate to direct musicians' performances was considered destructive for creativity.

Provisionally, the open ensemble, in jazz and improvising music, can be defined as having the following characteristics. Musician's musical roles are less differentiated than their social roles. The ensemble leader can be the person who establishes the ensemble or is chosen by the ensemble's musicians. While the ensemble leader has the principal, if not sole, responsibility for organising concerts, tours, recordings, payment of musicians' fees, rehearsals, appointing replacement musicians, determining the music performed, etc., and can expect, not always receive, a larger proportion of the fees paid for ensemble appearances, the ensemble is a loose association of relative equals<sup>6</sup>; the ensemble and its leader relies on the self-motivated contribution, compliance and agreement of ensemble members, rather than on compulsion, and imposition. Every ensemble musician,

---

<sup>5</sup> See Westby's (1960) discussion of the career experiences and disappointments of section musicians in symphony orchestra for an interesting contrast.

regardless of their status, instrument or task (e.g., soloist or not), is expected, by themselves and other musicians, not only to listen intently to, to integrate with, other musicians and perform competently but to perform to their peak abilities and inject novel and unexpected elements into musical performances, regardless of whether they are the leader of the ensemble, the soloist in or composer of a piece. (37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43)

Musicians participate in jazz and improvising ensembles as self-employed, free-lance musicians; most often they were not retained by written contract of determinate duration, but under informal mutual agreement, regularly concluded orally, for specific ensembles, or projects, guaranteed by convention and trust. These projects could be one-off affairs, for a recording, concert or tour, but frequently they were of unspecified duration, activated and reactivated over years. Projects initiated by a leader or co-operatively, were reported designed around the talents and musical visions of individual musicians in a process of joint consultation about its ambitions and potential<sup>6</sup>. Musicians were recruited to standing projects either where they were filling-in, or were a prospective replacement for a member. Thus, a musician can quite readily leave if the musical relationship comes to be perceived undesirable.

Of course, there are considerations such as the stature of the musical identity of the lead musician and/or the ensemble, the implications of

joining/leaving an ensemble for careers, and the working and earning potential of membership. While it can be suggested that such indicates power disadvantages for a musician who would benefit from membership, to pursue that route is to neglect or evade critical explanatory factors, such as evaluating the accuracy of assessments of career achievements, of aesthetic value, and the likes. If stature and/or implications for career were binding individual musicians to ensembles, these can not be accounted through power inequalities; if such ties superior and beneficial aesthetic and/or commercial stature of the lead musicians/ensembles these refer to other explanatory factors and themselves cannot be accounted for by drawing on the concept of power, which is to evade explanation. It is also the case that musicians reported leaving the best paying ensembles, despite the stature of the lead musician/ensemble or the income afforded them, and some did so promptly, unexpectedly; such call for more sophisticated explanation than advancing power inequalities allows.

Musicians hired as replacements because they were considered adequately skilled were sometimes expected simply to join and begin to perform, sometimes in the knowledge that they had familiarity with the ensemble's materials. Drummer Ben Riley described his recruitment by pianist Thelonious Monk without being given opportunity for preparation or rehearsal:

"[Monk] called me... to ask me to do a record

---

<sup>6</sup> The ensembles' and/or lead musicians' musical status factors into the attractiveness of a musician being a member, as does a musician's status and career stage achievements; higher musical and aesthetic achievements of an ensemble and/or its lead musicians heighten the attractiveness of ensemble membership. However, issues and questions such as these direct attention towards factors accounting for them; citing power imbalances in these circumstances forecloses the explanatory task.

<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, projects were initiated by recording labels and/or promoters to assemble musicians of equal, high star standing for a recording session and/or tour.



date. '...We're here at Columbia, and we'd like you to get your drums together and come.' After I went there, he still didn't speak to me. When I finished setting up the drums, Monk came out of the control booth and started playing. He still hadn't spoken to me. He hadn't told me what we were going to play. That's how I got on [the record] Monk's Time.... Monk asked me if I needed some money, and I said, 'No, I can wait for the check.' He said, 'I don't want anybody in my band being broke.' So that's when I knew I was in his band. Oh, it was strange because the first gig we had was in the symphony hall in London.... At that point, Monk still hadn't said anything to me. Before we left the U.S., I had asked Monk if we could have a rehearsal. He said to me, 'What do you want to do- learn how to cheat?' And he didn't say anything else to me. By the time we had finished the first half of the show, he said... 'How many people do you think could do what you just did? You didn't know all of the different songs, but you swung through all of that.... How many people do you know who would even be able to think like that? Why would you want to rehearse?'" (44)

While this occurred more often out of the necessity of time pressures than intention, it was not the standard practice, and sometimes it just failed, for good reason, though it represents an extreme of the expectation that musicians recruited to ensembles have the capacities that demanded their instrumental skills and imaginations be respected, and for these to be a potent source of enhanced creativity and stimulation within the group; the music was to be a product of the performance, of each performance.

Respect for other musicians' abilities and efforts was reported to be essential for creative, stimulating performances, and musicians' learning. When pianist Steve Kuhn was recruited to John Coltrane's group in the early 1960s his stay was short, and while, in his view, not so successful, it was 'extremely inspirational':

"But I was, at that age, 21, I was still trying to find my own voice. I didn't quite know what to do, and I asked John [Coltrane] about it. I said, "Is this all right?" and he said, "I can't tell you how to play. I respect you as a musician." He would never tell me yea or nay about anything, and I was really not that happy with my own playing. So at the time when I left after that three month period, I was sort of in a way happy? I wasn't happy to be leaving? but I was searching for my own voice. So it wasn't a great time, but it was extremely inspirational."

(45)

At this point Coltrane's aesthetic and commercial stature was superior to that of the young Steve Kuhn, but Coltrane refrained from criticising or attempting to mould Kuhn, indicating satisfaction with Kuhn's performance and expectations for the future.

Each performance was reported an opportunity to learn and develop:

"Strangely enough one learns how to play by playing with a great musician who can play better than you." (46)

One musician interviewed based in New York said:

"You know there are so many great musicians here, so many that I can play with. I try to play as much as possible because I always want to learn more. I could play with as many different people that I want to here... if I had the money

and could pay them. The music we play is not so popular as other music, and it is hard to get an audience and find some place to play. It is hard to get solid support of audience in New York playing this music. If I could it would be easier. I play with people like Wilber [Morris], Susie [Ibarra] Tomas [Ulrich], William Parker, Gerry Hemmingway, they are all really great musicians. Every time I play with them I am learning... always something new. They stimulate me. If I had the money I would pay to play with these people every night. Musicians need to make money, we all need to make money....”

Each occasion she could play with other, highly skilled musicians presented the opportunity to learn from their musical identities, skills and insights. Every musicians I spoke with spoke of seeking to enhance their capabilities, their range of experiences: mutual interaction in making music was reported crucial for continuous learning, expanding technique and repertoire.

Musicians are expected to contribute their voice and musical ideas to the ensemble, not to lock themselves into a recital contribution that remains unchanged on successive occasions. They are expected to contribute novel, unexpected, adventurous musical ideas, rhythmically, harmonically, melodically, as extended technique. They are expected to make great effort to listen closely to, engage with, respond to, and stimulate the other musicians within the ensemble by playing the unexpected within a conceivable logic of the music. Trumpeter, Dave Douglas said in an interview:

“My least favourite gigs are gigs, and I’ve done a lot of them, where you just know from the first note what’s going to happen. And nothing

you can do is going to change that. It’s the worst nightmare in the world, I think. That’s when music can sound really old.... I think that it’s a dangerous place for artists to be, having found a solution to whatever problem it was that they set out knowingly or unknowingly to find with their art. Once they’ve found it, they’re going to recreate it every night... but if you’re performing with someone that’s in that position, very often there’s an inflexibility. It may be extremely beautiful what they do. But that’s the only place that they can go, and that’s certainly not where I want my music to be now or ever. ....We’re pushing ourselves, but we’re having a high percentage of success. Some nights you go out, and everyone is pushing themselves, and it’s just not gelling... So those are the kind of risks that go into it. The most wonderful thing is when you find a new space and it’s just perfect, and it serves the piece, and the moment of the performance, and all the players have a part within it that’s fulfilling and satisfying for them.... Yeah. I think that’s the feeling I’m describing, of not knowing, and it’s not something that can be captured. It’s something that is ephemeral, and once the gig is over; it’s over.” (47)

Attempting to dominate, and dictate in these circumstance, was reported destructive for the quality and creativity of the music. While there were compositional and rehearsal solutions, for instance, to problems of coherence in performance, it was said that these should be seen as steps on the way, leading to new creative musical combinations and new creative solutions. These needed to be the product of the musicians coming together, adding their idiosyncratic musical voices, while knitting these into those of the

others; a product of a very careful attempt at perfect integration to attain the musically perfect experience and product. The performance is the achievement, and some performances are considered to be better than others, but there is a striving for improvement through the combined input of the musicians.

This vision of musical organisation, of mutual respect for capacities and of efforts motivated by the shared understanding of the music; musicians need to not only stimulate, they need to listen closely to their fellow musicians and respond to their creative, stimulating ideas. These sensitivities were apparent in participant observation of jazz, performance conferences and their preparation. Two musicians after a concert discussed the performance, how it differed from their rehearsal, where one musician felt they had lost track of the music:

“Although we did that little rehearsal this afternoon, and we have been playing together for... how many years Jonas?”

“Oh, egh, [joking] what twenty?”

“Yeh, so many years. When you changed that and made it a bowed you surprised me, after my solo in the [third] piece here [picks it out on piano], I did not expect that but it worked and it changed the feeling of it... egh my approach to the solo the way you came in low and soft, which was good, it brought another tone and way of thinking. It came out good, maybe better... don't you think Jonas... maybe we should leave that in there, don't you think?”

“If you think so Kyoko, it's your gig, it is your piece, you're the boss on this one. I was not so sure though, I was not sure when to come in there, where your solo was ending. I know I was supposed to play this [demonstrates] but

then decided to put that bowed stretch in there [plays the segment again]. But you need to give me a clue when to come in, I did not know when to come in there, I kind of lost it there [Laughs].”

“But that was fine Jonas, it was your feeling, it was fine. You can come in at any one of those points, any time there. I had thought after the part where I [hums, then picks it out on the piano], but where you did is good. That was fine, I like it, let's do it that way.”

Thereafter, the performance changed, and each time it changed a little more. Each musician strive with in a manner that respects the musical voice and contributions of other musician. That what might be seen as a mistake if the format of the music was meticulously pre-planned and anticipated, if the music was inflexible and the musicians incapable of responding, and encapsulating productively the unexpected within their own playing. If the unexpected does not seem to fit as desired, the question arises how can it be incorporated, how can it be modified to fit. There is always the risk that this sort of openness, not indeterminacy, will not work, will not cohere, in fact there is an extreme danger of failure; this is what the musicians work to avoid in striving to always expand their capabilities and knowledge of their instruments; looking forward to the future.

Another musician recounting a tour they had organised of a trio remarked that after a performance the bassist asked what she thought of his playing in some particular pieces and passages. She replied that what he played was just right, just fine for the piece, that they fitted together perfectly, and the results were great. The bassist was not totally convinced, no, he said,

there is something more, I need to work on that piece a but more, I need to think this one out more. The dissatisfaction came from the bassist, not the leader, and he practised and worked on the pieces and phrases that were disturbing him, to develop his approach to the music for the following evening's performance. Every day of the tour he did this; he was seeking to perfect his playing, such that his unique voice was very recognisable and fitting the ensemble voice.

These performance ideas may seem to be more feasible with small ensembles than that with big band ensembles; the introduction of big band jazz in the late 1920s relied on elaborate written arrangements to solve the coordination problem. However, this method of producing an integrated input of various creative voices from each musician by providing minutely detailed scores to adhere to while seeking individual solo creativity could be seen as contradictory. Not all musicians conceived an incompatibility between ensemble size and requiring musicians to contribute their individual musical voice and stimulating ideas; one interviewee offered this solution:

"I actually give some detailed music sheets and arrangement to my big band players, but at the same time I tell them to play anything they want if they feel they don't want to play as written. If I would like to hear the music just same as I wrote, I would have studio session players in my band. The reason that I told my band to play anything they want is because I would like to hear their own voice, too. I trust them, and I know they respect what I wrote. I mean when they play something else, they really know what the music itself would like to be. Am I [being] clear?"

At another time the same musician said of their

big band members:

"They are musicians, I choose them because they are musician. I need to respect them, they are musicians. What they contribute to the music I respect. If they are not musicians they could not play the music."

A musician is expected to display certain levels of creative ability when playing music which, for this musician, meant not playing someone else's music as dictated by the score; this was not innovative music with feeling, expressing one's own voice, but akin to the mechanical production of musical, to a loss of self; this is what they demanded of themselves to be counted as a musician, to create, and this is what they expected of other musicians in their ensemble.

When asked, 'What do you do if a musician changes a piece, and you do not like it?' they replied:

"[Laughing] Well, I don't know. It has not happened. They are musicians, I respect that."

Another musician gave this method of approach to big band performances, of giving the musicians written arrangements, but:

"...the arrangement is loose, more loose. I improvise the band when I conduct it, so it only needs a very loose map for the music."

When asked in response, 'Why do you prefer to improvise the band?':

"I like to hear 'very different music' [performed] every time with [the] same loose written music. I also like making music with the feeling that I have at that moment, with my inspiration."

Thus, the music was the creation of the band together, collectively inspired at the moment around his looses compositional idea and conducting. The music needs to be different, to

have the possibility to be different on every occasion; thus it cannot be meticulously pre-planned and scored in advance because the opportunity for something novel never arises. With collective improvisation, he believes this is always possible; the skill of the musicians and the integration of their voices in performance, the close listening to detail, to engaging with the other musicians, all lead to momentary opportunities for unique creations.

### Conclusion

Power seems a simple, uncomplicated and transparent concept in social theory, and explanations; the ability to achieve ends, regardless of the resistance of others. Power seems a simple, uncomplicated and transparent concept in social theory and social explanations; it is the simple ability to achieve ends, regardless of the resistance of others. Power, and its counterpart, empowerment are frequently employed in explanations of the gendering of occupations in medicine, and in social welfare, when speaking of discrimination and the relationships between service providers and their needy clients, where it is at times employed to overcome the difficulties attached with issues of ethics and knowledge, for example, which cannot be easily solved within a relativistic explanatory framework. Thus, power is drawn on to account for behaviours inconsistent and contradictory; behaviours inconsistent with theoretical expectations and actors' own interests; free of power constraints actors would have chosen to act otherwise. As this paper showed, ensuing difficulties bring a movement from power as a means to obtain ends regardless of opposition, to

power as collective action, to power as conflict and as consensus, to power as knowledge; usages that ensue from the non-productive purposes to which power is put and consequent incorrigible difficulties. Some studies of jazz and improvising musicians, particularly the new critical theorists of jazz, similarly lean on power to account for social location, performance procedures, meanings of musical improvisations, creative innovation, recording relations, and so on. While power plays a significant role in their work, they underpin their interpretations with existing statements of power, incorporating power's contradictions. The paper contended that the open ensemble, as a demanding and creative organisation of musicians who participate as relative equals, with expectations to perform innovatively at their peak, improves upon explanations of musicians' organisation, performances and creativity without recourse to power. This paper focused on the internal organisation of the open ensemble in jazz and improvised music as a musician driven organisation; that by requiring that each ensemble generates a unique musical sound, that all musicians contribute their unique musical voice, perform to their utmost ability, listen intently to, to integrate with, fellow musicians and perform inspirationally, while treating each performance as potentially innovative and allowing discovery and learning, the open ensemble creates an impetus for creativity and innovation.

### References

1. Weber, Max; *Economy and Society*, New York Bedminster Press. 1978.
2. Dahl, Robert. *Who Governs?: Democracy and Community Power in an American City*, Yale

University Press, New Haven. 1961.

3. Giddens, Anthony, *Central Problems in Social Theory; Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*; Macmillan; Cambridge; 1979.

4. Witz, Anne. *Professions and Patriarchy*, London, Routledge.

5. Becker, Howard S. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, Free Press, Glencoe.1963.

6. Jones, LeRoi, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. MacGibbon & Kee, London,1965.

7. Polsky, Ned. *Hustlers, Beats and Others*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth. 1971.

8. Floyd, Samuel A Jr. *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.

9. Gabbard, Krin (Ed.) *Jazz Among the Discourses*. Duke University Press, Durham. 1995.

10. Gabbard, Krin (Ed.) *Representing Jazz*. Duke University Press, Durham.1995a.

11. Gendron, Bernard. 'Moldy Figs' and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942–1946): Gabbard (ed) 1995; 31–56.

12. Kenney, William Howland,. *Historical Contexts and the Definition of Jazz: Putting More of the History in 'Jazz History'* in Gabbard, 1995; 100–116.

13. Monson, Ingrid. *Saying Something, Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1996.

14. Monson, Ingrid. *Miles Politics and Image*, in Gerald Early. (ed.) *Miles Davis and American Culture*, Missouri Historical Press, Missouri, 2001.

15. Porter, Eric., *What is This Thing Called Jazz? African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists*; California; University of California Press, 2002.

16. Radano. Ronald M. *Critical Alchemy: Anthony Braxton and the Imagined Tradition*, Gabbard (ed) 1995, pp. 189–216.

17. Rasula, Ted. *The Media of Memory: The Seductive Menace of Recordss in Jazz History*, in Gabbard (ed.) 1995: 117–133.

18. Monson 1996.

19. Holmwood, John, and Stewart, Alexander. *Explanation and Social Theory*, Macmillan Press, London, 1991.

20. Weber 1978, p. 53

21. Holmwood, and Stewart, 1991; 117.

22. Dahl 1961.

23. Adorno, Theodor, and Horkheimer, Max, *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*. 1972, Herder and Herder; Adorno, Theodor. *Aesthetic Theory*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. 1984;

Alexander, Jeffrey C. *Sociological Theory and the Claim to Reason: Why the End is Not in Sight*, *Sociological Theory*; 1991; 9; 147–153;

Alexander, Jeffrey C. *Fin de Siecle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction and the Problem of Reason*, Verso, London. 1995; Baudrillard,

Jean. *Seduction*. St. Martins Press, New York;

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Postmodern Ethics*, Blackwell, Oxford. 1993; Bauman, Zygmunt.

*Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, London. 1994;

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*, Blackwell, Oxford. 1995; .

Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press., 1984; Bourdieu, Pierre, *The*

*Logic of Practice*, Stanford, Stanford University Press. 1990; Bourdieu, Pierre, *Language &*

*Symbolic Power*, Cambridge, Polity. 1991; Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason: On the*

*Theory of Action*, Cambridge, Polity Press. 1998;

Giddens, Anthony, *Central Problems in Social*

- Theory; Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis; Macmillan; Cambridge; 1979; Parsons, Talcott. The Place of Ultimate Values in Sociological Theory, International Journal of Ethics; 1935; 45; 3; 282–316; Parsons, Talcott. The Structure of Social Action, Two Volumes, Free Press, Glencoe. 1937; Weber, Max; Economy and Society, New York Bedminster Press. 1978.
24. Habermas 1987, p. 270
25. Alexander 1995 p. 185.
26. Holmwood 1996, p. 69)
27. Bourdieu, Pierre, Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, Cambridge, Harvard University Press., 1984.
28. Bourdieu, Pierre, The Logic of Practice, Stanford, Stanford University Press. 1990.
29. Bourdieu, Pierre, Language & Symbolic Power, Cambridge, Polity. 1991.
30. Bourdieu, Pierre. Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action, Cambridge, Polity Press. 1998.
31. Floyd Jr., 2000.
32. Lewis, Goerge. Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives 1996,
33. Monson 1996.
34. Such, David. Avant-Garde Jazz Musicians: Performing 'Out There'. University of Iowa Press, Iowa. 1993.
35. Youngren, William H. European Roots of Jazz, in Bill Kirchner (ed.), The Oxford Companion to Jazz, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 7 – 17.
36. Peretti, Burton, W. The Creation of Jazz. Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America. University of Illinois Press, Urbana. 1992.
37. Sutherland, Allan J., The Social Organization of the Scottish Fisheries. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh.. 1993.
38. Sutherland, Allan J., Jazz: The Rational Reconstruction of a Music Culture, Are Studies Tsukuba University; 1998; 16; 147–197.
39. Sutherland, Allan J. The Orientations to Work Approach: A Review, The Journal of Kyushu University of Nursing and Social Welfare; 2000; 2;1;11–38.
40. Sutherland, Allan J. Sociology, Modernism and Jazz as a Musical Culture. Paper presented at ICU, Tokyo. 2001.
41. Sutherland, Allan J. Fractured Theories, Fractured Societies? Paper presented at the 5th Conference of the European Sociological Association, Helsinki. 2001a; August 28–31, 2001.
42. Sutherland, Allan J. Sociological Theories of Identity and the Culture and Practices of Jazz Musicians. Paper presented at the 5th Conference of the European Sociological Association, Helsinki; 2001b; August 28–31, 2001.
43. Sutherland, Allan J. Power and Identity in Contemporary Social Theory as Illustrated by Jazz Culture and Aesthetics. Paper presented at the 5th Conference of the European Sociological Association, Helsinki; 2001c; August 28-31,2001.
44. Riley, Ben. An Interview with Ben Riley, by Don Williamson, All About Jazz; 1999; December; <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/iviews/BRiley.htm>
45. Kuhn, Steve, Interview, All About Jazz, 2000 <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/iviews/SKuhn.htm>
46. Bley, Paul The Jazz Romantic, interview by Simon Hopkins and Dan Hill, Motion. 2001; <http://motion.state51.co.uk/features/bley/>
47. Douglas, Dave. Other Writings, Conversation with Connie Blaszczyk of ZineZone.com; June; 1999; <http://www.davedouglas.com/writings.html>

## 力 (power) に関する解釈の不十分性とオープン・アンサンブル

Allan J. SUTHERLAND

### 要 旨

力 (power) は一見すると明白な概念であり、社会学における解釈に多用されるものの、不思議なことにこれまで十分に概念化・理論化されたことがない。これは、状況を説明する上で矛盾が生じた場合に「力」が用いられてきたことに起因する。本論文では、現在のジャズ・即興音楽の研究者もまた、明らかに矛盾する行動の説明にあたり力の不平等性に頼る現状を考察し、行動はその解釈が与えられた場合のみ矛盾するという事実を指摘する。この点は、研究者が社会理論において矛盾かつ混乱した概念である「力」に頼る状況を用いて明らかにする。さらに、ジャズ・即興ミュージシャンが創造力を刺激的・融合的で連携した演奏に結実させ、新たな音楽的発想や演奏技法を学び、自らの音楽を進化させる上で理想的な形であるオープン・アンサンブルについて考察する。

キーワード：力 (power)、ジャズ、即興、オープン・アンサンブル (open ensemble)