Consequential Saints: A Preliminary Study of Jazz and Religion in New Orleans

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CONSEQUENTIAL SAINTS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF JAZZ AND RELIGION IN NEW ORLEANS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Arts

David Baker

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Music
Jazz Studies

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This Dissertation by: David Baker

Entitled: *Consequential Saints: A Preliminary Study of Jazz and Religion in New Orleans*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Arts in the College of Performing and Visual Arts in the School of Music, Program of Jazz Studies

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

________________________________________________________________________
Erik Applegate, M.M., Research Advisor
________________________________________________________________________
Drew Zaremba, M.M., Committee Member
________________________________________________________________________
Brian Casey, D.M.A., Committee Member
________________________________________________________________________
Donald Gudmundson, PhD., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense _______________ June 29, 2020 _______________

Accepted by the Graduate School

________________________________________________________________________
Cindy Wesley
Interim Associate Provost and Dean
The Graduate School and International Admissions
ABSTRACT


The moral ecosystem of New Orleans at the beginning of the twentieth century offers a unique opportunity for jazz to function and be observed beyond positivist definitions of music. The common narrative often cites religion and morality as peripherally influencing factors in the development of jazz but frequently disregards the impact of New Orleans’ atypical religious milieu and its influence on local culture. While recent research exists that studies the nuanced role of identity, phenomenology, and culture in shaping early jazz, the influence of New Orleans’ unusual form of morality and religion is subsequently ignored. Understanding the birth of jazz in transcendental and philosophical terms in response to its surrounding culture of adaptive pluralism permits insight into how early jazz musicians allowed their music to determine ethical boundaries that may or may not be at odds with their birth cultures. This inimitable capacity for jazz to exist in modified religious standing frames the subversive and adaptive nature of the music and musicians in a way that is otherwise overlooked. By defining the national ethos in terms of religious tolerance, pluralism, and authority and comparing it to the non-conforming nature of New Orleans, an idiosyncratic function of acclimatization can be observed that allowed relativist beliefs to thrive under basic conditions. Jason Bivins argues that the expression of both music and religion offer similarities that obscure the
boundary of each, offering a metaphysical connection between spirituality and the
performance and embodiment of music. When the expression of each is abstracted and
mapped onto a culture of unique behavioral patterns, the claim can be extended to include
the institution and cultural function of each. Where most of the United States at the
beginning of the twentieth century was incapable of tolerating a music as heretical and
imposing as jazz, New Orleans’ moral ecosystem provided a backdrop that not only
allowed its existence, but also supported its ability to impact the ethics and morality of an
individual with greater authority at times than traditional religious expression. Jazz,
therefore, permeates the identity of its participants in a quasi-religious capacity that
requires embodiment, performance, and concession to its ethical boundaries in a way that
New Orleans was distinctly poised to tolerate. The addition of this realization to the
common narrative of jazz history offers the ability to view the participants and their
decisions as individual results of an overarching cultural phenomenon.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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reorient my approach to the topic that will undoubtedly affect all of my future research. I would like to thank my peers for their informal discourse that highlighted the early esoteric pitfalls of the position and their important suggestions and contributions that added clarity and succinctness where otherwise I was uncertain. Lastly, I would like to thank my family: my mother Leslie, my sister Erin, my grandfather Ed, and my grandmother LeAnn. Their patience and support through this entire process means everything to me and I am forever indebted to their loving nature.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION.....................................................................................................................1
   Purpose of Study
   Limitations and Scope
   Need for Study

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE......................................................................................5

III. METHODOLOGY..................................................................................................................9
   Definition of Terms

IV. CONSEQUENTIAL SAINTS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF JAZZ AND RELIGION IN NEW ORLEANS..................................................................................................................14
   Intrapluralism: The Intersection of Jazz and Religion
   The Hutchison Model of Mainstream America’s Moral Ecosystem
   Representation of Diversity in the Common Narrative
   The Hutchison Model and its Contrast to New Orleans
   The Exception of New Orleans in Post-Great Revival America
   The Social Gospel Movement
   Jazz as a Result of Intrapluralist New Orleans
   Connecting Intrapluralism to Bivins’ Claims

V. CONCLUSION......................................................................................................................84

BIBLIOGRAPHY......................................................................................................................86

APPENDIX

A. Supplementary Maps Representing Religious Institutions............................................91
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1………………………………………………………………………………..………….31
   Religious Institutions of the Sea Islands Pre-1890

TABLE 2……………………………………………………………………………………..34
   Religious Institutions of the Mississippi Delta Pre-1890

TABLE 3…………………………………………………………………………………….38
   Religious Institutions of New Orleans Pre-1890
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The common narrative of jazz history cites New Orleans as the unique birthplace of jazz. A cursory glance at academic research on the topic shows a plethora of factors that point undeniably to this notion. Positivist arguments highlight the city’s atypical social and class structures, its auspicious geographic position, and its documented conglomeration of African American musical styles as causative factors. More recent musicology is attempting to grapple with more nuanced reasoning and is offering an ethnomusicologically informed perspective. The reevaluation of what makes New Orleans the definitive birthplace of jazz requires a sociological and anthropological discussion about Creole identity, subversive practices, micro-race relations, expressionism, civil rights, and social adaptation. These are the topics most jazz musicologists are using to expose greater nuance in the common narrative of the formation of jazz. In stating these theories, both positivist and postmodern, most musicologists concede a certain amount of influence from religious and moral spaces. The incorporation of call-and-response, blue notes, and other traditionally African musical elements into African American worship serves best the positivist narrative. More subtle research focuses on the outcomes of moral discrepancies or how a jazz musician had to contend with appellation to “legitimate” and “illegitimate” social circles.
Regardless, the association with morality and religion is suggested as important but is addressed as a neighboring, consequential concern. If instead the role of religion and morality is observed as both an influencing cultural construct and a representation of colloquial toleration and adaptation, a greater sense of how New Orleans influenced the inception of jazz can be logically informed.

Musicologists have responded to the modernist tendencies of positivism in their research by accepting an indeterminate subjective spirit. Instead of gathering archival materials for the purpose of reorganization or documentation, the goal has changed to hypothesize and theorize on the functions and evocative nature of music. In accomplishing this goal, Jason Bivins suggests that the expression of music and the expression of religion are synonymous in nature. Furthermore, he states that musical expression outside of a sacred setting can still perform and embody traditional spirituality.\(^1\) If this claim is taken at face value it serves to add a new perspective to what may or may not motivate a musician. If instead Bivins’ theory is expanded on the premise that expression follows institution, jazz can be observed in the context of a culture as functionally similar to religion. As ethics and morality are a common part of any discourse involving jazz history, delving into the origins of both within religion and music offers a new way to view New Orleans’ influence on early jazz musicians. The informative nature of understanding how and why a culture normalizes or disdains certain behaviors illuminates not only its foundation but also how the culture is likely to develop.

By viewing jazz as a religion and as a consequence of its moral ecosystem, patterns of

ethical behavior and institutionalization can be traced through jazz history in a way that adds reasoning behind action instead of observation of said action alone.

**Limitations and Scope**

The historical time period discussed in the following dissertation is limited from the Colonial Era in American history up to approximately 1920. To discuss the origins of jazz and its relation to religion thoroughly, a background of religious development in both mainstream America and New Orleans must begin from the nation’s independence and chronologically address both areas’ subsequent changes. While the beginning of jazz is indefinable by a single date, its origins can be traced to developments in ragtime at the end of the nineteenth century. By 1920, the ever-increasing onset of the Jim Crow laws which motivated the Great Migration meant that the influence of jazz was no longer isolated, to a large extent, to New Orleans alone. Therefore, to reasonably theorize on the origins of jazz and New Orleans, 1920 serves as a convenient historical landmark.

Other limitations of the document include the inability to either observe or interview participants of early jazz culture. While direct questions on the subject matter are impossible to ascertain, a wealth of archival material allows the ability to hypothesize on motivation based on a large sample size. Similarly, the attempt to map diversity of religious institutions must concede to limited census data, undocumented religious institutions, subversive practice, travelling institutions, and destruction from the Civil War. Regardless of variables, there is consistent equity in what data appears to be lost from each region. The consequent information, then, can be used as the best approximate representation of diversity possible.
**Need for Study**

As current musicology in jazz aims to further refine the understanding of New Orleans’ impact on the genre, all aspects of its influence need to be explored. The common narrative and modern musicology both fail to explore the avenue of spiritual and moral influence with convincing rigor. Likewise, the consequentialist nature of a majority culture influencing a subculture must be recognized for its authority. New Orleans, in all regards, affects the lives of all people inside of its boundaries. While traditional ethnomusicological perspectives are addressed in modern musicology, religion and morality are often left out. This document fills this informational gap by borrowing methodology and archival research from other disciplines to define the first true discussion of religious influence on jazz from New Orleans. The paradigms that are used specifically include the analytical styles of moral ecology, pluralism, relativism, epistemology, ethics, and poststructuralist musicology. The importance of viewing jazz in religious terms, and the influence of New Orleans on said terms, places precedence for action amongst all participants in early jazz. This precedence adds both nuance and facilitation for other musicological endeavors on jazz culture as a whole—whether in regards to identity, development, or any other academic pursuit. By viewing jazz in the capacity that its participants valued it, ethical boundaries can be observed and patterns of behavior can be explored throughout jazz history. The individual nature of expression within the context of a musical religion offers a traceable, tangible lineage that tints all aspects of jazz study.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature and media pertaining to the topic may be examined through the following categories:

- Books
- Dissertations
- Journal Articles
- Interviews
- Newspapers
- Governmental and Institutional Archives

Books

There are currently no books that explicitly compare religion to jazz as equal cultural functions. While there are some books that relate religion and jazz together, none discuss specifically why New Orleans was a unique location for the two or how jazz was granted the ability to serve in a religious capacity. Any books cited will serve instead as referential material for the overall argument of the dissertation and serve as source material for the moral ecological archival study.

The most comprehensive source relating religion and jazz is Jason Bivins’ *Spirits Rejoice!* , which highlights the connection between the expression of jazz, religion, and oppressed peoples. It does not, however, place emphasis on New Orleans and how the unique ecosystem at play in the city affected jazz as a whole. Similarly, it does not
explain spirituality as the result of an institution of ethics. Bivins’ book, however, serves as the foundational departure point for the dissertation’s main argument. The expansion of his claims is critical in understanding the connection of jazz and religion.

*Spirits Rejoice!* has been analyzed in the context of national pluralist trends as documented by William Hutchison in his book *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal*. Hutchison not only thoroughly explores American religious history but also offers meaningful discourse into its development over time in relation to philosophical movements. His analysis of mainstream America provides a foil to the unique nature of New Orleans, and his terminology regarding pluralist development has been repurposed to better explain the differences of the two areas.

Books relating to modern musicology and New Orleans that are referenced as part of the modern jazz musicological canon include David Ake’s *Jazz Cultures*, Charles Hersch’s *Subversive Sounds*, Bruce Boyd Raeburn’s *New Orleans Style and the Writing of American Jazz History*, Burton Peretti’s *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America*, Brian Harker’s *Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings*, and Thomas Brothers’ *Louis Armstrong’s New Orleans*. Other books that were used include the biographies and autobiographies of Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Sidney Bechet, Pops Foster, and Johnny Dodds.

**Dissertations**

Searches on *ProQuest Dissertations* and *Theses and Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology-Online* currently yield no dissertations or theses, either completed or in progress, with a clear relationship between jazz, religion, New Orleans, moral ecology,
and identity structures. There are a few sources that list a relationship between either jazz and religion or New Orleans and religion, but they focus primarily on the twentieth century and ignore the early jazz atmosphere. One document entitled *Navigating Jazz: Music, Place, and New Orleans in the Twentieth Century* by Sarah Suhadolnik promises to discuss religion but is limited to only the twentieth century. Likewise, the extent and nature of the discourse do not focus explicitly on the cultural byproducts behind the origin of jazz. Emily Demoor Corbello’s *The Musical and Cultural Adaptation of the Roman Liturgy: A Study of Black and Vietnamese Communities in New Orleans* has characteristics similar to the subject matter in terms of a moral ecological study, but is again limited to modern times and does not characterize the moral ecosystem of New Orleans as a pluralist exception within the context of the nation.

**Journal Articles**

There are no journal articles specifically relevant to moral ecology and New Orleans in existence, but there are a handful of publications that will help in the archival study of existing materials. The first most useful publication is a set of guidelines and explanations for what moral ecology is. Allen Hertzke’s “The Theory of Moral Ecology” explains and codifies the previously unorganized methodology and served as a general basis for defining ethical boundaries in New Orleans. Other articles relating to culture in African American society during the relevant timeframe include Charles Hersch’s “Poisoning Their Coffee: Louis Armstrong and Civil Rights” and “The Baptists and Slavery in the Lower Mississippi Valley” by Walter Posey. Each serves to highlight aspects tangentially related to the topic and will serve the argument, but they do not explicitly cover the topic of moral ecology in New Orleans.
Interviews

There are currently no interviews relating explicitly to the topic of religion and New Orleans as they relate to and affect jazz. There are, however, interviews with musicians who were alive during the time period or who currently live in New Orleans and come from a lineage of New Orleans musicians. These interviews were analyzed through the lens of pluralism, ethics, and moral ecology to provide a hypothesis on musical behavioral trends and cognition. Firsthand interviews were not possible given the distance in time between the dissertation and the subject at hand.

Newspapers


Governmental and Institutional Archives

Governmental archives allowed the analysis of legislative codes, processes, and operations. The primary use of these databases was to compile census data and historical registries and cross-reference them with legislative documentation to ascertain diversity of ethnicity and religion within New Orleans, the Sea Islands between Savannah and Charleston, and the Mississippi Delta. The thorough study of each archive served to represent the actions of each area in terms of pluralism and added quantitative data to the philosophical argument.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The document focuses entirely on archival study, historical analysis, and philosophical hypothesis, synthesizing existing materials in a way that has not been done previously. Research has been conducted on all print media and archival data surrounding New Orleans at the turn of the century including jazz history textbooks, peer-reviewed books, biographies, autobiographies, journal articles, dissertations, interviews, newspaper articles, and related sources in theology, philosophy, pragmatic ethics, anthropology, and epistemology. This material provided all that will be needed to conduct an analysis of pluralism and its relation to jazz.

A thorough study of American religious history has been conducted and juxtaposed to the religious history of New Orleans. The positivist trends were then analyzed as patterns of behavior and cognition that point to philosophical trends. These trends were then applied within the fields of musicology and theology and examined under a postmodern, poststructuralist evaluation. The philosophical nature of metaphysical hypothesis intersected both musicology and theology and served to connect them as logical outcomes of an overarching moral ecology—one that transcends all aspects of its participants. By observing patterns in how religious factions and jazz musicians both come to terms with ethical boundaries and their relativist decision-making process, a larger adherence to the moral ecological umbrella can be observed. When this
alignment is paired with similarities in embodiment, performance, and practice, jazz can transitorily be viewed as a consequence of its religious and moral environment.

The usage of pluralism and its function within each of these areas was crucial in identifying how each culture adapts, tolerates, persecutes, or denies certain behaviors. Philosophy is historically left out of pluralist debate and instead heretical behavior is the primary source of dissent. This important distinction allows validity in assigning patterns of behavior as circumstances and functions of their moral environment. In understanding the practice of pluralism in both mainstream America and New Orleans a better rationale can be made for what makes New Orleans the unique birthplace for jazz.

To supplement the philosophical discourse I included a chapter that analyzes religious diversity in the three regions cited as preserving African musical elements: New Orleans, the Sea Islands, and the Mississippi Delta. The amount of religious diversity in each area can be seen as a quasi-litmus test to prove the actions towards pluralism in each area instead of the sentiment towards pluralism. As jazz is first recognized in true form at the close of the nineteenth century, influential sources would have to predate its formation. As such, 1890 was used as a convenient cutoff date for analysis. The next step was to examine the entirety of the 1880 and 1890 census for each region to determine both population and ethnic dispersion amongst each region. Once ethnography is established, consultation with The National Registry for Historic Places, the National Archive, and published Statistics from the census allowed the ability to cross-reference religious institutions of each area with a proximal ethnic group. After consulting archives of street name changes, historical insurance records, and other identifying factors, each religious institution was geographically mapped. Using maps created at the approximate
time period, diversity can be observed geographically in terms of religious denomination, density, and assumed ethnic participation. After each institution was documented, statistics were pulled that represent the following quantitative points: how many institutions existed within each square mile of the given region, how many people represented in the census were there compared to the number of institutions, how many denominations were split amongst the institutions, and how these numbers compare to the cited musical outputs of each area. Consideration should be given to the fact that a percentage of each population likely did not participate in either the attendance of religious institutions or religious practice itself. The statistics represented are meant to instead show the maximum possibility of religious diversity. These data points provide a scientific representation of how pluralism was embodied in each area.

**Definition of Terms**

African American—The term “African American” was used to represent Black/Indigenous People of Color in America. The term is used to highlight the inclusion of African elements in Black culture in America and is not to imply that all People of Color were of African descent. The term is meant to respectfully facilitate discussion of People of Color in New Orleans and mainstream America and it should be understood that the term is used to highlight African contribution to the development of American music. At times, the terms “Black” and “People of Color” were used instead to acknowledge other terminologies of identity used internally within the studied culture.

The District—The District refers to the Red Light District of New Orleans, which came to be designated as “Storyville” in the common narrative of jazz history.
Epistemology—Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. In effect, epistemology is the philosophical discourse surrounding the phenomenon of knowing something.

Hutchison Model—The Hutchison model, synonymous with the proto-Hutchison model, is my reference to mainstream America’s embodiment of pluralism by toleration as defined by William Hutchison, wherein diversity is only allowed if it either distances itself from the mainstream adheres to mainstream principles.

Intrapluralism—“Intrapluralism” is my newly-coined term for pluralism that functions in a metacognitive capacity. Intrapluralism is an amplified version of pluralism that aspires not only to the diversity of groups, but the diversity of individuals. This unique form of pluralism contends with relativism inside of itself.

Jazz—“Jazz” in this document is used as a placeholder term out of convenience. While the musicians themselves mostly referred to their music as ragtime, “jazz” will be used as a representation of the proto-jazz, post-ragtime music unique to New Orleans that came to be known colloquially as “jazz.” Special consideration should be made to the fact that the term “jazz” is an etic description and has origins outside of the music’s creators.

Nativism—Nativism is the belief that morality is an innate construct and not acquired through learning. In this document it refers to the early pluralist environment of mainstream America before the Social Gospel Movement.

Neo-Hutchison Model—The Neo-Hutchison Model is the term given to the progression of the original Hutchison Model to less-pluralist actions based on the outcomes of the Great Revival and the Social Gospel Movement.
Place Congo—Place Congo is the French name for “Congo Square.”

Pluralism—Pluralism is the doctrine of promoting diversity within a culture. It is the belief in diversity as opposed to the representation and embodiment of diversity and the distinction between the two is paramount in understanding American history.

Relativism—Relativism is the doctrine that any form of philosophy is not absolute and is instead conditional on the individual. Relativism is a function of individualist ideals and implies that cognition, agency, and volition are unique to each person’s own experience.

Religiosity—Religiosity is the broad involvement with religious function. In this dissertation it will be used to describe music as having religious properties without being a formal religious institution by traditional definition.
CHAPTER IV

CONSEQUENTIAL SAINTS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF JAZZ AND RELIGION IN NEW ORLEANS

Intrapluralism: The Intersection of Jazz and Religion

The ever-present difficulties in discussing the evocative and transcendent properties of both music and religion have challenged scholars for as long as music and religion have existed. In terms of jazz history, much has been said about tracing tangible ancestral elements of culture and music into the historical jazz lineage but research into the abstract social and cultural functions of the music has been marginal. This marginality is likely due to the inherent difficulty in discussing the interplay of sociology, philosophy, and traditional musicology. The role of religion in the development of jazz, specifically in New Orleans, is also in the margins. Studying the history of American theology and applying it to New Orleans can highlight the unique function of religion in the city. Furthermore, viewing modern musicological findings about the origins of jazz with a broader definition of religiosity, one can establish the intersection of music and religion in the inception of jazz.

Pluralism, as will be explored later, is the prioritization of diversity in a context as opposed to diversity in its inherent state. A logical connection can be made as to how the unique religious and moral pluralisms in New Orleans can be observed culturally and then applied to music. By defining the ways New Orleans functioned abnormally in the context of the nation, the defined cultural and social traits can be extrapolated and applied
to other areas of similar cultural function as in music. To discuss these specific changes, a few questions need to be codified: 1) How does the nation as a whole develop in religious pluralist terms, 2) How does New Orleans differ from this development, 3) How does music, specifically jazz, function similarly to religion in culture, and lastly; 4) How do jazz musicians exemplify this adopted usage?

In order to frame the following narrative, it is paramount to define the ways that music and religion are functionally similar. Scholars have argued over the definitions of both of these terms for centuries.\(^2\) In a quest to challenge musicological norms, Joseph Kerman writes,

Musicology is restricted not only in the subject matter it covers but also in its approach to that subject matter … Musicology is perceived as dealing essentially with the factual, the documentary, the verifiable, the analyzable, the positivistic. Musicologists are respected for the facts they know about music. They are not admired for their insight into music as aesthetic experience.\(^3\)

Kerman suggests that a balance between factual observation and abstract reasoning should be the goal of comprehensive musicology, as opposed to the dated scientific, potentially positivist model. He continues to say that on one side music theorists address almost exclusively the syntax and structures of music and on the other side ethnomusicologists deal primarily with anthropology.\(^4\) His auspicious call-to-action in 1985 was that musicologists reevaluate their goals and find a middle ground wherein

\(^2\) Bivins, *Spirits Rejoice!*, 3-6.


\(^4\) Ibid., 14.
culture and theory are both still addressed, but also the aesthetic, transcendental, metaphysical nature of music. A similar trend can be seen in theological discourse.

In the realm of theology, any changes adopted in the study and structure of religion and religious practices reflect some form of global philosophical movement. It is rare to find a theology text that is not, in some way, centered on philosophical discourse. One facet of theology that contends with similar aspirations as Kerman is religious epistemology—“the study of how subjects’ religious beliefs can have, or fail to have, some form of positive epistemic status (such as knowledge, justification, warrant, and rationality) and whether they even need such status appropriate of their kind.”

Religious epistemologist Mathew A. Benton discusses his perceptions of inadequacies in describing knowledge in religion without acknowledging the more abstract, transcendental properties of what it means to “know” someone. For the same reasons that Kerman finds musicology insufficient, Benton argues that the idiosyncratic nature of humans, the impact of their individual cognition, and the indescribable nature of familiarity make the simple concept of “knowing” as complex as the simple concept of perceiving “music.” Knowing something outright is different than feeling like one knows something, just as analyzing music is different than how music makes one feel.

Knowing someone “personally” is arguably very different from having propositional knowledge about them, or from having qualitative knowledge of (say) what they look like, their mannerisms, mood patterns, and so on. The latter in its various forms might best be called objectual knowledge, on the model of perceiving (and retaining in memory) an object; the structure of such knowledge, however, also seems apt to knowing a city or a field of study. (“He knows Boston.” “She knows English literature.”) Yet when one knows someone personally, the “object” of cognition is a subject, a person. Not only do our

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languages distinguish such knowledge relations either lexically or grammatically, but also intuitively, knowing someone personally is not reducible to knowing a lot (propositions or qualitatively) about them.⁶

William James, considered to be the “Father of American Psychology,” wrote extensively on the emphasis of individual perception and its necessary inclusion into understanding knowledge in as wholesome of a definition as possible. Specifically, he discusses the role of understanding in religion, and how an individual will stifle any thoughts tangential to the established “normal” culture. The addition of any self-initiated thought that was not approved by the surrounding culture would be a “blasphemous” action that ignored the tradition and principles of the founding system. His belief is that, philosophically, the boundaries appropriated onto the metaphysical concept of religion all started initially as forethought in a person’s conscience, and therefore rules, even agreed upon by the majority, are self-imposed for all individuals in terms of what is logical or not—truthful or not. In other words, the understanding of what is illogical or what is dishonest is translated and judged by the same brain that decides what is logical and what is honest.⁷ In music history, factual and anecdotal truths reflect this same phenomenon wherein composers or performers ignore or adhere to social protocol in favor of or despite a self-initiated idea. While the subject matter is different, the acknowledgement is shared between Kerman, Benton, and James—each field needs to come to terms with


ways in which to address the evocative potential that is both intuitive and simultaneously inexpressible.

The juncture of Kerman’s assertions and the aforementioned theological debate is the adoption of relativism in academic study. Relativism, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is “a view that ethical truths depend on the individuals and groups holding them.” Musicologists grapple with the subjective nature of self in discussing music and assigning value to the less positivist functions of music. For jazz scholars, the contemporary trend is to apply relativist principles to archival material to better understand the cultural context that the subject was situated. Jazz scholars can then hypothesize about the culture manifested by said individuals. Some examples of this style of musicology include David Ake’s study of “creolization,” Brian Harker’s studies on Louis Armstrong, and Bruce Boyd Raeburn’s study into authentic New Orleans style.

The role of the individual in shaping a musical culture is quintessential to the study of jazz; especially considering the unique context individualism had in New Orleans. When the relativist standpoint is applied within a pluralist ecosystem, the opportunity for greater diversity abounds; and with it toleration. This is what will be referred to as intrapluralism.

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The concept of applying values to a specific culture is critical in linking religiosity, theology, and musicology. Realizing the context of an individual over the whole is an embodiment of pluralism that exemplifies minority within the majority at all levels including the individual within the group. To study jazz as a culture and understand the musician within said culture, there is a required concession to relativism. When juxtaposed to the remainder of the United States, the opportunity for adaptation to ideals in New Orleans is given priority. Music’s role in society within black New Orleans culture is unique in that it is not limited to the narrowness of the majority: if it can find ways to adapt itself in favor of toleration and if it can appeal to a cultural memory of subversion, a status and occupation not far from religion can be attained by the music and its associated culture.

Music is—like religions—situated in polyvalent human cultures of practice and embodiment, the attention to social setting and historical influence adds to the complexity of either crudely formal definitions or intentionally vaporous ones.\(^{10}\)

This quote from musicologist Jason Bivins is the main point of his book *Spirits Rejoice!* He states that religious practice and embodiment are fairly synonymous to musical practice and embodiment. Specifically, he attests that musicians’ expression is equal to spirituality.\(^{11}\) The phenomenology of spiritual practice and music overlap, he claims, in the qualities of community, performance, inherent experience, identity, and testimony.\(^{12}\) In other terms, the qualities of expressions and experiences within religion and music that are “unable to be transcribed” contribute to a shared cultural milieu of

\(^{10}\) Bivins, *Spirits Rejoice!*, 7.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 20.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 8.
emic understanding and etic frustration. It is simple for one to “know” instinctively what musical experience feels like, and similarly what religious experience feels like. The difficulty lies in defining that same experience in terms that are pragmatic, universal, specific, or all of the above. Bivins suggests that the difficulty in describing these experiences is what joins them, and this is what he explores in his book. While he positions these two topics next to one another, there remains a broader extrapolation he manages to avoid. Supposing that the expression of these two metaphysical entities is similar, could the argument then be made that they share a culturally or socially similar place for an individual? If the expression of both is intangible for the same reasons and Bivins is already showing similarity in the goal of each, could it not be said that music and religion are functionally very similar? The role of identity has been an elemental part of modern jazz musicology and it is common knowledge that someone’s spiritual beliefs or disbeliefs would be contained within their identity—or at least the colloquial understanding of identity. By using the transitive property from mathematics, and stretching further from the musicological “comfort zone” Kerman disparages, music theoretically has the capacity to replace religious expression.

Religion serves, at its core, as a boundary for ethics. Within this view comes a service to cognition—a provocation or affectation on action, thought, emotion, sense, morality, and other similar functions. By this definition, given the proper circumstances, music too has the ability to provoke and affect action, thought, emotion, sense, and morality. Music has long been a part of social change globally (thinking especially about the American Civil Rights Movement or even the “Marseillaise”). Some examples that come to mind include Bob Dylan, the Staples Singers, Pete Seeger, John Lennon, The
Clash, Public Enemy, Dmitri Shostakovich, and even Ludwig van Beethoven. This type of action is an embodiment of the middle ground between sentiment and action, the ethical lens that offers the ability to subvert normative practice. While these specific actions are much more volatile in the context of daily life, they represent the extremes of a spectrum—just as religious radicals and extremists don’t speak for the majority. The more mundane practice of these principles is what suggests inherent connection between music and religion: a self-imposed and natural cognitive service in provoking or affecting action, thought, emotion, sense, and morality. Music, like religion, can provide a person with expression, identity, ethics, and a moral framework. Similarly, the scope of this impact can be observed broadly enough to occupy what may be referred to as “denominations” of both Christianity and jazz, but also be observed on the microcosmic scale of the individual.

The importance of this relationship in terms of jazz history is that black identity and culture within New Orleans functioned differently than the majority of the United States. Jazz scholars have long addressed the ways in which the city has functioned *musically* different, but in advancing Bivins’ claim that musical and religious expression are similar, and understanding the capacity for religion and music to serve similar cognitive roles, a correlation can be drawn that connects both the musical and religious social paradigms. Beyond the simplicity of the Catholic-majority versus Protestant-majority narrative, the biggest difference for New Orleans was its way of dealing with diversity. The intrapluralist model of the moral ecosystem allowed, more than anywhere else, the ability for music to be a religion.
Jason Bivins was not the first to assert the similarities of religion and music.

Musicologist George Whitfield Andrews wrote in 1916,

What union more natural than that between the spiritual things which are “spiritually discerned” and the art whose real being must be felt, must be apprehended, rather than heard merely by the ear, or described in halting words.13

Additionally, he later writes, “If the composer was guided in his choice of tonal material by an esthetic and spiritual vision and refused to be satisfied until his work showed power to move the hearts of hearers … it may be labeled sacred.”14 In the mid-twentieth-century, Alan P. Merriam wrote about the anthropology of music:

[Music] is the result of human behavioral processes that are shaped by the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture. Music sound cannot be produced except by people for people, and although we can separate the two aspects conceptually [the sound aspect and the cultural aspect], one is not really complete without the other.15

Compare this to the MacMillan Encyclopedia of Religion’s definition of religion:

… almost every known culture [has] a depth dimension in cultural experiences … toward some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life. When more or less distinct patterns of behavior are built around this depth dimension in a culture, this structure constitutes religion in its historically recognizable form. Religion is the organization of life around the depth dimensions of experience—varied in form, completeness, and clarity in accordance with the enveloping culture.16


14 Ibid., 333.


Both of these definitions rely on a central focus on culture and its ability to intermingle with all components within itself. Merriam emphasizes the importance of music to be shaped anthropologically by the values, attitudes, and beliefs of a culture. These qualities are prescribed to music, but just as easily could be assigned to religion. And with these qualities comes the indescribable experience of each that Bivins and Andrews both grapple with. Addressing specifically similar indescribable experiences Jones, Eliade, and Adams detail religion as the organization of experience within a culture. Merriam asserts the importance of values, attitudes, and beliefs into the definition of music, but the nature of each of these terms is that they are unavoidably subjective and require a certain amount of evocative property. Both definitions share philosophically similar points of view as to how each topic functions in its respective culture, and both share the same difficulties in specificity. This adds significant value to their comparison.

In New Orleans, the same particular values ascribed to religious experience and tangible social qualities that define it as a religion can be witnessed in jazz culture: the importance of performance and all the values Bivins highlights and even more, a self-contained moral structure. Jazz is held, after a period of consequential growth, to self-imposed standards that rely on a spectrum of qualitative definitions that are relevant only to an individual within the group—a trait that abides by the pluralist and relativist agenda encoded to the city’s citizens by cultural memory and unique religious function. Musicians are judged in a way that represents evaluative versions of “good” and “bad.” A musician might be judged on whether they can read music or not. Other times they are judged on if they can convincingly play styles of improvised music. A musician could be considered “good” if they can perform well within a perceived hierarchy of inebriation. A
group of musicians might accept one another if they play jazz in a conceptually “hot” or “sweet/dicty” aesthetic. These qualities rely heavily on a subjective relativist perspective, but at the same time allow room within the cultural boundaries for one to be on either end of the spectrum and still work: a decidedly pluralist mindset. There is significant room for adaption, as musicians on the whole of these “moral” spectrums find work. A musician of whatever status will appeal to someone or some audience of similar moral status. Being pluralist to the point where relativism is a reality, New Orleans allows individuals of a wide range of religious ideals to coexist and not sacrifice any part of their identity to the mainstream. Musically, the same is true. Jazz, being religious in its own right, reflects this intrapluralist ecosystem of New Orleans. This room for adaptation and tolerance within a broad range of qualities, all of which must be ascertained and dealt with morally on an individual level, are clear echoes of the unique religious milieu of New Orleans.

The Hutchison Model of Mainstream America’s Moral Ecosystem

The proto-Protestant moral ecosystem of early America insisted that it was in fact progressive in the context of the world. From the Revolutionary period onwards, religious freedom implied that the United States was socially more tolerant than its global counterparts and early Americans believed this to be true. William Hutchison highlights this very cordiality that existed wherein the early generations of American citizens assumed, and with reason, that they were progressive. His approach is comprehensive in addressing the subtleties of mainstream America and acknowledges its progression by

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way of its goals. As Hutchison clarifies, hindsight will always illuminate the inadequacies of the past. While these early citizens may have in some respects been progressive, when juxtaposed against more modern social reforms (as early as the mid-nineteenth century), it is clear that the moral pluralism of those times was limited.

Pluralism, in this context, is defined as the desire to have and act towards achieving diversity. By this definition, a clear delineation can be made between the terms pluralism and diversity. Hutchison makes distinct the difference between pluralism and diversity and explains that the timeline of their inclusion in American religious history are not simultaneous. Specifically, he claims that diversity “happened to American religion in the first half of the nineteenth century” and pluralism, “of the kind people now discuss, did not arrive until the second half of the twentieth [century].” Furthermore, he goes on to explain that there are three identifiable “stages” in the development of pluralism in American religious history. The first is defined as “pluralism as toleration”: legal toleration and social tolerance—“either of which could sometimes be little more than an absence of persecution.” By this definition, non-dominant religions would be allowed the right to exist but only as “outsiders” to the dominant religion and culture. The second type of pluralism is defined as “pluralism as inclusion”: the inclusion of minority religions in the authority and exercise of mainstream culture, although rarely in “an equal or proportional right.” Lastly, the third type is defined as “pluralism as


19 Ibid., 5.

20 Ibid., 6
participation”: a shared “responsibility for the forming and implementing of the society’s agenda.” To be clear, the conclusions Hutchison draws are meant to apply to all of the United States, but as such can be assumed to occupy as much of the central development of the country as possible. While he goes to great lengths to explore the minutia of America’s religious developments, his focus is predominantly Protestant-based. Of course, he acknowledges this focus and justifies it by articulating that the United States is and has historically served as a Protestant-majority country: whether that is by demographics or social, political, and moral alignments. In his attempt to codify the major movements in America’s religious development, he has chosen to ignore (for obvious reason), the areas of the country that developed outside of this path: territories and states that remained mostly outside of American occupation or control until the early twentieth-century, non-conformist borderline “radical” factions, and areas of the country that abided by or were influenced to a greater extent by social structures formed outside of the original post-Calvinist, “American” model Hutchison outlines.

Hutchison suggests a model of prototypical American pluralism and offers examples of when the mainstream mentality was put at odds with minority opinions or dissenting individuals. By using the pluralist agenda of a society and mapping it against its own actions, a threshold of relativist tolerance is defined. This boundary represents a moral ecosystem from which a comparison can be made to one of the atypical pluralist models; the intrapluralist city of New Orleans.

For a long time, the paradigm of moral ecology existed mostly in rhetorical and poetic function: ill-established and primarily as metaphor. Allen D. Hertzke aimed to
organize it and provide facilitation for its usage. His basic definition is that moral ecology is the usage of ecological comparison to address the boundaries and thresholds of a society. Beyond the convenient visual this allows, he argues that it shifts the discussion of behavior from “Does this individual behavior cause harm” to “How much does this behavior, when multiplied cumulatively, undermine the system?” The distinction is a focus on “capacity and threshold effects” and that it views morality “as a resource that might be threatened or under-protected.” Hertzke concludes his article with a call-to-action for epistemologists in all fields to address moral ecology in unexplored areas. Realizing his request, his viewpoint could be reversed to view morality as a resource that can be under challenged and over-protected: addressing pluralism. A farm field overrun by pollutants is just as threatened in its ability to thrive as a field lacking biodiversity and crop rotation. Adapting these thresholds to society as a whole, Hertzke describes moral ecology in terms that avoid relativist viewpoints. At one point he mentions “the tragedy of the commons” as a principle that illustrates the negative ecological effect of individualism. However, the thresholds he grapples with offer the ability for relativism to be a value within a society and contribute to the moral boundaries assigned. If a culture sees morality as threatened and under-protected, it might devalue relativism in favor of preservation: nullifying pluralism. If the opposite is true, wherein a culture that sees


23 Ibid., 638.

24 Ibid., 659.

25 Ibid., 636.
morality as under-challenged and over-protected, it might venture to include more individualism amplifying its pluralist agenda. Regardless, the relationship between relativism, pluralism, and the actions towards or against each define the moral ecosystem of the observed group.

Hertzke’s original definition of moral ecology serves the prototypical Hutchison model best: one that protects its dominant morals while maintaining an often-passive pluralist agenda with limited capacity for relativism. New Orleans contrasts this model by maintaining a moral ecosystem that proves an ability to adapt to ecological change without overstepping its boundaries. The city acts as a foil to the national moral ecosystem, prioritizing intrapluralism and subverting the Hutchison model.

While the city did not join the United States until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, New Orleans had a long history with occupation by both the Spanish and French. In terms of a conceivable timeline, by 1850, the United States had only maintained political control (and as could be surmised, significant social control) of the city for 47 years. Similarly, France exercised political control of New Orleans (and therefore significant social control) from 1723 to 1763 and 1800-1803 (43 years), while Spain maintained control from 1763 to 1800 (37 years). In comparison, the three countries exhibited very nearly the same amount of political and social imprinting in terms of occupational time. However, the fact that France and Spain controlled the city prior to America, coupled with the fact that the dominant religious authority of the city contrasted the “typical” Protestantism of America suggests the pluralist model Hutchison describes will not apply

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conveniently, if at all, to New Orleans. While much research has emphasized the diversity of New Orleans, the agency of its pluralism too predictably adds a layer to the city’s uniqueness. New Orleans defaults on its accordance to the traditional American model by having a history and population that align it to different definitions of tolerance, inclusion, and participation. While the city is not completely exempt from the dominant social and moral reforms, as after all these are global changes, it has the unusual capacity to maneuver through them on its own terms. Consequentially, these same distinctions can be used to explain why other areas of the United States were less “fertile” for the creation of jazz.

**Representation of Diversity in the Common Narrative**

The common narrative of jazz history cites three locations in the American South that had, to varying degrees, an auspicious and abnormal tolerance to the preservation of African culture within their slave communities. Rather obviously, one of two necessary antecedents to African American culture is the retention, to whatever extent, of African cultural elements. The three locations most known for cultural clemency are the Sea Islands between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia; the Mississippi Delta between the Mississippi River’s and the Yazoo River’s flood plains, and New Orleans. Important musical traditions arose out of these three African American communities that invariably contributed to the creation of either jazz itself or other music

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that functioned as a precursor or a tandem expression that was ultimately enveloped by jazz.

While pluralism itself does not represent vast diversity, the presence of diversity can be used as a possible litmus test for pluralism. By using maps contemporary with the Reconstruction-era South and cross-referencing archival material and governmental databases, a combination of maps and tables can be made that estimate the diversity and density of religious institutions in each region. Concessions have to be made that not all institutions were properly documented and therefore are not represented, nor did all institutions in each area qualify as a large enough congregation to be notable in archival documentation. Likewise, census data likely has deviation based on access, availability, and irregular protocol. All regions, however, share the shortcomings in comprehensiveness, and so a satisfactory representation can be made. Due to its ability as a point in time to influence the first generations of recognizable jazz musicians and to coincide with federal census data, 1890 will be used as a cutoff date for the analysis of religious diversity as any influence on the creation of jazz should logically predate its existence. The specific resources referenced for each table below include consultation with the National Register for Historic Places, the Library of Congress, the Work Progress Administration, the 1880 Federal Census, and archival studies by church enthusiasts. Each institution represented in the following tables is represented in the appendix on maps from the aforementioned time period.

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Table 1. Religious Institutions of the Sea Islands Pre-1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (Unnamed) Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>pre-1890</td>
<td>James Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (Unnamed) Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>pre-1890</td>
<td>Johns Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Unnamed) Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>pre-1890</td>
<td>James Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Edisto Island Baptist Church</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>ca. 1850</td>
<td>Edisto Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Edisto Island Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>ca. 1825</td>
<td>Edisto Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Johns Island Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>ca. 1700</td>
<td>Johns Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. St. Helena Island Parish Church</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>ca. 1740</td>
<td>St. Helena Island, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Trinity Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>ca. 1875</td>
<td>Edisto Island, SC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sea Islands preserved African elements by way of the Gullah Geechee pan-African people. Withdrawn from the prototypical slave trade and slave markets, the Africans enslaved on these islands benefitted from a certain amount of isolation. The isolation was compounded due to the introduction of malaria and other diseases to the islands that made oversight more difficult for the European-American slave-owners, and therefore limited the amount of Euro-centric acculturation on the part of the Gullah.

Geechee. The major difference between the preservation of African elements here compared to Place Congo (Congo Square) in New Orleans is that the slaves on the Sea Islands, by nature of both seclusion and limited numbers, created a type of pan-West African creole culture. Whereas in New Orleans, the spiritual beliefs of one African culture could be preserved or assimilated based on individual choice, the Gullah Geechee benefitted from communal agreement: a model of assimilation over adaptation. After the Civil War, the Gullah Geechee were mostly left to their own devices and remained isolated until the first bridges to the islands were constructed in the 1920s.\(^{30}\) The slave-owners on the islands created worship houses on most plantations and, as was common, insisted on Protestant worship. The Gullah Geechee, given their unusual amount of space, adapted pan-African spiritual practice and embodiment into the Christian church.\(^{31}\) While musically sacred and secular formats preserved African elements in a unique way, the ability to view music in similar function to New Orleans is a moot point. The population of the islands follow the Hutchison model by assimilating all cultural elements into a singular identity, even though an identity unknown anywhere else. Within the context of the islands, the religious identities, as extended to all facets of identity, fail to uphold the same pluralism that pervades New Orleans. Instead of fostering separate cultural elements and adapting community culture to allow relativistic opportunity, the Gullah Geechee embody something more akin to the “melting pot” analogy that New Orleans


rejects. Likewise, the extended isolation of the islands removes to an extent the capacity for pluralism and relativism to pervade cultural memory in a meaningful way. The result is a moral ecosystem that is perhaps tolerant but not inclusive or adaptive to “outside” factions for the simple fact that there were none.

Consulting the aforementioned resources, the Sea Islands by 1890 had only eight recognizable religious institutions represented in available data. Of these institutions, all are Protestant churches belonging to mostly the Episcopalian or Presbyterian denominations. The table demonstrates eight institutions in an area encompassing an estimated 404 square miles (an average of 0.02 institutions per 1 square mile) and an approximate population of 15,064 (an average of 1 institution for every 1,883 citizens)\(^{32}\).

For geographic reference, a map is provided in the appendix. Analysis of these statistics in conjunction with the history of singular cultural memory and isolation leads to a very limited scale of diversity and therefore a limited possibility for cultural and social pluralism. The music of the region, in existing within this ecosystem, has a limited capacity to serve pluralist goals when confronted with mainstream culture. The precedent for adaptation to relativist impulse is not culturally relevant. A similar issue can be observed in the Mississippi Delta.

Table 2. Religious Institutions of the Mississippi Delta Pre-1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethel African Methodist Episcopal</td>
<td>A.M.E.</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Vicksburg, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Holy Trinity</td>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Vicksburg, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford Street Methodist Church</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Vicksburg, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Baptist Church</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Vicksburg, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Vicksburg, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Yazoo City, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Rosedale, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>ca. 1850</td>
<td>Vicksburg, MS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A cursory glance at the National Register of Historic Places will show that there was more representation of religious diversity in Mississippi than was present in the Sea Islands. The area is cited for its retention of African musical heritage in a variety of formats that later contributed to jazz but most often identified are country blues, work songs, field hollers, and spirituals. Religiously, there are six denominations represented in the area before 1890. Compared to the Sea Islands, this is an increase by a third within the same number of institutions. To explain why the Delta was not as conducive to the creation of jazz, despite a clear advance in terms of diversity, one must explore the pluralist dynamic in relation to said diversity—with special notice to the effect on African American communities.
Before the revivalist movements of the mid-to-late nineteenth-century, religion in Mississippi was predominantly Protestant in nature. The systems in place at the time align with the Hutchison model of pluralism in that tolerance was limited to the ability of a minority to be subordinate to the mainstream. In 1802 it was illegal for slaves to worship or preach without explicit written permission from their masters or overseers, limiting their options to denominations and practices that aligned with the behavioral norm of subordination and control. An optimistic view would suggest that within the walls of an African American congregation, expression had greater freedom. The truth, however, shows that slave owners were suspicious of slaves being converted and resisted changes in religious practice that allowed greater racial diversity.

During the Great Revival from approximately 1790-1840, the spread of evangelism reached Mississippi and expanded the presence of Baptist and Methodist congregations. Early on, these churches were biracial in nature, although segregated. The evangelicals who preached abolition and equality were suppressed by the social mores of the state by the time they reached Mississippi. The watered-down gospel appealed to more of the masses until the original aesthetic that drew in minorities was replaced with a majority opinion that reflected the racial disparity of the region and the Hutchison model mainstream. By the mid-nineteenth-century, the once progressive evangelicals had been


35 Ibid.
morphed into a denomination that defended the traditional hierarchy of the region, protecting patriarchal and slaveholding norms. The biracial system that held an ephemeral period of expression defaulted to the mainstream and African Americans conceded to forming their own evangelical congregations.

The embodiment of these churches lines up with the national establishment of the Social Gospel movement. The combination of social pressures for favorable behavior and outreach and the introspective pressure to abide by church standards created African American communities that centered around their congregations at the heart of their communities.\textsuperscript{36} Paul Oliver describes religious institutions that relied on using the preacher as an archetype for the congregation, embodying the social and cultural values that were pressured onto the church. These values aligned with the Hutchison model and denigrated behavior that alienated an individual from the practices of his or her church.\textsuperscript{37} The result of this cultural phenomenon is an African American community that preserves musical elements of African culture but fails to employ pluralism in a way that allows music to align philosophically so that it has the opportunity to supplant the traditional religious moral ecosystem.

Data shows that by 1890 the Mississippi Delta had only eight significant religious institutions representing six denominations: African Methodist Episcopalianism, Episcopalianism, Methodism, Catholicism, Presbyterianism, and Baptism. These institutions existed in a geographic region of approximately 7,000 square miles leading to

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

a statistic of approximately 0.0011 religious institutions per square mile (1 church for every 1000 miles). With a population of 101,049 citizens, the density of religious institutions per citizen comes out to 1 institution for every 12,631 people. While smaller institutions certainly existed and congregations in less formal conditions are noted, the diversity and density of institutions deemed worthy of documentation illustrates an area with very limited pluralism and a handicapped sense of relativism. New Orleans, however, offers a departure from these issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Annunciation Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>ca. 1848</td>
<td>2300-2328 Marais St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Canal Street Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>4302 Canal St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Christ Church Cathedral</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>2919 St. Charles Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Church of the Anunciation</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>ca. 1848</td>
<td>4505 S. Claiborn Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Church of the Immaculate Conception</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>120 Baronne St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>3368 Esplanade Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Coliseum Place Baptist Church</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>1276 Camp St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Congo Square</td>
<td>Trad. African/Vodun</td>
<td>1817-ca.1850</td>
<td>St. Louis Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Felicity United Methodist Church</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>1816 Chestnut St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. First African Baptist Church</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>2216 Third St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. First Evangelical and Reformed Church</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>5212 S. Claiborne Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. First Greek Orthodox Church of the Americas</td>
<td>Greek Orthodox</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1222 N Dorgenois St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. First Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Lafayette Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. German Evangelical Church of Carrollton</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>1333 S Carrollton Ave.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. German Orthodox Evangelical Congregation</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>2624 Burgundy St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Holy Trinity Church</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>714 St. Ferdinand St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Jackson Avenue Evangelical Congregation</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>720 Jackson Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. LaHarpe Community United Methodist Church</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1823 LaHarpe St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Marie Laveau</td>
<td>Vodun</td>
<td>ca. 1825</td>
<td>Bayou St. John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Mater Dolorosa Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1228 S Carrollton Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Mortuary Chapel</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>311 N Rampart St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Mount Zion United Methodist Church</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2700 Louisiana Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Napoleon Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>2524 Napoleon Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Old Ursuline Convent</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>16 Chartres St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Corner of St. Bernard/N Claiborne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Rayne Memorial Methodist Church</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>3900 St. Charles Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Saint Anna’s Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>1313 Esplanade Ave.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3, continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. Saint Augustine Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>1210 Governor Nicholls St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Saint Clare’s Monastery</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>720 Henry Clay Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Saint Frances de Sales Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>2203 Second St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Saint Francis of Assissi Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>631 State St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Saint James African Methodist Church</td>
<td>A.M.E.</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>220 N Roman St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Saint Louis Cathedral</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1727</td>
<td>Jackson Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Saint Patrick’s Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>724 Camp St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>6249 Canal Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Saint Theresa of Avila Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>1404 Erato St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Salem United Church of Christ</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>4212 Camp St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Second Free Mission Baptist Church</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>1228 Burdette St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Sixth Baptist Church</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>928 Felicity St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. St. George’s Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>4600 St. Charles Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. St. Henry’s Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>812 General Pershing St.</td>
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Table 3, continued

<table>
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<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>43. St. John the Baptist Catholic Church</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1139 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>3937 Canal St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. St. Mary’s Assumption</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>St. Joseph Cemetery #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. St. Peter AME Church</td>
<td>A.M.E.</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1201 Cadiz St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. St. Vincent DePaul Parish</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>3053 Dauphine St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Temple Sinai</td>
<td>Reform Judaism</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>6227 St. Charles Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. The Monastery of St. Joseph and St. Teresa</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1236 N Rampart St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Third Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>2540 Esplanade Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Touro Synagogue</td>
<td>Conservative Judaism</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>4238 St. Charles Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Union Bethel A.M.E.</td>
<td>A.M.E.</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>2321 Thalia St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Zion Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>1924 St. Charles Ave.</td>
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New Orleans demonstrates a clear expansion in terms of displaying multiplicity in its religious institutions. By 1890, 55 institutions were established with 12 denominations represented. One benefit New Orleans has, in terms of documentation, is it did not have the same plantation culture within the city boundaries meaning places of worship were
much more official in their founding. This list is, of course, not comprehensive in the same way the other maps were not—flooding, fires, and disestablishment is documented historically as removing more institutions than is represented above. What is apparent though is that within the metropolis a greater density of institutions exists with a greater scale of diversity: doubling what existed in the Mississippi Delta. Within an area of approximately 199 square miles, 55 institutions are catalogued, resulting in a density of roughly 0.29 institutions per square mile. With a population at the time of 242,039, the result is one institution for every 4,401 citizens. Compared to the other regions cited as precursors to African American music, New Orleans has almost 6 times the amount of religious institutions present with a representation of double the denominations of the other areas. Within those denominations is a majority belonging to Catholicism as opposed to Protestantism. The Protestant representation is split almost half-and-half between denominations that align with conservative traditions and ones that stemmed from the Great Revival and other progressive movements. In terms of density and availability to the citizens, legislation and social structures defended congregants of most ethnicities and social classes to participate in their chosen religion. Access to institutions compared to the population places New Orleans second of the regions, with the Sea Islands having more institutions available to the comparatively lower population. Access is technically more difficult within New Orleans, and denominationally the city has fewer options compared to the number of institutions than the Mississippi Delta.

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What makes New Orleans different then? The answer is diversity within its boundaries. The placement of the institutions is geographically intertwined and leads to greater proximity and interaction of denominations. Likewise, the census data points to areas with greater concentration of races and ethnicities in the city, but there is always to some extent the presence of all recognized races within each area. The result is a map that is much more difficult to organize, but points to relativist and pluralist needs. The supply and demand of religious institutions reflects the area around said institutions. Contrasting the Sea Islands, isolation is clearly not an issue to contend with. Likewise, racial subordination is not reflected in religious institutions with nearly the same amount of oppression as the Mississippi Delta. Institutions predominant in all recognized races and ethnicities pervade all corners of the city and are established consistently throughout the entire nineteenth century, without a clear preference to one denomination over another. New Orleans religious institutions reflect a society that contends with diversity in a much more progressive way than can be observed in these other regions, specifically in regards to its African American communities.

The contribution to African American music offered by each of these regions reflects similar diversity as is represented in their religious institutions. This leads to a greater understanding of how pluralism and relativism in religious expression mirror expression in other areas—especially music. Given the opportunity New Orleans presents, intrapluralism offers the capacity for music to join the denominational ranks and to function similarly within the city’s moral values. The foundation of intrapluralism is one of the essential reasons New Orleans is fertile to the development of jazz—a music allowed to operate in its most diverse capacity.
Once you got those wheels under you, you can turn this way, and you can turn that way, or you can take off and fly. But you got to have the wheels … New Orleans, it’s the wheels; it’s the foundation.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{The Hutchison Model and its Contrast to New Orleans}

Hutchison describes the religious ecosystem of the early American colonists as 95% Protestant.\textsuperscript{40} He explains that at least 90% of the colonists were associated with the Calvinist side of the Protestant Reformation as opposed to the Lutheran side. The result is a society made up of distinct cultures that had “profound similitudes” in cultural practice beyond just religious doctrine.\textsuperscript{41} This provides the foundation for his first mode of pluralism: pluralism by tolerance.

Hutchison describes a “unitive ideology” that resists “outsiders” serving the desire for Americans at the beginning of the nineteenth century to return to the “considerable homogeneity of the long colonial era.”\textsuperscript{42} He goes on to describe a society that had incomplete legal equity via nativist principles that in effect produced social intolerance.\textsuperscript{43} The intolerance described was aimed at the behavior of said “outsiders” and not, however, at their beliefs.\textsuperscript{44} Americans in the context of the world felt they were quite progressive in terms of religious pluralism. The newly created country prided itself on religious freedom and tolerance, the very elements the colonies were founded on. Still,

\textsuperscript{39} Sidney Bechet, \textit{Treat It Gentle} (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 118.

\textsuperscript{40} Hutchison, \textit{Religious Pluralism in America}, 7.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 20.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 17.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 30.
social tolerance was not the same as acceptance. The behavior of the “outsiders” was expected to conform to the social norms of the majority and when they did not there was a push back. Examples of groups who faced various degrees of persecution were the Mormons, the Millerites, the Quakers, the Unitarians, and the Oneidans. The minority groups that faced the least amount of persecution, such as the Transcendentalists, avoided the more punishing reactions by acting, as Hutchison calls it, like “our sort of person.”

Thoughts on music also reflected this embodiment of pluralism. In an 1839 issue of *Music Review and Record of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence*, a request is made for music to more closely align with early American tradition and Protestant morality:

> If this art has power to direct the emotions of the heart, does it not deserve our most earnest attention to preserve its proper influence, and to direct it to the good purposes intended by the wise and kind Author of all good things? This can only be done by preventing the art itself from being corrupted through the caprice and absurdity of human frailty, and by employing the powers of its purity to assist us in the habits of virtue and religion.

The author suggests that the “present state of music in our own country” be “made subservient to the … sober pursuits of virtue and religion.” This opinion acknowledges that by the mid-nineteenth-century, American music had become more secular in nature and the goals of music had shifted from the author’s preferred “quaint” and traditional areas. The conservative viewpoint describes a moral ecosystem that has tolerated other


46 Ibid., 32.

47 “Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Music,” *Music Review and Record of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence* 1, no. 7 (1839): 76-77.

48 Ibid., 77.
musical forms in some sense but is shifting to a nostalgic sense of superiority—a want to be more similar to its earlier primary preferences.

The implication of this opinion is that music occupies a spectrum of adherence to mainstream morality, but the behavior it elicits is of greater concern to those in power. In similar fashion to the religious pluralist attitude, in this ecosystem, the possession of heretical opinions does not alienate a group or individual to the same extent that the participation in alien behavior does. If a group, person, or music could blend into the majority culture, their dissenting beliefs could be waived, and therefore they would be tolerated.

This is the early moral ecosystem of America, by a basic definition, that is defined by Hutchison. It is one where the multiplicity of the religious environment did not equate to true pluralism. While diversity was present, to a limited extent, the end result was that members of American society in the nineteenth century could only achieve tolerance if they were more closely aligned with the mainstream, tinting pluralism with an attitude of prescriptivism.

Prior to the religious revival movements that began around the 1840s, this situation was the norm. New Orleans, however, is at odds with this model. While the function of the model may be upheld, the definition of mainstream culture and its outcome in New Orleans is different. As a result of the French and Spanish occupation, the occupant religion of power in the city was Catholicism.49 Furthermore, in terms of

diversity, the city had included religions, cosmologies, and spiritualties in a way that was much less similar than Hutchison’s described Calvinist-dominant, colonial society. The Catholic makeup of citizens extended culturally beyond French and Spanish descendants and included Irish, German, and Italian immigrants.\textsuperscript{50} Likewise, the Code Noir allowed slaves, Freed People of Color, and Creoles of Color to be participants within the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{51} This enhanced cultural diversity is the result of the specialized intrapluralism of the city, of course, but also helps to define the complexity of the city as a moral ecosystem.

In terms of general pluralism, Hutchison’s model holds true in New Orleans. The common narrative of jazz history often mentions Place Congo as a primary example of religious and cultural freedom within New Orleans. Closer inspection of the origins of Place Congo underline that slaves were indeed given a day free of work on the Sabbath but that the establishment of the Square was a means to control where populations of slaves could gather.\textsuperscript{52} The Square’s establishment was a response to societal fear. In the context of pluralism by tolerance, this exhibition of control lends itself, albeit abstractly, to Hutchison’s model. The prevailing authority in New Orleans’ society allowed slave expression to exist so long as the slaves abided by its terms. These “terms,” in both de facto and de jure capacities, specified that they must comply to gather only on the Catholic Sabbath, that gathering was restricted to Place Congo, and as concession, that

\textsuperscript{50} Milliken, “The Religious Landscape of New Orleans.”


\textsuperscript{52} Scott Deveaux and Gary Giddens, \textit{Jazz}, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 81.
there they could freely buy and sell goods or even buy one’s freedom. In the Square, freedman and slaves had the opportunity to express themselves musically in a way that gave them ownership and cultural freedom. While social disapproval existed for the kinds of music being expressed in Place Congo, if the boundaries in place were respected, the behavior was tolerated.

The inference is that the intersection of the Franco-Catholic culture and slave culture were too vastly different to rely on similar behavior—without mention of the power dynamics—but to achieve tolerance rules would be devised instead. If the subordinate class followed these rules, their individualism would be tolerated. Whereas Hutchison shows that religious tolerance could be achieved by cultures that behaved more similarly, religious tolerance specifically between these two parties relied on a continuity of existing dissimilar behavior. This interaction is to ignore, for the sake of comparison, the obvious nuance added by the existence of the *gens de couleur libre*: The Creoles of Color. If the behavioral power dynamic could be maintained, tolerance would be upheld for African and African American religions and African and African American musical expression.

Baptist missionaries first arrived in Louisiana around 1798 and become the second Protestant religion to take root in the territory after the Episcopalians. Early on, most congregants of the Baptist churches of New Orleans were African American, which

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53 Ibid.

54 Milliken, “The Religious Landscape of New Orleans.”
led to the establishment of African Baptist churches. Similar to the pluralist orientation of Place Congo, in order to allow tolerance to remain for the churches, fearful authorities required the presence of a police officer at all congregational meetings. This caveat fulfilled whatever tacit requirement there was for tolerance.

The city’s casual adherence to French social law served as another function of leniency and adaptation. The French colonial law Code Noir stated that all inhabitants of New Orleans should “enjoin all of [their] officers to chase from [their] islands all the Jews who have established residence there as with all declared enemies of Christianity.”

While Jews were deterred from taking up residence in New Orleans, it is well documented that a consistent population was present. Behaviorally, the Jewish population of New Orleans did not practice in as Orthodox of a manner as they may have elsewhere. Jacob Solis, an observant Jew who moved to the city in 1827, found the local Jewish population to be much more secular in behavior than other areas, citing the lack of matzo in the city during the celebration of Pesach. The local Jewish population, aware of the political disapproval, abandoned more traditional Ashkenazim observances in an attempt to blend better with the local mainstream. In this instance, in terms of religious pluralism, the minority group within New Orleans subjected themselves to self-imposed change in order to achieve greater tolerance, reversing the paradigm of Place Congo.


56 Milliken, “The Religious Landscape of New Orleans.”


58 Milliken, “The Religious Landscape of New Orleans.”
Even with greater cultural disparity amongst the religious diversity in New Orleans, the reaction of the city was one of adaptation first as opposed to one of hostility. In the model provided by Hutchison, groups who could not more closely align with the mainstream religious identity became the subject of persecution and were driven geographically away from the behaviorally similar institutions. The historically violent expulsion of the Mormons from the prototypical American society exemplifies this well. The group was allowed to maintain its “unorthodox” practices so long as it was “over there.” As the theologian Philip Schaff explained, religious liberty was allowed to those “who do not outrage […] the public morality.” The behavior of a group that does not interfere with “public morality” (read: dominant public opinion) can and seemingly would be tolerated, but in the case of the Mormons, they were too radical for the public morality. Since the Mormons did not adopt principles more centralized to the majority consensus, they were eventually persecuted—a perceptual oxymoron to the pluralist goals of the country.

Shifting back to New Orleans, the religious groups (and therein cultural groups) at odds with one another never pushed one another away. This resistance to forcible exile is made all the more fascinating by the fact that legally, under Code Noir, the Catholic majority was insisted to exile non-Catholic residents. The choice to adapt instead of raise conflict seemingly emphasizes the leniency New Orleans bore. New Orleans found a capacity to carve a space for denominations and cultures that vastly contrasted the

59 Hutchison, Religious Pluralism in America, 30.

mainstream. The interaction between these factions therefore, due in large part to the choice of action, was far more numerous than was probable elsewhere. As opposed to the treatment of the Mormons, the minority religious factions of New Orleans were not forced to adapt their behaviors at the risk of expulsion. Instead, the local authority created conditions for tolerance in which the less aligned behaviors and beliefs could be accepted and allowed its own space aside from the mainstream.

Music too reflected this sentiment. As Place Congo slowly became more suppressed over time, retention of African drumming shifted to Mardi Gras Indian tribes. This appeal to exoticism and entertainment provided a novel experience to the dominant authority of New Orleans. The musical expression could be performed without crossing the shifting line of tolerance by existing within the performative cultural practices of Mardi Gras: a celebration of mainstream Christian basis.61

Similarly, the prominent dance culture of New Orleans appealed to all ethnic groups and created a demand for musicians who could play dance music for the masses. While the quadrilles, contradanzas, and cotillion styles matched the aesthetic needs of the dominant culture, bombas, boleros, and other dances attracted minority cultures. To address the potential for perceived debauchery at local dances, permits had to be filed with the city mayor. Information about the nature of the event would include demographic makeup, if there would be a presence of alcohol, whether the event was a masquerade or not, and what time it would end. By organizing the event in an official capacity there existed a contract for intervention if any rules were broken. Because

boundaries were set in place by the local mainstream authority, musicians of Color were able to play music that appealed to their cultures without risking alienation or persecution.  

**The Exception of New Orleans in Post-Great Revival America**

A major shift occurred in America’s religious history in approximately the mid-nineteenth century: the Great Revival. This religious movement signaled a divide in public opinion and the start of significant social reform, eventually including Prohibition, Suffrage, and Abolition. Evangelical revivalists imbued the concept of free will into their religious practice as well as fostered an atmosphere that was more public and fantastical in nature. At first, the more orthodox corners of American religion and secular, liberal parties received the revivalists poorly. The behavior cultivated and sustained by mainstream American religion was being tested. While the revivalist beliefs themselves were quite radical when juxtaposed to the norm, the change in accepted behavior was a greater confrontational catalyst.

Revivalist Protestantism emphasized behavior that subverted the nativist model of privacy, stoicism, subservience, abstemiousness, and sagacity. Critics of the movement argued that it “placed too much emphasis on the supposed moment of conversion” or that it “made the pulpit itself into a stage, encouraged preachers to be full of themselves rather than filled with the Holy Spirit, and in general promoted ‘vulgarism of feeling.’”  

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63 Hutchison, *Religious Pluralism in America*, 44.

64 Ibid., 46.
nativist view of the behavioral change brought revivalists farther from the mainstream for its perceived hedonism, vulgarity, and vanity. Revivalist congregations as a whole adopted the shifts in behavior and manufactured a de facto system of social pressure. Paul Oliver writes on the topic that “the importance of the Baptism [is] not only a sign of admittance to the Christian faith but also as a rite of passage into the community of believers within the church itself.”65 Zora Neale Hurston recalls during these services that “the pressure on the unconverted was stepped up by music and high drama.”66 The social pressures described are what fueled nativist resistance. However, the excesses in behavior that irked the more conservative critics were the same features that inspired the new participants.

The foundational structure of America’s religious ecosystem inherently surrounds all aspects of the country’s culture, and the revivalist movement threatened traditional perpetuity. French political scientist, Alexis de Tocqueville, observes American culture:

There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains greater influence over the souls of men than in America … In the United States, Christian sects are infinitely diversified and perpetually modified; but Christianity itself is an established and irresistible fact.67

By Tocqueville’s estimation, the laity surrounding mainstream American Protestant religion has greater social pressure than a theocratic system would have. He suggests that the constitutional separation of church and state does not mean that the state is in actuality separated from the influence of church. The nature of America’s moral

65 Oliver, Songsters and Saints, 165.

66 Ibid., 144.

ecosystem insinuates that regardless of political interaction, the people themselves would always center their morality and religiosity on Christian principles before any other influence as a result of the national ethos: the Hutchison model. This framing of American religiosity explained the power that the reviverist movement had. If social pressure is inherent to the reviverist movement, and that same social pressure is what motivates the societal majority to uphold Christian beliefs, then there is an impetus for the layperson to adhere to the pressures of contemporary Christian social movement. In the pluralist capacity the country was then serving, the maximum possible outcome was tolerance. To be tolerated meant that a person must behave tolerably rather than believe tolerable thoughts. If social pressures start suggesting a shift from nativist principles, then behavior that is considered tolerable would also have to shift. This is the crux of the motivation for some people to convert into reviverist ideology and for others to challenge it. The end result is a threat from within the Protestant exoskeleton that defines mainstream American morality and religious identity.

Hutchison supposes that reviverism was met with much greater objection than the prior more liberal or even radical expressions due to its proximity to more traditional religious beliefs. Revivalism functioned almost identically to the “tried and true” Protestantism of yesteryear; however, it supported wildly different behavior. This wave of philosophical and religious unrest was simultaneously fueled by a massive influx of European immigrants who also shared differing, but proximal religious beliefs to the long-established “true-blue American” tradition.68 Contrasting the earlier Hutchison model, these denominations were too similar to be pushed away from mainstream society

68 Hutchison, Religious Pluralism in America, 47.
as outsiders and instead they forced confrontational discourse. One example of this discourse was the fear that Rome would possess the ability to influence American voters via the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{69} The nativist political American/Toleration Party used its resources to propagate slanderous publications against the Catholic Church. An example of this castigation is the book \textit{Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk}, which tells the fictitious story of Maria Monk, an escapee from a convent who was victim to various sexual transgressions by the nuns.\textsuperscript{70} The “old-stock Americans” were resistant to change and fought for assimilation to what they perceived as the American way, and ironically in doing so subverted the very pluralism they were preaching.\textsuperscript{71}

The discrepancies in philosophy and behavior led consequentially to the addition of a number of new Protestant denominations, the call for organizational clarification in existing ones, and the modest growth in national perceived legitimacy for non-Protestant denominations. While the mainstream moral ecosystem faltered in its pluralist agenda, diversity had an opportunity for growth. In an attempt to domesticate musical expression, some nativists tried to regulate musical expression to a more “traditional” model and limit xenophilic influence.\textsuperscript{72} The revivalists, on the other hand, felt strongly that music could democratize the nation and in an attempt to contend with the national boost in

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{70} Maria Monk, \textit{Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk} (New York: Howe and Bates, 1837).


diversity unintentionally limited its toleration by trying to define a nationally unified, democratic sound. While not entirely immune to the national sentiment, New Orleans was at odds with the national social trends and the backpedaling of pluralist action.

New Orleans, out of all cities in America at the time, had the strongest historical Catholic presence in terms of both Catholic citizens and Catholicism’s permeation into the local ethos and policy. Regardless of the ever-increasing influx of Anglo-American Protestants to the city, the local cultural memory remained overwhelmingly Catholic-oriented. The result, as can be logically observed, is that the nativist perspective did not have the same traction in New Orleans. First, the native culture being defended was largely Catholic in origin (considering, of course, the subtleties in various nationalities’ interpretations of Catholicism) and was therefore resistant to the anti-Protestant bigotry disseminating across America. Secondly, the previously defined affinity to adaptation as opposed to confrontation suggested that the city was hypothetically poised to handle more progressive religious ideals. Lastly, the city’s acceptance of relativist expression indicated that nonconformist behavior, both proximal to the mainstream or not, would not lead to the same intensity of debate seen elsewhere in the United States. By 1860, New Orleans had the highest percentage of foreign-born white persons of any urban area in America: 45%. While the myriad origins of New Orleans’ population would suggest conflict, the non-industrial, non-manufacturing narrowness of the economy placed people

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74 Ostendorf, *New Orleans: Creolization and All That Jazz*, 17.

of all backgrounds, races, creeds, and similarly religions in competition for the same work. This cultural contiguity is amplified by the fact that, with exceptions, many religious institutions of New Orleans were at times integrated. The revivalist movement also created churches within Protestant communities that encouraged proselytizing to women and People of Color, furthering the cultural collage of interaction. Richard Campanella describes the ethnic and religious diversity of antebellum New Orleans as “nebulous” and that “ethnic intermixing prevailed markedly over segregation.” A survey of religious institutions in antebellum, early revivalist-era New Orleans shows at least twenty-one new congregations were established. Of these organizations, eight were new Protestant denominations spread across the city including a Revivalist Evangelical church, a German Lutheran church, an African Methodist Episcopal church, a Presbyterian church, and various Baptist churches. While the city observed subtle political change that may have affected its religious pluralism, the overall adaptation model holds steady through the Great Revival. The nativist resistance felt in the remainder of the United States created dissension and philosophical discourse, but New Orleans seemingly absorbed the changes and moved on. By Hutchison’s definition, New

76 Ostendorf, New Orleans: Creolization and All That Jazz, 21.


Orleans may have, perhaps by a stretch, moved into its second form of pluralism: pluralism by inclusion.

**The Social Gospel Movement**

A major tenet of revivalism was that individualism and moralism were acutely interwoven with one another. Specifically, salvation was no longer considered in the nativist hegemony, wherein one’s fate was in the hands of God alone. Instead, the onus was on the individual, who solely through action could qualify oneself for salvation. The result of this shift was the start of the Social Gospel movement, the nineteenth-century adoption of revivalist ethics to universal social problems. In stark contrast to the religious freedom promised by the founding fathers, the social trend for the late nineteenth-century was to adopt social policy based on a singular moral consensus. The contemporary neo-Protestant ideals (the result of revivalism) would indicate that it was not simply enough to take action on behalf of one’s own salvation, but instead to take action on behalf of others too; the “betterment” of society as a whole. The result of this unitive process was a national moral and ethical ecosystem that was tinted by the social tenets of Protestantism. All behavior and belief within the pluralist environment had to observe the dominion of the nationalist lens, which in effect removed the notion of religious pluralism all together. Consequentially, secular social reforms shifted towards addressing the rights of women, the impoverished, and minority races (despite the ever-present Jim Crow). Reformative practices like temperance, unionization, and law

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80 Hutchison, *Religious Pluralism in America*, 70.

81 Ibid., 79.
enforcement all point to a greater secular social pluralism but under a singular religious authority. 82

In contrast to the national trend, New Orleans retained its own semblance of pluralism through this movement, due to the city’s unusual tolerance for subversive culture. However, the religious diversity in New Orleans had to concede somewhat to the federal actions of the social gospel movement and race relations in the city increasingly faltered from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards. The Louisiana Legislative Code 111 removed any semblance of a functional middle racial caste occupied by the Creoles of Color. 83 Likewise abolition, paired with the continually growing presence of Anglo-American citizens, shifted the once-lenient social system to one where Jim Crow was omnipresent. Despite the shift in diversity, the city continued its appeal to pluralism by allowing, in greater concentration than to the rest of the United States, behavior subversive to the social gospel agenda.

The adaptive nature of New Orleans’ pluralism allowed morally subversive practices to exist under its religious diversity. Significantly, these practices were given the opportunity to exist despite national social disapproval. Consideration should be given to the fact that regardless of whatever subversive practices existed in New Orleans,

82 Ibid., 111.

there was always a faction at odds with said practice. In a method similar to New Orleans’ approach to behaviorally different religions, the decision to control morally insubordinate practices allowed the mainstream of the city to retain its pluralist ideals of tolerance while it exercised judgment that, although aberrant, generally endorsed the national opinion. The following quote from a Chicago-based magazine outlines this national opinion in regards to prostitution, a vice regulated in New Orleans.

The chastity of woman is at the foundation of Anglo-Saxon society. Our laws are based upon it, and the finest and most binding of our social relations. Nothing could be more menacing to a civilization than the scale of this as a commodity.

New Orleans’ Red Light District, commonly referred to as “Storyville” or “The District”, formally established in 1897, was the last of several legally defined municipal sub-districts that legalized and regulated prostitution and other vice activities. The area was situated in the unofficial boundary between the “respectable” part of the city and the Tenderloin vice district. Through government regulation and self-imposed assimilative action, the “disrespectable” red light district found subtle ways to align more closely with the above-detailed mainstream moral opinion. Charles Hersch describes:

The push for racial purity and respectability even pervaded the red light district, Storyville. Despite their immoral reputations, madams like Josie Arlington

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cultivated respectability, decorating brothels with classical images and sculptures to create a sense of “refinement, worldliness, wealth, and sophistication.” Prostitutes were prohibited from smoking, becoming intoxicated, and cursing, which might threaten their image of refinement.\footnote{Charles Hersch, \textit{Subversive Sounds: Race and the Birth of Jazz in New Orleans} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 56.}

In an era where the city was coupled with redefined racial classification and a new definition of segregation, brothels attempted to appeal in some way to the majority. To retain an aesthetic of exoticism without endangering their business, brothels advertised \textit{octoroons}, or light-skinned Creole women with just a “touch of color.”\footnote{Ibid.} By the act of placation, participants were able to shift focus away from the activities explicitly and instead maintained a moral compromise that embodied the adaptive spirit of the city. Testimonials from musicians of the era highlight the unusual polarity of the district wherein they claim the area as lawless on one hand but also a place with considerable repercussion for breaking its tenets. Underage musicians had to sneak past a minimum of two patrolling police officers on each street corner.\footnote{Foster and Stoddard, \textit{The Autobiography of Pops Foster}, 40.} Beyond police officers, in an attempt to retain adaptation and toleration, enforcement of colloquial rules were often handled by the residents themselves. Louis Armstrong recalls that people in the district would celebrate an occasion by shooting a pistol in the air.\footnote{Louis Armstrong, \textit{Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans} (New York: Prentice Hall, 1954), 33.} Ownership of guns in the city was illegal and when an elder discovered a young person brandishing one in the
district, the elder observer would confiscate the gun.\textsuperscript{92} This type of self-ownership reflects an opportunity within African American society that had minimal opportunity outside of New Orleans.

The ability to behave and express oneself as a censured minority by imposing self-facing regulation is a byproduct of intrapluralism. A concession for individual thought is allowed within the construct of a group just as a concession for the uniqueness of a group is allowed within the whole of society. The multiplicity in moral alignment within New Orleans introduced the novel ability for nationally subversive behaviors and moralities to have occupancy—the only caveat being that said behaviors and moralities bargain in some capacity with the mainstream.

This intrapluralist ecosystem offers a few defining characteristics to be considered. Firstly, authority cannot be assigned to one denomination like it can be within Progressive Era mainstream America because a concern to relativism disallows one defined morality from surpassing another. Secondly, the result of increased diversity both ethnically and denominationally and the nature of their proximity leads to a breadth of what is considered “outside” that supersedes the Hutchison model. Thirdly, on the individual level, a person can participate in multiple, even conflicting, definitions of religion and morality and not be at odds with a mainstream authoritative system. Lastly, dissention or subversion to any amount of self-identified moral standard can be reconciled or accepted in the context of the self or society on the basis that there is some amount of adaptation, assimilation, or concession. Whereas Hutchison’s Progressive Era model identifies a country in identity crisis, one that is hastily joining its many fringes,

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 132.
the New Orleans moral ecosystem circumvents the national issue by simply making it a non-issue. The Faustian bargain required by minority culture in mainstream America is avoided and a unique expressionism is afforded the ability to thrive.

There is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly. Such an outlook is quite congenial to an individualistic ethic, wherein each individual is faced with his own truth, different from the truth of others.  

**Jazz as a Result of Intrapluralist New Orleans**

The intrapluralist developments of New Orleans suggest a redefinition of religious epistemology wherein the idea of knowing what is and can be recognized as religious enterprise and religious experience (in the traditional sense) must first contend with the individual. Likewise, the concession must be made that a traditional religious definition has to be abandoned in favor of one that allows a greater standard deviation in behavior, observance, and practice—one that instead allows self-identification to define parameters as opposed to the pressures of group consensus. Echoing Kerman’s musicological concerns, a reduction of group-oriented qualitative standards provides a better understanding of the function and prioritization of religion in New Orleans.

Religion in its most basic sense was defined earlier as a boundary for ethics. In the neo-Hutchison model of Progressive Era America, Protestant moral boundaries were applied beyond their threshold to secular ethics. New Orleans reflected similar changes, however under its adaptive intrapluralist model, individual choice replaced a singular authority. The importance of this distinction is that New Orleans, like the rest of

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America, empowered religion to sway secular social ethics but limited its reach by denying singularity and supremacy to any one entity.

The same Progressive Era developments are shared amongst the entirety of society, and while majority disapproval did exist for some behaviors and practices, they were adapted to a position of tolerance. More importantly, the type of tolerance displayed was one of inclusion, which places New Orleans uniquely ahead of the remainder of the country by Hutchison’s pluralist progressive scale. This unusual position that religion occupies, under its new definition, puts forward the possibility for any self-defined, relativist religion to create social moral boundaries that has the ability to extend beyond relativist borders under the pretense that they adapt. In other words, if an individual claims belief, explicitly or tacitly, in a self-proclaimed religion, it will be tolerated as long as it can manipulate itself to exist within one of the many tenets of niche culture. Furthermore, that same belief will be socially included to the extent that it has the altruistic opportunity to influence the morality and ethics, and therefore behavior, of others. Under this new epistemological foundation of intrapluralism, Bivins’ claim about the spirituality of jazz can be broadened to the extent that jazz functions socially under the umbrella of religion.

Starting with the most basic definition, jazz would need to serve as a boundary for ethics. Ethics, however, can be understood philosophically in two basic ways: as deontological ethics or as consequentialist ethics. Deontological ethics define the morality or immorality of a behavior based on its adherence to preconceived structures and rules: the typical model of most Western religions. Consequentialist ethics, on the
other hand, defines the morality or immorality of a behavior based on its result.\textsuperscript{94} Jazz is best observed as a participant in consequentialist ethics. Due to its natural development, jazz developed any recognizable sense of “rules” gradually and they lacked consistency in terms of expression because of personal preference and individual opportunity. Behavior outside expression, however, is instead judged by the outcome of others’ experiences. Hagiography of musicians influenced others with similar aspirations to see role models and their results as a trend of normalized behaviors in which they themselves can participate. This is a consequentialist boundary of ethics allowed existence only by the intrapluralist nature of New Orleans.

Musicians, of course, can identify and belong to traditional religious denominations, as is accepted under the intrapluralist model. The ethical boundaries of jazz, though, can be observed at interplay with these denominational ethics. When jazz musicians allow themselves to be at odds with their birth culture or religious identity, placing jazz first in a hierarchy of subscribed ethical manipulators, the argument for jazz as a quasi-religion is strengthened. The specific instances below highlight the capacity for jazz to be prioritized in religious ethical terms.

Louis Armstrong’s parents frightened him at a young age into avoiding the Red Light District. They told him stories, real or otherwise, to keep him out of a place they saw as morally unscrupulous.\textsuperscript{95} As a boy, he idolized Joe “King” Oliver who played


\textsuperscript{95} Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya: The Story of Jazz Told by the Men Who Made It} (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 64.
regularly at Pete Lala’s cabaret in the District. Against the moral values prescribed by his parents, Armstrong eventually found a way into the district:

I would delight delivering an order of stone coal to the prostitute who used to hustle her crib right next to Pete Lala’s cabaret … Just so’s I could hear King Oliver play … I was too young to go into Pete Lala’s at the time … And I’d just stand there in that lady’s crib listening to King Oliver.96

Years later, Armstrong dissolved his marriage with his wife Irene in order to more readily pursue his newfound opportunities to play with King Oliver.

I told Irene that since she was now going straight, she should get an older fellow … I was so wrapped up in my horn that I would not make a good mate for her…97

Soon after, Armstrong vowed to continue performing actively and exclusively in New Orleans unless King Oliver presented an opportunity. He said, “I resolved again never to leave home unless Papa Joe Oliver sent for me. And I didn’t either.”98 Eventually, Armstrong would leave New Orleans without Oliver on Fate Marabel’s riverboat. Armstrong confessed, “Like everyone I have my faults … I was determined to play my horn against all odds, and I had to sacrifice a whole lot of pleasure to do so.”99 The “pleasure” to which refers, whatever specifically is meant aside, is a set of behaviors with ethical boundaries that conflict with music. He abandons a contextually hedonistic lifestyle for one that is within the bounds of his self-assigned morality. Armstrong is allowing music to influence his decisions over other ethical factors in his life.

96 Ibid., 42.


98 Ibid., 107.

99 Ibid., 107.
Pops Foster recalls helping his friend and fellow musician Steve Lewis clandestinely practice piano against the will of Lewis’ aunt. Due to Lewis’ talent, Foster decided to help him subvert the ethical boundaries of Lewis’ aunt and they both chose to place music first.

Steve Lewis … lived next door to me when we were kids. He lived with his aunt, and she didn’t want him to play piano. When she’d go off she’d lock him out of the house so he couldn’t play the piano. He’d wait until she was gone, then climb in a window to practice. I’d watch for him, and if she’d come too soon, I’d throw some rocks at the house so he could get in before she caught him.100

Beyond just the boundaries defined by outside interaction, ethical boundaries can be observed within the music and culture itself, among the aforementioned spectrum of acceptable behavior. Sidney Bechet offers an anecdote about Freddie Keppard and the seriousness he insisted musicians give to musical performance.

What Freddie asked of a musician, was that he keep on playing like he always played. If you were sick, well, there was no pain big enough to keep you from playing; you could be sick after. If he saw a musician not playing right, he’d practically get right up there in that horn or clarinet and want to show him. He wouldn’t play with no one that had no heart for what he was doing…the one thing he couldn’t stand was bad music. He left many a band because he didn’t like the way they played. He’d walk right off the bandstand and never come back…101

The consideration of what was “right” or “good” in the music was the outcome of personal preference and highlights a relativist vision of musical expression. While Freddie Keppard may not have enjoyed some of the music of his peers, their associations, performances, and aspirations were still globally tolerated. The moral ecosystem of New Orleans facilitates Keppard’s decision to associate with musicians who play music in the way he sees fit just as a churchgoer might choose a congregation that most aligns with


their preferred form of religious expression. Regardless of choice, the musicians with the
greatest notoriety, the greatest opportunity, or the most widely recognized talent became
role models of ethical behavior. As a result of the outcomes of their behavior, musicians
who achieved any amount of success in the field became subsequent leaders.

For a period of time, bands would advertise by performing throughout the city
atop horse-drawn wagons. With the exception of only two groups, which were led by
Buddy Bolden and John Robichaux, most musicians were not marketing themselves
under their leader’s names. Seeing the potential for marketing in this fashion, Kid Ory
began using signage with his name and contact information in conjunction with the
typical usage of a wagon. Further, in order to reach a wider audience faster, he eventually
substituted the horse-drawn wagon with a truck. Any band with similar aspirations was
soon following suit.102 In almost all cases, jazz musicians in New Orleans cite influence,
inpiration, or mentorship from other musicians that undeniably affected their cognitive
decision-making processes by consequentialist means. As a result, jazz qualifies as a
religion under the most basic definition as a boundary for ethics. The following firsthand
accounts support this claim.

The first night I played with Kid Ory’s band, the boys were so surprised they
could hardly play their instruments for listening to me blow up a storm. But I
wasn’t frightened one bit. I was doing everything just exactly the way I’d heard
Joe Oliver do it. At least I tried to. I even put a big towel around my neck when
the band played a ball down at Economy Hall. That was the first thing Joe always
did—he’d put a bath towel around his neck and open up his collar underneath so
he could blow free and easy.103
— Louis Armstrong

102 Gene Anderson, “Johnny Dodds in New Orleans,” American Music 8, no.4

John Robichaux’s band would play the show, which lasted from about 6:00pm to 8:00pm. After the stage show, the people would come in and the brass band would take over onstage and play a dance. It cost 15 cents to get in and I was lucky to have a nickel to take the streetcar home, so I had to sneak in. I’d hide behind a post, then get mixed up in the crowd and move on in. Inside I’d hide around the stage so I could peep at the band. The cop in the place would catch me sneaking around every Sunday and chase me off. Finally, he asked me what I was looking at. I told him I was watching Mr. Kimball play the string bass. He said, “Why don’t you learn to play it?” I said, “That’s what I’m trying to do.” He said, “Okay, you can stay till 9:00pm after this.” So after that I could watch Mr. Henry Kimball play till nine. I always thought Mr. Kimball was a wonderful bass player.104
— Pops Foster

Buddy [Petit] is a man they’ve never written much about. He kind of what you call set the pace for a lot of the other bands. I mean these other bands would hear Buddy play something and they would all want to play it.105
— Edmond Hall

I came to New Orleans in 1906, when I was fourteen years old. It was after I heard Buddy Bolden, when he came through my home town, Plaquemine, Louisiana, on an excursion, and trumpet playin’ excited me so that I said, “I’m going to New Orleans.” I had never heard anything like that before in my whole life.106
— Clarence Williams

We used to go down to New Orleans weekends to hear the different bands that played in the parks. They play a tune once, that’s all I want to hear so we could play it too. Take two and make one out of it if we couldn’t get all of it.107
— Kid Ory

Given that this music would be considered a minority fringe religion, it would need to uphold the intrapluralist model by way of adaptation. Jazz has the unusual challenge of having to appeal to both the mainstream and subversive cultures of the city.


105 Shapiro and Hentoff, Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya, 21.

106 Ibid., 31.

107 Ibid., 28.
in order be adequately tolerated. As the relativist perspective would insist, musicians grappled with this adaptation on an individual basis. Most musicians had trades that they worked during the day. According to testimonials, most musicians at the time could not make a living on performance only. Equally important, though, is that having a conforming occupation allowed musicians to contribute to mainstream society in an acknowledgeable and traditional sense.\textsuperscript{108} Furthermore, the opportunities for performance spanned an entire spectrum of establishments that were recognized as either “ratty” or “respectable.” Mutt Carey remembers the more “ratty” establishments within the District saying “… they had some rough places in Storyville in those days. A guy would see everything in those joints and it was all dirty.”\textsuperscript{109} Kid Ory, on the other hand, describes the Come Clean Hall as an establishment that appealed to a more “respectable” crowd that required patrons to “come clean or stay away.”\textsuperscript{110} Johnny St. Cyr recollects that some lawn parties would be very “proper” and were organized by the local Yacht Club or Country Club while others on the Irish Channel would force the musicians to “play beyond the regular hours until the patrons passed out from drink, fighting, or exhaustion.” St. Cyr continues to describe that a singular event could transition from “respectable” to “ratty” and that the “quadrille before the midnight intermission functioned as the signal for the respectable folks to leave” and that afterwards “the blues were played for rough and dirty dancing.”\textsuperscript{111} During Lent, the Catholic authority would ban dancing and

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 17.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 40.

\textsuperscript{110} Anderson, “Johnny Dodds in New Orleans,” 418.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 422-24.
musicians would find work in the District cabarets, avoiding the potential conflict of typical society performances.\textsuperscript{112} In other ways, some musicians refused to play certain kinds of music to appear more “legitimate” while others would learn to play as many genres and styles as possible to be respected by musical peers in both “legitimate” and “illegitimate” circles.\textsuperscript{113} Bands needed to have repertoire that appealed to both audiences. If a band was working in the District, they would play “dirty songs” and “gutbucket blues” to entertain the sporting crowd. If a band played a picnic or lawn party, they would prepare dances such as waltzes, quadrilles, and schottisches.\textsuperscript{114} Beyond music, some musicians refused aspects of the vice cultures they surrounded themselves in while others utilized those cultures to better their standing in the Tenderloin district.\textsuperscript{115} The following accounts highlight how musicians engaged with both “legitimate” and “illegitimate” cultures.

And do you know that you could buy all of the cocaine, morphine, heroin, and hop you wanted in the section, almost right out in the open? But I never knew hardly any musicians that took dope.\textsuperscript{116}

— Clarence Williams

I became manager of a cabaret in 1913 … a very rough place where the railroad fellows would hang out … The man who owned the place came to me and asked me to run it … I had the place cleaned and scrubbed and painted and made a strict

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 422.

\textsuperscript{113} Boyd Raeburn, \textit{New Orleans Style}, 10.

\textsuperscript{114} Anderson, “Johnny Dodds in New Orleans,” 424-5.

\textsuperscript{115} Hersch, \textit{Subversive Sounds}, 56.

\textsuperscript{116} Shapiro and Hentoff, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya}, 12.
rule. Nobody was allowed in ‘less they would wear a coat and a collar. It turned out to be a respectable place …

— Clarence Williams

[Jelly Roll Morton] eschewed the vices of his associates and cultivated their business acumen. He learned to drink moderately. And he worked hard. If, by playing the lowdown blues, Morton could pick up a dollar … he was ready to oblige. If the white customers wanted a laugh, he had ready some sensational trick and surprise effects. Whatever he played, however, it had to be good and it had to be Morton.

— Tony Jackson

The balance of “respectable” and “ratty” was a tightrope that musicians grappled with that created a unique ethical struggle. Whereas the neo-Hutchison model would only tolerate certain behaviors in mainstream culture and generally only accepted music of “respectable” nature, the unusual adaptive nature of New Orleans suggests that exoticism, novelty, and showmanship held position in the local milieu and consequently became valued traits. Musicians took initiative from the practice of others to collect musical traits that not only allowed greater entertainment for their audience but also a greater breadth of personal musical expression. Bucking contests would serve as a way for bands to compete and win over audiences for their own performances. The bands that lost these competitions were forced to adapt their skillset to maintain an audience. Illustrating the importance of these scenarios, Sidney Bechet explains:

You was always being judged. It would make you tremble when one of those bands, it came into sight. Say you was somebody standing there, a spectator—you’d be hearing two bands maybe advertising for different theaters or a dance or just being out there. One of them it would come up in front of the other and face it, and you’d hear both of them. There’d be the two. And then you’d start noticing onliest the one. Somehow you’d just hear it better. Maybe it was clearer, maybe it was just giving you a lot more feeling. That band, it would be so gay and fine—

Ibid., 54-55.

the men in it, there was nothing they was depending on but themselves. They
didn’t have to play after some arrangement. Almost it was like they was playing
ahead of themselves. And so they’d have more confidence and there would be a
richness to what they were doing. And so you’d want to hear it closer and you’d
get up nearer. And then, it seemed it was all you was hearing. It was the only one
that came through. And the other band, it would get away farther and farther until
finally you just didn’t hear it at all.119

Once a member of John Oliver’s band, Baby Dodds reminisces on a time that he was
involved in a bucking contest with Kid Ory’s band and was so badly defeated that Dodds
approached Kid Ory about joining his band so that he might learn how to improve his
playing.120

The musicians who attained the most subjective success were the ones who
approached music with the greatest pluralist agenda. Johnny Dodds, for instance, was
highly regarded in his ability as a blues clarinetist but his reputation was restricted
elsewhere because of his limitations in other styles.121 In contrast, when Louis Armstrong
first became acquainted with Sidney Bechet, the singular trait he claimed stood out to
him was Bechet’s versatility.122 While Dodds’ peers recognized his greatness, his lack of
diversity regulated the potential for opportunity and musicians sought instead to follow
more often the path of Bechet. Similarly, Louis Armstrong gained notoriety not only for
his innovation, but his consolidation of various styles.123 When reflecting on the

119 Bechet, Treat It Gentle, 65.


121 Ibid., 425.

122 Armstrong, Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans, 134.

123 Brian Harker, Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings (New
trumpeters and cornet players who inspired him, Armstrong describes all by a singular trait save for Joe “King” Oliver. He suggests that Buddy Bolden relied on volume for excitement, that Bunk Johnson was limited to the blues but had great tone, and that Freddie Keppard relied mostly on novelty and gimmicks. Armstrong’s greatest influence, Joe “King” Oliver, stands out to Armstrong because he created more music than any of his peers. Armstrong explains, “Almost everything important in music today came from him.”

**Connecting Intrapluralism to Bivins’ Claims**

With intrapluralist tendencies being manifested by the musicians and ethical boundaries established within the musical culture, the aura of New Orleans’ moral ecosystem could be observed as infiltrating and characterizing jazz. The only remaining caveat in defining jazz as religion is that the musicians themselves must either identify or embody jazz as expression in similar terms to mainstream religion. This is the final remaining argument to tie Bivins’ claims to the intrapluralist perspective.

Bivins describes the following characteristics as necessary for equating religious and musical expression: community, performance, inherent experience, identity, and testimony. Additionally, to bridge the gap of expression and institution, consideration must be made for the importance of places of worship and study. The role of community and identity are married under the intrapluralist umbrella and the resulting behavioral outcome is that jazz exists as a fraternal organization of individuals. Identity in terms of self and in terms of cultural and ethnic backgrounds are quintessential in the power and

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125 Ibid., 53.
usage of jazz as a religious force. Subversion, protest, memory, and expressive freedom are all instigating factors behind jazz that rely on an epistemological understanding of the self and the group. These are topics on which jazz musicologists have recently offered a wealth of interpretation: David Ake, Bruce Boyd Raeburn, Charles Hersch, Berndt Ostendorf, and Burton Peretti have all completed notable work in these areas. Instead, an approach to less anthropological means might be useful under the prerogative that a moral ecological discussion will benefit more readily from the interpretations of performance, inherent experience, and testimony. The positivist data acquired in studying religious pluralism in New Orleans already points to the significance of identity and community. In an attempt to bargain with Kerman’s request, a metaphorical comparison of the remaining traits—testimonial, performance, inherent experience, places of worship, and study—will serve to define the evocative nature of jazz, an entity that already has ethical boundaries and a capacity for interpretation under intrapluralism.

Testimonials serve as primary sources that offer insight into a musician’s thoughts, feelings, and other cognitive processes regarding jazz. One can observe a culture of musicians describing music that is undeniably similar to colloquial accounts of religious experience in mainstream America. Louis Armstrong once stated, “Things were hard in New Orleans in those days and we were lucky if we ate, let alone pay for lessons. In order to carry on at all we had to have the love of music in our bones.” Armstrong frames jazz as a conduit of faith and optimism in a way that closely resembles prose from The King James Version of The Bible, the same book that coincidentally shapes social ethics in the neo-Hutchison model of America.

126 Ibid., 187.
Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

— Phil. 4:11-13

The similarities between the two highlight the spiritual importance of music to the individual. Most scholars, aside from Jason Bivins, recognize the spiritual nature of jazz only in terms of human spirit: primarily the functions of intellect, creativity, and passions. When an encompassing culture of intrapluralism is present, expression of human spirit is not definably different from expression of religious spirit. Likewise, as ethics are intertwined within the culture of the music, the expression of human spirit that most jazz scholars address might best be seen as a derivative of a more traditional definition of spirituality. The willingness of the participants to adapt and simultaneously be at odds with aspects of their society shows an urgency in the expression that is unrivaled by other spiritual elements. An expanded capacity for influence suggests that the expressive powers of music cannot be simply limited to human spirit alone. Furthermore, the nature in which jazz musicians describe the music highlights a transcendence that relates beyond human spirit to include the human psyche—inseparable from its relationship to emotions, images, memory, and personality. This entire embodiment of spirituality is what Bivins’ is nearly suggesting. Instead of recognizing the entirety, however, Bivins is mostly concerned with traditional religious spirituality manifesting in performance alone. An expanded perspective of spirituality offers reasoning for the musicians to synonymously interpret expression and performance of both music and religion.
Louis Armstrong again serves as an archetype in the ways he describes musical performance. He describes a sense of liberal universalism that creates the ephemeral feeling of being in utopia, a decidedly Judeo-Christian interpretation of manifested perfection. By sharing the intrapluralist functions of the music with an audience, he describes that performance has the ability to evangelize harmony and subtract the social barriers that will inevitably be erected again after the performance. Armstrong’s view of jazz as a tool for social subversion is not limited by secular constraints. His perspective includes imagery and behavior that describe a consideration for ethics, spirituality, and above all else, an intrapluralist spirit. By his own power as an individual, he can conjure an atmosphere akin to a heaven or “Garden of Eden,” and within that adapt his music and audience to one another in a way that creates relativism and pluralism simultaneously.\textsuperscript{127}

As a tool for subversion, jazz offered salvation to its participants by manufacturing unparalleled opportunity for influence, notoriety, and expression. Sidney Bechet describes this perceived sense of freedom as the following: “The music, it was the onliest thing that counted. The music, it was having a time for itself. It was moving. It was being free and natural.”\textsuperscript{128} Beyond the obvious implications of civil rights, the freedom being referred to can include relativism in the way of spirituality and ethics. In the ways that Bechet suggests the importance of music, he later describes the impact of its loss to a participant, offering an opportunity to weigh its impact on the whole of a musician’s being:


\textsuperscript{128} Bechet, \textit{Treat It Gentle}, 68.
When a man’s been giving his whole life to something he loves, his whole heart and soul, putting aside all the troubles that come to him, putting aside everything but the music—just doing that one thing so he can be giving some happiness, so he can be making some happiness—when he does that all his life and the something comes along to stop him: that’s when it hits. It’s something like a poverty, only it’s a poverty inside himself; there’s nothing he’s got any more; there’s nothing and there’s no one, and he’s forgotten.129

Aligning with Bechet’s sentiment on the loss of jazz in one’s life, Bunk Johnson writes the following after experiencing poverty and the loss of his ability to play trumpet:

You all do your very best for me and try and get me on my feet once more in life. Now, here is just what I mean when I say the word, “on my feet.” I mean this: I wants to become able to play trumpet once more, as I know I can really stomp trumpet yet … Old Bunk is only in need for a set of teeth and a good job … Do tell my dear old pal, Clarence Williams, to write me and to send a few late numbers of his. Now, I cannot play them but I can think them. O Boy, that will make me feel good anyway. If I have not got no teeth I can have something to look at when I get to thinking about the shape I am in and have no good way to go but work …130

Bunk Johnson continues to explain his state of being, that he had not been able to perform, and above all other concerns, places the return to music as his top priority. His rhetoric and tone suggest that jazz is his tool for coping with his then-current situation. Not unlike religious expression, Johnson is using music as an apparatus of comfort and guidance. Likewise, he reinforces the ethical powers he assigns to music by placing it higher on a relativist interpretation of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.131 His desire to return to music, and with it its religious parameters, offers a metaphoric similarity to the born-again practice of re-Baptism started by Evangelist Protestantism—an outcome of

129 Ibid., 86-7.

130 Shapiro and Hentoff, *Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya*, 69-70.

the Revivalist movement. There is reasonable information available to support that the
treatment of jazz mirrors in many ways the treatment of religion.

I never signed contracts for any of those jobs … [We] did not know enough to pay
attention to what was going on. We were so glad to get a chance to blow our
horns that nothing else mattered.\textsuperscript{132}
— Louis Armstrong

It was my daddy. They had snatched him off his meat-wagon down at the French
market and killed him … Was I angry about it? Well, sure, sure I was. But what
could I do? … Couple of days after my daddy was killed, I was back there at 25’s
playing harder than ever.\textsuperscript{133}
— Louis Nelson

But, you know, no music is my music. It’s everybody’s who can feel it. You’re
here … well, if there’s music, you feel it—then it’s yours too. You got to be in the
sun to feel the sun. It’s that way with music too.\textsuperscript{134}
— Sidney Bechet

The potential for evocative experience is clear in the way the musicians describe
its role in their everyday life. The usage of the music individually shows a consistent
behavior of expression that evokes more than a passive artistic outlet. The ethical
concessions accepted within the culture of the music are a foundation of its expression
and cannot be separated from the individual. Many musicians employed within a trade or
members of a traditional religious institution were identified in testimonials first by their
musical instrument or musical ability.\textsuperscript{135} The epistemological understanding of who an
individual was to others in jazz culture relied firstly on their contributions and

\textsuperscript{132} Armstrong, \textit{Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans}, 186.

\textsuperscript{133} Shapiro and Hentoff, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya}, 92.

\textsuperscript{134} Bechet, \textit{Treat It Gentle}, 2.

\textsuperscript{135} Armstrong, \textit{Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans}; Bechet, \textit{Treat It Gentle}; Foster
and Stoddard, \textit{The Autobiography of Pops Foster}; Shapiro and Hentoff, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’
To Ya}. 
participation in the field. While this is not entirely exclusionary to other identifiers, it suggests a model that contrasts the neo-Hutchison model. Wherein adherence to Protestant values is the identifying mark of a person in mainstream American secular and sacred functions, jazz musicians identified other musicians based on their participation of jazz ethics. This explains the capacity for musicians to have relativist means of expression within the music that are accepted behaviors. The boundary of prioritizing music is the primary social concern.

The subscription to the boundary of jazz ethics serves as the initiative step to participants and as jazz history progresses it manifests as a means to include or exclude those who have “proven themselves.” Musically there are tangible theoretical components that participants demonstrate, but more importantly, the cultural and expressive means of adaptation and prioritization will sort the musical “haves” from the “have-nots.” Appropriation of the music without its emic understanding, its cultural history, serves to out the musical shibboleths. Musicians who play “dicty” interpretations of jazz, those who prefer reading bands, or those who prefer other classifiably “uptight” ensembles do not meet this same impossibility of acceptance. The sense of musical and cultural lexicon is shared: the only difference being the volition of the individual. The musicians with the greatest respect and global acceptance had the fluidity to cross these inner musical boundaries and served as archetypes for the “complete” musician. Much like Paul Oliver describes the role of the preacher in an African American church, the most adaptable and evocative musicians served as role models to their musical community and set the standard for behavior within. Those who do not commit to these
ethics outright become passive participants and are not a member of the culture under pluralism by inclusion, but by toleration instead.

This fraternal organization relied on devotion to its practice with seemingly all participants occupying vast majorities of their otherwise free time to its practice. Clarence Williams was a shoeshine during the day and, like his peers, spent most of the night engaging with music. He says, “I was goin’ around to all the joints, stayin’ up all night playin’ for nothing, or for drinks—whatever they’d give me.”¹³⁶ In the daylight hours, Williams would finish work and commit to practicing piano for hours at a time saying, “[I] just lived piano—all day and all night. I would spend only fifteen minutes on dinner so that I could use the rest of the time practicing.”¹³⁷ This shared devotion led to a fraternal connection amongst all jazz musicians. Musicians would gather nightly at various clubs, cabarets, sporting houses, or any other performance venue. They would collaborate musically and learn, but also share in the camaraderie of the culture: food, drink, conversation, and even engagement with vices. Much like a church serves a community in more ways than just a house of worship, the nightclub or nightclub-equivalent establishment served as the central meeting place for the jazz community.

On a smaller scale, the function of an ensemble required a concession to group mentality. While relativism was still a desired attribute and found its home in solos and call-and-response, an ensemble that performed best as a singular group was the one that was most respected. On the matter, Sidney Bechet offers:

¹³⁶ Shapiro and Hentoff, *Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya*, 32.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 33.
And that band was best that played together. No matter what kind of music it was, if the band could keep it together, that made it the best. That band, would know its numbers and know its foundation and it would know itself.\textsuperscript{138}

An individual had to understand truly his or her own musical and ethical boundaries and adapt them to the group in order to achieve the greatest perception of compatibility: a true embodiment of intrapluralism. Nat Towles describes the phenomenon as:

\textit{… Half a dozen men putting it out all together, each in his own way and yet somehow fitting in all right with the others. It had to be right, and it was, because it came from the right place.}\textsuperscript{139}

This commitment and devotion to the music and its fellowship was a hallmark of its most serious practitioners. Beyond devotion on a personal level, many musicians sought mentorship from more experienced players, by way of lessons or observation. Zutty Singleton remembers, “Most all kids took music lessons of some kind.”\textsuperscript{140} Louis Armstrong studied cornet and trumpet with Willie Davis and Joe Oliver.\textsuperscript{141} Sidney Bechet studied with George Baquet, Lorenzo Tio, and Louis Nelson.\textsuperscript{142} Jelly Roll Morton claims to have studied with William Nickerson.\textsuperscript{143} A culture of internal education and mentorship was established that taught not only the musical elements of jazz, but also its cultural and ethical boundaries. Not only would musicians learn through observation, but mentors and teachers would ask students to substitute for themselves or find other

\textsuperscript{138} Bechet, \textit{Treat It Gentle}, 64.

\textsuperscript{139} Shapiro and Hentoff, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya}, 16.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{142} Bechet, \textit{Treat It Gentle}, 73, 79.

\textsuperscript{143} Lomax, \textit{Mister Jelly Roll}, 8.
performance opportunities for their students, effectively shaping their understanding of
the field and its function. This style of teaching is in many ways the jazz equivalent of
Sunday school, offering knowledge of the history and morals of the tradition.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

The practice of jazz is a consequence of its historical environment: the moral ecosystem of New Orleans. Jazz is able to exist as religion or quasi-religion based on the following criteria: 1) It creates consequentialist ethical boundaries on its participants, 2) It embodies the function of intrapluralism and therefore aligns itself with the other religious occupants of New Orleans’ moral ecosystem, and 3) It is practiced and embodied in means that mirror religious epistemology, institution, and experience. The continued use of intrapluralism as a tenet of jazz culture offers a valuable ethnomusicological tool that contends with ethics and epistemology and offers insight into the religious and expressive functions of jazz. The roots of New Orleans being an exception to the American mainstream includes its pluralist divergence and provides nuance to the common narrative of where jazz came from—and inherently where it went afterwards. The Great Migration brought this unique musical culture to cities across America and inspired a depth of expression that grew nationally. Due to its auspicious circumstances in the city of New Orleans, jazz and religion mingled in a way that was inaccessible anywhere else during the music’s development and the result was an African American expression that continues today.

Jazz was a craft that demanded excellence in practice and embodiment and challenged those who took it upon themselves to be members of the music to be serious in their craft—regardless of whether or not the music reflected such a spirit. The culture
that the music created, by its congregants and preachers alike, compares to religion in the most orthodox of functions. The music required study, ritual, performance, ethical observance, and mentorship. The expression of the music matches Bivins’ description of spirituality, but moreover, the music culturally functions as religion does. The denomination of jazz has consequentialist rules to abide by, has judgment both internal and external, has places of “worship,” has an oral history and cultural memory unique to the music, has outreach, has phenomena, and has an emic epistemology. The music has a form of baptism where young musicians must prove their worthiness and commitment to the music, and be accepted by the music’s elders. There are instances of musical conversion where outside musicians are passively proselytized into the religion. There is room for individual expression within the music’s boundaries paralleling in many ways the “unprogrammed worship” of a Quaker service or the Talmudic study of Chasiddim. There is a common understanding that after death one is remembered by their music, as is apparent in the oral history and body of quotes about musicians from other musicians. This musical memory of a person, often tinted with hagiography and hyperbole, represents the potential for an afterlife.

The identity of the musician is intertwined not only with the music itself, but also with the musician’s embodiment of jazz culture—of jazz religion. New opportunity, innovation, and expression of peers symbolize the ambition of a sermon and the undying need for a minority culture to experience salvation. To one another, these musicians become consequential saints.


“Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Music.” In *Musical Review and Record of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence* 1, no. 7 (1839), 76-77.


APPENDIX A.

SUPPLEMENTARY MAPS REPRESENTING RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS
Figure 1. Religious Institutions of the Sea Islands Pre-1890
Source Map: Unidentified Publisher, “Map of the coast of South Carolina, from Charleston to Savannah,” 1860.
Figure 2. Religious Institutions of the Mississippi Delta Pre-1890
Figure 3. Religious Institutions of New Orleans Pre-1890