The Grain of the Voice and Imaginative Writing. Instructions for Part 1: The Grain of the Voice The “grain of the voice” typically refers to an individual vocal timbre, or tone quality. It is what makes Bessie Smith’s voice distinct from Madonna’s, Rihanna’s, and so on. But, as we have seen, “grain of the voice” has a wider significance. For one thing, it can be a metaphor for any individualizing aspect of music that escapes easily described structures of meaning. And even in its more limited reference to voices, the vocal quality may interact with other musical elements, like form, rhythm, dynamics (volume), harmony, genre, etc. Take James Brown’s iconic scream. Listen to the first three minutes of “Super Bad,” and pay attention not only the timbre of his screams, but how they relate to the form and change. This song has a verse and a bridge (he cries out “bridge!”), each containing its own groove. At the end of the first bridge, Brown unleashes two screams (at 2:21 and 2:25). Yes, the grain is recognizable as James Brown. But more than that, his screams join an important moment in the song’s form: they are the loudest and highest at the bridge’s end. From that climax they release the song back to a new verse while also summoning howling echoes from the saxophone soloist. More can be said. But notice how even this brief description has linked the grain of the voice to relevant features and moments in the song. Read the above text. Don’t skip it. Then, choose two performers, one from EACH column below, and write a one to two-page paper (double-spaced text) or record a five to ten-minute video essay that reports on how the grain of each voice relates to specific features of their music. Maybe it intensifies them, challenges them, befits them, etc. The James Brown example focused on form and dynamics; you do not have to do the same. You may compare/contrast them if you like, but that is not required. If you do compare two performers, do NOT spend time on the obvious (e.g., the fact that they are different). Criteria for grading: 1) Completeness: two selections, one from each column, and examples for each; 2) Makes a case: relevant connections between each “grain of the voice” and specific musical features; 3) Justified with detailed observations from the music. Instructions for Part 4: Imaginative Writing Choose one of the following people. Write about the proposed subject from their point of view. Write a minimum of one page double-spaced on the topic. You are imagining how this person would have addressed the issue. You are not trying to find what they actually said about it (if anything). Pick specific songs to discuss. Be detailed in your arguments—for instance, for option b, have Friedan cite specific songs and state why they are “good” for her understanding of feminism or why they are feminist. Be sure to model your writing on their general thinking and concerns (but you may also try to write in their style and with their vocabulary as a bonus). Provide citations at the end of the document listing which writings of your authors you consulted to get a sense of their ideas and style (there are multiple sources of their writing or interviews on the internet—read at least one essay/interview from your author, or skim several). a. Huey Newton on soul music as part of Black identity. b. Betty Friedan on Janis Joplin or Grace Slick as feminist icons. c. Timothy Leary on the use of music to attain deeper consciousness. d. Marshall McLuhan on American Bandstand. e. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Motown as part of the Civil Right Movement. f. Cesar Chavez on why Bugulú or Tijuana Brass is bad for the image of Latinos. g. William F. Buckley, Jr. on San Francisco psychedelia. h. Noam Chomsky on the US adoption of Bossa nova. i. Jean-Paul Sartre on the music and poetry of Bob Dylan. Criteria for Grading: 1) Plausibility: statements sound like something these writers would say and refer to specific aspects of the music); 2) Makes a case: relevant connections between the ideas and the music. 3) Style and accuracy, with any sources cited.