

*Shaping Jazz: Cities, Labels, and the Global Emergence of an Art Form.*  
By Damon J. Phillips. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013.  
Pp. xiv+217. \$35.00.

Gabriel Rossman  
UCLA

Damon Phillips has spent a decade on a remarkable work that engages deeply with jazz from 1917 through 1933. However, even if (like me) your knowledge of jazz does not extend much beyond George Gershwin, Phillips's book is both accessible and provides tremendous theoretical interest for what it says about how fields develop. The central question of *Shaping Jazz* is how the canon formed, as operationalized by how often songs were rerecorded. Phillips's argument is that in various respects the early recordings of a song grants an imprimatur of identity, and this in turn shapes its long-run reception.

The first analysis is based on a social network of the cities where songs were recorded, where nodes are cities and arcs are defined by musician travel. Although the story is fundamentally about diffusion (of songs), his emphasis is on the identity of songs rather than flows through the network. That is, in Podolny's terms the analysis is mostly about prisms and only secondarily about pipes. Phillips shows that the travel network was symbolically important insofar as (to simplify his model slightly) isolates come to be seen as exotic, especially when the giant component is dense. Exoticism becomes beneficial for new songs when allowed to interact with several variables that indicate a recording would be hard to categorize musically. The upshot is that sounding weird makes a song less popular when it originates in the core but more popular when it originates from a disconnected, exotic city.

Chapters 2 and 6 are conceptually similar insofar as both argue that a common trajectory of successful songs is to originate in a commercially less powerful position and then be adopted by actors in a more powerful position. In chapter 2 this outcome means originating in an exotic city and then being rerecorded in a core city. In chapter 6 this outcome means being originally recorded by a black band and subsequently rerecorded by a white band. In both cases the original recording provides authenticity and the rerecording provides legitimacy and exposure. Nonetheless, even as the cover version provides fame, it draws attention to the original identity. Of course, as Phillips argues in the conclusion, the irony is that those things that once provided legitimacy and exposure may not do so in retrospect, with the important case in jazz being white bands (and in particular Paul Whiteman) that were considered both commercial and classy in their heyday but in retrospect seem like cultural usurpation and are sometimes not considered jazz at all. (I am reminded of how in my own teen years the popularity of Green Day renewed interest in the Clash, including among people who would eventually disavow interest in Green Day.) That is, we have to accept not only a sociological (as compared to musicological) con-

ception of genre, but to appreciate how the “traditional” phase of sociological genre involves collective memory. Rossman includes a very funny discussion to this effect of the possibility that the smooth jazz of Kenny G will enter the canon. Indeed, even if Kenny G is not accepted in the jazz canon, this does not mean he won’t have directly or indirectly shaped it, much as *the* canon historically developed in reaction to excommunicated heretics.

Chapters 3–5 all deal with the relationship between jazz and incumbents in the music field. Chapter 3 explores the puzzle that Weimar-era Berlin was a major center for jazz and yet in retrospect Berlin jazz has largely failed to be canonized. Phillips explains this not in terms of continuity being disrupted by the Nazis but rather that there was a sort of cohort effect, in that both the global jazz trends of the early 1930s and German notions of Kultur gave Weimar jazz a distinctly symphonic cast that has not been popular in retrospect. Chapters 4 and 5 contrast “Victorian” incumbent record labels with “Jazz Era” market entrants. Much like Weimar Germany, Victorian labels were skittish about the racial associations of jazz and disproportionately strove toward more legitimate forms, especially white “orchestras.” In contrast, Jazz Era firms were especially apt to distribute black nonorchestras and to use sparse but idiosyncratic combinations of instruments. The Jazz Era firm practices tended to be both more profitable and more artistically creative. Chapter 5 explores how labels engaged in loose coupling to resolve the legitimacy-efficacy trade-off implied by the previous chapter’s findings. In particular, Victorian firms were especially likely to reissue music by (low-legitimacy but high-profit) black nonorchestras under pseudonyms.

Overall the book provides a fascinating and distinctly sociological understanding of a major musical genre stream that has implications for fields well beyond cultural production, as with Phillips’ own argument about how the interaction of exoticism and weirdness would apply to bottled water. I found the first two and last two chapters especially interesting in part because these are the parts of the book that provide novel theoretical mechanisms that should most readily generalize well beyond jazz. The entire book rewards the reading, both for what it tells us substantively about a major art form and what it tells us theoretically about processes of legitimation, diffusion, and canonization.

*Justifiable Conduct: Self-Vindication in Memoir.* By Erich Goode. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. Pp. xx+199. \$29.95 (paper).

Colin Sumner  
*University College Cork*

Erich Goode locates his study of self-vindication in memoirs within the context of the sociology of deviance. For people to “blab at length about their transgressions, and on the scale that currently prevails,” is a “fairly recent development” (p. viii), he says. Yet even if we confine ourselves to