

Ornette Coleman, "Lonely Woman: Re-Masculating Jazz"

1950s: Complex moment for both black and white men

- During World War II: African American troops had hoped for a "Double Victory"—victory against fascism abroad, racism at home
- After WWII: the double victory did not materialize—lots of resentment amongst African Americans
- Arthur Schlesinger: crisis in American white male masculinity after World War II

Reading example: Jack Kerouac, Music scene from *On the Road*

- Kerouac (a white middle class man who wants to reject corporate bourgeois America) envies the jazzman—he loves jazz as an alternative to white American masculinity
- But why? lots of problematic/bad reasons—he sees the African American jazzman as anti-intellectual, sexual, "authentic" because he's "primitive"
- looks at jazz as a way out of white middle class masculinity, but he **bases this escape on a lot of racist stereotypes**

Jazz and Gender in the Era of Bebop:

- stereotypes about jazz itself (gender)—Cootie Williams quote about jazz as a woman
- longheld racist stereotypes about black men as hyper-hetero sexual
- bebop as a particularly strong place for performative hyper-masculinity
- **cutting contests**
- **virtuosity = masculinity**

Ornette Coleman as an alternate masculinity:

- offstage roles for musicians becoming more important
- Coleman's role—student? "Jesus type"? vegetarian?—not hyper-heterosexual vision of masculinity, at any rate
- a queer interpretation of jazz—Coleman was often perceived as different within the jazz communities
- this was due not just to formalist concerns, but his race and gender

Jazz:

- **valued/valuable** American cultural export
- uniquely American;
- often configured as male in production
- also unmistakably rooted in African American cultural forms
- in late 1940s and 1950s, what types of internationally known art or entertainment were open to African Americans?
- movies, sports, literature—all were open to some extent, but all were **very** problematic
- In the 1940s and 1950s—emergence of bebop as a less entertainment-based music, more intellectual, more virtuosic, more exclusive, more highly valued "high art"
- bebop: newly assertive space as hip, cool, mysterious
- **jazz is a unique place of power for African Americans at mid-century, but...**

Bebop:

- small groups (trumpet, sax, piano, bass, drums)
- unison melody ("head") at the beginning
- chord changes—become complex
- solos over the "changes"
- complex rhythmic feel (more so than swing)
- often a fast tempo
- virtuosic
- cutting contests

Coleman's "Lonely Woman":

- free jazz
- distinctive introduction—floating pulse
- form: AABA? lacks a typical head
- Coleman doesn't solo over chords—improvises on the melody
- more modal, less bebop harmony
- instrumentation: pocket trumpet, plastic saxophone, no piano
- idiosyncratic approach to instrumentation
- very different rhythmic feel than bebop