

I wish to address an issue which is central to current debates relating to Australian culture and the arts. Multi-culturalism, sexual politics, deconstructionist aesthetics and political correctness are some of the issues besieging notions of aesthetic worth and calling into question the idea of 'excellence' as formally inherent rather than politically attributed. I propose to enquire into the extent to which artistic values, specifically in Australian music, are functions of the approved discourses about music, rather than of its formal and acoustic properties. In important senses, certain kinds of music are brought into being by how they are talked about, framed and represented. Simply consenting to the approved discursive conventions already constitutes an exclusionary gesture whereby some musical forms are recognised as having artistic legitimacy, and others are banished. In the context of the work of writers like Bourdieu on discourses of power,² my theoretical framework should not be considered outrageous. But I wish to demonstrate the way in which that framework helps to account for our musical landscape at the practical level of lived experience. Because I will be suggesting that certain discursive protocols keep us at a distance from our own cultural practice, I have therefore not hesitated to transgress them. The unwritten imperatives of academic writing, with their emphasis on scholarly detachment and the production of a seamless argument, tend to mask the writer's involvement in the field, jostled in the eddies of conflicting pluralism. I happen to be very much immersed in the field I am describing. If recognising this violates one of the conventions of scholarly writing, ignoring it is to offend against one of the central objectives of research: to disclose what is hidden.

In October 1994, the first statement of cultural policy ever to be articulated by an Australian Federal Government was presented in the form of a document called *Creative Nation*.³ In its 100 pages, jazz is mentioned only once, buried in a list which included theatre, dance, opera, circus, classical and contemporary music, performance art and puppetry. Yet among those who performed at the policy launch in Canberra was a band led by jazz musician Don Burrows who, it was announced at the same time, was awarded a three-year Commonwealth Government Creative Arts Fellowship to the value of \$330,000, one of eleven presented in that year. In the same year, while announcing the

rationale behind his choice of programmes for the 1994 Melbourne Festival of Arts, Leo Schofield declared that he had tried to give Melburnians 'everything from what one might call "high art" to popular culture'. This magnanimous gesture did not embrace jazz; representations made to him from the jazz community elicited the curious non-sequitur: 'when jazz festivals put opera on their program, I'll put jazz on mine'.⁴

These anecdotes exemplify the elusiveness of jazz in Australia's cultural discourse, ranging from official taxonomies to informally articulated attitudes. In a society obsessed with categorisation, the uncertain position of what is arguably the most influential music to develop in the twentieth century is striking. The pattern is not confined to Australia. Simon Frith has noted that discussions of contemporary culture and education show little grasp of the fact that 'one of the central strands of *everyone's* American experience is African-American music. Indeed in...*New Criterion* it is simply taken for granted that jazz and blues represent minority interests...as against the "universal appeal" of classical music'.⁵

For what I believe are historical reasons, the paradox has particular definition in Australia. Jazz does not seem to fit very securely into the various genres of our music discourse. As a consequence, it frequently acquires the status of an afterthought or an aside. Eric Myers, who reviewed jazz for the country's only national newspaper, *The Australian*, reports that his Arts Editor would accept his recommendations 'only if there was absolutely nothing else from such areas as classical music, opera, dance or the theatre that she could include on the arts page. Jazz was the lowest priority, and the last resort'.⁶ The pattern is repeated in academic institutions. The standard scholarly accounts of Australian music barely register the existence of jazz.⁷ When we observe the same lacuna in popular music studies, we must begin to suspect that jazz has no place in our discussions of music, no position from which it can develop cultural leverage.⁸ Among other things however, I wish to argue that it is precisely this intermittently interrupted silence that makes jazz one of the most profitable vehicles for a consideration of Australian cultural politics, demonstrating the limits of our arts discourses in their engagement with cultural practice. Since jazz emerged from its folk and geographical origins in the 1920s, it has wandered back and forth across the ill-defined

wilderness between high and low culture. James Lincoln Collier describes it as a 'unique type, it cannot be safely categorised as folk, popular, or art music, though it shares aspects of all three'.⁹ It is this discursive placelessness that makes it a fruitful subject for the consideration of the limits of our cosy cultural typologies. Its eloquence lies in the silence it inhabits.

Let us first document this 'silence' by referring to one of the most persuasive forms of recognition which our society accords any cultural activity: financial support. For the sake of perspective, it is necessary to work down from the big picture. In the year ending March 1993, the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments in Australia devoted 2.4% (\$3,799 million) of their outlays to 'Recreation and Culture'.¹⁰ Among these levels of government, the Australian Commonwealth Government supports cultural activity through such machinery as tax incentives and Direct Line funding, but its main support mechanism is the Australia Council. In 1993-94, Council funding was compartmentalised through five boards, each chaired by a member of Council: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts (ATSI), Literature, Visual Arts/Craft, Community Cultural Development (CCD) and Performing Arts (PAB). It is the last of these which disburses whatever funds are allocated to jazz. The PAB in turn operates through committees, each chaired by a member of the Board; these committees deal with applications in the categories of Dance, Drama, Music and the newly recognised Hybrid Arts. It is the Music Committee which makes decisions on applications that come specifically from the jazz community, although it should be borne in mind that, as pit musicians, some jazz performers will also be collateral beneficiaries under grants coming through, say, the Drama or the Dance Committees. But these are not grants for jazz *qua* jazz.

Given the thrust of what follows, it is important to stress that since the establishment of the Council in 1973 jazz has benefited significantly from its patronage, particularly for what are generally referred to as contemporary jazz forms, and also through the establishment of the various Jazz Co-ordination programmes in different states. At their most effective, the Jazz Co-ordinators have been invaluable in generally mobilising jazz activity. Financially, Australian jazz is unquestionably better off with the Australia Council than without it.

Let us look at some relativities however. How much recognition does jazz enjoy in relation to other forms of music funded by the Council? And how does that compare with the levels of production and consumption of jazz in relation to those levels for other

categories of Commonwealth Government funded music? Lack of focussed surveys makes it difficult to assemble these statistics. In some studies, figures for jazz are differentiated but in most cases can only be identified through case by case cross-checks. Extrapolations give some indication of scale but are unreliable as precise indicators. The figures I present are based on documents prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics; the Australia Council; Eric Myers, the National Jazz Co-ordinator; researcher at the University of Technology Sydney, Kerry McConnell; and my own primary research and experience in jazz performance, broadcasting and administration. Since I prepared these figures, updated survey material has appeared, but it indicates no measurable changes to the general patterns observed here.¹¹

On the basis of that research, how much support does jazz receive from the Australia Council compared with other music? In 1993-94, arts support grants made by the Council totalled \$49.22 million. The largest share of that, 49% or \$24 million, went through the PAB. Of that amount, 22% (\$5.227 million) went specifically to music projects, and of that amount, \$493,155 went to jazz for a total of 39 projects out of 285 successful music applications.¹² Thus jazz received 9.4% of the money disbursed to music for 13.7% of the number of music grants. If this seems like a rather low figure as a measure of the official recognition of jazz, it dwindles embarrassingly when it is remembered that I have not included the PAB's grants for projects in the categories of Opera, Music Theatre and Dance, which only indirectly subsidise jazz. Furthermore in addition to the Australia Council's grants, various levels of government also provide direct line funding to particular art music organisations. In 1992 for example, the Australian Opera received direct government grants to the value of \$8 million.¹³ To appreciate the significance of these figures, it is necessary to know that the PAB does not in general fund vernacular or popular musics such as rock, pop and country & western.¹⁴ An infinitesimal share of the pie is enjoyed by some folkloric and ethnic music projects, but in terms of mainstream musical taxonomies, the music funded by the PAB would be described as jazz and 'art' or concert music, which includes the contemporary and self-proclaimed avant-garde. However inappropriately, the latter category is lumped together to distinguish it from jazz through terms like 'classical', and it is in this very loose sense that I shall use the term throughout this study.

It might then be asserted of course that jazz is by any measure a negligible activity that attracts no more assistance than it warrants. This is the supposition generally encountered when attempts are made to

achieve recognition for the music, ranging from lobbying for media coverage to applications for research funding. The business of demonstrating the value of any cultural activity is always conducted on a very slippery surface since what operate as validating criteria for one group are dismissed as fatuous enthusiasms by another. I shall approach this task in two ways: quantitative and qualitative. In the first instance, I am interested in figures that might be available for the production and consumption of jazz in relation to other musics that enjoy commonwealth largesse. Is there enough jazz for it to at least deserve notice? The statistics assembled in *Jazzchord 25* allow for differing conclusions regarding the numbers of musicians employed in the jazz and orchestral sectors, though even the most divergent interpretations cannot sustain any correlation between levels of activity in both sectors and the relative levels of funding.

Thus for example, there are 172 organisations devoted to symphony, chamber and choral music; there are around 160 organisations devoted to jazz (societies and festival organisations). Almost half the music festivals held in Australia are devoted to jazz. In 1993, there were around 16,500 individual performance 'involvements' in classical or art music. The most recent published figures for jazz (1985) estimated that there were 17,800 jazz performances, most of them likely to involve groups ranging from trio to seven-piece. At the 'consumption' end of the process, 986,000 attendances were recorded at classical music performances in Australia in 1991; a 1985 study estimated the audiences for jazz performances at 2.4 million. In a group surveyed in 1991 regarding leisure patterns, only 2% (the smallest category) attended classical music concerts during the relevant period. Among various categories of 'cultural venues', the lowest national participation rate was for classical music concerts (8.2%), while the third highest—and the highest for people with full-time employment—was for popular music concerts, a category which embraced jazz though not with any internal statistical differentiation. It is very difficult to use the available statistics to defend any particular position on music funding priorities. At the very least on quantitative grounds, the relative figures for support for jazz and classical music fail to correspond in any way to related figures for the number of musicians employed, performances presented, support organisations and audiences served.

The next line of defence for apologists of the funding patterns is qualitative. Maybe there is a lot of jazz, but it is a trivial music. This is a pervasive assumption which underlies various institutional responses to the music. When Nigel Buesst was researching for his

documentary film on Australian jazz, *Jazz Scrapbook*, in the early 1980s, he reported that he was told by what he referred to as the National Archives that they held 'no film on the subject of Australian jazz because it wasn't important enough'.¹⁵ Part of the purpose of this paper is to propose that the criteria by which classical music is privileged in the funding processes are highly problematic as general measures of cultural value. They are particularly inappropriate to vernacular musics such as jazz. Even so, I wish to suggest at this point that some inspection of these criteria reveals that even though they are loaded dice, they do not, even on their own terms, justify the qualitative advantages and official biases in funding which they accord classical music. The following extract from Section 5 of the Australia Council Act 1975 lists Council functions as:

...to formulate and carry out policies designed:

- (i) to promote excellence in the arts;
- (ii) to provide, and encourage provision of, opportunities for persons to practise the arts;
- (iii) to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts;
- (iv) to promote the general application of the arts in the community;
- (v) to foster the expression of a national identity by means of the arts;
- (vi) to uphold and promote the rights of persons to freedom in the practice of the arts;
- (vii) to promote the knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts by persons in other countries;
- (viii) to promote incentives for, and recognition of, achievement in the practice of the arts;
- (ix) to encourage the support of the arts by the States, local governing bodies and other persons and organisations.¹⁶

Apart from what might be called the quantitative mission—to increase the amount of arts activity—there are several objectives here which imply or state criteria of value. These may be described as nationalist objectives which achieve the enhancement of national identity locally and overseas (v and vi), democratic objectives which increase the access of Australians to the arts (ii, iii, iv, vi) and aesthetic objectives which foster excellence (i). These objectives are so deeply embedded at the hegemonic level that they reflect a bipartisan consensus on the part of Australia's major political parties. The Commonwealth Labor Government's *Creative Nation* defines its role in cultural development as including: 'nurturing creativity and excellence; enabling all Australians to enjoy the widest possible range of cultural experience [and] promoting the expression of Australia's cultural identity'.¹⁷ These

sentiments are echoed almost verbatim by the Opposition Coalition Party's cultural policy document, with its talk from the first page of Australia's 'unique...cultural tradition', 'artistic excellence' and accessibility 'to all Australians'.¹⁸ There is no official 'opposition' on these issues. The responsibility for enquiring into the problematics of the government's assumptions was abrogated by the Opposition and fell instead to members of the community for whom the policy was evolved, including a former Chair of the Council, Donald Horne.¹⁹

Of the three broad criteria elaborated in these documents, it is the meaning of 'excellence' which is the least self-evident. As a preliminary clarification however, we can note how frequently it is invoked in conjunction with global recognition. The artistic value of the national arts touring program *Playing Australia* is signalled by the 'world standard' of its productions; Australian opera has achieved its prominence 'in world terms'; a planned National Academy of Music will bring Australian music 'to internationally competitive standards'.²⁰ The primary test of artistic excellence is that the work is acknowledged *outside* Australia. If we take these criteria at face value, there seems to be no question that the funding disparities are irrational. Jazz in general has been regarded as a music of aesthetic significance by 'art music' figures from Stravinsky and Ansermet onwards for most of this century.²¹ Among Australian composers, its importance has been acknowledged by such composers as Don Banks and Keith Humble.²² But what of jazz in Australia, Australian jazz? How does it measure up against the criteria by virtue of which classical music enjoys such benefits?

Certainly jazz appears to make itself democratically accessible. Audience sizes are comparable with classical music, while the distribution of jazz societies, venues and annual festivals as listed in the *Australian Jazz Directory* and regional newsletters suggest that as live performance, the music is distributed nationally at least as widely as its funding competitors.²³ Jazz can be heard in the context of everyday social life, as well as in concert venues. It is played in shopping centres, parks, plazas, streets, pubs and restaurants, mostly at no direct charge.

The 'nationalist' and the 'aesthetic' objectives are intertwined. With regard to the former, it remains to be demonstrated how the staple repertoire of our most generously funded art-music organisations enhances, either in ourselves or in our image overseas, the sense of what it is like to be Australian in the second half of the twentieth century. Of all music organisations, the Australian Opera has been the biggest single benefi-

ary of government funding since the establishment of the Australia Council; yet when it produced *Voss* in 1986, it was reportedly the first Australian work the company had presented for a decade.²⁴ This is not to express a prejudice against Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, Bach, Verdi and all the eurocentric staples of the 'serious' music repertoire but to ask how this repertoire meets one of the main criteria by which value is determined. It might well be argued that jazz, with its roots in Afro-American culture, is no more 'Australian' than European concert music. From that equal footing however, Australian jazz performance and composition, like much of our classical music, have also achieved international artistic recognition. In the 1940s, the work of Graeme Bell's band was ranked by European and American critics as equal to any and superior to most, including American musicians. In the 1950s, the work of the Australian Jazz Quartet/Quintet in the U.S. introduced new jazz instrumentation and voicing and outbilled such luminaries as Miles Davis. More recently, Australian jazz musicians such as Bernie McGann have frequently outshone U.S. players in the opinions of many reviewers.²⁵ These primarily illustrate that, like our exported classical music, Australian jazz can reproduce the character of its sources in the Northern Hemisphere.

More striking in relation to the 'nationalist' criterion is that Australian jazz has also evolved stylistic characteristics which are regarded as distinctive to this country. While our concert performers are admired for having 'come up' to the standards of Europe and the U.S., our jazz has, in addition to this, defined an identity regarded by overseas commentators as 'Australian'. The assertion has been amply documented, perhaps most succinctly by Bruce Clunies-Ross, who wrote that traditional jazz in Australia developed, unlike other countries where it was simply preserved, resulting in 'a characteristic accent of its own, as compared to the international style of traditional jazz which was to flourish later'.²⁶ As a further achievement, Australian jazz musicians have influenced the history of their music in other countries. In the United Kingdom, the Graeme Bell band consciously opposed prevailing fashions to transform the audiences and the social function of jazz in a way that set the stage for subsequent developments in English popular music. In Czechoslovakia, the postwar history of jazz was largely shaped by the Bell band, which inspired several generations of artists. It gave momentum to radical theatre and performance and to what became known as the Prague Spring, one of the most significant liberalising moments in the history of European communism.²⁷

It has been put to me in conversations with funding body representatives that if jazz already achieves these things, then it does not need subsidy. But this takes us into Catch 22 territory: it amounts to saying that the more convincingly a cultural form meets the official criteria of value, the less support it should receive. The absurdity of this becomes patent if we imagine the converse. But in any case, the policy statements contest this reasoning:

Among current successes, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra have also been fine ambassadors for Australian performance and Australian music.

For fifty years, Musica Viva Australia has been engaged in bringing high quality ensemble music to as many Australians as possible...it has...made an invaluable contribution to strengthening our cultural presence overseas. As outlined above, the Government will be providing additional assistance to Musica Viva.²⁸

According to the terms of approbation deployed here, jazz should be ranked highly among priorities rather than suffering from a radical inequity which cannot be defended in terms of the criteria articulated. Jazz has undoubtedly benefited significantly from the PAB, but the 9.4% share of the music funding it receives falls far short of what would appear to be the appropriate recognition according to the criteria the Council promulgates.

When representatives of the PAB are questioned as to why this disparity prevails, their last line of defence is a rather turgid area in which 'merit' and 'budgetary restrictions' mingle in a way that defies further analysis, especially given that details of unsuccessful applications are not disclosed. At a public forum organised by the Jazz Co-ordination Association of New South Wales, held in August 1993, a representative of the PAB replied to a question on this subject by saying: 'most of the unsuccessful applications met the Board's criteria, and would have been funded if there was enough money to go around. But, because there were too many applications, the committee had to choose'.²⁹ The most interesting part of this response is what it does not say. If the unsuccessful applications met the criteria, why were they not chosen as opposed to others? When the criteria of choice are arrayed against the quantitative and qualitative information relating to jazz, words like 'excellence' and 'merit' become not only vague but they also become impregnable sanctions, ways of concealing rather than disclosing the politics of the selection process. The

position of a music like jazz in the dominant discourse of value cannot be explained in relation to the criteria supposedly being applied. Therefore, some other agenda are operating. These may be found, I believe, in the problematics of the 'discourse of value'. The value system appears immaculate when applied to politically symbiotic cultural forms. But its problematics emerge grotesquely when it is confronted with interstitial art forms. This is precisely why a study of jazz in this context is so useful. It is the things that slip through the net that reveal the limits of its discrimination, and which compel us to go back to the unspoken assumptions of cultural politics.

Jazz is a particularly sensitive register of these aporias. Classical music is less sensitive because its cultural authority depends so squarely on preserving the current discourse of value, on the privileging of concepts like autonomy, textual fixity, permanence and universality. When a vernacular music like jazz attempts to find a place in this discourse however, it finds itself in a Procrustean bed. The formal properties of the music, its informing traditions, the conditions in which it is most frequently produced and consumed, all result in an incompatibility with the dominant typologies of art music. Rowse and Hawkins, *inter alia*, have demonstrated the extent to which the official discourse of art in Australia is dominated by neo-Romantic aesthetics of transcendence, in spite of episodic interruptions which seek recognition of alternative ways of conceiving the relationship between art and culture.³⁰

I have argued elsewhere that the conception of art which underlies such assumptions and dominates institutionalised policies is notable for its consistency with a political economy which, in turn, finds it very difficult to accommodate significant aspects of the jazz tradition. To be drawn into the market, the artistic process must conclude in a finished, static product, for it is only in this form that it can be bought and sold. The primary project is to commodify the artistic process. If you can 'embody' it, as, say a book or a painting, then you control the circumstances of its consumption; regulate the flow of the audience through a box office; ensure that the audience can not interfere and seat them statically at a distance from the performance site; and intimidate them into the convention of silence. This reinforces the fetishisation of the art product and the romanticisation of the artist. The effect of this is to establish a space between artist and audience which can then be occupied by commercial mediators who can, in turn, control the production, distribution and consumption of art. This is one of the hidden reasons why jazz, like other interactive, improvisational folk

forms, has always been marginalised—not because it is inherently aesthetically inferior, but because it happens to be a form that cannot be so easily regulated through the existing political economy. The moment of performance in interaction with the audience is central to jazz; the resulting improvisation is, historically, part of its essence. The moments of production and consumption are the same; there is almost no space in there for a mediating economic network, except by deforming that moment, as in a concert hall where interaction is controlled or in a recording, which is only a static memory of the improvisational moment. In these respects, jazz is relatively non-compliant with commodification. This is why it is trivialised: not because it is an inferior expressive form, but because it threatens a political economy.³¹

I have also argued that, even in the context of the globalisation of the jazz industry, achieved largely through technological means which began with the sound recording, particular characteristics of jazz performance, especially the improvisational element, can link the music powerfully with the specific local conditions in which it is produced. Indeed, its history is frequently charted through highly localised stylistic categories: New Orleans, Kansas City, Chicago, West Coast, New York's 52nd Street. This focus on local communities remains very strong at grass roots level in Australia and is reflected in the proliferation of regional clubs and festivals among the organisations referred to earlier. Eric Myers' experience as New South Wales and National Jazz Co-ordinator prompted him to write that 'the jazz festival often works much better as a modest event in a small community', and he attributes the success of such festivals as those held in small towns like Kiama and Bellingen to this tight link with local communities.³² The peripatetic Australian Jazz Convention, which was inaugurated in 1946 and is the world's longest running annual jazz festival, is now held almost as a matter of course in small towns.

The perception is spreading. When the Western Australia Jazz Co-ordinator's application for a day-long festival was rejected by the state Department for the Arts, a successful submission was made to another funding body under the 'Free Community Concert Incentive Scheme'.³³ This demonstrated a shrewd recognition of the position of jazz within the arts economy and illustrated the point that, setting aside questions of formal aesthetics, jazz is an example of a musical form whose traditions and conditions of production and consumption are very unevenly matched with the deeply rooted assumptions that govern support for the arts in Australia.

The fixation on internationalism in these assumptions is reflected at a micro-level by the massive privileges enjoyed by centrist, peak music organisations. Among artists, musicians have one of the lowest rates of application to the Australia Council and the highest level of ignorance of its existence. In spite of this individual apathy revealed in the Throsby and Thompson study, they also found that music, including opera, enjoyed the highest level of assistance flowing to individual artists. Interestingly, this anomaly has been magnified since the earlier study by Throsby and Mills, when both the level of ignorance and the level of individual benefit were lower.³⁴ The reason for this pattern lies in the fact that music enjoys the highest—and an increasing—level of indirect benefit as a consequence of the bargaining power of a few centralised, peak organisations like the Australian Ballet and the Australian Opera. Jazz activity is not centralised in this way, so it fails to conform to the musical model to which the funding bodies are most responsive. Insofar as jazz enjoys organisational support, it comes from low-level regional infrastructures that can respond quickly and flexibly to local conditions. I suggest that this is in part because, as an improvised music responsive to the moment, it is to a greater extent an outgrowth of the 'local', as opposed to the 'high art', canonical and internationalist orientation of opera and classical music. This suggestion is fortified by the preliminary results of my own written survey of Australian jazz clubs, in which we find a widely dispersed collection of small jazz communities with a relatively negligible rate of funding from the PAB. This difference in the cultural dynamic of jazz and the disadvantages it therefore suffers in the funding processes have also been repeatedly asserted by representatives of the jazz community.³⁵

As we consider the centralist pull of the official discourses, the image that presents itself is that of opening a set of Russian dolls. As we move from the macro (international) to the micro (local) level of music activity, the shape of each successive level is required to conform to the one preceding it. Each should fit neatly into the mould defined by the international music performance industry. At the lowest level, we find a sad miniature of a model which is quite inappropriate to its size; its features and identity are only made intelligible by reference to the macro-version. If at any point in the movement from macro to micro, from internationalist to local, we encounter a structure of activity or a discourse of value generated from the local end of the continuum which does not conform, it must either be reconstructed or rejected. A process of deracination is essential for it to fit into the paradigm.

Thus precisely that which makes it distinctive—for historical or geographical reasons—is what violates the paradigm and requires it to be rejected. The features that proclaim its distinctive local identity are what compromise its 'excellence' as conceived by and from the dominant metropolitan centre.³⁶

One consequence relevant to this paper is that jazz itself becomes divided into privileged and disadvantaged areas. This is not because of aesthetics as such (some are more 'excellent'), but for reasons arising from cultural politics. Particular styles of the music will commend themselves to the dominant ideology far more than others, because they conform to the paradigm that underpins musical politics. This hypothesis tends to be confirmed by the very dramatic biases within jazz funding. Expressed in its simplest form, 'modern' jazz enjoys the lion's share at the expense of 'traditional' jazz.³⁷ Without figures relating to the total number of applications made and the projects they outlined, we must be extremely cautious in our interpretation of this imbalance.

It is a bias which is mirrored in jazz education and where we have sufficient information to form more robust conclusions.³⁸ Among many other factors, the music I am simplistically calling 'modern' jazz conforms more closely to the paradigms that govern official discourses of the arts. Bop still constitutes the determining source tradition for 'modern' jazz performance and the point of departure from which educational programs generally begin to treat the music seriously as a subject of musicological discourse. The difference is of course not absolute; but on a spectrum running from collective to solo improvisation, bop gives us, more than traditional jazz forms do, the romantic foregrounding of the individual artistic *agon*, the transcendent virtuosity of the soloist that confirms his (sic) separate status. Such myths confer greater artistic legitimacy than the more collectivised approach of earlier jazz forms. Irrespective of questions of artistic excellence, performances based on the 'soloist/backing' model are more congenial to the figure/ground typology that dominates the European art-music tradition.³⁹ This is simply one example of the way in which certain paradigms of music-making which are not inherently related to 'excellence' nonetheless take charge of the evaluative process.

I have said, however, that we need to exercise great caution in interpreting these data. I want now to look more closely at the ambiguity of the encounter between jazz and the dominant discourses of musical value. Apart from what this might tell us about jazz itself, I believe this will disclose a general pattern that frequently characterises negotiations between cultural

centres and margins. Indeed, the pattern could well be articulated through models drawn from post-colonial and feminist theory, models which could be productively applied to the analysis of the relationship between all vernacular musics and the dominant cultural politics. I want to draw attention to the way in which the marginalised accentuate their own 'otherness' by collaborating with the disempowering typologies.

One way in which they do this is through almost wilful apathy toward support mechanisms. This is frequently defended as a refusal to compromise artistic integrity by participating in the official discourse. In fact, it merely subscribes to one of the official discourse's most powerful mythologies: the artist as absorbed in the act of creativity to the exclusion of all else. The refusal to 'play their game' is a way of playing it to one's own disadvantage. There are many reasons for which jazz musicians might decline to submit applications for support. One is that it is difficult. However, it is not comforting to think of oneself as too lazy or incompetent to work out how to prepare an application. On the other hand, if this inertia can be projected as part of the *mythos* of the artist, it becomes a positive guarantee of artistic integrity, a refusal to acknowledge the petty world of bureaucracy. Ironically, this refusal is not only an acknowledgment of that world but is also a willingness to construct oneself in its terms, invoking such vague romanticisations as 'authenticity', 'folk purity' and a general being-above-it-all of the true devotee of the art form.

In terms of the detachment of musicians from the Council's activities, jazz musicians seem to be no different from their colleagues in the classical field. Jazz Co-ordinators have been struck by the poor planning, the ignorance, the negativity and the apathy manifested by their clientele in relation to promoting support for their own activities.⁴⁰ In the experience of Eric Myers, this is the single most significant factor in the relatively poor success rate of particular jazz styles in grant applications. As someone frequently drawn into conversation on the subject of funding, from casual chatter at gigs to more formal statements from musicians, it is my experience that this self-exclusion is exaggerated and often validated by the *mythos* of 'The Street'. Research at grassroots level across the country for the *Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz* indicated that Australian jazz musicians are overwhelmingly of the white, suburban, middle class. Nonetheless, there is a strong inclination to construct themselves as outsiders occupying a *demi-monde* as a way of legitimising hostility to arts institutions. The irony of this is rich indeed as the myth itself is very largely the construction of white, middle-class jazz historiography which

sentimentalises contempt for the white, middle-class ethos.

Another way in which jazz interests situate themselves in relation to the dominant discourse of value is by conforming to a discourse which is, to a significant degree, incompatible with the cultural dynamics which characterise jazz and its history. The 'other' collaborates in denying its own identity by seeking to reproduce the subject position. I have argued elsewhere that, as the price of entering education curricula, the academic culture required jazz to surrender large tracts of its own history, particularly its history in Australia.⁴¹

We who speak for the music have sometimes been unwittingly complicit in a related reshaping of jazz in order to qualify for institutional recognition. In seeking to make jazz competitive in the funding process, its supporters have often adapted the music to the funding categories. In the long term, the results might well be more impressive if the appropriateness of the paradigms were also questioned. By its own account, the Council is based 'on the same model used for scientific, artistic and academic projects throughout the Western world'.⁴² The process of adapting the music to the Council's criteria therefore operates in tension with the non-Western elements in the jazz tradition. Jazz thus disadvantages itself by participating in a game whose rules were written by and for its main funding competitor: European art music.

Perhaps the most appealing yet dangerous of the axioms of institutionalised arts discourse is that music attains, supremely among expressive forms, the Kantian transcendent. According to this model, music takes us into a politics-free zone, soaring above the sullied domain of historical and social specificity in an airtight positivist bubble labelled 'art'. Janet Wolff, among many others, has outlined the historical conditions which engendered this notion and in turn referred to Arnold Hauser's enquiry into the political economy, the interests of which are served by 'the discovery of the concept of genius, and the idea that the work of art is the creation of an autocratic personality, that this personality transcends tradition, theory and rules, even the work itself'.⁴³ Transcendence and autonomy are central to a discourse which reinforces and sustains very specific socio-economic conditions and their presiding epistemologies. This is effected in close symbiosis with the music which grew out of those conditions.

The music and its framing discourse centralise themselves at the expense of other forms of socio-economic organisation and their expressive forms. I am suggesting that, in terms of its history and traditions, jazz is an example of such an 'other'. I believe all forms of music

manifest, to a greater or lesser degree, that which Gramsci termed 'relative autonomy', and this is experienced, by performer and listener, as something that may be described as 'transcendence'. I do not wish to understate the importance or magnitude of this component of musical experience. It is closely related to the myth of 'universalism', the sense of rising above the local and historical moment. It is the way this energy becomes politically harnessed which needs to be disclosed. Quite concealing its ideological baggage, the idea of 'autonomy' invites all expressive forms to cut *all* moorings and to step into a space outside the history which actually makes them intelligible. In fact, this new space is nonetheless determined by a history of its own, in which exotics must function at a serious disadvantage in relation to the 'native' cultural flora. Jazz is such an exotic. Yet its own spokespersons, understandably seeking legitimacy for the music, frequently attempt to do so through a garbled Enlightenment aesthetic, faintly stamped with the recognition that there might be problems in the project. Rather than renegotiate the basic aesthetic—reshape the hole—the tendency is more often to reshape the music. Paul Grabowsky, for example, has said:

I think jazz is art because it's about self expression, but jazz was born into entertainment. Somehow, without realising it, it was an art as well. In the same way you might say of an African statuette in the Congo, is it art or is it a religious object? It can be argued either way, and both arguments would be correct. They're an expression of some higher ideal with an abstract notion, something which attempts to elevate the human condition; something which points to a more perfect world.

Jazz does those things as well as being entertaining. I do think there was a time when jazz's entertainment value could obscure its content—Cab Calloway and Louis Jordan stopped being jazz at some point and started being variety acts.⁴⁴

Implicit in such utterances is the construction of the high/low cultural binary. In spite of the political agenda that underlie this distinction, it follows as a supposedly aesthetic axiom from the subliminal pressures to make jazz conform to the official definitions of art.

The positivism underlying such distinctions as 'entertainment/art' makes it difficult to contemplate an aesthetic in which the two coexist as they have done to a conspicuous extent in jazz. Grabowsky acknowledges this in the abstract, but has difficulty with the specific cases of Calloway and Jordan. Like a trial

witness who is instructed to answer yes or no, the speaker thus finds himself in a discourse which simply will not recognise a different order of complexity that might be more appropriate to discussions of jazz. In Grabowsky's eagerness to legitimise jazz and to give gravity to his own thoughts, there is little recognition of the possibility that the categories themselves are incriminating. Jazz thus finds itself having to apologise for certain embarrassing moments in its history, yet they are moments which are crucial to its cultural power and vitality. The idea that jazz's 'entertainment value' is not actually a part of its content would have perplexed one of its most seminal figures, Louis Armstrong, who experienced no tension between the two.⁴⁵

This deeply rooted aesthetic then engenders all the related typologies of Enlightenment culture and identity. The discourse which then emerges from those typologies is often articulated with a bold 'cutting edge' configuration in relation to jazz:

[Grabowsky] believes it is time for Australian jazz to come in from the margins and claim recognition from the cultural hierarchy. 'Historians of the future [sic] will look back at this time as marking the first maturity of modern Australian improvised music,' he says.⁴⁶

The irony is that these typologies have long been virtually problematised out of credibility. Let us briefly illustrate how they continue to drift like icebergs through the jazz discourse of value. The Romantic view of the artist, which in turn is based on the myth of centred, fully self-conscious subjectivity, continues to reign unchallenged with its notions of mastery of the self and the space it inhabits. It emerges in the conception of the artistic sensibility as a spectacle of (male) creative intensity:

Jim McLeod: Are you, do you think, a very intense person?

P[aul] G[Grabowsky]: My wife thinks so. People say that I am. I think I probably am.

Jim McLeod: You can sometimes look quite menacing.

PG: I'm a person of intense passion. I'm very passionate about this music.⁴⁷

The slightly jocular tone in the interviewer's reference to 'menacing', which seems evident in the broadcast interview, is not picked up by the interviewee, who constructs himself through Romantic stereotypifications: artist as separate, the Beethoven scowl proclaiming the seriousness of the mission, the woman's role in confirming the importance of the artist

who is so passionately absorbed in his higher work as to not be entirely sure of how he appears to ordinary mortals. It is an image refracted through countless Romantic constructions and which has become popularised in jazz on record covers and novels like *Young Man With A Horn*—most conspicuously in representations of white, middle-class jazz musicians by members of the white middle class.⁴⁸ Eric Myers has speculated perceptively on the connection between this stereotype of the artist and her/his detachment from the political economy though leaving intact the link between Romantic individualism and the jazz musician's intellectual physiognomy:

Perhaps the sort of individualism that makes for a fine jazz musician... militates against a broader view of society. This could explain why most jazz musicians tend to be passive on committees, or as part of organisations, and why they have had little effect in the past on the policies of, say, arts funding bodies.⁴⁹

A fundamental structure of this representation of the artist is the same figure/ground model that characterises the romantic artwork. It is based on the idea of the individual confronting the universe in an epic struggle for control. It is a historically specific, politically determined view of the artist, and it does not easily accommodate the powerful jazz tradition of harmonious collectivity which is to be found in the relationships between both musicians and their audiences. That tradition has to be muted in order to fit the jazz musician into the Romantic model. As I have suggested above, this in turn reinforces the paradigm in which the artist is detached from social materiality, thus serving the dominant interests in a particular political economy. In accepting the eurocentric model of the artist, the jazz tradition is deformed and enervated in and by the official discourse. While specific manifestations of that tradition will enjoy some benefits, the music as a whole will inevitably remain disadvantaged in ways reflected by the funding disparities.

The same model is frequently latent in the way that excellence is centralised in evaluations of performance. Thus a reviewer attempts to explain his dissatisfaction with a particular performer: 'Her aim is not so much to deliver music of excellence—the basic rationale of jazz—but to be appreciated'.⁵⁰ The disjunction between 'excellence' and 'appreciation' raises the question of who decides matters of musical excellence and how. I believe the problem lies in the fact that the term 'excellence', as embedded in the official discourse of value, is fundamentally mystifying in the sense that it conceals its own historical and political determinations. It is

suggested that excellence has some kind of Platonic existence to which particular musical utterances more or less correspond. When a musician is praised for 'producing lyrical solos that were *almost* perfectly formed' (my italics),⁵¹ it unwittingly invokes the idea of immanent formal perfection—an ahistorical aesthetic, the key to which is to be found in the same kind of formalism which dominates classical musicology. The parallel is reflected in formalist approaches to the study of jazz improvisation. The supposition that decisions made in improvisational performance might become intelligible through the analysis of musical form is demonstrably flawed. It is, however, part of a high-art discourse which, although well in decline in other art forms, remains privileged in the musicology of classical music whence jazz derived it.⁵²

Again, this reflects the myth of the genius of the artist who is above the aesthetically contaminated conditions of life, who is, in effect, a god creating *ab ovo*. Thus an Australian jazz journal announces its policy as biased toward 'music that is innovative and an expression of pure creativity'; a reviewer critically scrutinises a performance for evidence of 'plagiarism'; and although what he finds is at least meliorated by the fact that it is borrowed from the performer's own earlier work, there is some sense that this brief hiatus in originality has compromised excellence.⁵³ Again, it must be stressed that these criteria, imported from European Romanticism, are somewhat awkward at a time when we are not only rediscovering the problematics of notions like 'pure creativity', but we are also celebrating that rediscovery through pastiche, intertextuality and exercises in artistic homage. All artistic processes manifest derivativeness—they would be wholly unintelligible otherwise. Not only is the idea of unqualified originality currently an anachronism, but it is also particularly inappropriate to take it for granted in assessing improvised performance. Such improvisation is a spontaneous effusion of a consciousness which mostly explores the stock of its existing expressive devices as a response to the conditions of the moment.⁵⁴

These elements of excellence, based in formalist analysis, function to disengage the performer from that moment which actually produces the music. They converge to privilege the virtuoso who has risen above his human limitations (the gendering is intentional) and his social materiality, the virtuoso who has erased his own history, his origins in space and time—hence the idea so often articulated in one form or another of 'a virtuoso of international standard'.⁵⁵ Conceived in these terms, 'excellence' embodies the myth of the universal and the erasure of the sense of place, which

is replaced by the internationalised sound generated from a dominant centre. For many, New York continues to fulfil for jazz the role played by centres such as Paris and Vienna for the music that defines the paradigms of value. The global dominance of a centre tends to produce a placeless virtuosity in which evidence of one's regional origins becomes an embarrassment. Until one moves away from the regional periphery and assimilates the sound of the centre, one's artistic status is negligible. As I have already suggested, this is especially inappropriate to the history and traditions of jazz.

When coupled with 'internationalism', excellence is centripetal, the equivalent in the realm of artistic value of political imperialism. When centralised in bodies like the Australia Council and reproduced without question in the jazz community, it produces alarming contradictions.⁵⁶ Consider, for example, the privileging of 'internationalism' as a guarantee of worth in art-music and the anathematising of 'globalisation' as the curse of mass culture. These contradictions have a particular point in jazz because phases of its history have so often been defined as functions of locality, producing sounds which violate metropolitan ideas of musical excellence. It is always true, but it is especially so in this case that internationalist criteria of excellence involve a strategic sanitisation. The result is a reconstitution of music according to the demands passed down from the dominant discourse, operating in tension with the 'bottom up' forces of local place and identity. This tension is not, of course, a simple binary any more than are the other bipolarities I have invoked for the purposes of producing clear argumentative outlines. The institutional pressures that erode an individual's regionalism are in fact part of that individual's sense of place and identity at that moment. None of us can simply imagine these pressures as non-existent and reclaim some kind of regional folk innocence or authenticity. It remains true, however, that the global pull towards various dominant centres results in utterances that are, like the 'mid-Atlantic accent', decreasingly a music of a specific material place and increasingly the product of a centre that is nowhere to be found outside the apparatus of mediation. I believe that the dominant culture in the Australia Council is characterised by no particular local identity other than itself. It tends to produce not, say, Adelaide music but Australia Council music. The regional variations that could be heard in postwar Australian jazz are not audible in the projects that enjoy favour from the Council. The hidden connection with the way 'excellence' is constructed may be glimpsed in the following comment.

Noting the gradual increase in Council funding for jazz, the writer is drawing attention to the link between the idea of 'standards' and the role of the Council in not simply encouraging the music, but in determining it:

I believe that the sort of jazz scene we have in, say, Sydney, has been primarily conditioned by the Australia Council. Whenever artistic standards are high in the modern movement, one can usually trace these back to the injection of PAB funds.⁵⁷

For 'high standards' read 'standards defined by the Council'. I must stress vigorously that this observation is not meant to disparage music which does enjoy Council favour. On a personal level, my own experience of music is richer for having heard work that would not have come to me without Australia Council patronage. I am concerned here with that which is excluded by Council decisions, especially when that which is excluded appears to conform with the articulated criteria. Certain musics and performance conditions which have been decisive in the development of a distinctively Australian jazz tradition are written out by the PAB on undisclosed grounds.

The interventionist objective was alarmingly revealed in a report of a recent grant made by the PAB to the Sydney band Ten Part Invention; the grant was conditional on the band's ceasing to perform at its main public venue, the Strawberry Hills Hotel.⁵⁸ The current wisdom is that the PAB funds music of 'excellence', meaning free of the commercial contamination of the marketplace. But, in fact, it funds music most compatible with the cultural politics of the Council, which is self-avowedly modelled on European aesthetics. The idea that music will ascend into some pure, ahistorical aesthetic as it gradually frees itself from commercial constraints through Council patronage is specious.

The general pattern of ideological collaboration I have been illustrating leads to specific policies and pressures that clearly demonstrate an orientation towards nineteenth-century eurocentric art music which works against jazz's Afro-American traditions. Not only are many of these policies now under radical review as instruments of cultural engineering, but they are also inconsistent with the conditions of production and consumption under which Australian jazz has maintained its most robust presence, locally and elsewhere. This is most usefully illustrated by a consideration of the policy utterances of Paul Grabowsky, who held a position of influence as Chair of the Music Committee of the PAB at the time. Although he acknowledged many of the distinctive features of jazz,

the limits of his recognition of their implications are signalled in his continuing deference to the European art-music model. It is particularly significant that he should be quoted in the following manner: 'He is also beginning to "get respect from the right people", he says. And who might they be? "The classical community"'. The same article reports that 'He'll probably never conduct a symphony orchestra, as he dreamed of doing as a lad, but he may yet take a bow as an operatic composer'.⁵⁹

His policy strategies for jazz reflect the orientation away from jazz towards the dominant cultural model embodied in eurocentric art music. In spite of some admirable disclaimers about the distinctive character of jazz, Grabowsky believes that a few central peak organisations are the appropriate way to intervene in the music. He intends his Australian Art Orchestra (AAO)—the name itself is significant—to 'be a flagship for Australian jazz, in the same way as the Australian Opera and Ballet are flagships for their respective art forms', and he also looks to European models, notably 'the French National Jazz Orchestra'. What is interesting here is the complete absence of any reference to Australian jazz itself as a source of ideas about the 'flagship for Australian jazz'. The success of the AAO in the funding process, before it had even built up a record of performances, seems to illustrate the power of appropriate discursive paradigms in securing PAB patronage. When he laments that 'jazz is still treated in a second-rate fashion by society; it's never been understood', it seems not to occur to him that this simplistic parallel with eurocentric high art music situates it within a framework in which it must always, by definition, be second-rate.⁶⁰ We cannot expect the strengths of a sprinter to be revealed if we enter him in a weight lifting competition.

The impulse to immerse jazz in an alien discourse in which it can only operate at a disadvantage is not confined to any one individual, but it pervades the general community. The establishment of incentives which centralise the individual soloist or composer, and the fetishisation of sound recordings as marks of success and canonicity are further manifestations of the power of a text-centred European art tradition to function as a template for a musical form based substantially in oral performance. Perusal of specialist and non-specialist journals and newspapers discloses a fixation with performance sites which have become central to the classical tradition yet where jazz musicians spend very little of their careers as performers. The respect accorded the 'jazz concert' is out of proportion to its importance in sustaining the music, for example, as is the focus on a performance site whose

politics cut brutally across important grains in the jazz tradition. It has been pointed out that the 'concert', supposedly the shrine at which the transcendent is revered, is in fact a profoundly politicised space in terms of class,⁶¹ and, I would also add, in terms of race and gender. It functions to enact ideologies specifically congenial to European art music and which have little correspondence to major elements of the jazz tradition. The focus is on the Romantic individual (composer/conductor/soloist) controlling his artistic terrain before whom all others (musicians and audience) must be tightly regimented; the sharp separation between the functions of audience and musicians; the performance-as-object and the sanctity of the text; and the classical concert hall to which jazz musicians are pressured to aspire: all have very little to do with traditional social functions and sites of the music making. It is indeed noteworthy in this connection that the 'jazz concert' was unknown until the intervention of entrepreneurial white Americans. This is not to anathematise the concert out of existence, but it is to point out that its position of privilege obscures some of the most significant categories of jazz performance—the pub, the club, the social event and the site of communal interactivity.⁶²

It is important to again illustrate that it is misleading to simplify the argument through a focus on particular groups or individuals. I have cited Grabowsky frequently because, as someone with high public visibility, his utterances are an influential reflection of the assumptions I am interrogating. Yet he himself recognises the limitations of the concert hall as a site for jazz performance:

With jazz you are encouraged actively to participate by showing your appreciation and being allowed to be in a relaxed frame of mind....Classical music is all about being passive, like attending a lecture. You sit there and you must receive the great wisdom.⁶³

Not all jazz writers and spokespersons conform neatly to the postures I have been defining, and few if any always do. As Garfinkel has pointed out, we deploy beliefs and inhabit categories with different levels of intensity at different times.⁶⁴ No individual and no group conforms consistently and inflexibly to the typologies I have been illustrating, and indeed jazz administrators operating from grass-roots experience have frequently and carefully articulated opposition to assumptions underlying institutionalised cultural policy.⁶⁵ It is useful to study the process of negotiation which took place between advisers from the jazz community and the Wangaratta Chamber of Commerce and led to the establishment of the town's annual jazz

festival as an instructive model of how those negotiations carefully balanced pragmatics against principles. The jazz representatives, Myers and Peter Rechniewski, were able to persuade the planners that, in the form proposed by the organisers, jazz awards were not appropriate to such a festival, yet they also recognised that, in the particular geographical and cultural context, some acknowledgement of competitive success was likely to be useful for the public image of the Festival.⁶⁶

I have drawn some very sharp outlines here in order to foreground a pattern which is usually obscured by many other lines of force yet which exerts a profound influence on the contours of the map. It is important, however, to avoid developing alternative proscriptive simplifications.

My argument is that to embrace the dominant discourse of 'music' by using the meanings controlled by the institutional sites of that discourse is perhaps a very misleading way to situate jazz. 'Music', as it is used in that discourse, in general secretly means 'eurocentric art music'. The subterfuge is disclosed when we begin to notice what is quietly excluded by the term 'music'. For Leo Schofield, the meaning of 'music' as a component of Melbourne's International Festival of the Arts is clear: 'At its heart, this is a classical music and theatre festival'.⁶⁷ With the aid of traditional musicology, western art music has enjoyed a position of such privilege that all other musics are subordinated to it in our society. Western art music is taken as embodying aesthetic principles which are supreme. Two consequences of this are that the vast majority of the world's music-making practices is aesthetically trivialised and that any other music seeking validation has to construct itself according to the discursive procedures by which 'classical' music secures its position.⁶⁸ The implicit criteria of musical merit are constructed with reference to forms and traditions that are significantly incompatible with the conditions in which Australian jazz has been most vigorously and influentially produced and consumed.

In light of discussions I have had regarding early drafts of this paper, I wish to give particular emphasis to a number of things which are *not* asserted in the foregoing. I am not suggesting that Australian jazz should not have its solo virtuosi, its concert performances or its recordings. That would be an absurd denial of the specific local conditions of production in our post-war period. Rather, I am arguing that the discourse of value to which such performance phenomena are so congenial accommodates only a very small proportion of jazz activity, consigning the remainder to a realm that is accorded little or no importance. It is very important to stress this.

I am not suggesting the proscription of any particular way of making music. What emerges in musical performance is always going to be an 'authentic' manifestation of the cultural forces that produce it. A band consisting of straw-boated studio musicians hamming 'The Saints' on Sydney day-time television is not more or less 'authentic' than an Australian string quartet playing Brahms in the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House. My point is that in negotiating with the hegemony embodied in an institution like the PAB, jazz can no longer represent itself on its own terms if control of the discourse is surrendered to that institution. By 'its own terms' I mean typologies that register its distinctive character and situation: the sounds it produces, how it generates meanings and the individual and collective identities of those who participate in it.

It is also necessary to stress that I am not seeking to abolish standards by which people form preferences for one cultural production over another. Rather, I am interested in disclosing the aporias in the criteria currently deployed. It has been put to me with great vigour and integrity that the PAB and the support structures it has created have generally enhanced the range of Australian jazz by creating cultural space for the development of less commercially viable forms of the music, and that the application of the notion of 'excellence' has been essential to these successes. This is a compelling point, so much so that I have taken the unusual step of inviting Eric Myers to summarise what he considers to be the counter argument to much of what I have said here. Accordingly, the following is a section of his lengthy comments on earlier drafts:

Historically, the more jazz has 'played the game', the better it has done out of the funding authorities; jazz musicians and organisations have increasingly addressed the criteria for funding laid down by the Australia Council, and this has led to funds increasingly flowing into the jazz world throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. In other words, while it may be true that, had different criteria for funding been in place, jazz may have received a greater share of the available funds, what success we have had with funding authorities has come about through 'playing the game' better, i.e. by articulating to the Australia Council why it should fund jazz projects. Some of the arguments that have been advanced by successful jazz applicants have been: that jazz is an 'art form' (rather than 'entertainment'); that jazz musicians are 'artists' (rather than 'musos'); that they are involved in composition, or the creation of so-called 'original' music (rather than playing the compositions of others, such as Ameri-

can jazz standards); and that, if the Council wants to fund 'excellence', jazz incorporates as much excellence as any other musical form; and that therefore it should not be excluded from Government support.

Normally such comments would be 'taken into account' in completing a paper such as this, but they would be mediated smoothly through the writer. What has emerged most strikingly from this exercise, however, is the difficulty of moving ideas across different levels of interest within a single community. Some of the observations I have made in this paper, familiar enough in the literature of cultural analysis, have been greeted with angry incredulity by people deeply committed to promoting the interests of jazz. Demonstrations of specific links between apparently innocent discourse and the practical disadvantaging of particular musics have, ironically, elicited the dismissive charge of academic abstraction. I believe that this resistance is central to the problematic of arts discourses and not some bothersome detail which I should ignore in the interests of a finished, univocal argument. Increasingly, I see this discursive tension within the jazz community as lying at the heart of the problems addressed here and as something that needs to be recognised and investigated in its own right. This debate concerns a subject in which, for whatever reasons, a great many people are passionately involved: musicians, administrators, cultural theorists, educators and musicologists. Yet in preparing this paper, the most difficult part of my task has been to communicate across those sectors of interest. There is a deep resistance to the examination of fundamental assumptions, even when it can be shown that these assumptions work against the interests of jazz in relation to other musics. This seemed at first to be a distracting obstacle which obscured the reason why jazz finds itself in such an anomalous position. Increasingly, I begin to believe that it is a significant part of the 'answer': this resistance itself is one of the strongest forces working against the music.

Jazz is a significant voice in the musical diversity that constitutes Australia's cultures. The hegemonic discourses of art music will always tend to drown out the others. The much-feared homogenisation, which art music invokes to argue its superiority over mass culture, is equally the objective of art music discourse, albeit in different terms. I am not setting up a fetish about 'authenticity' or 'Australian-ness'. Everything that comes out of the country is arguably a manifestation of these. I am more concerned to preserve difference and diversity which will always be threatened by the predatory discourses of power imposed from 'the

top', in whatever combination of aesthetic, political and economic interests constitutes 'the top'. One sees the negotiations I am proposing already proceeding within the Australia Council, and these also offer an alternative way for jazz to negotiate. To break out of the constraints imposed upon it by the PAB's discourses, jazz could look to the achievements of community arts. Jazz does not have to be significantly centred on 'products' like recordings, scores or a string of performances on a tour. It can be very fruitfully represented as a moment in a process by which a community is constructed and sustained—as in a club or even at a venue which has become the site of a community. To begin the process of imagining alternatives, prospective applicants for recognition might find it useful to look at the Community Cultural Development Board rather than PAB guidelines. The bulk of jazz performance is already compatible with many of the criteria laid down by the CCD Board as well as the Hybrid Arts. It is an ill-considered collaboration with the heroic romanticisation of the artist—dare I say 'snobbishness'?—which distracts us from the alternatives. I believe that the jazz community and representatives of all vernacular musics could enrich and secure recognition of their own cultures by questioning the impulse to construct themselves through the dominant music typologies. Insist, rather, upon discourses that recognise their own distinctive dynamics and social functions.⁶⁹

Notes

- ¹ I wish to express my thanks to the Department of English, Goldsmiths College, where, as Visiting Research Fellow from December 1994 to February 1995, I was provided with the leisure and the facilities to synthesise the research material which is the basis of this article. My thanks also to colleagues in the School of English, University of New South Wales, before whom I workshopped the paper in a seminar; Helmi Järviluoma of the Department of Folk Tradition, Tampere; Dr Richard Letts, Chair, Music Council of Australia; Kerrie McConnell, of the University of Technology, Sydney; Eric Myers, New South Wales and Australian Jazz Co-ordinator. All were kind enough to look at early drafts and offer vigorous comments which were invaluable in forcing me back to review sections of the work. The final result, of course, is my own responsibility. It is also important to pay tribute to the Australia Council's library, publishing and research facilities, which constitute an invaluable and insufficiently recognised resource for research into cultural policy.
- ² Apart from recently translated collections of essays, the key work is P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984). First published in French, 1979.
- ³ Commonwealth Government of Australia, *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy October 1994* (Canberra: National Capital Printing, 1994).
- ⁴ Quoted by Susan Chenery in 'Leo wins their hearts and minds', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August 1994.

- ⁵ Simon Frith, 'Political Correctness', *Critical Enquiry* 35.4 (Winter 1993), p.50.
- ⁶ *Jazzchord* 19 (May/June 1994), p.5.
- ⁷ Deborah Crisp, *Bibliography of Australian music: an index to monographs, journal articles and theses*, Australian Music Studies 1 (Armidale, 1982), lists only 29 entries under jazz, out of a total of 2,218. Jazz is not accorded an index entry in Roger Covell's *Australia's Music; themes of a new society* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967), still the standard history of Australian music.
- ⁸ The profound effect of this on Australian music historiography is explored and documented in B. Johnson, 'Popular music and Australian modernism', *Meanjin* 53.2 (Winter 1994), pp.345-54.
- ⁹ James Lincoln Collier, 'Jazz', *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (London & New York: Macmillan, 1988).
- ¹⁰ Department of Communications and the Arts/Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural Trends in Australia No.1: A Statistical Overview*, ABS Catalogue No.4172.0 (May 1994), p.10. All sums are given in Australian dollars. The definition of 'Cultural industries' is based on the National Culture-Leisure Industry Statistical Framework produced by the Cultural Ministers Council. Throughout this paper, unless I wish to make a particular point about categories, I refer the reader to the source documents for definitions. Since I drafted this paper, a more recent study has appeared covering the full year 1992-93, and indicating that government outlays on culture alone amounted to \$2,540 million, of which the commonwealth government provided 47.7%, or \$1,213 million. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural Funding in the Arts 1992-3* (Australia Council, 1994), p.3.
- ¹¹ See in particular David Throsby and Beverley Thompson, *But what do you do for a living? A new economic study of Australian artists* (Australia Council, December 1994). A full account of the sources and how they were used to arrive at the figures presented is published in *Jazzchord* 25 (Jun/Jul 1995), pp.5-6, where the following information is documented unless otherwise specified.
- ¹² These figures are taken from the *Australia Council Annual Report, 1993-4*, pp.96-104. In *Jazzchord* 18 (Mar/Apr 1994) the figure given by the Editor, Eric Myers, for the jazz component of these grants was \$478,155. On the basis of further information received, Myers has provided the revised figure, in correspondence dated 7 August 1995.
- ¹³ *Cultural Trends in Australia No.1*, p.27.
- ¹⁴ By using the word 'vernacular' I wish to activate a historical model which will throw light on the present argument. I use it to evoke the dialect of the local and the everyday. The term was commonly applied to regional languages which gradually emerged with the decline of cosmopolitan Roman Catholicism which had linguistically colonised Europe through Latin. Through the textually stabilised language of ancient Rome, Roman Catholicism constructed itself as an international belief and value system which suppressed and devalued oral vernacular languages until the decline of Mother Church and the emergence of European nationalisms. A similar discursive scenario emerged with the rise of English studies, which developed throughout the nineteenth century as the vehicle of 'universal' artistic values, and became a means of suppressing local colonial literatures under an imperialist Anglocentric internationalism. These models help to clarify an analogous relationship between the cultural projects embodied in *Creative Nation* and its agencies, and vernacular popular musics in Australia.
- ¹⁵ Quoted in an article by Adrian Jackson in the *Melbourne Age*, sourced here from a reprint in *Jazzline* 27.4 (Summer 1994), pp.36-37.
- ¹⁶ Quoted in *Australia Council Annual Report 1993-4*, p.8.
- ¹⁷ *Creative Nation*, p.12.

18 *The Cultural Frontier: Coalition Priorities for the Arts* (n.p., October 1994), n.p.

19 See for example D. Horne, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 October 1994, 'Arts', p.17, and 22 November 1994, p.18. Other public critics of *Creative Nation* included Peter Craven and McKenzie Wark, *Australian* 26 October, 1994, pp.34, 35. *Bulletin*, the journal of the Music Council of Australia, also devoted issue 1.3, (February 1995) to an analysis of *Creative Nation*.

20 *Creative Nation*, pp.22, 24, 26 respectively.

21 The interest in jazz shown by Stravinsky, Ravel and other European art music composers is well known. Ansermet's prediction in 1919 that African-American music, specifically jazz, was the 'highway' to the future has often been quoted, as for example by John Chilton, *Sidney Bechet, the wizard of jazz* (Basingstoke, London: Macmillan, 1987), p.40.

22 On Banks see for example Johnson, 'Popular music and Australian modernism', p.350. Laughton Harris attributes to Humble the view that jazz is 'one of the most dynamic forms of musical expression'; see Frank Callaway and David Tunley, eds., *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.117.

23 Eric Myers, ed., *Australian Jazz Directory 1994* (Sydney: Jazz Co-ordination Association of New South Wales, 1994), pp.98-112.

24 Martin Friedel, 'Opera as politics', *Sounds Australian* 15 (October 1987), p.31.

25 On the significance of the Bell band in Europe, see B. Johnson, 'Australian jazz in Europe: a case study in musical displacement', in *Perfect Beat—The Pacific Journal of Research into Contemporary Music and Popular Culture*, 2.3 (July 1995), pp.49-64. The career of the Australian Jazz Quartet/Quintet is reviewed in B. Johnson, *Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.90-91. Canadian and U.S. reviews of McGann are quoted in *Jazzchord* 15 (Sep/Oct 1993), p.6 and *Jazzchord* 18 (Mar/Apr 1994), p.7.

26 Bruce Clunies-Ross, 'An Australian sound: jazz in Melbourne and Adelaide 1941-51', *Australian Popular Culture*, ed. Peter Spearritt and David Walker (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1979), p.67.

27 These arguments are developed and documented in Johnson, 'Australian jazz in Europe'.

28 *Creative Nation*, p.25.

29 *Jazzchord* 14 (July/Aug 1993), p.5.

30 Tim Rowse, *Arguing the Arts: the funding of the arts in Australia* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1985), Gay Hawkins, *From Nimbin to Mardi Gras: constructing community arts* (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

31 See further, Johnson, 'Hear me talkin to ya', *Popular Music* 12.1 (Jan 1993), pp.1-12.

32 The quotations from Myers are from *Jazzchord* 18 (Mar/Apr 1994), p.18, and 21 (Sep/Oct 1994), p.8. The importance of local conditions in the generation of jazz activity in Australia has been explored in B. Johnson, 'The Great Divide—Australian traditional jazz and the academics', *Journal of Australian Studies* 34 (September 1992), p.32-42.

33 *Jazzchord* 21 (Sep/Oct 1994), p.9.

34 Throsby and Thompson, *But what do you do for a living?* p.50. David Throsby and Devon Mills, *When are you going to get a real job? An economic study of Australian artists* (Sydney: Australia Council, August 1991), pp.26-30.

35 These arguments were drawn together in a submission prepared by the National Jazz Alliance for the Commonwealth Minister for the Arts in 1993, and summarised in *Jazzchord* 19 (May/June 1994), p.2.

36 In Charles Keil and Steven Feld, *Music Grooves* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), Feld provides an illuminating ethnomusicological discussion of the relationship between the musical articulation of local identity and viola-

tions of hegemonic paradigms of artistic practices. Local modes of expression (in this case, of the Kaluli in Papua New Guinea) are banished from the field of 'art' and consigned to areas such as 'folklore' or 'custom'. His conclusion has particular aptness to my discussion: 'confusion, struggle, alienation, and resistance may be around the corner...as...government sources begin to give money prizes for performance and insist that Kaluli activities fit into other organisational frameworks in order to be valid' (p.136).

37 Unpublished paper by Eric Myers, 'Report on funding of Australian jazz by the Australia Council', September 1989.

38 See for example B. Johnson, *Jazz: A Test Case for Popular Culture in the Australian Academies*, Occasional Paper 3, Institute of Popular Music, University of Liverpool, [1993].

39 The figure/ground model is elaborated in a number of studies of the ideology of western music, as for example in a number of the essays in Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, eds., *Music and Society: the politics of composition, performance and reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), including their own 'The blasphemy of talking politics during Bach year', pp.13-62. The model is explored in relation to contemporary pop music by Philip Tagg in 'From refrain to rave: the decline of figure and the rise of ground', unpublished paper presented at the Convegno sulle culture del rock, Bologna, 6-7 May 1993, Istituto Gramsci/La Repubblica.

40 For examples of each of these, see respectively *Jazzchord* 14 (Jul/Aug 1993), pp.5, 9; *Jazzchord* 18 (Mar/Apr 1994), p.4; *Jazzchord* 20 (Jul/Aug 1994), p.4.

41 Johnson, *Jazz: A test case for popular culture in the Australian academies*.

42 *Australia Council: Arts for Australians by Australians* 2nd ed. (Sydney: Australia Council, May 1994), [p.8].

43 Quoted in Janet Wolff, 'Foreword—The ideology of autonomous art' in Leppert and McClary, eds., *Music and Society*, p.2.

44 Paul Grabowsky, interview with Jim McLeod, originally published in *24 Hours*, October 1993, p.34; republished in Jim McLeod, *Jazztrack* (Sydney: ABC Books, 1994), pp.188-89.

Similarly, the interviewer himself, identifying the reasons for the success of a particular jazz festival: 'It's the music that's the most important thing; it's not so concerned with the entertainment values that become the reason for a festival.' Quoted in *Jazzchord* 20 (Jul/Aug) p.7.

45 See for example James Lincoln Collier, *Louis Armstrong: a biography* (London: Michael Joseph, 1984), p.229. A general reading of the relevant literature discloses that Armstrong's position on this matter was typical of the jazz musicians of his generation.

46 Diana Bagnall, 'Basement to Boardroom' *Bulletin*, 14 September 1993, p.93.

47 *24 Hours*, October 1993, p.32.

48 I have drawn attention to this in relation to the sleeve photograph of Chet Baker, RLP266, as part of a review published in *Jazz, The Australasian Contemporary Music Magazine*, Winter/Spring 1985, pp.43-44; Dorothy Baker, *Young Man With a Horn* (London: Readers Union Ltd and Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1939).

49 *Jazzchord* 21 (Sep/Oct, 1994), p.14.

50 *Jazzchord* 17 (Jan/Feb 1994), p.12.

51 *Jazzchord* 18 (Mar/Apr 1994), p.17.

52 On the limitations of musicological formalism, B. Johnson, 'Klactoveesedstene—Music, Soundscape and Me' in Helmi Järviluoma, ed., *Soundscapes: Essays on Vroom and Moo* (Tampere: Department of Folk Tradition/Institute of Rhythm Music, 1994), pp.39-47; on its continuing dominance, see for example 'Introduction' to Leppert and McClary, eds., *Music and Society*, p.xxi.

53 *Jazzchord* 19 (May/June 1994), p.13; *Jazzchord* 17 (Jan/Feb 1994), p.11.

⁵⁴ The false romanticism surrounding musical improvisation is discussed in B. Johnson, 'Orality and jazz education', *New Music Articles* 10 (1993), pp.39-46.

⁵⁵ This example from *Jazzchord* 15 (Sep/Oct 1993), p.7.

⁵⁶ The problem of 'excellence', particularly as deployed by the Australia Council in relation to cultural diversity, is taken up by Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope in 'Vocabularies of excellence: rewording multicultural arts policy', Sneja Gunew and Fazal Rizvi, eds., *Culture, Difference and the Arts* (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1994), pp.13-34.

⁵⁷ *Jazzchord* 16 (Nov/Dec 1993), p.3.

⁵⁸ *Jazzchord* 21 (Sep/Oct 1994), p.1.

⁵⁹ Diana Bagnall, 'Basement to Boardroom', p.95.

⁶⁰ The three Grabowsky quotes are from, respectively, *Jazzchord* 13 (May/June 1993), p.3; Diana Bagnall, 'Basement to Boardroom', p.94; *24 Hours*, October 1993, p.32.

⁶¹ Christopher Small, 'Performance as ritual: a sketch for an enquiry into the true nature of a symphony concert', *Lost in Music: Culture, Style and the Musical Event*, ed. Avron White (London & N.Y.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), pp.6-32.

⁶² See B. Johnson, *Jazz & Society: Sound, Art, Music—Living*. (Bondi Junction, NSW: Waverley Library, 1993).

⁶³ *24 Hours*, October 1993, p.34.

⁶⁴ A useful synthesis of Garfinkel's arguments is to be found in John Heritage, *Garfinkel and ethnomethodology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

⁶⁵ See for example the Editorial, *Jazzchord* 21 (Sep/Oct 1994),

p.3, and 'Jazz Community Questions Performing Arts Board Rep', *Jazzchord* 14 (Jul/Aug 1993), pp.4-5.

⁶⁶ An account of this negotiation is provided in *Jazzchord* 20 (Jul/Aug 1994), pp.7-8.

⁶⁷ *Jazzchord* 20 (Jul/Aug 1994), p.2.

⁶⁸ See further B. Johnson, 'Art, Jazz and Uncle Tom's Cabin' *Jazzchord* 13 (May/June 1993), p.8.

⁶⁹ Since I completed the foregoing, there have been changes introduced into the corporate plan, the structure and operating procedures for the Australia Council and its Performing Arts Board. Responses to these changes among those who will be affected by them suggest that, if anything, they are likely to exacerbate the aporias I have discussed. The changes introduced to the PAB were rationalised by its Senior Project Officer at that time, Julie Owens, in *Sounds Australian*, 43 (Spring 1994), pp.22-24. This rationalisation is nonetheless based on the paternalist, regulatory model I have discussed. The changes address some anomalies in horizontal linkages in the process of artistic production, such as the relationship between composition, performance, recording and promotion. But they leave wholly intact—and indeed sometimes fortify—the vertical linkages between funding procedures and ideology. Far from responding to the grass roots diversity of cultural activity, it is arguable that they will increase the centralist control of a single eurocentric model of cultural dynamics. Some of these arguments are set out in 'The PAB Changes the Rules', *Bulletin* 1.3 (February 1995), pp.3-4.