

JAZZ MUSIC AND INTERMEDIAL REFERENCES IN TONI MORRISON'S *LOVE*

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes an intermedial reading of Toni Morrison's *Love* (2003) and applies the concepts of intermediality theory to discuss the jazz narrative strategies used in the novel. In this article, intermediality is on the one hand associated with the musicalization of fiction; on the other hand, it is viewed from the perspective of expanding the representational modes of a given medium. The article explores the links between jazz music and literature, and argues that the structure of Morrison's *Love* has a certain similarity to a jazz music composition. We identify in the structure of the novel a number of solos and the polyphonic overlapping of the voices, and we show that the interaction of voices gives the narrative a dialogic character, which results in multiple interpretations of the complex characters and ambiguous situations. Juxtapositions, temporal shifts, syncopation, rhythmically arranged sequences, meaningful chords, improvisation, repetition and variations are explored and interpreted as jazz narrative strategies. The article identifies a double riff based on counterpoint, and its role in harmonizing the sounds of the voices at the end of the novel. The rich imagery contributing to the performative character of the narrative is analysed. We argue that Morrison's *Love* serves as a vivid example of the musicalization of fiction, which results in expanding the representational modes of literature.

Keywords: musicalization of fiction; jazz; jazz narrative strategies; musico-literary intermediality; intermedial references; Toni Morrison; *Love*

THE MUSICALIZATION OF FICTION and the intermedial dialogue between music and literary texts are becoming an increasingly popular focus of interdisciplinary research. However, despite the growing interest in capturing the intricate and controversial interplay between music and literature, there is no clearly defined conceptual framework for assessing the relationship between a literary work and music or, in other words, its 'musicality'. More importantly, the issues related to the translation of music into literary forms are still unresolved; as a result, there remain a number of literary works which have signs of musicalization but have not hitherto been analysed from the standpoint of musicality and musical techniques. To date, 'there has appeared much discussion among scholars about the intersection between literature and music in order to explore this interrelation in literary criticism and develop

adequate techniques of accounting for literary texts within these intermedial case studies'.¹

The concept of the *musicalization of fiction*, as coined in Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* (1928),² implies a combination of musical art and literature as two different semiotic modes or, in a narrower sense, the introduction of music into a narrative text. Werner Wolf proposes expanding the term *musicalization* by putting musico-literary relations into the larger framework of intermedial relations. He defines intermediality as 'a particular relation [...] between conventionally distinct media of expression or communication; this relation consists in a verifiable, or at least convincingly identifiable, direct or indirect participation of two or more media in the signification of a human artefact'.³ Wolf focuses largely on the sustained connection between music and a verbal text, in which the text is compared to a piece of music, and claims that the reader's participation in decoding a musicalized text is an indirect form of intermediality:

'[M]usicalization of literature' points towards a presence of music in the signification of a text which seems to stem from some kind of transformation of music into literature. The verbal text appears to be or to become, to a certain extent, similar to music or to effects connected with certain compositions, and we get the impression of experiencing music 'through' the text. Hence the 'musicalization of fiction' is essentially a special case of covert intermedial imitation: the imitation of music in a narrative text.⁴

More recently, researchers have begun to specify and extend the theory of intermediality to embrace the vast field of intermedial relations in literary studies,⁵ the systematic correspondences between musical and literary techniques,⁶ the musical structure of jazz novels,⁷ the literary interpretation of jazz as a phenomenon of the culture of remembrance and the elements of musical ekphrasis in literature.⁸ The application of musical forms to fiction and the imitation of musical structure in fiction may also be found in the recent works of Henning Nölke, Emily Petermann, Liisa Steinby and Theodore Ziolkowski.⁹

Toni Morrison's musical narrative approach has already received considerable critical attention, which has mostly focused on the three novels in which she either explicitly or implicitly introduces jazz-like or fugue-like poetics – *Jazz* (1992), *Beloved* (1987) and *A Mercy* (2008).¹⁰ Existing scholarship on *Love* (2003) primarily focuses on Morrison's treatment of memory in relation to trauma,¹¹ her postmodern discourse on memory viewed from the perspective of the present,¹² the ways in which the novel uses the trickster paradigm to highlight the intricacies of love and the complexity of human emotions or the notion of orality as central to the African American narrative tradition.¹³ However, the synergistic relationships between music and *Love* rest on the characteristics of jazz music, and point the way towards the development of a comprehensive vision of Morrison's strategic use of formal musical features and jazz performance as a structural principle represented in the novel.

Morrison's *Love* seems not to contain any references to music, judging by its title or the names of its chapters. However, throughout the novel there are shifts in narrative rhythm, fragmentary outlining of events, improvisations, variations and the

polyphonic sounding of multiple narrative voices. To date *Love* has not been read in relation to a musical premise. Yet Morrison herself makes the connection between her writing and music; in an interview with Robert Stepto, she speculated on literature and her way of writing:

I think of it in terms of the one other art form in which black people have always excelled and that is music, an art form that opens doors, rather than closes them, where there are more possibilities, not fewer'.¹⁴

The present article offers an interpretation of Morrison's *Love* as an example of the musicalization of fiction.

On intermedial narration and jazz compositional form in fiction

Literary scholars have recently started to explore the intermedial (text-music) configurations of literary texts, where direct or indirect links to music can be found in the arrangement of storylines through the formal incorporation of musical genres into the literary text. As Wolf puts it, 'the existence and the range of similarities between the two media or arts determine both the possibility (or impossibility) and the limits of a musicalization of fiction'.¹⁵ In a very general sense, intermediality is observed when one media product – for example, the novel – begins to employ the strategies and techniques of another medium, or when the structural elements of one (source) medium come to be incorporated into another (target) medium or are translated into it. The musicalization of fiction thus seems to imply structural analogies to musical composition practices that result in musico-literary intermediality and, more specifically, in musico-literary intermedial forms.

In spite of the fact that the interplay of music and literature has been longstanding, it is still not fully defined, and entails another quite important issue: how do we identify musicalization in fiction, and specifically jazz musical forms? Wolf notes that musicalization is a kind of phenomenon that is inclined to vary 'not only in the techniques used for the *transposition d'art* but also in its intensity and this causes further problems of [its] recognizability'.¹⁶ The musicalization of fiction lays the groundwork for the research and further analysis of intermedial forms and strategies. As Irina Rajewsky argues in 'Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation', intermedial practices are 'useful only in so far as those configurations manifest some form of intermedial strategy, constitutional element or condition'.¹⁷ The focus of the discussion in this section is on intermedial references in literary texts (or 'intermedial relations', in Wolf's terminology)¹⁸ and on the specific ways in which we can relate the structure of a literary work to the genre of jazz music, thereby making that literary work an intermedial literary product. The important function of intermedial references in fiction in this framework is to imitate certain elements or formal structures of jazz music through verbal language, thus expanding the representational modes of a given medium.

The development of jazz helped African Americans to express themselves with self-assurance; it has also been described as a vehicle for the expression of individuality. As Ralph Ellison asserts in 'Shadow and Act',

true jazz is an act of individual assertion within and against the group. Each true jazz moment (as distinct from uninspired commercial performance) springs from a contest in which each artist challenges all the rest; each solo flight, or improvisation, represents (like the successive canvases of a painter) a definition of his identity: as individual, as member of the collectivity and as a link in the chain of tradition.¹⁹

Ellison stresses the complex nature of jazz as an art 'which employs a broad rhythmic freedom and accents the lyric line to reinforce the emotional impact'.²⁰

Thus, in Ellison's description, jazz music conveys the rhythm of African American life and expresses a new sense of individual and communal freedom by using improvisations: spontaneous and explosive variations on the basic theme. The characteristic features of this music genre were gradually carried over into the world of literature. Novels of this kind bear resemblances to jazz music pieces, and a strong jazz influence is found in the works of Langston Hughes, Morrison, Nathaniel Mackey, August Wilson and Ralph Ellison, all of whom were inspired by jazz with regard to subject matter and style.

Tracing a parallel between the jazz compositional form and a literary text necessitates giving a brief introduction to jazz as an aesthetic mode and a music style. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, jazz in its broadest sense is defined as

a type of music that developed in the Southern States of USA in the late 19th cent. and came into prominence at the turn of the century in New Orleans, chiefly (but not exclusively) among black musicians. Elements that contributed to jazz were the rhythms of West Africa, European harmony, and American gospel singing. Before the term *jazz* was used, ragtime was the popular name for this genre. About 1900 also, the blues craze began.²¹

Accordingly, within the framework of the musicalization of fiction, we may single out at least three essential features as constituting the fabric of the jazz compositional form: rhythm, harmony and singing. In addition to these, the musical techniques of polyphony and improvisation have become integral structural elements of jazz, taking into account the fact that 'jazz solos are a product of the improviser's own decisions and are an expression of his or her individual creative voice'.²² From this point of view, we can locate the complexity of the jazz musical form in its improvisations, and in the polyphonic sounding of multiple narrative voices offering their creative variations as a result.

All the characteristic features which make up the jazz tradition resonate with the concept of intermusicality that is offered in Ingrid Monson's seminal work *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (1996). Monson discusses the importance of rhythmic and harmonic devices used in jazz improvisation and their meaning-making role therein:

Even within the most mainstream setting, musicians make use of the chord substitutions, alterations, and chromatic voice leading so frequently that the published chord changes to

a tune can be said to serve only as a general framework from which improvisation proceeds.²³

In turn, a novel may manifest numerous proofs of its musicality, and consequently it may also be studied within an intermedial framework. In this respect, Wolf's notion of imaginary content analogy as a form of intermedial imitation enables the translation of the effects of specific pieces of music into a narrative text that displays the features of intermedial transposition. As Wolf claims, 'imaginary content analogies, by their very nature as transpositions of a particular piece of music into a literary text, are usually linked with [...] specific references'.²⁴ This article discusses the compositional forms of music in Morrison's *Love* through the structure and essence of jazz, providing insights into how Morrison integrates such structural elements of jazz as polyphony, syncopation, improvisation, repetition, variations and a riff into the fabric of the novel.

Jazz narrative strategies in Toni Morrison's 'Love'

In this section, we identify jazz narrative strategies across Morrison's *Love* and focus upon the specific musical forms that constitute the jazz composition of the novel. This topic deserves consideration, since Morrison herself stated in relation to her authorial aims more generally that 'I want as an author to be like a good jazz musician. To make music that impresses people'.²⁵

From the opening page, music is present in this novel, both explicitly and implicitly. The names of famous jazz performers and the titles of popular jazz pieces are scattered throughout. On the first two pages, music is mentioned four times, humming four and dancing three. The first narrator, 'L', does not tell her story; she hums it. On the first page of the novel she declares, 'The words dance in my head to the music in my mouth', defining the novel's musicalized mode of narration.²⁶ Then, metaphorically, she accents the impact music can have on a person's decisions, choices and life:

The way 'Mood Indigo' drifting across the waves can change the way you swim. It doesn't make you dive in, but it can set your stroke, or trick you into believing you are both smart and lucky. So why not swim farther and a little farther still? (*L*, 4)

Thus, the importance of music and dance in the lives of the people whose story *L* hums is established from the very beginning.

Bill Cosey, the novel's central male character, who owned an ocean front hotel, ensured the success of his business by inviting popular jazz musicians to his hotel. *L*, who was a chef at Bill Cosey's hotel at that time, is confident that Mr Cosey managed to build a successful business in the years of the Great Depression because he knew that 'where there was music there was money' (*L*, 102). Important decisions are often taken by the characters of this novel to the accompaniment of music. When remembering her love affair with one of the guests at the hotel, Mr Cosey's wife Heed thinks of music as the reason for what she did: 'The reason was Jimmy Witherspoon singing "Ain't nobody's business if I do"' (*L*, 172).

In the Foreword to *Love*, Morrison explains that the material of the novel itself (forms of love and kinds of betrayal) made her long for a freedom similar to that which she acquired writing her previous novel, *Jazz*: 'breaking or dismissing conventional rules of composition to replace them with other, stricter rules'.²⁷ Jazz rhythms throb in this novel. Its polyphonic sounding is provided by a number of voices. Formally, there are two narrators in this novel. One of them is the first-person narrator L, a ghost who is a bystander in the fictional present and an active participant in the action which took place in the past. The other is the third-person narrator. However, the parts of the story told by the latter narrator give not the narrator's point of view but those of the characters. The appearance of a young girl named Junior on Monarch Street is reported by the narrator, but she is described and characterized according to the perspectives of Sandler, Christine, Heed and Romen. In some aspects, their opinions coincide; in others they are quite different. Junior's life story itself, though told by the narrator, presents Junior's version of events, which is given a sense of veracity by the emotional colouring of the fragments devoted to this subject: 'Of no importance to her were flesh cuts or twigs embedded in her hair, but she mourned the seven crayons broken in flight before she got to use even one. Vivian could not protect her from Vosh or the uncles' (L, 58). Episodes which inform the reader about Junior's past, though told from the third person, are Junior's reminiscences and sound subjective. In the structure of the novel, these episodes play the role of syncopation typical of jazz music, as they shift the accent from the story of the Coseys to this minor but important character: emphasizing unstressed beats, as it were. These episodes are akin to inserted notes. Such inserts create rhythmic tension by breaking the main melody. They help to assess Junior's inner nature and as a result create suspense. The shift from the fictional past to the fictional present is made in one step. Short sentences and repetition produce intricate, complex rhythms, revealing the underlying motives of Junior's conduct:

Gauge the moment. Recognize a chance. It's all you. And if you luck out, find yourself near an open wallet, window or door, GO! It's all you. All of it. Good luck you found, but good fortune you made. And her Good Man agreed. (L, 118)

Episodes which describe Romen's behaviour at the party where a girl was raped and his relationships with his schoolmates and his family are also accented off-beats. They display his experience and his reactions to this experience, which contributes to making his actions in the final chapter of the novel plausible.

The narrative centers on the prosperity and inevitable dissolution of the Cosey family with its central figure of Bill Cosey, the owner of the Hotel and Resort, which was 'the best and best-known vacation spot for colored folk on the East Coast' in the years of segregation (L, 6). A series of juxtapositions in the novel reveals the complexity of the characters and the ambiguity of the situations it features. The multi-layered character of the narrative in *Love* is largely created by the juxtaposition of the past and the present. The narrative is non-linear, with the action leading to the novel's denouement taking place in the 1990s, while the past (which moves from the 1930s to the 1970s, with the accent on the 1940s to 1950s) is elucidated by means of numerous

flashbacks. The juxtaposition of the past and present is multi-pronged. The extemporaneous free flow of L's humming starts with judgemental remarks about modern women who 'open their legs rather than their hearts' (L, 5), dance 'half naked on TV' (L, 4) and 'dance crotch out on television' (L, 3). This judgement is repeated several times with different variations, and makes the reader realize that, in L's opinion, the moral situation in the 1990s is getting worse in comparison with the past periods. L's soliloquies are italicized. The italicized piece, which precedes the first chapter, outlines the unbridgeable chasm between the atmosphere and the social conditions at the time when Mr Cosey's resort prospered and the time when 'urban renewal came to town' (L, 9). The past of the Oceanside is filled with music and unashamedly romantic impulses, and is crowded with handsome men who came to the place 'partly for music but mostly to dance by the sea with pretty women' (L, 6). The present state of the Oceanside looks dreary. There are no big bands, no honeymooners, no boat trips and no picnics on the beach, but there are cheap, paltry houses and malls. The contrasting picture is aggravated by a description of the now empty building of the Coseys' hotel with padlocked doors and peeling paint, and by the image of the ocean without people. L tries to define the reasons for the decline of the Coseys' business and mentions the viewpoint of his daughter-in-law May, who is also dead but whose voice sounds in the reminiscences of other participants in the events and dramas of the past.

L begins to comment on Mr Cosey: 'He helped more colored people here than forty years of government programs' (L, 9). She also starts describing the Cosey women (Mr Cosey's granddaughter Christine and his wife Heed): 'I guess they both knew they deserved each other. Meaner than most and standoffish, they have the regular attention that disliked folks attract' (L, 10). In fact, in this first soliloquy L introduces all the main subjects of the novel. The same subjects reappear in the thoughts and speeches of other characters. This first short italicized piece plays a role similar to that of the 'intro' in a jazz composition. This gives the reader the opportunity to hear other voices, which offer different perspectives on events and on the main characters (Mr Cosey, Christine and Heed).

Christine and Heed, as well as other characters, perform their 'solos'. The polyphonic overlapping of the voices produces the structure which Morrison describes as crystalline when she discusses *Love* in an interview with Michael Silverblatt:

You know you have a small piece and then it expands to another. And another layer comes on in a different shape, but it's all the same material. And when you get finished it's different facets, different light looking at one simple thing.²⁸

The solos are the characters' reminiscences, in which the same events and people are mentioned but frequently understood in a different way, with the effect that the reader is made to see the same things in different lights. This diversity of opinions creates an impression that the characters are in dialogue with each other. This dialogic feature of the narrative produces a vivid multiplicity of visions of the situations and the characters' interpretations. Mr Cosey performs no solo despite the fact that he determined people's fates in the past and is a phantom who influences Junior in

the fictional present. His opinions are only periodically mentioned by other characters. Elaborating on the same subjects, each soloist improvises, and the result is a set of variations typical of jazz compositions.

Love opens with an intro (L's first soliloquy), includes nine chapters plus three more of L's soliloquies (which follow Chapter 3, 4 and 6, respectively), and finishes with a coda (L's last soliloquy, which ends the entire piece, stops the variations and makes a conclusion). The subjects, introduced by L in her first soliloquy, find their development in the following chapters. In Chapter 1, Vida and Sandler discuss Mr Cosey and his women. Vida calls Christine and Heed '[h]incty, snotty girls' (L, 16). Romen thinks they are cool. Sandler does not share Vida's attitude or her conviction that Mr Cosey died a violent death. Mentioning this alleged murder sharpens the reader's interest and creates tension. The charismatic and questionable person of Mr Cosey emerges out of this arguing between characters. Speaking of Mr Cosey, Vida remarks, 'Wasn't a thing wrong with that man' (L, 17), but Sandler objects, 'He had a lot to answer for, Vida' (L, 17). These contradicting opinions create the basis for further variations.

Junior's meeting with Christine and Heed provides the reader with an opportunity to see them through Junior's eyes and at the same time to discover in their solos the virulent hatred and distrust that exists between these two old women who share the house Mr Cosey built on Monarch Street. The pauses Christine makes while conversing with Junior break the rhythm and testify to her bewilderment: 'They both sat then and the woman returned to the work of deveining shrimp' (L, 20); 'The silence stretching between the two women tightened' (L, 21). Junior's appearance makes Christine perceive a threat to her present precarious position in her family home. She is sure that Heed, whom she considers to be 'the meanest thing on the coast' (L, 24), intends 'to rob her future just as she had ripped off her past' (L, 24). The past and the present are paralleled. Junior's attention is captured by twelve diamond rings on Christine's fingers: 'Twelve rings, two on three fingers of each hand' (L, 20). This detail is an important, meaningful chord, which is repeated in this chapter five times and sounds again and again in the solos of Christine, Heed, L and Junior (fourteen times in total). These rings were once won by Mr Cosey in a card game, and Christine took them with her when she escaped from her family home. However, she does not keep them as a special reserve or a cushion against financial difficulties. Even when she was beset by financial worries, she did not sell them, and when her grandfather died, she tried to place them in his hands in his coffin. Christine's excited mind refers to these rings as if they were a kind of support: 'Returning to the table, she picked up a garlic paw and, enjoying her bedizened hands as usual, peeled two of the cloves' (L, 22); 'Christine spread her fingers for the familiar jolt the diamonds gave her' (L, 24). In her view of her present life situation, these rings are the reminders of the financial and emotional stability of a time when she knew no trouble and was an integral part of her family. For Christine, they are a link to the past, as are the double 'C's etched on the handle of the coffee spoon that she keeps and uses to eat every meal she can. This coffee spoon enables her 'to hold close the child it was given to, and hold also the pictures it summoned' (L, 22). The

coffee spoon obviously acquires symbolic meaning for her. Pain and yearning for the long-gone days of beach picnics are coded in this symbol. For Heed, however, the double 'C's on the spoon are not the signs of Christine's property, and the rings are twice stolen from her by Christine.

A specific chord also sounds in the scene when Junior meets Heed. This woman of about sixty looks like a little girl to Junior, because 'she had something of a little-girl scent: butter-rum candy, grass juice, and fur' (*L*, 24). In this case, the repetition of the chord is also observed. Junior fixates on Heed's hands – 'small, baby-smooth' (*L*, 28), 'with a hand small as a child's' (*L*, 25). At first this chord seems dissonant, as Heed sounds pompous when she speaks about her past and about the thriving business of her dead husband. However, information which is disclosed in her own and other characters' reminiscences makes this chord dominant. We learn that Heed was deprived of any chance of a natural development and upbringing when the fifty-two-year-old Mr Cosey married her, an eleven-year-old illiterate girl, in 1942. She still remains practically illiterate in the 1990s. Even Junior, whose education leaves much to be desired, notices mistakes in her speech. Somewhere deep in her mind, there remains something of that grotesque little girl wearing a 'too big' wedding dress (*L*, 76). Heed still calls her dead husband Papa, and she still does not recognize the abuse she suffered when she was a child who played with colouring books, picture magazines and paper dolls during her three-day honeymoon.

The improvisational exploration of this marriage, of the reasons for Mr Cosey's unexpected decision and of his married life with Heed is found in the voices of the witnesses to the events of those days. This marriage brought Heed social status and money but ruined her friendship with Christine and made her an object of hatred: 'For as long as she could remember, Heed believed stomachs turned in her company' (*L*, 79). Her desire to become part of the Cosey family foundered on the arrogance and contempt shown to her by May and Christine, whom she considered silly and spoilt by Mr Cosey, 'by the wealth of an openhanded man' (*L*, 78). Both Christine and L acknowledge that this marriage ruined Christine's life. It began her slide 'from spoiled girl child to tarnished homelessness' (*L*, 87). With piercing sadness, Christine recalls the time when she, a 'petted child' (*L*, 74), lived in her grandfather's 'big hotel' (*L*, 95).

Nostalgia for the time when the resort was popular also colours the voices of Sandler, Vida, L and Heed, who seem to share their recollections. The bustling everyday life of the hotel, where famous people stayed and popular jazz musicians performed, where every evening charming women in light dresses and well-dressed men danced to beautiful music, became deeply entrenched in their minds as the time of their lives. For example, music and dancing are constantly present in pictures of the former splendour of the place. 'Then the music started, convincing them they could manage it all and last' (*L*, 35) (Vida). '[I]t was enough to watch the visitors, admire their cars and the quality of their luggage; to listen to the distant music and dance to it in the dark' (*L*, 41) (Sandler). 'Flowers in the bedrooms, crystal on the table. Music, dancing, and if you wanted to, you could join a private card game' (*L*, 103) (L).

The reason for the decline of the Hotel and Resort is another unsolved issue that Vida and L seem to be discussing. The effect of this discussion is to add oral qualities to the narrative. Additionally, L mentions May's and Mr Cosey's opinions. Mr Cosey blamed the cannery situated close by. He claimed that 'the fish smell had turned his resort into a joke' (L, 8). May blamed civil rights and freedom. She was convinced that 'civil rights destroyed her family and its business. By which she meant colored people were more interested in blowing up cities than dancing by the seashore' (L, 8). Vida believed that Mr Cosey let 'feuding women [...] ruin all he had built' (L, 36). To L, it was Mr Cosey's marrying Heed that eroded the very foundation of his business and undermined relations in the family: 'It was marrying Heed that laid the brickwork for ruination' (L, 104). The characters' diverging opinions encourage the reader to ponder the issue in question and take up this or that position or form a new point of view.

Aspects of the formal arrangement of jazz are easily traced in this novel. The disclosing of Mr Cosey's nature by contradictory multiple narrative voices recalls a polyphonic ensemble playing. Five voices are involved in this process: Vida, Sandler, Christine, Heed and Junior. The degree of improvisation varies. As Junior has never met Mr Cosey, knows only what she heard from Christine and Heed, and judges based on the portrait of Mr Cosey hanging in the house on Monarch Street, her improvisation is the freest. Junior likes Mr Cosey's portrait. He seems kind and reliable to her. She perceives Mr Cosey somewhere by her side and calls him Good Man. She has erotic fantasies about him, hears him saying things into her ear, enters his room, touches his things and feels sure it makes him happy. She seeks his approval of her intention to stay in the house on Monarch Street. Only she perceives this phantom, and the phantom disappears when Junior gets ready to take Heed to the half-ruined hotel in which Heed will meet her death.

Information about Mr Cosey is given in portions. The voices take their turns, adding new facts. Sometimes the facts are repeated but presented in a different light (Cosey's marriage, Cosey's funeral, Cosey's will, Cosey's business and so on). There are understatements, gaps and temporal shifts in every version. The same voice now and then makes contradictory assessments. In Chapter 3, when telling Junior about her deceased husband, Heed shows respect for him and assures Junior that she was absolutely happy with him for almost thirty years, and that neither of them 'even looked at anybody else' (L, 62). In Chapter 4, remembering her married life, Heed admits that her husband was not faithful to her and that there was a woman who could summon him any time she wanted. In Chapter 8, Heed remembers her own love affair with one of the hotel guests, a man of her own age, that made her 'aware of the difference between being needed and being obliged' (L, 172). In her last talk with Christine (Chapter 9), Heed confesses that her husband was good to her for a few years only, pointing out that at eleven a box of candied popcorn seemed like good treatment in her comprehension.

Facts and hints at Mr Cosey's dissipated way of living can be found in other solos as well. Vida recollects his motto: 'The best good time this side of the law' (L, 33). Sandler, who accompanied Mr Cosey on his fishing trips, remembers that Mr Cosey

constantly changed women, 'whose names he couldn't remember and whose eyes he avoided' (*L*, 110). In the 'counterfeit world' created by Mr Cosey on his boat (*L*, 111), Sandler first saw the only woman Mr Cosey ever felt connected to. Without mentioning the woman's name, Sandler picks up the theme that *L* touched upon previously – Mr Cosey's long-standing love affair with Celestian, a woman of a social status so low that he would deny even knowing her if he were asked. However, the harshest judgements of Mr Cosey are made by Christine, for whom the double betrayal from the two people she trusted is absolutely unforgivable. Her grandfather's marrying her only friend filled her with disgust and contempt. Christine still suffers when she remembers her grandfather taking Heed to the dark room at the end of the hall to do things 'no one would describe but were so terrible no one could ignore them' (*L*, 132). Christine's revelations contribute to the argument for seeing Mr Cosey in a negative light. She is sure that her grandfather was the 'Big Man' who 'with no one to stop him' could get away with a heap of blame spread around and with anything else he wanted (*L*, 133). Christine's emotional outburst is conveyed by a specific complex rhythm created with the help of repetition and parallel constructions. This interruption of the regular flow of rhythm creates great emotional tension and a strong impression:

He was dead. The dirty one who introduced her to nasty and blamed it on her.

He was dead. The powerful one who abandoned his own kin and transferred rule to her playmate.

He was dead. Well, good. She would go and view the wreck he left behind. (*L*, 165)

The pattern is again changed in the last line of this rhythmically arranged fragment, and then the regular flow is restored.

Despite all the rumors, however, people admired Mr Cosey and 'spoke of him with forgiving smiles' because he helped many families and because his example made them believe that 'with patience and savvy' they could also achieve 'his finesse, his money' (*L*, 40). None of the voices denies this fact. Even Christine admits, 'William Cosey [...] always fascinated people' (*L*, 88). Sandler remarks, 'Vida, like so many others, had looked on him with adoring eyes' (*L*, 40). Sandler himself had mixed feelings about Mr Cosey: 'At times sympathy conquered disappointment; other times dislike overcame affection' (*L*, 44). Telling Junior about her husband, Heed notes that 'People just adored him and he was good to everybody' (*L*, 62). Comparing people's attitudes to Mr Cosey and to his father, *L* concludes: 'The father was dreaded; the son was a ray of light' (*L*, 68). Positive and negative opinions are given in bits and pieces. Dispersed information demands assessment rather than acceptance.

In accordance with the traditions of jazz music, Morrison also uses a riff. The riff is a short and catchy musical idea. It appears at the beginning, recurs (intact or varied) and gives character to a piece of music. J. Bradford Robinson, investigating the peculiarities of riffs in jazz music, focuses on 'double' or 'compound' riffs:

The riff came to the fore in the early 1930s in the Southwest tradition of orchestral jazz, where the influence of rural blues musicians was notably strong. Among the innovations of

these groups was the 'double' or 'compound' riff, in which the brass and reed sections played separate riffs in counterpoint.²⁹

This kind of riff is incorporated in *Love* by Morrison. The interaction of voices in the narrative establishes a call and response effect. The short contradictory characteristics given to Mr Cosey in different characters' solos form a 'point against point' pattern. These characteristics are varied and may be summarized as 'a good man'/'a bad man', forming a compound riff. In the opening italicized piece (the intro), L gives a positive characterization: 'Mr Cosey was a smart man' (L, 9). In Chapter 1, Vida endorses the sentiments: 'Wasn't a thing wrong with that man' (L, 17), but Sandler objects and calls Mr Cosey 'that old reprobate' (L, 17). Having noticed Junior looking at Mr Cosey's portrait, Heed declares: 'What you see there is a wonderful man' (L, 26). '[A] ray of light' (L, 68), L confirms in her next italicized piece following Chapter 3. In the italicized piece following Chapter 4, she restates her positive opinion: '[H]e used his heart like Santa Claus' (L, 103). By contrast, in her soliloquy following Chapter 6, L reproduces May's viewpoint – 'a reckless old reprobate' (L, 136) – without denying the description. Junior calls Mr Cosey 'Good Man' in her improvisations. 'The dirty one' (L, 165), bursts out Christine in Chapter 8, and in Chapter 9, Heed dramatically changes her previous claim: 'Only a devil could think him up' (L, 190). In her last solo excursion (the coda), L stops the variations of the double riff and binds the halves of it together: 'You could call him a good bad man, or a bad good man [...]. He was an ordinary man ripped, like the rest of us, by wrath and love' (L, 200). The two opposing ideas merge into one, which results in harmonizing the sounds of the voices in the end.

The interaction of voices gives the narrative of *Love* a performative character. This character is maintained by L's address to the reader. Moreover, the expressive potential of jazz music is reproduced to a great extent in this novel. In addition to the expressiveness of the characters, the novel is rich in metaphorical images. The image of the 'Police-heads', who punish guilty women and uncontrollable children, appear and recur in L's reminiscences. This image seems to symbolize the ethical norms that people at Bill Cosey's Hotel and Resort were inclined to ignore: 'But the Police-heads liked to troll at night, too, especially when the hotel was full of visitors drunk with dance music, or salt air, or tempted by starlit water' (L, 6). This supposition is supported by the fact that the Police-heads disappeared when the resort declined: 'Only when the resort failed did they sneak off like pickpockets from a breadline' (L, 6). Another important image that the reader encounters in L's solos is the idea of love itself, which emerges in the scene five-year-old L observed – Bill Cosey caressing his first wife Julia in the sea. His tenderness impressed L greatly: 'I'd never seen anything like that' (L, 64). This scene formed her idea of love: 'People with no imagination feed it [love] with sex – the clown of love. They don't know the real kinds, the better kinds, where losses are cut and everybody benefits' (L, 63). The ocean is described as lacking vacationers, and L speaks of it as if it were a living being:

The ocean is my man now. He knows when to rear and hump his back, when to be quiet and simply watch a woman. He can be devious, but he's not a false-hearted man. His soul is deep down there and suffering. (*L*, 100)

With impeccable taste and mastery, Morrison weaves these images in the characters' inconsistent memories, often triggered by associations and sensations.

Morrison goes further than simply introducing these striking images into the novel. She also conjures them up like a musician performing a musical piece conjures up images and associations in the minds of their listeners. The story of Christine and Heed's relationship is told in fragments of reminiscence and in a non-linear fashion. As a result, the story of Christine and Heed's interactions, involving love, jealousy, competition and conflict, unfolds into a picture of two women dancing like butterflies around the open fire of Bill Cosey's rampant desires, both seeking warmth but burning their wings instead. First they fight for his protection and favour, and later for his legacy; for years they do not understand or do not dare to admit that they need not him but each other. 'We could have been living our lives hand in hand instead of looking for Big Daddy everywhere' (*L*, 189), Christine concludes in their last conversation before Heed's death. In the end, this dance appears to have been a death dance, for it was the desire to deceive Christine that urged Heed to hire the trickster Junior, to make the latter take her to the half-ruined hotel in order to look for an old menu upon which to write a fabricated will of Bill Cosey.

Of all the facets of love that *Love* deals with, this children's friendship, which develops into affection and even a certain psychological dependence, is described with the most painstaking detail, with the effect of imbuing this friendship with great psychological depth. The dialogic character of the narrative, offering different viewpoints on the same events and the same people, provides a multi-dimensional view of the friendship, and the reader's vision of problems and the actual situations is formed on the basis of fragmentary memories of all the participants in the events and witnesses to Christine and Heed's conflicts. Only by mentally joining together all these voices into one 'jazz band' does the reader come to comprehend the dramas of the past and discover what caused the tragedy in the fictional present. The picture of the two girls playing on the beach lingers in the reader's mind, serving to manifest 'a time when innocence did not exist because no one had dreamed up hell' (*L*, 190). The hell of Christine and Heed's mistrust and hatred of each other was created by Bill Cosey when he noticed little Heed wiggling her hips to music and laid his hand upon her. He broke the innocent relations of the two girls and made them share 'a certain twin shame' (*L*, 190), conceal that shame and lie to each other. Some visual images in the novel have an almost cinematographic quality, such as that of the two girls parting the day that Bill Cosey takes little Heed for their honeymoon. One child 'with fear and the grief of abandonment' gazes at the other (*L*, 170), who is sitting in her grandfather's car and pressing hard on the car window. Christine cannot understand why she cannot go too, and Heed looks alone and confused in that

big car. In fact, neither of them understands what is really going on, but Heed is trying to smile and Christine forces her hand to wave farewell. On coming back, 'Heed was bursting with stories to tell Christine' (*L*, 127), but their friendship did not exist any longer. The image of little Heed holding out her wedding ring to Christine with the words 'You can wear it, if you want' suggests to the reader the despair of Heed who sees the abyss of mistrust and hatred into which both fall (*L*, 129).

Christine and Heed's ambitions, jealousy and competition with each other become evident in the novel's descriptions of them both at Christine's delayed sixteenth birthday and graduation party. Christine's appearance is glamorous, but Heed arrests party attendees' attention by her provocative dance:

Christine, led from the car on her grandfather's arm, makes a glamorous entrance; an Oh-so-pretty-girl-in-perfectly-beautiful gown, proof and consequence of racial uplift and proper dreams. The band plays 'Happy Birthday' over the crowd's applause, then segues into 'Harbor Lights'. May beams. Christine glows [...]. Then a flutter, a murmur of disbelief. Turning heads. Heed is in the center of the room dancing with a man in a green zoot suit. He lifts her over his head, brings her down between his legs, casts her aside, splits, and rises on angled legs in time to meet her hips shimmying toward his clenched pelvis. (*L*, 168)

The passionate displays of their heightened emotions (such as Heed setting Christine's bed on fire and Christine's leaping toward Heed with a knife in her hand) reveal their common hatred, which Morrison suggests is the other side of love.

Despite numerous scenes and accounts of heterosexual love in the novel, none of the partners in these scenes ever utters the word 'love'. It is pronounced only by Christine before Heed's death. 'Love. I really do' (*L*, 194), she says to the only person she ever felt psychologically connected to, whether by affection or by hatred. Her dying friend says the same to Christine in the language they invented when they were little girls. Morrison treats their relationship as a specific but real love ruined by Bill Cosey's lust. *L* states, 'The way I see it, she [Heed] belonged to Christine and Christine belonged to her' (*L*, 105). In the novel's coda, *L* concludes: 'Heed and Christine were the kind of children who can't take back love, or park it. When that's the case, separation cuts to the bone' (*L*, 199–200).

The structure of the novel, with its polyphony and improvisation, contradictory opinions, gaps, shifts, understatements, hints and rich imagery, makes the reader ponder over each of its episodes, fill in the gaps, elaborate upon the subjects touched on by the characters, develop his or her own vision of the situations and problems and make assessments, and in this way add his or her voice to the voices that sound in the novel.

Conclusion

Morrison's *Love* is a multifaceted, complicated novel. Consequently, it allows different interpretations, each of which may reveal new things about the story. This article has demonstrated the relationship between jazz music and verbal art in terms of

intermedial references. The structural analogies in literature to musical composition practices result in musico-literary intermediality and musico-literary intermedial forms. In *Love*, Morrison employs structural elements typical of jazz music and adopts jazz strategies to reproduce them within the narrative framework. The polyphonic sounds of the novel are provided not only by two narrators – the first-person narrator and the third-person narrator – but also by the characters' voices, and their juxtaposing viewpoints. The juxtaposition of the past and the present makes the narrative, which abounds with flashbacks, multi-layered. The different viewpoints revealed in the characters' reminiscences resonate and overlap with one another, giving the effect of a dialogue, with the result that readers must reassess and ponder over the details, rather than accept anyone's assessment as authoritative.

In accordance with the structure of a jazz composition, *Love* opens with an intro (L's first soliloquy), which presents the main subjects and characters of the novel. The characters' diverging reminiscences correspond to the solos in a jazz composition as they offer varied versions – improvisational explorations of the same subjects – in which new details, hints, gaps, shifts from one subject to another and contradictory opinions are observed. The novel winds up with a coda (L's last soliloquy), which stops the variations and offers conclusions.

A number of rhythmically arranged fragments render strong emotions and reveal the characters' psychological states. The characters' senses of self become evident due to meaningful chords. The syncopation observed in the structure of the novel, the double riff due to which the voices are harmonized in the end, as well as turn-taking solo voices which produce the effect of a dialogue, meaningful chords and the rhythmic qualities of emotionally charged fragments, may be seen as intermedial references to jazz techniques. The interaction of voices and the rich imagery also give the narrative a certain performative character and bring it closer to the expressive potential of jazz music.

In conclusion, we argue that in Morrison's *Love* musical techniques, which constitute an important dimension of the theory of intermediality and entail what we call musico-literary references, may be viewed as a means of foregrounding the literary text's musical premise. As the novel shows, these references draw heavily on the musical techniques of polyphony, improvisation and variation. Morrison's orientation toward jazz music in *Love* generates jazz narrative strategies to introduce contradictory opinions and rich imagery, and to urge the reader to reassess and join his or her voice to the ensemble of its characters' voices.

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NOTES

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² Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (Los Angeles: Vintage, 1994), p. 384.

³ Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), p. 37.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵ See Irina Rajewsky, 'Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation', *Intermedialités*, 6 (2005), 43–64; Jens Schröter, 'Four Models of Intermediality', in *Travels in Intermedia[lity]: ReBlurring the Boundaries*, ed. by Bernd Herzogenrath (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), pp. 15–36; and Werner Wolf, '(Inter)mediality and the Study of Literature', *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 13.3 (2011).

⁶ See Andrzej Hejmej, *Musicality of a Literary Work* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2012); Paul Phillips, *A Clockwork Counterpoint: The Music and Literature of Anthony Burgess* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Andrea Pérez Mukdsi, 'A Rose is a Rose is a Melody: Mapping Julio Cortázar's Musical Narratives', *Logos & Littera: Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches to Text*, 4.2 (2017), 115–30; Marcin Stawiarski, 'Words and Music Boundaries: Conrad Aiken and his Ambiguous Musicality of Poetry', *Comparatisme*, 1 (2017), 82–94; and Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction*.

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⁸ See Svitlana Macenka, 'Jazz as a Phenomenon of the Culture of Remembrance in the Contemporary German-Language Literature (Michael Köhlmeier's *Occident* and Friedrich Christian Delius' *The Future of Beauty*)', *Philological Class*, 4.58 (2019), 118–26; and Emily Petermann, 'Unheard Jazz: Music and History in Michael Ondaatje's *Coming through Slaughter*', in *Apropos Canada/A propos du Canada: Fünf Jahre Graduiertentagungen der Kanada-Studien*, ed. by Eugen Banauch and others (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 223–33, respectively.

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¹⁷ Rajewsky, ‘Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation’, p. 47.

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²⁵ Michael Saur, “‘I Want to Write like a Good Jazz Musician’: Interview with Toni Morrison”, in *Toni Morrison: Conversations*, ed. by Carolyn C. Denard (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), p. 227.

²⁶ Toni Morrison, *Love* (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 3. Unless otherwise specified, subsequent references will be to this edition as ‘*L*’, incorporated in the main text.

²⁷ Toni Morrison, ‘Foreword’, in *Love* (New York: Vintage, 2005), p. x.

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