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The heroic age of American avant-garde art

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Abstract A major contribution of Pierre Bourdieu to the study of art was his analysis of the autonomization of modern art fields. His model of autonomy and legitimacy in modern art was based on a study of the genesis of an avant-garde in French art in the late nineteenth century. I argue that a similar autonomization of art occurred in the mid-twentieth century in the United States. I present studies in music and film to demonstrate the genesis of an American avant-garde during this period. This general process of autonomization until now has been neglected in the work of sociologists and historians on American art. My analysis shows that the genesis of principles of autonomy in the United States, unlike France, developed in what were considered the high and popular arts. These case studies reveal a failure in Bourdieu's model to account for the role of culture industries and popular artists in the autonomization of modern art fields. I show how the American art field generated a subfield of autonomous art that included both *avant-garde* high art and *independent* popular art. This permanent subfield of avant-garde and independent art became central to future struggles over autonomy and innovation in American art.

Keywords Avant-garde art · Autonomy · Classification · Popular Art · High Art · Subcultures

Pierre Bourdieu is one of the most influential theorists on art and society in contemporary sociology (Inglis and Hughson 2005; Grenfell and Hardy 2007). One of his most important contributions was the analysis of the *autonomization* of art fields. Autonomization is when a subfield of *avant-garde art* emerges autonomous from the *principles of legitimation* found in elite art institutions or commercial art markets. His classic study of the genesis of an avant-garde in the literary and visual arts in nineteenth century France was the foundation for his general argument on autonomy and art in modern societies (Bourdieu 1993, 1996). He termed this period a Heroic Age because artists at the time, in rebelling against the prevailing rules of art in literature and

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painting, established enduring principles of autonomy in French art that inspired generation after generation of avant-garde artists (Fowler 1997).

Bourdieu argued that the potential for autonomization of a national art field depended on the history of a specific country (Bourdieu 1993, 1996; Jurt 2001; Lipstadt 2003). He never, however, presented another case similar to his study of French art. His model of art fields has been applied to other nations, but as Jurt (2001) and Boschetti (2006) point out, scholarship addressing the genesis of subfields of autonomous art is lacking. DiMaggio's (1982, 1991) analysis of the rise of high art institutions in the United States borrows from Bourdieu to show how urban elites beginning in the late nineteenth century constructed a subfield of high art free from commercial markets. But this is not the *autonomy* addressed in Bourdieu's model of the autonomization of art fields. Bourdieu is interested in the genesis of avant-garde art autonomous from the rules of art found in elite institutions as well as commercial markets; in other words, art judged by artists and intellectuals independent of these institutions and markets. Other sociologists have focused on American avant-garde movements (Crane 1987; Cameron 1996), but no sociologist has addressed the historical genesis of principles of autonomy across the arts in America. This article shows how such a genesis did take place across the high and popular arts and the significant impact of this general autonomization of American art.

The present article argues that American art in the mid-twentieth century experienced a transformation comparable to the autonomization of French art in the late nineteenth century. Using case studies of music and film, I demonstrate that Bourdieu's analysis of autonomy in art fields applies well to twentieth century American art. I show, however, a significant difference between the autonomization of art in France and the United States. The difference between these moments of autonomization is the role culture industries and popular artists played in the struggle over autonomy and innovation in American art. This role of the *popular* in the rise of avant-garde art in the United States led to different articulations of principles of autonomy and legitimation than those Bourdieu describes for the Heroic Age in French art. While the differences between my analysis and Bourdieu's might reflect social and cultural differences between our two respective countries, they also point to a weakness in his failing to account for the complexity in the production and consumption of popular art.

This article provides two major contributions to the sociology of art. The first contribution expands our understanding of American art in the twentieth century. A number of sociologists and historians highlight how the mid-twentieth century was a major moment of transition in American art, both in a flourishing of the arts and in challenges to established aesthetic, cultural, and social distinctions in art (Blau 1991; DiMaggio 1991, 1992; Ennis 1992; Kammen 1999; Zolberg 1990, 2007). Their scholarship, however, overlooks how this period in American art was also the moment when the position of *avant-garde* or *independent* art became a permanent objective and subjective element of the American art field. The *taken-for-granted* position of avant-garde or independent art today, whether applauding this art's vibrant state or lamenting its marginal standing, is a product of the autonomization of American art in the mid-twentieth century. And the case studies of music and film provide a comparative analysis of the complexity and breadth of this unique moment of autonomization in American art.

The second contribution of this article is a re-evaluation of how Bourdieu understands modern art fields. I show how Bourdieu failed to recognize *relations of opposition* in art fields that can account for expressions of autonomy or rebellion in popular art. Shusterman (2000) and Fowler (1997) point to problems in Bourdieu's narrow conception of popular art. This essay, however, builds upon the criticism of Hesmondhalgh (2006). Hesmondhalgh argues that Bourdieu ignores the complexity of the relations of production in popular art in the twentieth century, particularly the role of cultural intermediaries. Cultural intermediaries are the gatekeepers in the culture industry—commercial enterprises, professional organizations, and the decision makers within these organizations—who mediate between artists and audiences by producing, exhibiting, promoting, or representing artists and their works for specific venues and markets (Hirsch 1972). Bourdieu's narrow view of popular art as a "black box" of mass culture led to a model of art fields in which the question of autonomy does not arise in relation to art produced or consumed by what for now we can call the popular classes. This article develops a model of art fields with a broader scope for analyzing distinctions, conflicts, and strategies of rebellion in the autonomization of American art. While it is based on Bourdieu's major works on art fields, *The Field of Cultural Production* and *The Rules of Art*, the incorporation of the *popular* into my model presents a critique and re-conceptualization of Bourdieu's approach to art and society (Bourdieu 1993, 1996).[1]

Bourdieu: art fields and autonomization

It is best to begin with Bourdieu's general analysis of art fields before moving to his analysis of autonomization. Bourdieu analyzes art fields based on two determining factors, demand and consecration. These factors generate a field of positions occupied by genres, works, artists, and audiences—as well as intermediaries such as producers, publishers, exhibitors, sellers, and critics—which he sometimes represents in an abstract two-axis graph (Bourdieu 1993, p. 49, 1996, p. 122). His model of the structure of an art field is represented in Fig. 1. The X axis represents demand. It ranges from the *external demand* of art institutions and commercial markets for specific genres, works, and artists to the *autonomy* of certain genres, works, and artists from this demand. As a position moves right on the X axis, the influence of external demand increases towards the ultimate external demand of anonymous commercial markets. On the other hand, as positions move left on the X axis, genres, works, and artists gain greater autonomy. The Y axis represents consecration. It ranges from low to high consecration as it measures the cultural status of genres, works, and artists through the *principles of legitimation* active in the field, including the social status of their audiences. As a position moves up on the Y axis, consecration increases for genres, works, and artists; that is, they gain greater status.

One can divide this field into four quadrants that represent the basic relations of distinction among genres, works, and artists in an art field. These quadrants are shown in Fig. 1. In Quadrant I, genres, works, and artists are determined by the external

[1] In this article, assume Bourdieu's key arguments are in both these works unless otherwise cited.

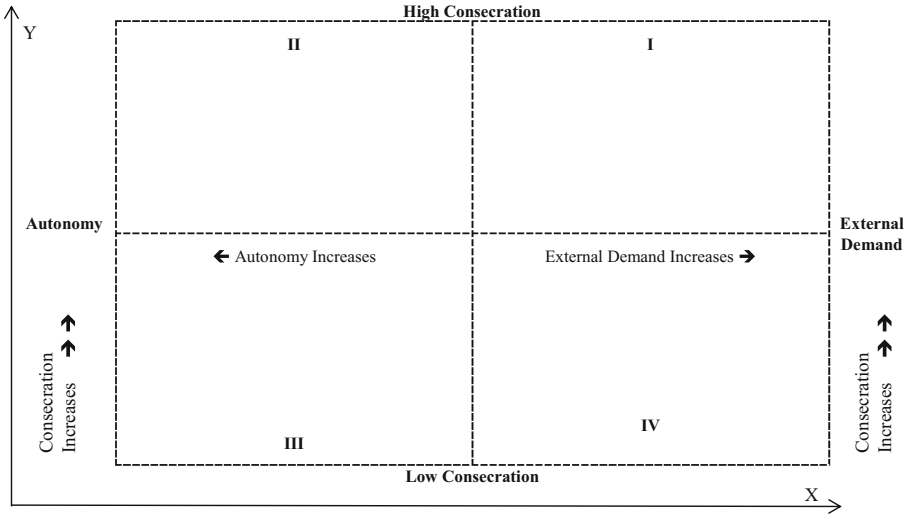

Fig. 1 Pierre Bourdieu's basic model of art fields

demand of institutions and markets. They gain high consecration based on the principles of legitimation guiding these institutions and markets as well as the social status of their elite patrons and bourgeois audiences. Genres, works, and artists in Quadrant II are autonomous from institutional and market demand. They derive high consecration based on the recognition and social status of cognoscenti of artists, critics, and intellectual audiences. Quadrants III and IV contain genres, works, and artists with relatively low consecration. Genres, works, and artists in Quadrant III are marginal to the field with no commercial audience and little to no recognition by critics and intellectuals. Low consecration in Quadrant III is a product of relative anonymity, the absence of critical recognition and commercial success. Genres, works, and artists in Quadrant IV serve large commercial markets. They are clearly not anonymous; their low consecration comes from the low social status of their audiences.

Figure 2 provides an elaboration of Bourdieu's conceptualization of art fields. He situates *academy art* and *bourgeois art* in Quadrant I: external demand + high consecration. Academy art serves patron audiences and gains *institutional* consecration from elite institutions. A contemporary example of academy art is an art work, such as Jean-Michael Basquiat's *Hollywood Africans*, exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Bourgeois art would be an art work for sale at a top international gallery like the present-day Gagosian Gallery, which represents international stars of the global art world like Damien Hirst (Thornton 2008). The social status of the buyers provides *audience* consecration for this bourgeois art. Bourdieu refers to art in Quadrant II—autonomous + high consecration—as *intellectual art*. Intellectual art is successful avant-garde genres that gain support from artists, critics, and intellectual audiences. These cognoscenti provide *charismatic* consecration in their criticism and social status. An example of intellectual art is Abstract Expressionism in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Influential art critics Clement Greenberg (*The Nation*, *Partisan Review*) and Harold Rosenberg (*Art News*) celebrated Abstract Expressionists Jackson

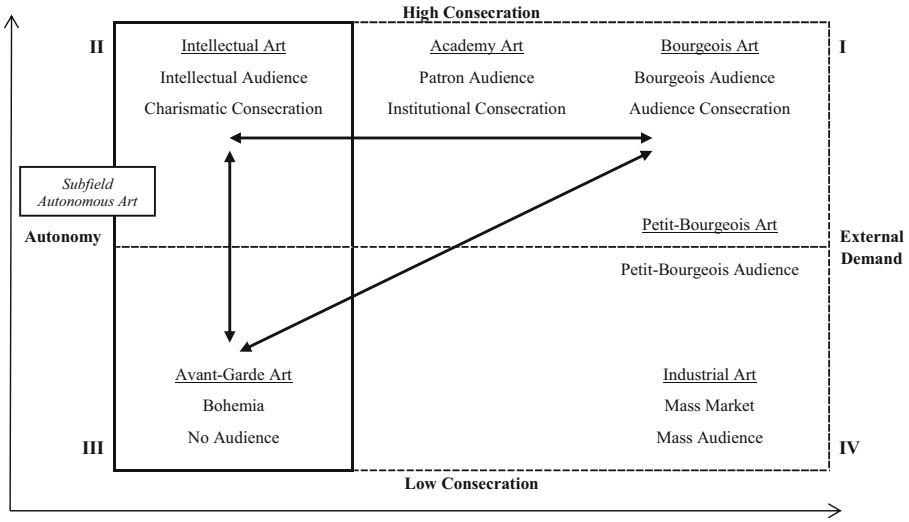

Fig. 2 Pierre Bourdieu's basic model of art fields

Pollack and Willem de Kooning whose art was exhibited in small New York City galleries such as Peggy Guggenheim's The Art of This Century.

In terms of low consecration, Bourdieu presents two basic art positions. Art in Quadrant III—autonomy + low consecration—is called *avant-garde art.* This art has no audience. It is usually the art of struggling bourgeois artists. An example of avant-garde art is the circle of young writers—including Alan Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and John Clellon Holmes—who formed a community in New York City's bohemian scene in the mid-1940s. Only later, in the 1950s, did they become the acclaimed Beat Generation; with Scribner publishing the first beat novel *Go* in 1952. Art in Quadrant IV–external demand + low consecration—is what Bourdieu calls *industrial art*. This art serves a mass audience. This art garners the greatest financial rewards, but has low consecration because of the low status of its audience. An example of industrial art is C. C. Beck and Bill Parker's comic book series *Captain Marvel* published by Fawcett Comics from 1940 to 1953. Finally, Bourdieu positioned *petit-bourgeois art* between Quadrants I and IV as a profitable genre with an audience whose social status gives it greater consecration than industrial art, but less than bourgeois art. An example of petit-bourgeois art is the *Saturday Evening Post* cover illustrations of Norman Rockwell from the 1910s to the 1960s.

Figure 2 also represents Bourdieu's conceptualization of the definitive struggle in modern art, the conflict over autonomy and legitimation. Quadrants II and III represent what Bourdieu calls the *subfield of autonomous art*. Autonomy in the field is linked to relations of opposition in the art field. These relations are represented by the three arrows in Fig. 2. Autonomy, in other words, is embedded in struggles over legitimation among avant-garde artists, bourgeois intellectuals, elite institutions, and bourgeois markets. The first relation of opposition is between avant-garde and intellectual art versus academy and bourgeois art. The second relation of opposition is between a heretical avant-garde art and orthodox intellectual art. Innovation in the field is driven by both oppositions. As elite institutions and bourgeois markets co-opt intellectual art,

intellectuals anoint a previously anonymous avant-garde as the next intellectual art. The next generation of artists, of course, rebels against this new intellectual art with a new avant-garde heresy—and so forth, and so on. An example of this process is Abstract Expressionism as intellectual art in the late 1940s, its success as academy and bourgeois art in the 1950s, and the rise of Pop Art as the new avant-garde in the 1960s with artists like Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.

It is important to stress that *autonomy* for Bourdieu is a relational value of an art field. In his model, autonomy is not centered on the individual, such as in the analysis of art by Critical Theorists like Theodor Adorno (Adorno 1991; Held 1980). Autonomy is an emergent quality of a modern art field in relation to the two forces of opposition, in the first instance, autonomy from the *external demand* of academic art and bourgeois art, and in the second instance, autonomy from the orthodoxy of intellectual art. Bourdieu is interested in autonomy as a collective phenomenon, both objectively, as social networks emerge that are independent from either external demand or intellectual orthodoxy, and subjectively, as both intellectual art and avant-garde art become commonly recognized positions for actors in an art field. For Bourdieu, autonomization occurs when such networks and positions become a permanent part of an art field. Since elite institutions and commercial markets represent in his model the external *forces* and *interests* of social class and political power, Bourdieu (1998) is concerned with how cultural production in general becomes more autonomous when established subfields of autonomous art can push back against such forces and interests.

Now subfields of autonomous art usually include the celebration of the individual autonomy of artists. And for Bourdieu, subfields of autonomous art do enable greater individual autonomy. But it is the *collective* dynamics of the subfield that generates the general degree of autonomy in the field, which then enables lesser or greater *individual* autonomy. In another sense, the very idea of an authentic, autonomous artist, exemplified in avant-garde art, is itself a product of the collective autonomization of modern art fields. And as we see later, the authenticity of an artist in avant-garde art is almost always anchored in artistic communities, circles, or subcultures located in subfields of autonomous art. Certainly *outsider art* of a lone *naïve artist* exists, such as the famous Watts Towers by Simon Rodia (Zolberg and Cherbo 1997). But such outsider art is peripheral in Bourdieu's model until it is in some fashion located in an art field. A naïve artist who is isolated and unaware of an art field is outside the dynamics that define the struggles over autonomy and legitimation. It is such struggles within an art field, however, that this model attempts to analyze. Ironically, the very term *outsider art* is now a recognized position in the American art field, and therefore, part of the struggles over autonomy and legitimation in the field. I can reference the Watts Towers, for instance, confident that readers familiar with American art will understand this example!

Another important distinction also exists in an art field. This distinction is between bourgeois art and industrial art. But this distinction remains external to the struggles over autonomy and legitimation in Bourdieu's analysis, and therefore, not a significant relation of opposition in his analysis. This is evident in how the three arrows of relations of opposition in Fig. 2, based on Bourdieu's own graphic representations, exclude participation from industrial art in Quadrant IV. An example of this exclusion of industrial art is the use of comic book imagery by avant-garde artist Roy Lichtenstein in the 1960s. His work gained intellectual, institutional, and audience consecration

while comic books and their artists remained in the industrial art position with no consecration (Lopes 2009).

I have named a variety of actors, works, organizations, and relationships in presenting Bourdieu's model of art fields. These examples point to the complexity of his model. The objective structure of an art field is a field of organizations, networks, actors, and art. His model incorporates informal networks like art circles, scenes, and salons; enterprises and organizations such as publishing-houses, journals, galleries, exhibitions, museums, theaters, and institutions; and actors including publishers, critics, theater-directors, gallery-owners, patrons, artists, and audiences. For Bourdieu, networks, enterprises, organizations, and their *intermediary personages* act as mediators as artists position themselves in an art field and audiences discover their art. An art field incorporates all these elements even if for simplicity a graphic representation of this field presents only artists and genres across the two-dimensional grid of demand and consecration (Bourdieu 1996, p. 122).

I have used American art examples in my description of art fields because of their greater familiarity to American readers. Bourdieu, however, approaches art fields, autonomy, and legitimation based on French art. More importantly, Bourdieu argues that the subfield of autonomous art and its relation to innovation and legitimation in French art is a historical product. It is the result of the *autonomization* of the French art field in the late nineteenth century. During this period, new principles of autonomy set themselves against the dominant principles of legitimation found in academy and bourgeois art. Bourdieu links this rebellion to the growth of a French middle class. This change in the social structure led to a higher demand for the literary and visual arts and a simultaneous increase in writers and visual artists. Bourdieu sees the eventual over-abundance of artists leading to an artistic rebellion in the second half of the nineteenth century. Making virtue out of necessity, avant-garde artists came to view their immiseration as indicative of their dedication to *art for art's sake*, and subsequently, adopted new principles of autonomy against the prevailing *rules of art* governing the fields of the literary and visual arts.

Accompanying the boom in the literary and visual arts was a vibrant literary press of journals and reviews. This press provided not only a platform for *proletaroid intelligentsia* to make a living writing popular serial fiction and journalism, but also a platform for struggling writers to transform themselves into art critics. The Heroic Age in French Art included the birth of the art critic; and a new form of consecration in the art field where writer-critics became the "measure of everything in art and literature" (Bourdieu 1996, p. 54). Bourdieu also takes into account other actors, networks, enterprises, and organizations. His description of the literary and visual arts incorporates a complex of relationships arranged around circles of artists and writers at cafés and brasseries in the bohemian scene of Paris; patron-supported salons frequented by artists, writers, critics, publishers, and others; institutions of consecration such as the French Academy; publishing firms and their publishers; theaters and their directors; exhibits; and galleries. Bourdieu, for example, understands the overlapping and contrasting positions of writers Baudelaire and Flaubert during the Heroic Age in relation to various artists, genres, circles, cafes, brasseries, salons, publishers, and journals.

Since this article cannot present a detailed description of Bourdieu's historical case studies, Fig. 3 presents one example of the dynamics he outlines in his analysis. The principles of legitimation in the French Academy and the bourgeois art market in the

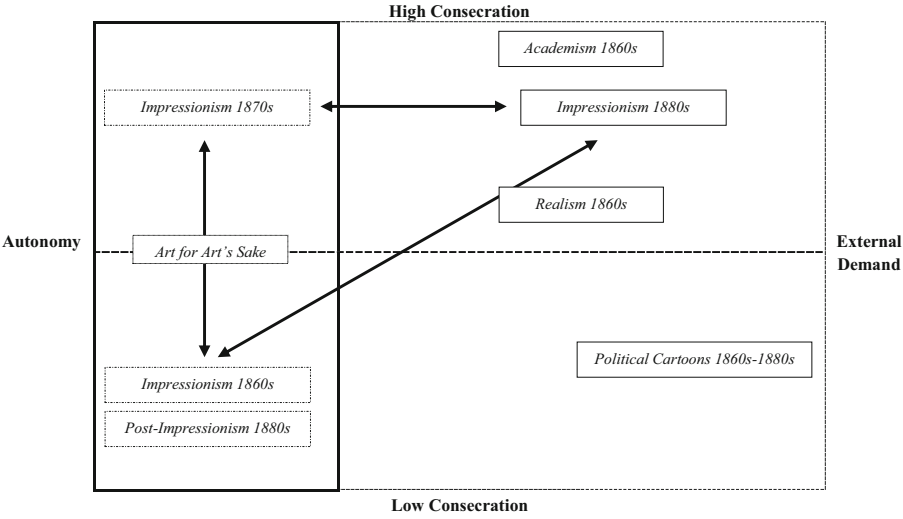

Fig. 3 Autonomous art & relations of opposition French late-nineteenth century visual art

1860s positioned the visual art genre of *Academism,* neo-classicism, and romanticism, and to a lesser extent the genre of *Realism,* as academic and bourgeois art. A young circle of artists gathered in the 1860s Parisian bohemian scene and created an avant-garde movement to claim new principles of autonomy in French painting. A favorite haunt of this circle—painters Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Bazille, Pissarro, and Cezanne, along with writer-critics Zola and Champfleury—was the café Guerbois. Their movement, *Impressionism,* radically challenged the rules of art in French art. Rejected by the French Academy in its annual Salon de Paris in 1863, Impressionists had their first public display at an alternative exhibition, Salon de Refusés. Following this exhibit, however, they continued to struggle for recognition and financial reward even as they gained charismatic consecration from intellectual critics in the press such as Zola and Champfleury. Impressionists were forced to organize the *Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs* in the 1870s to present their own exhibitions. By the 1880s, however, Impressionism gained a bourgeois audience in galleries and exhibitions, and even institutional consecration at the Salon de Paris. In the 1880s, however, the orthodox Impressionists were challenged by a *Post-Impressionist* avant-garde. This new circle of avant-garde artists—Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat, Van Gough, and others—established in 1884 the *Société des Artistes Indépendants* and its exhibit Salon des Indépendants. The subfield of autonomous art was clearly established and French visual art experiences a continuous series of avant-garde heresies. Absent from Bourdieu's analysis, however, were the caricaturists like Honoré Daumier in the popular press of the period.

Bourdieu argues that the French art field since the late nineteenth century has been defined by two hierarchies of legitimation—one between avant-garde/intellectual and academic/bourgeois art and another between bourgeois art and industrial art. The avant-garde/intellectual rebellion, however, confronted academic/bourgeois art and its bourgeois sensibilities. It positioned itself subjectively and objectively against this art and its social class sensibilities. This art rebellion viewed industrial art as not worthy of any consideration beyond contempt (Bourdieu 1996; Huyssen 1986). Once the social space

of autonomous art and the position of avant-garde artist were firmly established, recurring struggles between heretical and orthodox artists drove innovation for intellectual, academic, and bourgeois art. All three positions, however, maintained a boundary against the pretentions of petit-bourgeois art, the vulgarity of industrial art, and the unrefined tastes of the dominated classes. Bourdieu (1990) later recognizes *middle brow art*, such as photography and jazz, but sees their efforts at legitimation as doomed to fail since they reside outside the main relations of opposition in art fields. When Bourdieu refers to the *illusion* of an art field being that everyone plays their *ready-made* part in the game of perpetual heresy and orthodoxy, he does not include middle-brow art, popular art, or their practitioners. But such art and artists were unquestionably part of the autonomization of American art.

The American art field and the autonomization of art

The autonomization of art in the United States had to wait until the mid-twentieth century. Several factors account for this relatively late arrival of a subfield of autonomous art in America. The most obvious is the later institutionalization of consecrated art (high art) in America. Zolberg (1990) points to a mix of social, economic, and political changes that led to a boom in the consecrated arts in the mid-twentieth century. Blau (1991) points to a similar set of factors that gave rise to this "historical epic" in the American consecrated arts. In particular, the rise in the number of middle class, the rise in educational attainment, and the rise in support for the arts led to a renaissance in cultural creativity and institutionalization across the consecrated arts. DiMaggio (1992) also shows how social-structural changes supported the institutionalization of consecrated art in America across the visual, musical, theater, and dance arts into the mid-point of the twentieth century.

It was not until the mid-twentieth century that America had the type of social structure and art fields to create the social context necessary to generate subfields of autonomous art in consecrated art—a social context similar to the Heroic Age of French art. Prior to the 1940s, modernist art existed in America (Taylor 1979; Hitchcock 1988). It was only in the 1940s and 1950s, however, that a wave of domestic *avant-garde* genres in consecrated art appeared, such as Abstract Expressionism, Experimental Music, and Experimental Film (Crane 1987; Cameron 1996; Sitney 2002; Soares 2010). In addition, it was only in the post-war period as the American art field generated major domestic avant-gardes that permanent subfields of autonomous art appeared that could nurture future innovation in consecrated art. Sociologists have analyzed specific avant-garde movements during this period (Crane 1987; Cameron 1996). This article, however, places these avant-garde movements within a broader genesis of autonomous art across the arts that represented a more far-reaching structural and ideological change in American art.

This historical epic, however, also included changes in industrial art as well (Ennis 1992). In the post-war period, the centralization of the culture industry reached a historic peak in film, radio, and music, but then suffered a large setback. Artists entered the immediate post-war period under the centralized power of a select number of cultural intermediaries who acted as bureaucratic *functionaries* (Peterson 1990). These decision-makers in the industrial oligopoly determined what industrial art was.

By the 1950s, changes in technology and law in industrial art undermined this concentrated power in film, broadcast, and recording (Ennis 1992; Peterson 1990; Lopes 2002; Maltby 2003). The corporate crisis in the culture industry opened film, broadcast, and recording to new *independent* artists and new *independent* intermediaries as well as to what Peterson (1990) refers to as *entrepreneurial* producers in major corporations. This allowed for new approaches and new markets in industrial art. Industrial art was able to respond to changes in social class structure in the United States and the subsequent changes in the tastes and dispositions of American artists and audiences. The perfect storm of autonomization at mid-century in the United States occurred in both the consecrated and industrial arts. What DiMaggio (1992) calls the *opportunity space* in art fields—the potential for significant changes in the positioning of artists and their works—unlocked the American art field for radical realignment.[2]

Now Bourdieu uses the term *industrial art* to refer to genres manufactured by culture industries for a mass audience. I have already referred to *popular art* and *popular artists*. For this article, *popular art* is defined as all art enjoyed by the middle and lower classes, which in the case of the United States includes social class fractions based on race, ethnicity, and religion (Gans 1975). It is determined by the social composition of its audience, not the size of its market. *Popular art* within Bourdieu's terminology is all art with low consecration based on the social status of its audience. Popular art includes what at mid-century were called middle-brow art and low-brow art in America. Cultural critic Dwight Macdonald's rant against middle-brow and low-brow art in his famous *Diogenes* essay "A Theory of Mass Culture" in 1953 demonstrates their common distinction from high art and their mutual low consecration in America at the time.

Bourdieu never points to autonomous popular art in his elaboration of the genesis of subfields of autonomous art. He neglects the potential for (1) a rebellion against corporate intermediaries and their hegemonic power in popular art, and (2) a subfield of autonomous popular art. This makes his model of autonomization inadequate for analyzing American art in the twentieth century. Struggles for autonomy, innovation, and legitimation in American art have taken more diverse directions compared to the paths outlined by Bourdieu for French art. In the American field, autonomization led to the structuring of genres, works, artists, intermediaries, and audiences where consecrated and popular art developed into divergent struggles over autonomy and orthodoxy. The struggle between autonomy and external demand expressed itself not just between intellectual art and bourgeois art, but also between subcultural popular art, middle-brow art, and industrial popular art. The struggle between new generations of heretical artists and older generations of orthodox artists fell along a continuum of consecrated and popular art. Avant-garde art and artists were either recognized by an intellectual audience, which provided *intellectual* consecration, or recognized by a subcultural audience, which provided *subcultural* value but low consecration due to the lower status of its audience.

Figure 4 represents my model of the American art field. The factors of demand and consecration remain as well as the structure of four quadrants. Some terms have been

[2] The New Deal WPA in the 1930s acted as an important incubator for post-war avant-garde American artists with the Federal Arts Project, Federal Music Project, and Federal Theater Project. See McDonald (1969) and Bindas (1996).

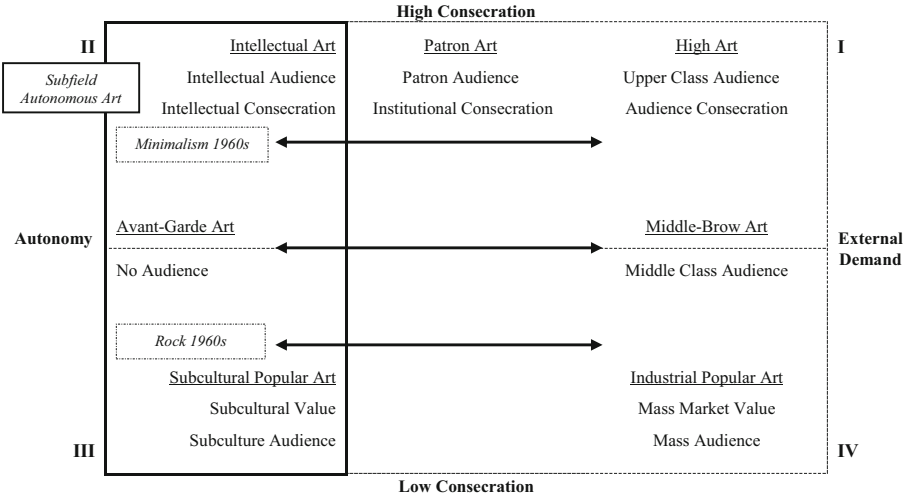

Fig. 4 The American art field in the twentieth century

translated into terminology more appropriate for the United States, such as *upper class* and *middle class* for bourgeois and petit-bourgeois and *high art* and *middle-brow art* for bourgeois art and petit-bourgeois art. Since we do not have a national academy, I replace academy art with *patron art* for art supported by private or state patronage. I use the term *industrial popular art* in order to link its relationship to a new position in this field, *subcultural popular art*. The subfield of autonomous art now includes avant-garde art, intellectual art, and subcultural popular art in order to cover the breadth of struggles between this subfield and the rules of art that determined patron art, high art, middle-brow art, and industrial popular art. The three arrows in this figure represent the relations of opposition across all institutions and art markets from consecrated to popular art.

In American art, struggles over autonomy and orthodoxy in the twentieth century generated subfields of consecrated art and popular art that shared a *homologous* relationship in rebelling against external demands, but were distinct in important ways. The distinctions among genres, works, and artists in the autonomous subfield included (1) the institutions and markets artists rebelled against; (2) the intermediaries that produced, exhibited, or sold art; (3) the symbolic value of art; (4) the audiences and critics who provided this symbolic value; and (5) the social class of artists and audiences. These differences, for example, were evident in the new styles of *minimalism* in classical music and *rock* in popular music in the 1960s.[3] Bourdieu's analysis cannot address autonomous subcultures of artists, critics, intermediaries, and audiences composed of the dominated-classes such as the case in *rock*. Nor did he recognize symbolic value distinct from the consecrated avant-garde like *minimalism* and its intellectual audiences and critics. The two general directions of autonomy and rebellion in American art articulated the social status of artists and audiences with distinct aesthetics, symbolic values, dispositions, and tastes. In addition, the main orientation

[3] Minimalism and rock can be viewed as next generation expressions of the earlier genres of experimental music and rock 'n' roll discussed in this essay (Ennis 1992; Gillett 1983; Hitchcock 1988).

of avant-garde popular art was against the middle-brow and industrial popular art supported by dominant institutions in the culture industry and their functionaries, not the art of elite patrons, upper-class audiences, and their cultural intermediaries.

Not all art in America experienced autonomization at the same time. Literature and dance, for example, incorporated a domestic avant-garde in the 1920s. The post-war boom in art, however, had a dramatic effect even on the avant-garde of these arts. European modernist and avant-garde artists did inspire American visual artists in the 1910s and 1920s. But only in the 1940s, aided by a significant migration of European avant-garde artists to the United States, like Hans Richter, Ferdinand Leger, Max Ernst, and Marc Chagall, did the visual arts generate a domestic avant-garde in Abstract Expressionism. This article presents two case studies of American art in the mid-twentieth century. Like the visual arts, music and film experienced major openings in their opportunity spaces. Unlike the visual arts, however, the autonomization of music and film included popular art as well as consecrated art. In fact, popular genres in music and film also experienced "aesthetic mobility"—genres gaining greater cultural status—by artists claiming new positions in their fields (Peterson 1994). I argue that the consolidation of subfields of autonomous art in the visual arts, film, and music, in combination with a general renaissance in art, marked the peak of the Heroic Age in American art.

A note on art fields and avant-garde art

The sociology of art and the sociology of music provide useful insights to help clarify my application of Bourdieu's concepts of *art field* and *avant-garde art* to the case studies of music and film (Alexander 2003; Dowd 2007; Regev 1994; Roy and Dowd 2010). In highlighting how actors, networks, enterprises, and organizations structure an art field, I incorporate the organizational analysis found in the *art world* and *production of culture* approaches to art and music in American sociology (Becker 1982; Dowd 2007; Peterson and Anand 2004; Zolberg 2007). These approaches underscore the role of intermediary actors and organizations in shaping the links among artists, art works, and audiences. One can think of the objective structure of an art field such as music or film as the *networks* of actors and organizations that range from informal and local networks to more extensive and established networks. It is not by chance that sociologists often describe art and music with terms defining some form of social network such as "industry structure," "art world," "stream," "scene," "genre," "subculture," or "circle" (Becker 1982; Bennett and Peterson 2004; Bystryn 1981; Crane 1987; Ennis 1992; Gelder and Thornton 1997; Lena 2012; Peterson 1990; Roy and Dowd 2010; Thornton 1996). In his model, Bourdieu constructs an objective structure of social networks dedicated to art based on the two dimensions of demand and consecration in which individuals, especially artists, subjectively orient themselves and others in relation to this field of distinctions.

I argue that in the mid-twentieth century the American art field had institutionalized an extensive network of actors and organizations controlling patron, high, middle-brow, and industrial popular art. Principles of autonomy and avant-garde art emerged against and outside these particular networks in the art field. Alexander's (2003) review of the sociology of art argues that sociologists see avant-garde art and innovative genres as

incubating in small social networks outside dominant networks of art production, whether dominant non-profit organizations or commercial industries. Both Crane (1987, 1992) and Bystryn (1981) argue that small networks or circles of artists are crucial for the emergence of avant-garde or innovative art, but vary tremendously in terms of goals, structure, and connections to other circles, scenes, or subcultures. These artistic circles also vary in their ability to enter eventually the established networks that dominate an art field. The autonomization of American music and film shows how *avant-garde art* became a permanent position at mid-century, when new communities or circles of artists and intermediaries transformed these fields.

Lena (2012) also defines a music genre as a social network. A music genre comprises a community dedicated to a collective project of music making, i.e., a genre ideal. Similar to the work on avant-garde art, Lena (2012) argues that most new music genres in the twentieth century were from "avant-garde-based" circles or "scene-based" local communities of performance, broadcasting, and recording. A few new genres were "industry-based" creations of commercial music labels. For Lena, industry-based included both independent labels and labels of major corporations. In my analysis, however, *independent* labels work as intermediaries of avant-garde-based and scene-based music genres. They are positioned outside the dominant industrial network in music. Like *independent* film companies, these commercial enterprises are intermediaries in the subfield of autonomous art, although they can cater to the demand of high, middle-brow, or industrial popular art audiences. Lena's concept of music genre is a perfect bridge between Bourdieu's use of genre and other sociological approaches to this term. Here I use her concept of *genre community* to define an *avant-garde genre* as a community dedicated to a collective project of art-making. Avant-garde genres in music and film in my case studies in this article include circle, scene, or independent-industry based genres. As Lena demonstrates in her work, these genres follow trajectories over time across these three bases, e.g., moving from a circle to a scene to an industry or institutional supported genre.

The heroic age in American music

I use three new music genres in the mid-twentieth century to show the autonomization of American music: *experimental music*, *modern jazz*, and *rock 'n' roll*. These genre communities positioned themselves against the two major genre positions in the music field at the time: *classical music* and *popular music* (Lopes 2002; Ennis 1992). Each of these rebellions challenged prevailing orthodoxies in music. While they comprised different aesthetics, audiences, artists, intermediaries, and positions in the field, together they contributed to the establishment of a new social space of autonomous music. This social space became the fertile ground for future innovation in American music.[4] Figure 5 presents the American music field at mid-century and the trajectory of these

[4] Folk music was another genre in the social space of autonomous music. But unlike experimental music, modern jazz, and rock 'n' roll, this genre community collected and performed "traditional" folk music. In the 1960s, when songwriters like Bob Dylan took center stage in the folk music revival, this community still resisted new forms of performance. Dylan discovered this orthodoxy with the disastrous reception of his "electric" set at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival. See Cantwell (1996), Eyerman and Barretta (1996), and Garofalo (1997) on the folk music genre.

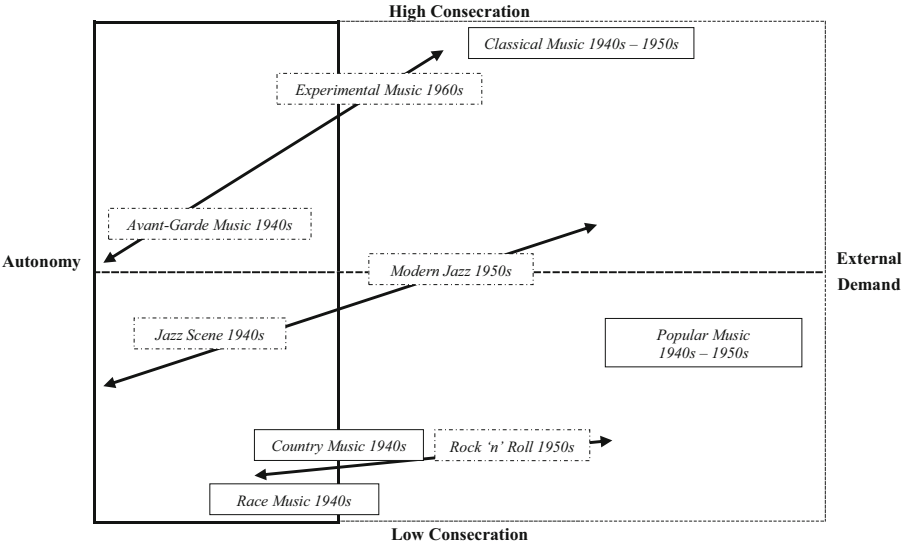

Fig. 5 Positions in autonomization American music field mid-twentieth century

three avant-garde genres. Figure 6 shows the positions of the musical examples used in this section on the Heroic Age in American music. The following discussion is based on my research on American music as well as secondary sources (Lopes 1992, 1999, 2000, 2002).

Experimental music was an avant-garde genre community in classical composition that appeared in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s (Cameron 1996). This community included several approaches to composition, but composers like John Cage recognized their collective project as maverick experimental music-makers (Nichols 1998; Broyles 2004). Experimental music challenged the reigning orthodoxy

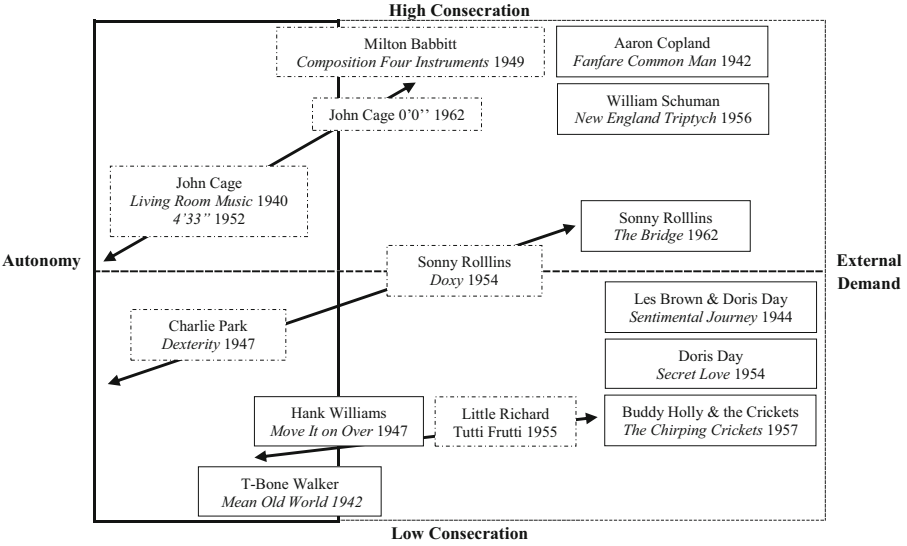

Fig. 6 Artists' positions in autonomization American music field mid-twentieth century

of *internationalist* composers in American classical music at the time (Cameron 1996). Internationalist composers fell into two compositional styles, neo-classicism and serialism. Serialists like Milton Babbitt found a place in university music programs, while neo-classicists like Aaron Copland found support among patrons and audiences. Experimentalists never gained the consecration of the classical art world. They remained marginal to this art world of live performance, recording, publishing, and academic programs. Experimental music only established a stable social space in the 1960s with the further expansion of higher education and the arts (Cameron 1996; Goldfarb 2000). New generations of avant-garde composers, like minimalist Steve Reich, would emerge from this subfield of autonomous art (Nichols 1998).

Experimental music resonated with a small community of avant-garde artists in music, visual arts, dance, theater, and film. Similar to the avant-garde during the French Heroic Age, avant-garde artists across the high arts in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s intermingled and at times collaborated. Experimental music composers oriented their strategies of rebellion toward the recognition of this intellectual audience. The arrow running through Avant-Garde Music towards Experimental Music in Fig. 5 shows the strategy of rebellion of this community moving from an avant-garde art position towards intellectual and institutional consecration. In terms of dispositions, aesthetics, intermediaries, and audiences, Avant-Garde Music and Experimental Music were elite in terms of the *social status* of its patrons and audiences. These artists were mostly from middle class families. Many of their parents were cultural workers, such as missionaries, inventors, journalists, publishers, or musicians (Nichols 1998; Hitchcock 1988).

In the 1940s, the internationalist hegemony of classical music can be seen in the career of Aaron Copland, a celebrated American composer at the time. Conductor Eugene Goossens of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra commissioned a fanfare from Copland in 1942. *Fanfare for the Common Man* was a composition based on neo-classical composition. The score for *Fanfare* was published by the established music publishers Boosey and Hawkes whom Copland joined in 1939. In the same year *Fanfare* was commissioned, Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* was recorded by the New York Philharmonic for the major record label Columbia. In 1945, Copland was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in music for *Appalachian Spring*. Copland was positioned securely in the patron and bourgeois arts.

William Schuman also was one of the most celebrated American composers at mid-century. Schuman was associated with a more conservative group of composers in classical music. He was awarded the first Pulitzer Prize for music in 1943, the same year he joined the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Two years later, he became president of Julliard School of Music, where he remained until 1962. He composed *New England Triptych* in 1956. It was commissioned by the famous conductor and radio personality André Kostelanetz. The score was published by the oldest music publisher in the United States, G. Schirmer, and this work was recorded by the New York Philharmonic for Columbia in 1959. Schuman's case points to the continued dominance of internationalists in patron and bourgeois music in the 1950s.

Milton Babbitt represents the serialist wing of the American internationalists. He received an MFA in music composition at Princeton University in 1942. Babbitt composed *Composition for Four Instruments* in 1949, one year after joining the faculty at Princeton University. This work followed the twelve-tone composition championed

by European composer Arnold Schoenberg, who in 1934, at the age of 59, immigrated to the United States. The score was published by New Music Editions, an independent publisher created in 1939 to support modernist American composers. In 1959, after Babbitt received an Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, his composition was recorded by the small independent label Composers Recordings, owned by the modernist American composers Otto Leuning and Olivier Daniel. Babbitt and serialism were clearly positioned as intellectual and patron music at mid-century.

In contrast to Copland, Schuman, and Babbitt, experimental music composer John Cage remained marginal to the music field in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1940s, he moved among a circle of American and European avant-garde artists; painters Mark Tobey, Piet Mondrian, Marcel Duchamp, and Jackson Pollack; film-makers Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid; and long-time partner and collaborator dancer-choreographer Merce Cunningham. John Cage's avant-garde music composition *Living Room Music* was written in 1940 as part of his exploration of "the musical potential of noise." This piece called for the use of household objects in the first movement such as "furniture, books, paper, windows, walls, and doors" (Bernstein 2002, p. 76). In the 1950s, Cage became part of a circle of experimental composers known as the New York School (Nyman 1999). His 1952 composition *4′33″* involved artists silent on stage for 4 minutes and 33 seconds of ambient sound. Its first performance was poorly received, as were other works during this period of experiments in silence (Revell 1992). While Cage was reluctant during this period to have his earlier works recorded, the first recording of his work was in 1950 by pianist Maro Ajemian. *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano* (1946–1948) were recorded at WOR studios for Dial Records and produced by this small independent label's owner Ross Russell.

Cage became a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan College in 1960. With institutional consecration and an institutional home, he continued to compose experimental compositions like his 1962 piece *0′00″*. The "score" for this work consisted of one sentence: "In a situation provided with maximum amplification (no feedback), perform a disciplined action." The first collection of his essays and lectures, *Silences*, was published by Wesleyan University Press in 1961. That same year Cage joined the catalog of the established music publisher C. F. Peters. Cage, after two decades as a marginal avant-garde composer, captured a position in intellectual and patron art as experimental music successfully entered academia (Cameron 1996; Pritchett et al. 2013).

In the 1940s and 1950s, popular swing musicians also promoted a new avant-garde genre, *modern jazz*. This genre was born in an artistic circle of black swing musicians in New York City, including Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and Max Roach, who gathered for jam sessions in the early 1940s. In the late 1940s, their new style called bebop, and their hipster panache, captured the imagination of young swing musicians across the nation and lead to a modern jazz genre community. Beboppers and modern jazz musicians directed their art for art's sake rebellion against the culture industry and its industrial popular music. Modern jazz in the early 1950s continued to thrive in a small jazz scene of clubs, concerts, record labels, and jazz enthusiasts. This urban scene was populated by both intellectual and subcultural audiences. Most enthusiasts up to the late 1940s were college educated jazz connoisseurs. By the early 1950s, however, the modern jazz genre was enjoyed in bars and

clubs frequented by a mix of social classes comprising the urban nightlife at the time. So the *social status* of audiences in this scene lent a combination of intellectual consecration and subcultural value to modern jazz. This jazz scene also was commonly framed by musicians, critics, and enthusiasts as autonomous from the commercial demands of industrial popular music (Lopes 2002).

Modern jazz eventually captured a *middle-brow art* position in commercial music supported by a vibrant art world. A rising middle class and greater access to higher education in the post-war period supported this middle-brow music. The arrow in Fig. 5 running through the Jazz Scene position towards the Modern Jazz position represents this rebellion in jazz in the post-war period. The original avant-garde art of the Jazz Scene eventually evolved into a Modern Jazz position supported by a middle-brow art world. An important component of this new jazz art world was the rise of modern jazz critics, like Leonard Feather and Barry Ulanov, who wrote for jazz magazines and middle brow magazines like *Metronome* and *Esquire* (Lopes 2002). Once a social space for performance and a form of appreciation for modern jazz was established, a succession of innovations characterized a Modern Jazz Renaissance (Lopes 2002).

Modern jazz was distinct from the industrial popular music of the 1940s and 1950s. Recorded and broadcast industrial music was dominated by Tin Pan Alley composers (Ryan 1985), while corporations controlled industrial music through powerful Artists and Repertoire functionaries at major labels. Les Brown and his Band of Renown with Doris Day recorded the ballad "Sentimental Journey" in 1944. It became an instant number one hit. "Sentimental Journey" was composed by Ben Green, a Tin Pan Alley composer since the 1920s. It was recorded for the major label Columbia. After leaving Les Brown, Doris Day remained a star of industrial music. Her "Secret Love," produced under the supervision of Columbia A & R man Mitch Miller, became a number one hit in 1954. This ballad was composed by Tin Pan Alley composers Sammy Fain and Paul Francis Webster.

In contrast to "Sentimental Journey," Charlie Parker's composition "Dexterity" in 1947 is a perfect example of the early modern jazz avant-garde. This tune showcased the chromatic tonal gymnastics and fast rhythms of bebop. While boppers never claimed to be exploring the potential of noise like John Cage, many critics accused beboppers of being more noise-makers than music-makers. Parker recorded this tune at WOR Studios for Ross Russell's Dial Records. Russell did record several Cage works, but he was a jazz enthusiast whose label specialized in bebop and modern jazz. It turns out that a number of jazz enthusiasts, like Russell, played intermediary roles for other avant-garde music genres. As intermediaries uniquely placed at the margins of the music establishment, jazz enthusiasts-turned producers bridged avant-garde music communities that all shared a common outsider status.

In 1954, when modern jazz had gained national recognition as middle-brow music, Sonny Rollins recorded "Doxy" with Bob Weinstock's independent jazz label Prestige. The tune was one of the first of a new hard-bop style in modern jazz. Hard-bop continued the rhythmic drive of bebop, while placing a greater emphasis on African American music idioms. Like all modern jazz styles, hard-bop demanded musical appreciation of virtuoso jazz performance, not the jitterbugging legs inspired by dance bands like Les Brown and his Band of Renown, or the swooning fans inspired by "songbirds" like Doris Day. It was clearly a middle-brow music demanding a different form of appreciation than popular industrial music. Rollins moved to the major label

RCA in 1962. His album *The Bridge* pointed to a minor interest in major labels for modern jazz that began in the mid-1950s when Columbia signed Miles Davies and Dave Brubeck. All three artists entered the majors through entrepreneurial producer, and jazz enthusiast, George Avakian, who worked for Columbia in the 1950s, and RCA starting in 1962.

The success of modern jazz in the 1950s was due in part to rapid changes in the field of American music as the culture industry's monopoly over the mass market collapsed (Lopes 2002). The *rock 'n' roll* genre community in the 1950s also overran a struggling music oligopoly (Peterson 1990). From the margins, musicians like Little Richard and Elvis Presley brought the rock 'n' roll revolution to America at the same time as modern jazz. These musicians and their intermediaries staked a claim over the position of industrial music previously occupied by swing musicians and Tin Pan Alley composers. They asserted the subcultural value of their vernacular-based popular music against the old mass market value of swing music and Tin Pan Alley song. Rock 'n' roll was based on a mixing of the vernacular genres of "race" (black) and "country" music—two marginal genres in the culture industry (Ennis 1992; Garofalo 1997; Gillett 1983; Roy 2004; Ryan 1985).[5] The arrow in Fig. 5 moving from the Race Music and Country Music positions through the Rock 'n' Roll position towards the Popular Music position represents this rebellion.

The rock 'n' roll genre emerged among independent disc jockeys, store owners, and labels. At first a way to market race records to white radio audiences and record buyers, the genre quickly incorporated black and white musicians and elements of both race and country music. Gillett (1983) recognizes five circles of musicians and record producers associated with independent labels across the country that created this new genre. For example, Sam Phillips Sun Records with Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash created the Memphis style of rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll rebels did not see their struggles as indicative of their commitment to art for art's sake like artists in modern jazz, but as a commitment to the collective project of rock 'n' roll. And their invasion of the mass market at the time was certainly framed as a rebellion (Altschuler 2004; Garofalo 1997).

Two subcultural artists who had a major influence on rock 'n' roll were blues guitarist and songwriter T-Bone Walker and country guitarist and songwriter Hank Williams (Garofalo 1997). T-Bone Walker's electric blues "Mean Old World" was recorded in 1942 for the race market, while Hank Williams recorded his country blues "Move It on Over" in 1947 for the country-western market. Both records were produced by new labels in their first year of production, Capital and MGM.[6] Black artist Little Richard's recording of "Tutti Frutti" in 1955, with Art Ruppe's independent label Specialty in Los Angeles, was an example of the new rock 'n' roll genre. While independent labels were the backbone of rock 'n' roll, entrepreneurial producers brought a few white rock 'n' roll artists into the majors (Gillett 1983). Jazz enthusiasts Milt Gabler and Bob Thiele entered the majors in the early 1950s after struggling with their own independent jazz labels. As entrepreneurial producers, Gabler brought Bill

[5] Both Ennis (1992) and Roy (2004) point to African American and southern white music becoming distinct industry genres in the 1920s. They remained distinct genres into the 1950s, although their names changed overtime: "race" to "rhythm and blues" and "hillbilly" to "country-western" to "country."

[6] Capital became a major label by the end of the 1940s.

Haley and the Comets to Decca in 1954 and Thiele brought Buddy Holly and the Crickets to Brunswick in 1957 with the album *The Chirping Crickets*.

Popular rock 'n' roll artists and their intermediaries sought positions in industrial popular art that they viewed as rebellious and authentic. Unlike modern jazz rebels, rock 'n' roll rebels did not create a new social space of autonomous art. Such an autonomous space already existed in the marginalized country and race markets (Garofalo 1997). Rock 'n' roll, however, did establish a subfield of autonomous subcultural art as an *integral* part of the dynamics of authenticity and innovation in popular music. Future generations of popular musicians would create new styles of rock 'n' roll—rock and punk—or new genres—disco and rap—in subcultures of "alternative" or "underground" music that continually challenged the orthodoxy of industrial popular music (Lopes 1992). The indie-underground versus pop-mainstream conflict of today represents a dynamic of heresy versus orthodoxy in popular music that appeared during the autonomization of American art.

The three avant-gardes of experimental music, modern jazz, and rock 'n' roll represented distinct genre communities in the American music field. The institutionalization of classical music and industrial popular music in the early part of the 20th century structured the music field into distinct communities of artists: high art classical artists, industrial popular music artists, and subcultural popular music artists (Lopes 2002). This institutionalization of music explains in part the emergence of three genre communities with distinct strategies of rebellion. Modern jazz rebels were working-class black and white dues-paying union musicians who performed dance music for the industrial popular art and race markets of the culture industry. Rock 'n' roll rebels were black and white working-class non-union musicians whose vernacular-based music culture was in a subfield of subcultural popular music. And finally, white middle-class experimental music composers oriented themselves to the art world of classical music as well as a general high art avant-garde. All three genre communities, however, contributed to the autonomization of American music.

The heroic age in American film

American film, like American music, experienced a similar autonomization in the mid-twentieth century. Three important avant-garde genres appeared in American film in the post-war period. The genre communities of *experimental film*, *exploitation film*, and *auteur film* oriented themselves against the only significant position in film at the time–*Hollywood film*. All three genres helped transform the rules of art in American film and engender the autonomization of this field. Figure 7 presents the positions in film during the autonomization of this field with arrows indicating the strategies of rebellion of the three genre communities. Figure 8 shows the positions of the film examples used in this section on the artistic rebellions that transformed American film.

In the 1940s, the only significant film exhibition in the United States was the industrial film of the Hollywood Studio System (Bordwell et al. 1985; Sklar 1994; Maltby 2003; Baumann 2007). The Studio System asserted control of the market in a vertically and horizontally integrated system of production, distribution, and exhibition. This system emphasized the craftsmanship of studio-contracted artists like actors, directors, and writers as well as the bureaucratic decisions of functionaries like the

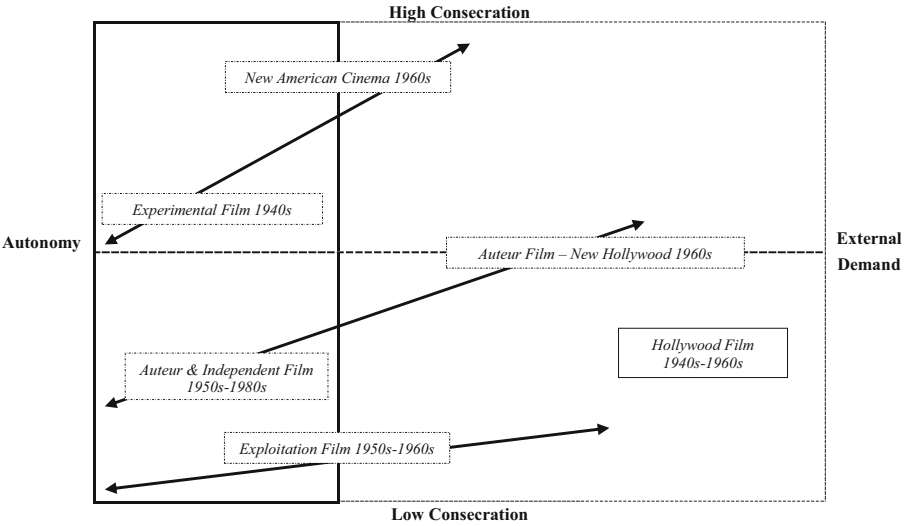

Fig. 7 Positions in autonomization American film field mid-twentieth century

all-powerful producers (Bordwell et al. 1985; Maltby 2003). The eight studios in the system were Paramount, 20th Century Fox, MGM, Warner Brothers, RKO, and the smaller studios Columbia, Universal, and United Artists. These "majors" competed over the big budget A-films. Smaller independent studios—"poverty row"—remained marginal in the system, desperately competing with low budget B-films (Lewis 2007). Only after the 1948 Supreme Court Paramount Decision broke apart the Studio System's oligopoly did the majors lose their stranglehold over the market, and subsequently, the American film field opened up to a major transformation (Maltby 2003; Thompson and Bordwell 2003).

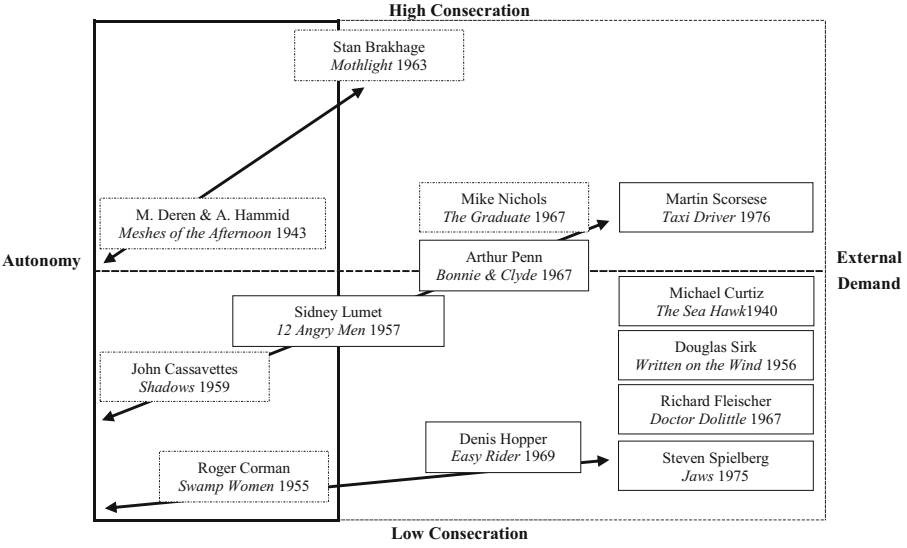

Fig. 8 Artists' positions in autonomization American film field mid-twentieth century

As Thompson and Bordwell (2003) argue, besides the collapse of the Hollywood Studio System, the rise of an international Art Cinema movement in the 1940s through 1960s also had a major impact on American film. Based on national circles of Art Cinema, this movement initially developed across Europe, but eventually included artists in South America and Asia. These *modernist* directors in some fashion abandoned popular genre traditions found in their national popular film industries as well as Hollywood. These directors experimented with elements of narrative film-style and brought a more critical realism to their films. Another noteworthy aspect of Art Cinema was the presence of an authorial voice in these films, i.e., the greater presence of the director as *auteur*. The most influential modernist movements in Art Cinema were Italian Neo-Realism and French New Wave. Post-war Art Cinema was exhibited in the United States as early as 1946 with Italian director Roberto Rossellini's *Open City*, but this movement had its greatest impact leading into the 1960s with a boom in art houses and cine-clubs (Thompson and Bordwell 2003). The Art Cinema movement would have an influence on both the experimental film and auteur film genre communities in post-war American film.[7]

Experimental film was the first rebellion (Renan 1967; Sklar 1994; Tyler 1995; Sitney 2002). Film-makers in this genre distinguished their films from conventional Hollywood film. Like experimental music composers, these film-makers associated themselves and their art with the broader community of high art avant-garde artists. This genre community consisted of a circle of artists centered in New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco dedicated to a collective project of experimental film-making (Renan 1967; Sitney 1970). While influenced by expatriate European film-makers like Hans Richter, Oskar Fischinger, and John Mekas, this movement in the United States of American film-makers would be the largest national development in experimental film in the post-war period (Thompson and Bordwell 2003). In the 1940s, this circle of artists was small with no organization outside of informal networks (Renan 1967). Early experimental film-maker Maya Deren did receive a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1946. She used it to establish the short-lived Creative Film Foundation. The first long-running exhibition of experimental film began in 1947: Frank Stauffacher's Art in Cinema in San Francisco lasted until 1955.

In the 1950s and 1960s, experimental film-makers built an art world of societies, distributors, cooperatives, exhibitions, theaters, festivals, and journals (Renan 1967; Sitney 2002). This new American art world of experimental film also was strongly linked to an international network of clubs, art houses, and festivals supporting experimental film (Thompson and Bordwell 2003). In New York City, Cinema 16 specialized in film exhibition and distribution from 1950 to 1966. A major figure in the New York community, European-born film-maker John Mekas published the first long-running publication dedicated to this genre in 1955 (*Film Culture*), wrote a film column for the underground Village Voice beginning in 1958, and established the distributor Film-makers Cooperative and the art-house Film-makers Cinematheque in 1962. On

[7] The Art Cinema movement had roots in early cinema. Art film institutions emerged as early as the 1920s. The Modern Museum of Art in New York City, for example, established a Film Archive in 1935. MOMA played a role in exposing American audiences to the Art Cinema Movement in the 1950s and 1960s (Thompson and Bordwell 2003).

the west coast, Canyon Cinema Cooperative and the Film-makers Cooperative were established in the early 1960s.

The most significant organization in experimental film was the New American Cinema Group established in 1961. This group involved a number of film-makers and intermediaries in this genre. The group also involved a number of film-makers—the New York School—dedicated to the project of independent *commercial* film associated with a competing avant-garde genre, auteur film. So this organization bridged two of the major film avant-gardes of the mid-twentieth century. The New American Cinema community did succeed in creating new positions of avant-garde and intellectual art for experimental film in the autonomous subfield of visual arts. It also established a new position of patron art with the consecration of elite institutions. The arrow in Fig. 7 running through Experimental Film and New American Cinema towards positions of intellectual and patron art represents the rebellion of this genre community. Experimental film, however, never captured a commercial market, and therefore, remained a marginal subculture of film-making (Bayma 1995).

Maya Deren's and Alexander Hammid's 1943 *Meshes of the Afternoon* represents the early avant-garde of experimental film. These films retained some aspect of narrative. But *Meshes'* heavy emphasis on a circular narrative, symbolism, and dream-like imagery defined these first efforts. P. Adams Sitney (2002) refers to this style of avant-garde film as "trance film." Stan Brakhage's 1963 *Mothlight* represents the next generation of New American Cinema film-makers. In *Mothlight,* Brakhage constructed a film with moth wings and plant leaves placed between two celluloid strips—a silent collage of light passing through material nature (Renan 1967). This generation of experimental film-makers moved towards abstraction and formalism in what Sitney (2002) calls the "structural film." At the end of the 1960s, Brakhage began teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Experimental films stood in stark contrast to industrial films like Michael Curtiz' 1940 Warner Brothers swashbuckler *The Sea Hawk* or Douglas Sirk's 1956 Universal melodrama *Written on the Wind*. Michael Curtiz was a veteran studio-director, joining Warner in 1926. The producers of *The Sea Hawk*, Hal B. Wallis and Henry Blacke, were long-time functionaries for Warner and worked with Curtiz in previous films. The screen play was written by veteran studio-writers Seton Miller and Howard Koch. Douglas Sirk was a studio-director as well, joining Universal in 1952. And *Written on the Wind* was produced by long-time functionary Albert Zugsmith who joined Universal in 1955. It was written by Hollywood free-lance writer George Zukerman who wrote mostly B-films for Universal and other major studios. Both these films were characteristic industrial products of the Studio System and the industrial film position.

Exploitation film was the next rebellion in American film. The collapse of the major studio's oligopoly gave independent studios greater access to the film market. These independent studios served a subcultural teen market of drive-in and grindhouse theaters (Maltby 2003). This avant-garde genre was created by independent studios, producers, and directors with a collective commitment to pulp-genre film-making. This position challenged Hollywood film and its conventional mass-appeal narratives in films like *Written on the Wind*. Roger Corman was the icon of these pulp rebels who pumped out horror, biker, beach, and other pulp films in an independent market of B-films. The arrow in Fig. 7 moving through Exploitation Film towards industrial popular art represents this strategy of pulp rebellion. The 1955 Roger Corman directed *Swamp*

Women is an example of the subcultural popular art position of early exploitation film. It was a women-prison narrative popular in exploitation film at the time with a story about scantily-clad women convicts escaping from prison to look for a hidden stash of diamonds in a Bayou swamp. Corman was the producer in this joint venture of the independent studio Allied Artists and the financial company Woolner Brothers, a company formed by three drive-in theater owners—a common practice at the time to finance B-films.

Auteur film was the third avant-garde film genre. It appeared in the late 1950s and gained wide recognition in the late 1960s. Unlike the entertainment ideology of earlier Hollywood film, auteur film-makers viewed commercial film as *art* as well as the unique expression of its directors. Shyon Baumann (2007) provides a detailed study on how the auteur film genre transformed Hollywood film from mere entertainment to art. While Baumann does not address the avant-garde genres of experimental or exploitation film, his work informs my analysis of the auteur film genre and the general autonomization of American film. Baumann emphasizes that the success of the auteur film genre as *art* was due to both external and internal changes to the film field. External changes included a growing college-educated demographic, while internal changes included the collapse of the studio system and the rise of new venues and criteria of judgment found in art houses, festivals, universities, and film criticism. And I argue that these external and internal changes can be linked to the general autonomization of American film.

There were two generational waves in the auteur film genre. The first generation emerged from circles of directors, writers, and actors in New York City. The New American Cinema Group included auteur-film directors such as Peter Bogdanovich, Shirley Clark, and John Cassavetes (Sitney 1970). Cassavetes' self-produced *Shadows* (1959) was an example of the New York School's attempt at commercial auteur film. Another important circle was the Actors Studio. The Studio followed a mission of being an experimental space outside the rigid confines of writing, directing, and acting for the commercial theater (Garfield 1980). The Studio contributed to the auteur film genre in two ways. First, many of the first generation directors participated in the studio such as Mike Nichols, Sydney Lumet, Arthur Penn, and Sydney Pollack. And second, many of the Studio's actors became stars in independent and New Hollywood films such as Ben Gazzara, Gene Hackman, Estelle Parsons, Dustin Hoffman, Anne Bancroft, Jack Nicholson, Robert DeNiro, and Ellen Burstyn.

The growth in film criticism, festivals, and academic programs in the 1960s significantly influenced the second generation of auteur film-makers (Baumann 2007). This generation settled in Los Angeles in the early 1970s, forming an artistic circle of mutual support that included Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Brian De Palma, John Milius, and Steven Spielberg (Biskind 1998). Many in this next wave of New Hollywood directors attended new film schools at NYU, UCLA, and USC. These film schools had become a refuge for experimental film-makers, so New Hollywood directors were exposed to film as avant-garde art as well as to the principles of autonomy of their teachers. Many of these young directors also began their commercial careers working for pulp-rebel Roger Corman (Biskind 1998). It was not surprising that New Hollywood directors demanded autonomy as auteurs in making commercial film. They did not adopt the art for art's sake ideology of experimental film-makers, but they did share a commitment to commercial film-making as art. And like exploitation film

rebels, New Hollywood directors viewed capturing the commercial market as a form of revolt and celebrated their financial success (Biskind 1998).

Several changes in the industry in the post-studio era opened up opportunities for auteur film. One change was a shift to what Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson (1985) call "package-unit" production and Baumann (2007) calls "director-center" production. Both terms refer to how Hollywood studios became financiers and distributors that outsourced production to smaller independents that gave more creative power to directors. An early example was United Artists' financing of Henry Fonda and Reginald Rose's independently produced *12 Angry Men* in 1957. This critically acclaimed box office flop was directed by a young Sydney Lumet (Teichmann 1981). By the late 1960s, the opportunity space for American film opened further, as the market continued to fall new independent studios like BBS Productions entered the market and old generation Hollywood functionaries were replaced by young entrepreneurial producers like Bob Evans and Peter Bart at Paramount Studios (Biskind 1998). Another change in the post-studio era was the rise of art theaters in the United States, with over 600 across the country by the mid-1960s (Thompson and Bordwell 2003). These theaters exposed audiences and future American directors to the international Art Cinema movement's approach to film as art (Biskind 1998; Thompson and Bordwell 2003; Baumann 2007).

The new auteur film was evident in such films as Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and Mike Nichols's *The Graduate* (1967). Both films broke the conventional norms and censorship of old Hollywood.[8] *Bonnie and Clyde* was a romantic tale of murderous criminals, imbued with a sexual and violent-laden narrative, while *The Graduate* reflected the anti-establishment mood of the 1960s counterculture, mixed with sexually explicit scenes and a surreal ending. *Bonnie and Clyde* was independently produced by Warren Beatty with financing and distribution by Warner-Brothers, while *The Graduate* was produced, financed, and distributed by the independent studio Embassy Pictures. Even 1960s exploitation film expressed the New Hollywood auteur film ideology and countercultural mood, such as Denis Hopper's psychedelic, drug-infused biker film *Easy Rider* (1969), produced by Peter Fonda with the independent studio Raybert Productions and distributed by the major studio Columbia. New Hollywood signaled when the auteur film genre gained *mass market value* in the eyes of the intermediaries in independent and major studios. It also captured the attention of *middle-brow* film critics like Pauline Kael in *The New Yorker* as well as *middle-brow* audiences.[9]

New Hollywood's market of middle-class audiences was a strategy of survival for Hollywood studios in the late 1960s and early 1970s as they struggled with a collapsing market and box office flops like veteran studio-director Richard Fleischer's 20th Century Fox musical *Doctor Dolittle* (1967). Second-generation auteur Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* was released in 1976, produced by independent producers Julia and Michael Philips, written by fellow auteur Paul Schrader, and distributed by Columbia. But by the release of Scorsese's film, Hollywood had moved to a new

[8] The erosion of the Production Code in the 1950s, with its final elimination in 1966, was also a major factor in the broadening of content and style found in the exploitation and auteur film genres (Thompson and Bordwell 2003).

[9] Pauline Kael wrote reviews of *Bonnie and Clyde, The Graduate,* and *Easy Rider.*

blockbuster strategy. This strategy was sparked by the financial success of *Jaws* (1975), also directed by a fellow auteur Steven Spielberg, but produced by veteran studio functionaries Richard D. Zanuck and David Brown for Universal. This strategy reestablished the old logic of film as pure entertainment.

After the rise of the blockbuster, auteur film maintained a position in a small niche of the commercial market controlled by major studios. The genre community also served a more marginal market in a subfield of *independent film* that emerged in the 1980s parallel to the mass market dominated by the majors. Figure 5 shows this strategy of rebellion with an arrow running through Independent Film and New Hollywood towards a position in middle-brow art. The first position of Independent Film remained a position for future rebel film-makers in a subfield of autonomous art supported by festivals and art houses. The New Hollywood position remained as middle-brow popular film produced or distributed by the majors for niche audiences in the mass market. Hollywood's "discovery" of the Sundance Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and other major film festivals in the 1990s gave independent film greater access to the middle-brow art market dominated by the majors.

The rebellions of auteur film and exploitation film opened up new positions in middle-brow and industrial markets as well as a new subfield of independent film ranging from art-oriented to pulp-oriented movies. New American Cinema created a new position for experimental film in the avant-garde and institutional high arts (Bayma 1995). These rebellions show distinct differences in the aesthetics of these genres as well as the social status of their artists and audiences. And like the music field, these rebellions show the importance of both *independent* intermediaries in these genre communities as well as *entrepreneurial* intermediaries in dominant institutional and commercial organizations as these genres moved from avant-garde to less autonomous positions in the film field. And the new social space of autonomous film set-up the on-going dynamic of heresy versus orthodoxy between "independent" or "underground" filmmakers and the Hollywood dominated commercial film market.

Conclusion: autonomy and rebellion in American art

Bourdieu focused on the literary and visual arts to explore the autonomization of French art in the late-nineteenth century. I have focused on music and film to show how the autonomization of American art occurred nearly a century later. I have argued that the 1940s to 1960s was the defining period in the autonomization of American art, evident not only in music and film, but in other arts as well. My analysis shows how Bourdieu's model of art fields can incorporate a broad array of distinctions, struggles, and transformations in the meaning and practice of art. The cases of music and film reveal great complexity in the autonomization of American art at mid-century in terms of autonomy, innovation, aesthetic mobility, and social class. And my analysis shows how symbolic value, autonomy, and rebellion apply to art practiced and enjoyed by the popular classes–a phenomenon absent in Bourdieu's analysis of art fields.

This article shows how rebellions in music and film during the Heroic Age in American art were linked to changes in social structure and taste cultures. For Bourdieu, strategies of rebel artists must first be situated in the internal dynamics of art fields. But Bourdieu emphasized how rebel artists only transform a field when they

find an audience to provide value to their new positions, whether intellectual, patron, or market value, or as I argue in the case of the United States, subcultural value. That is why changes in art fields seem to magically correspond to changes in social class structure as new positions in art fields resonate with a new social class structure (Bourdieu 1984, 1993). It is clear that the rebellions found among artists in music and film at mid-century resonated with a more diverse social class structure, greater educational opportunities, and a corresponding emergence of new taste cultures.

The genesis of autonomy in American art also shows how *principles of autonomy* can articulate in ways other than an art for art's sake ideology that emphasizes the unique genius of avant-garde bourgeois artists. While the high art avant-garde in America followed such an ideology, what Bourdieu called *pure art* and the *pure aesthetic,* this was not the case for many in the popular art American avant-garde. Autonomy for most popular artists was about the expression of what Thornton (1996) calls *subcultural cultural capital*. Authenticity in this sense conveyed a commitment to the ideals or symbolic values of a genre community or subculture (Grazian 2003; Hall 1992; Lena 2012; Thornton 1996). Avant-garde popular art, therefore, shows how it is that rebellion in Bourdieu's model—a conscious commitment to aesthetic experimentation—is a limited conception of autonomy and rebellion in art. American art forces one to acknowledge how a commitment to a subcultural genre community is just as much an act of autonomy and revolt as commitment to experimentation in formal aesthetics or virtuoso technique. This social history clearly undermines Bourdieu's view of popular art and the popular classes as incapable of having a "cultured culture, capable of sustaining its own questioning" or its own "culture" or "aesthetic" (Bourdieu 1998, pp. 136–137).

I have emphasized popular art rebellion as rejecting the rules of art found in the industrial commercial sector. I have confirmed Hesmondhalgh's (2006) argument that one must recognize how intermediaries in the corporate center of the culture industry for most of the twentieth century determined industrial art and who produced it. These functionaries viewed popular artists as crafts persons, not artists (Baumann 2007; Peterson 1990). By mid-century, however, the corporate oligopoly in the United States lost control of the production of popular art, and therefore, the *opportunity space* opened up for a major realignment in the American popular arts. Rebel artists, and the various intermediaries who supported them, sought new positions within this changing opportunity space, where popular artists claimed auteurship and the symbolic value of their subcultural art against the rules of art and logic of craftsmanship found in the industrial popular art of the hegemonic culture industry.

Positions against industrial popular art, however, involved more than just redefining this art and capturing the mass market like rock 'n' roll or exploitation film. Other rebellions in popular art like modern jazz and auteur film involved efforts at *aesthetic mobility*—acquiring greater status for an art genre—through the charismatic consecration of enthusiasts and critics or the audience consecration of middle and upper class audiences. Experimental music and experimental film, however, show how the autonomization of American art included strategies seeking consecration similar to those highlighted by Bourdieu in the Heroic Age of French art. Taken together, the artistic rebellions during the Heroic Age of American art demonstrate that struggles for autonomy and legitimation occurred across the field in terms of (1) the institutions and markets targeted by specific genre communities; (2) the intermediaries producing,

exhibiting, and selling these genres; (3) the types of consecration and value enjoyed by these genres and their artists, (4) the social status of the audiences and critics who provided consecration and value to these new genres, and (5) the social class of the artists who occupied these new positions in American art.

The genesis of autonomy also involved a shift from groundbreaking heretical positions to more established avant-garde positions in the American art field. Artists such as John Cage, Charlie Parker, Little Richard, Maya Deren, Roger Corman, and Sidney Lumet viewed themselves, and were viewed by others, as rebels in their art fields. In the mid-twentieth century, their position-taking, radically breaking the rules of art in their art fields, was ground-breaking in establishing *permanent* avant-garde positions never previously seen in American music and film. After these rebellions established permanent subfields of autonomous art, the realigned American art field provided more *ready-made* positions for future generations of avant-garde and independent artists, and their intermediaries, to strike out against the orthodoxy of intellectual, bourgeois, middle brow, and industrial art. Since the 1960s, next generation avant-garde artists in American music have included Chuck D, Kurt Cobain, John Adams, and Steve Coleman in popular, classical, and jazz music, while next generation avant-garde artists in American film have included Peggy Ahwesh, Quentin Tarantino, and Jim Jarmusch in experimental, exploitation, and auteur film.

This essay emphasizes what sociologists and historians have previously neglected: how changes in the American art field in the mid-twentieth century led to a general autonomization of the field. In other words, during this Heroic Age in American art, a subfield of autonomous art became a permanent feature of the art field where *avant-garde* or *indie* or *underground* artists and intermediaries generated new innovations and genres from each generation to the next. The case studies of music and film also demonstrate that the role of the popular arts in this Heroic Age occurred across the arts, not simply in one exceptional case. This calls for a general reconceptualization of demand, consecration, and autonomy in modern art fields. The film field in particular, where no high or middle-brow art positions existed, demonstrates how the popular arts played a vital role in the avant-garde art rebellion in America.

My work also contributes a new perspective on American music and film. Until now scholars have focused on the avant-garde genres discussed in this article as distinct phenomenon. While some scholars point to similar social and cultural contexts, they focus on only one avant-garde genre (Baumann 2007; Cameron 1996; Ennis 1992). This article shows how these avant-garde genres had a common link to structural and ideological transformations within and across these art fields. In other words, there was a homologous resonance between these seemingly dissimilar genres of artistic innovation and rebellion, as well as actual connections among artists, intermediaries, and audiences. One must therefore assume continued homologies, if not actual connections, in avant-garde music and film genres, high or popular, since the Heroic Age. Peggy Ahwesh, for example, began in the punk scene, worked with exploitation film auteur George Romero, then finally moved successfully into the world of avant-garde experimental film.

My model of the American art field reflects the dynamics of American art in the twentieth century. Do these dynamics still apply to contemporary American art? Recent changes in American art will not undermine my historical analysis, but they might suggest a possible re-evaluation of the American art field in the twenty-first century. I end this article by highlighting three transformations that might affect the dynamics of autonomy, legitimacy, and innovation in American art. The first is the discovery of more *omnivorous* tastes—tastes for both high and popular culture—among high status groups at the end of the twentieth century (Peterson and Kern 1996). This change suggests possible new dynamics of distinction and legitimacy in American art. The second change is a contemporary fine art world overwhelmed by a hyper-commodified global market (Thornton 2008). However, whether this hyper-commodification has undermined autonomy in American art has not been definitively answered (Halle and Tiso 2009). The final change is the effect of new technology on art and mass media (Jenkins 2006; Aneesh et al. 2012). Predicting the effects of new technology, however, has shown itself to be a rather dubious endeavor (Lister et al. 2009). New technology is unquestionably *disrupting* culture industries such as film, music, and television, and even the global fine art market with Christie's and Sotheby's recently moving to online art auctioning, but the ultimate effects of this technology are yet to be determined. This is evident in how, outside the decline in the commercial market in recorded music, it is still unclear how new technology will change the American music field, especially in terms of genre formation, autonomy, and innovation (Rossman 2012). For now, addressing these three changes effects on autonomy, legitimacy, and innovation in American art must be left for a future project.

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