

**MILES DAVIS'S BITCHES BREW, JACK JOHNSON,
AND DOO-BOP: RESISTANCE BY ANY OTHER
NAME IS STILL RESISTANCE**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent to which Miles Davis's recordings *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were 1) reflective of a Black aesthetic, 2) reflective of Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic, and 3) reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism. This study also critiqued literature related to jazz historiography from the music's earlier formation to assess the extent to which that literature was written from an Afrocentric or Eurocentric perspective. The methodology for this study utilized the Afrocentric paradigm to examine and analyze data from structured interviews, archived interviews, archival data such as album cover liner notes, and album cover artwork. Findings supported my hypothesis that recordings were reflective of a Black aesthetic and reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism but did not support my hypothesis that Davis was resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. Instead, findings indicated that Davis was unconcerned with a Eurocentric aesthetic and was only concerned with creating his own aesthetic. Implications of this study consists of educators, historiographers, and music critics constructing an Afrocentric narrative of jazz historiography that places Black people at the center of analysis as active agents rather than passive spectators. The result will yield a historiography that corrects a historically Eurocentric narrative that marginalized Black musicians' role in jazz history. Another key implication of this study is to demonstrate the importance of oral history projects where the stories of Black people are told from their perspective, which is critically needed.

I stand upon the shoulders of millions of African descendants, many of whom I never met, but who gave their lives for the betterment of generations yet born, i.e., me. To those Ancestors, I am indebted, forever and a day. I dedicate this dissertation to my familial Ancestors Elizabeth and Alex Epps, Irene and Roosevelt Becton, Ann Winfield, Benita Becton, Brandon Becton, Justin Winfield, Keith Winfield, for they helped shape me into the person I have become. *“I am because we are, and because we are, therefore, I am.”*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“I don’t see why our (Black people’s) music can’t be given the same respect of European classical music. Beethoven’s been dead all these years and they’re still talking about him, teaching him, and playing his music. Why ain’t they talking about Bird, or Trane, or Monk, or Duke, or Count, or Fletcher Henderson or Louis Armstrong like they’re talking about Beethoven? Shit, their music is classical.” – Mile Davis (Davis, M. & Troupe, Q., 2005, 361)

This study is the culmination of over fifty years of queries. As a child, my mother used to put me in front of the stereo and I would rock back and forth to the music of iconic artists such as Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Horace Silver, Wes Montgomery, Jimmy Smith, and many others. Inevitably, I had a penchant for reading liner notes on the back of album covers. I was drawn into the stories and anecdotes about musicians and recording sessions. The album’s behind-the-scenes testimonies lured me in. I did not realize it then, but those moments laid the foundation for a lifetime of musical inquiry.

As I read liner notes, I realized I did not recognize the last names of writers who were penning liner notes. Their names sounded foreign to me and were unlike last names I was used to hearing. Names like Johnson, Washington, Thomas, Jones, Brown, Jackson, and Smith somehow eluded liner notes. Consequently, I often asked, “Who is writing these notes?” and “Why don’t their names sound like the names of people they were writing about?” To me, the names of those writers seemed incongruent with the brown faces of musicians who graced album covers. I vividly recall saying, “That writer is trippin’! They’re acting like this album is junk, but I really dig it!”

I did not realize those moments would be etched in my soul and, in myriad ways, impact my life decades later. As a teenager, I kept my head buried in album liner notes and magazines about music that people called jazz. In fact, I could recite the musicians on entire albums and, sometimes, even who the recording engineer was. By the time I was in college, I learned the answer to the critical issue I had as a child: I learned that all the writers who penned liner notes were White people. In fact, all the ones I recall were White men. But, how? Why? Why were these White men so interested in Black music? Why did some of them write some incendiary things about Black musicians' music? Why don't Black people write about jazz, it's their musical creation, right?

I was naïve. At that time, I did not know or understand the socio-political culture of America as it related to Black musicians being creators while White people reaped the financial benefits of Black artistic production. I vowed I would do something to reverse that trend of White writers dominating spaces of album liner notes, magazines, and periodicals about music called jazz, and I did. I started writing for any outlet that would accept my work. Anywhere and everywhere, I had an opportunity to talk about music and Black people's contributions to it, I seized it: websites, lectures, or periodicals. I did not care. I just needed to tell the story of Black people in music from a Black person's perspective.

Years later, I learned about Afrocentricity and its foundation of putting Black people at the center of analysis as agents and creators rather than myopic appendages. Finally, I was able to synthesize my passion for music that people called jazz and writing. Or, dare I say, what I perceived as correcting a hegemonic narrative that too

often did not capture the nuances of Black life, spirituality, culture, philosophy, and psychology. A writing and musical historiography that marginalized Black people, the very ones who created the idiom!

Growing up in St. Louis, Missouri, I heard a lot about Miles Davis, from his superior skills as a musician to stories about his run-ins with overzealous police officers or White music critics who sometimes wrote scathing reviews of his work. Periodically, those reviews were in stark contrast to my perceptions and reactions to the same recordings. This study is the culmination of decades of queries I have had about jazz, Black musicians who created it, White men who wrote about it, White men who controlled its distribution, and, above all, how will I contribute to reversing what I perceive as a trend that will eventually lead to Black people being “whited out” of the very music they gave birth to. This is a study about Miles Dewey Davis, III, who changed the course of music history. A man who played music on his terms. A man who refused to let others define him, his music, style, playing technique, or anything else that would render him unauthentic to himself. A man who was unapologetically and uncompromisingly Black.

Miles Dewey Davis, III was born May 26, 1926, in Alton, Illinois. During a music career that spanned five decades until his physical passage on September 28, 1991, the iconic trumpeter was a major contributor in impacting the direction of jazz at least five times. This is not to say Davis was the sole precursor to developing new jazz styles, but that he was unquestionably a major contributor. However, before and throughout his career, the music he was associated with, popularly called jazz, was not always embraced by educators, historians, politicians, clergy, parents, and others. That

is, jazz, and even the term jazz, was not always embraced, celebrated, or understood as it is today. Even some of the greatest creators and composers of music, such as Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Max Roach, and Duke Ellington, among others, distanced themselves from the term jazz, in large part, because of its negative connotations and they were not even invited to define music they created.

Scholars such as DeVeaux (1991) understand that jazz “openly acknowledges its debt, not to Europe, but to Africa (p. 525). This is important because jazz historiography in its formative years mirrored American society and racial politics of the times, i.e., Black inferiority/White superiority. In other words, a historical narrative that has too often implied that jazz was not legitimized until it was “refined” by the likes of Paul Whiteman, the self-proclaimed “King of Jazz” or the Original Dixieland Jass Band, who falsely claimed they invented jazz simply because they made the first jazz recording in 1917. Jazz as a musical idiom, then, was not immune from the racial politics of American society (Dunkel, 2012).

Jazz in its early years of development was often criticized in academic and popular literature. One major criticism of jazz was that it did not meet the standards of European classical music, the latter of which was perceived as being technically proficient, structured, and played by trained, skilled musicians. That criticism, in part, is what this study is about, i.e., challenging a historical fallacy that Eurocentric standards of creative production, art, and beauty, are universal (Ake, Garrett, & Goldmark, 2012; Baraka, 2010; Gayle, 1971; Nelson, 2015).

Davis’s quote at the beginning of this chapter is even more salient, considering America does not valorize and elevate its only indigenous art form, jazz (Farley, 2011).

A corrective measure of this study includes locating Davis's work through the lens of an Afrocentric paradigm and a Black aesthetic. Black aesthetic is operationalized as music, art, literature, poetry, and theater that locates and places Black people as central agents and participants in their lives and shared historical experiences. That is, a Black aesthetic tells stories (whether visual, tactile, spiritual, or auditory) of Black people from their perspectives based upon shared cultural, economic, historical, political, psychological, social, and spiritual experiences. This approach examined the extent to which Davis defined himself and his music on his terms. Despite music critics, he consistently looked towards the future, culturally and musically.

Miles Davis is one of the most significant American artists of the twentieth century, and certainly so in the context of music called jazz. The rationale behind this pronouncement is based upon four arguments. Firstly, Davis contributed mightily to impacting the direction of music styles, at minimum, five times, i.e., bebop, cool, modal, hard bop, and fusion. This is significant because it represents Davis's vision and approach to the future. He forged new musical terrain by being mindful of what he created previously (www.udiscovermusic.com).

Secondly, alumni of Davis's bands went on to carve out equally impressive careers of their own, including icons John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Carlos Santana, Marcus Miller, John McLaughlin, and others. Metaphorically, Davis was the tree that produced musical branches, i.e., the musicians noted above (www.last.fm). This is significant because it demonstrates the impact Davis had on other musicians and, by extension, those musicians' impact on music and society.

Thirdly, over the span of five decades of recording and performing, Davis built a discography of approximately one hundred twenty albums (www.milesdavis.com). This impressive amount of production does not include dates where he was a sideman on others' recordings. Having scores of recordings as a barometer of Davis's impact was second to his ability to consistently produce dozens of critically acclaimed, genre-defining dates, several of which continue to be models of jazz musicianship and lauded by listeners. This is significant because it represents Davis's desire to move forward and build upon his previous works, which was reflective of his sense of challenging conventional boundaries and paradigms.

Fourthly, *Kind of Blue* and *Bitches Brew* continue to maintain robust sales despite both being over fifty years old, and most impressive, the former achieving quintuple platinum status in 2019, i.e., five million, and counting, copies sold (www.riaa.com). This is significant because it demonstrates that thirty-one years after his death, in 1991, his music continues to be a standard by which other musicians aspire and measure themselves against. His legacy continues to generate interest among music veterans, and even more importantly, serves as a medium by which new musicians and listeners are introduced to jazz (Corrota, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Interest in Davis's work has spawned thousands of research articles, books, dissertations, magazine commentaries, and newspaper articles among the academic community, music community, and public. While there is a significant amount of literature about Davis's individual recordings, there is a dearth of literature that examines *Bitches Brew* (1970), *Jack Johnson* (1971), and *Doo-Bop* (1992)

simultaneously. There is an absence of literature that examines and analyzes these recordings as a collective for their cultural and historical significance. Also, there is a need to examine this collective as examples of Davis's contributions to Black aesthetics and as models of self-determination and cultural liberation. For example, these recordings were junctures where Davis obviously developed and defined his musical direction on his terms. The premise of these recordings being examples of self-definition and liberation is, in part, reflected in the fact that Davis began using electronic instruments, i.e., keyboards, electric guitars, etc. to the chagrin of the "jazz police" whether they were music critics or not. Davis, particularly as it relates to this study, was always pushing music forward, yet he was also trying to expand his listenership.

A seminal query of this study might be, "Considering the vastness of Davis's discography, what is the rationale for selecting only three recordings for this project?" That is, out of roughly one hundred-twenty recordings, why does it make sense to cull only three recordings from Davis's musical vault to examine and analyze? The rationale for choosing *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* is threefold.

Firstly, *Bitches Brew*, in contrast to the majority of Davis's recordings prior to 1970, generated more fervor and attention because of 1) its musicianship, 2) direction, i.e., diversion from Bebop, 3) instruments, i.e., electric versus acoustic, and 4) perhaps most significantly, its parallel to the chaotic social climate of the late 1960's (Davis and Troupe, 2005). Davis's recording *In A Silent Way*, recorded in 1969 (one year prior to *Bitches Brew*), was in some ways a musical precursor to *Bitches Brew*, yet the former,

while incorporating electric instruments, did not capture elements of Rock & Roll to the extent the latter did.

Similarly, *Birth of the Cool*, recorded in 1957, garnered a considerable amount of attention and press for its venture into Davis's "new" direction, a nonet band composition described as a "cool" because of its laid-back sound., Yet, the 1950's would certainly not be described as relaxed and/or laid back, especially considering the social climate of that era was resplendent with social upheaval and inter-ethnic strife in America: Supreme Court *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision (1954); Jim Crow laws permeated throughout the South; rise in McCarthyism; Montgomery bus boycott (1955); Emmett Till being lynched and murdered in Mississippi (1955); Civil Rights Act (1957); desegregation of public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas forced President Eisenhower to send federal National Guard troops to intervene and protect Black students. Eisenhower summoned troops because the governor Orval Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to keep Black students from integrating public schools (1957).

Therefore, the 1950' were, in some ways, just as volatile as the 1960's. However, *Birth of the Cool* did not come close to capturing the turbulence of the 1950's. *Bitches Brew*, conversely, reflected the chaotic energy and spirit of the 1960's politically, socially, culturally, and of course, musically. In that regard, *Bitches Brew*'s significance to this study is twofold. Firstly, it captures the social climate and, secondly, it synthesizes the direction Davis's music was headed, i.e., heavy use of electric instruments which was consistent with the influence and impact of Rock & Roll music on society.

Jack Johnson was not as highly publicized and lauded as *Bitches Brew*, yet it was Davis's musical, political, and pugilistic nod to one of White America's oft-maligned historical figures, Jack Johnson, who was the first African American heavyweight boxing champion in 1910. Johnson mercilessly pummeled "The Great White Hope" boxer Jim Jeffries, and the former's victory sparked race riots across America, most of which left African Americans dead (Alderman, et al. 2018). This recording was selected from Davis's vast discography because it related to one of the questions in my original hypothesis, i.e., the extent to which the recording was reflective of resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic, reflective of a Black aesthetic, and represented tenets of Afrofuturism.

Doo-Bop, Davis's last recording, released posthumously in 1992, found Davis incorporating Hip Hop rhythms and funky bass lines into his jazz repertoire. Like *Jack Johnson*, *Doo-Bop* did not generate the same level of enthusiasm and promotion among jazz writers and historiographers as his previous decades of work, but, once again, demonstrated that Davis was unabashed in his quest for new musical terrain (Cole, 2005). *Doo-Bop* did, however, receive a fair amount of negative publicity for, among other things, not adhering to an artificially imposed prescription of what jazz was supposed to be.

Arguably, *Doo-Bop*, with its Hip Hop rhythms, was attempting to 1) reach a young Black audience and 2) serve as yet another venture on Davis's part in musical innovation, i.e., looking towards the future and, as he echoed, not having an interest in "playing that old stuff" from previous decades. *Doo-Bop*, despite Davis's vast discography, was selected because it, too, addressed fundamental queries of this study,

i.e., Miles Davis creating music on his terms as well as capturing tenets of Afrofuturism.

Bitches Brew has been studied for its artistic quality and cultural significance (Ackerman, 2021); Freeman, 2005; Grella, 2008; Tingen, 2017; Wayte, 2007). *Jack Johnson* has been studied for its musical and social relevance (Smith, 2008). Anderson (2022) analyzed *Doo-Bop*'s foray into the Hip-Hop genre while some critics and reviewers scoffed at this date as being a "sell out" to Hip-Hop music (Cole, 2005; Litweiler, 1992; Smith, 2008). Despite Davis's immeasurable and undeniable impact on world history, there remain critics of his technical proficiency, superfluously arguing that Davis often missed notes while playing (Collier, 1979; Nelson, 2015; Walser, 1993).

Bitches Brew, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* represent pivotal musical junctures over the course of Davis's career. Therefore, one might ask seminal questions such as "Why are these three recordings significant?" and "How, if at all, are these recordings related?" Davis has a discography of approximately one hundred and twenty recordings. While each recording is unique in its own right, some recordings from his discography have been grouped by periods or eras, e.g., Bebop era, Cool era, etc.

Bitches Brew (1970) was selected because it reflected the social climate of the times, i.e., protest movements in America. *Jack Johnson* (1971), represented as the musical manifestation of the first African American heavyweight boxing champion in 1910, Jack Johnson, was selected because of its social and political relevance, i.e., hopes and aspirations of African Americans in 1910 and 1971, who were fighting, literally and figuratively, for equality, justice, and the right to define themselves on

their terms. Socially and politically, pugilist Jack Johnson, who often had conflict with White law enforcement officials, represented the hopes and dreams of African Americans during a nadir period of American history, i.e., segregation, lynching of African Americans, etc.

Davis, who also was a boxer, paid tribute to boxer Jack Johnson by recording an album that served as the soundtrack to the documentary *The Great White Hope* (Alderman, et al. 2018). Similarly, *Doo-Bop* was selected because it, too, represented a musical extension of Davis's previous output, yet added a new dimension to his work, i.e., infusion of Hip Hop, which, in its formative years, resonated with young African Americans who spoke out about injustice, poverty, and inequality (Gladney, 1995).

Rhetorically, what was the social, cultural, and historical significance of these recordings when studied as a group? This study will add to the existing body of literature, yet what makes it unique is the focus on three specific albums, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* as a collective triad.

Bitches Brew, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*, in myriad ways, are the crux of this study and its research questions in contrast to other recordings from Davis's vast discography. These musical archives allow us to study Davis and his work despite his physical absence. I was purposeful in selecting these recordings because they represented different junctures of Davis's direction at an extremely elevated level of musicianship and are ideal for this study's purposes and goals. Lenny White, one of the drummers who performed on Davis's *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson*, concurred with my selections and rational for these recordings. According to White, "I think that the three albums you picked were great because he (Miles Davis) put his foot in all

these (three) different kinds of musical approaches” (L. White, personal communication, September 16, 2023).

Finally, one of the goals of this study was making a coherent case that Miles Davis deserves to be in the pantheon of musicians who personify Afrofuturism. For example, artists Sun Ra and George Clinton are lauded as artistic representatives of Afrofuturism, and rightfully so. But, why not Miles Davis? Did Davis, with virtually every recording in his vast discography, not chart new terrain (futures?) with each successive recording? Did Davis, who vowed “I don’t play that old stuff” actually use his past to construct alternate futures where the past meant new, and the future meant now? Freedom. Lenny White, who recorded with Davis on the seminal recording, *Bitches Brew*, was succinct in adding, “People misunderstand what Miles was saying about not looking at the past. He did look at the past to move forward” (L. White, personal communication, September 16, 2023). Is this not what Steinskog (2018) alluded to in his analysis of the sonic? The power of sound as a mechanism to examine history? The Future? The now? The past?

There are two reasons why Davis, in comparison to Sun Ra and George Clinton, has not garnered the same level of discussion among Afrofuturism scholars and communities. The first and most obvious reason is attire, although this may be a subjective, interpretive experience. Sun Ra and George Clinton wore clothes and adorned jewelry befitting of someone traveling to an extraterrestrial locale, and in the case of Clinton, space suits, space boots, and even a Mothership as a mode of transportation. The Mothership was the conduit that would transport Funkateers who “believed in the P- Funk” to a space and place where their minds would be free. A land

where Funk “was its own reward” and music would be “rescued from the blahs.” Clinton used music, or as Steinskog describes as “the sonic” yet it was/is not as much about the music as it was/is mental, spiritual, cultural, and philosophical freedom Sun Ra, in comparison to Clinton, took the otherworldly to another place Saturn. Sun Ra, even more than Clinton, donned futuristic attire, albeit the major distinction between Sun Ra and Clinton, as least as it related to attire, was Sun Ra wore the same clothing as ancient Kemites. For Sun Ra, dressing in ancient times was the now *and* future because Kemites, in real-time or in their burial practices, believed physical being was temporary, and that was just the beginning of a never-ending journey. They believed that spirit, the *ba*, was eternal.

Miles Davis, from the 1940’s until the late 1960’s was celebrated for his sartorial splendor, i.e., tailored suits, imported fabrics, etc. However, when Davis began to shift musically to electronic instruments, unlike the majority of his previous recordings, he began to wear “hip” clothes that were popular at that time: leather pants, stylish boots, platform shoes, sequined shirts, colorful fabrics, all of which young contemporaries were wearing. It was the sign of the times, yet it was also a period when Davis was connecting to a younger audience.

What is important to understand about Davis’s attire, in comparison to Sun Ra and George Clinton, is that while he was not wearing clothes befitting of a time-traveler per se, he, nevertheless, believed in changing clothes and, by extension, shedding the old (past) while embracing the new (future) several times within the course of one day. According to Davis’s nephew, Vincent Wilburn, Jr., “Uncle Miles would change clothes five times a day, every day!” (V. Wilburn, Jr., personal

communication, March 15, 2024). In making the argument that Davis be included in discussions about Afrofuturism, the discussion should not be about him changing clothes several times a day. The discussion should be about understanding his *purpose* and *motivation* for doing so. Stradford (2020) and others who knew Davis well discussed how changing clothes was an outward manifestation of an internal dynamic, i.e., shedding the “old” clothes (past) in favor of fresh (future) ones. He may not have worn clothing with Kemetic motifs or space suits, but he undoubtedly was looking towards the future as in the very immediate now and later; a “What’s next?” mantra that applied to his wardrobe choices and, as this study will examine, his perspective and approach to music.

The second, and most important, reason Davis’s name is not uttered as often among Afrofuturism scholars and communities is that George Clinton had a physical carrier, the Mothership, to transport Funkateers to another space, a place Sites (2020) describes as “psychedelic Afro-mythology of outer-space deliverance.” Sun Ra, went much further in his futuristic vision by co-creating Themi Research, which was “devoted to the study of the origins and identity of Black Americans” (Sites, p. 93). Eshun’s *More Brilliant than the Sun* (1998) goes as far as to describe Sun Ra’s ability to create “sonic people” which is far more reflective of Afrofuturism tenets than Davis espoused, musically or otherwise. In other words, Sun Ra did not just talk about what Zuberi (2016) described as the “Transmolecularization of Black folk”, he attempted to put it into action. Therefore, it makes sense, then, why Sun Ra is an artist who is valued in the Afrofuturism community.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer three fundamental questions. Firstly, to what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of a Black aesthetic? That is, to what extent do these recordings mirror, among others, Gayle's (1971) notion of Black aesthetics? While Gayle's framework may seem dated, i.e., 1971, his fundamental tenets of what Black aesthetics comprise remain salient in contemporary milieu. As well, this study incorporates a Black aesthetic framework as espoused by Baraka et. al (1974 and 2009), whose notion of the "changing same" reflects the premise that wherever Black people traverse, they take their music, and while their environment may change, the fabric, function, and meaning of their music remains with them. Secondly, to what extent is the recording reflective of resistance to a historical Eurocentric aesthetic? That is, historically - prior to the twenty first century - jazz historiographers often maligned jazz in scholarly and popular articles (Anderson, 2004), often describing the music as primitive, unsophisticated, and even "devil music." Thirdly, to what extent do *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflect tenets Afrofuturism?

Contextually, the responses to these questions will help reveal the extent to which these recordings reflect African-centered self-definition, liberation, and a Black aesthetic. These recordings were chosen because they represent periods of Davis's career when he went into a new musical direction, specifically Jazz-Rock and Hip-Hop. Yet, the recordings also represent Davis's perspective of creating music on his terms, regardless of what others thought, or as Grella (2015) opined, "Miles Davis does not care what you think."

This study is important for three reasons. Firstly, as it relates to *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*, it argues for an alternative interpretation and corrective to a historically Eurocentric narrative that Davis was a “sell out” for venturing into new directions with his music (Crouch, 1990). This is significant because data supports Davis’s contention that his interest was in attracting a younger Black audience and broadening his audience in general rather than older listeners from his previous eras of music. By extension, this study’s point of departure is from an Afrocentric perspective where African descendants are central and agents of their existence, i.e., self-defining (Asante, 1998; Karenga, 2010). The result is that Davis is rescued from a historically marginalized Eurocentric paradigm that too often feebly attempted to define reality for others, for benevolent reasons or otherwise. This approach recognizes that power, as defined by Nobles (2022), was in Davis’s hands, i.e., he defined his reality on his terms in contrast to the inverse. Further, it recognizes that African descendants can speak for themselves, which is congruent with the mantra of Cornish and Russwurm’s *Freedom’s Journal*, i.e., “We wish to plead our own cause” (1827).

Secondly, this study is important because it connects these recordings to a Black aesthetic. Connecting the recordings to a Black aesthetic is useful and necessary because it contributes to the existing body of knowledge by and about African descendants, and most importantly, recognizes a Black aesthetic inherently resists and revolts against Eurocentric hegemony, oppression, and imperialism (Gayle, 1971). This is significant so that African descendants will not be “whited out” of jazz and jazz historiography. In a broader and more dangerous context, there are legislators across the country attempting to erase history, specifically that of African Americans, from

curricula in public education. In 2023, the governor of Florida went as far as to suggest that “slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit.” This study serves as a reminder that African descendants must tell their stories from their lens or risk having their narratives ignored, revised, replaced, or eliminated.

One need not look far in the annals of jazz historiography to be reminded that Fletcher Henderson’s band was swinging well before Benny Goodman’s band; the former having been instrumental in the latter’s success as a bandleader. However, Goodman was dubbed the “King of Swing” by TIME Magazine in 1937. Even more egregious was the notion the Original Dixieland Jass Band invented jazz. They were the first band to record a jazz album in 1917, later changing their name to Original Dixieland Jazz Band, yet the historical record substantiates they appropriated rhythms and music from African American musicians who preceded them (Blauvet, 2017).

Thirdly, this study is important because it examines the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* adhere to tenets of African speculative thought, i.e., Afrofuturism (Dery, 1994; Anderson, 2016; Anderson and Jones, 2017). Anderson (2016) synthesizes Afrofuturism as “future-looking Black scholars, artists, and activists (who) are not only reclaiming their right to tell their own stories, but also to critique the European/American digerati class of their narratives about cultural others, past, present, and future, and challenging their presumed authority to be the sole interpreters of Black lives and Black futures” (p. 228). In other words, Afrofuturism attempts to rescue African creative production from the talons of Eurocentric paradigms, pedagogy, reality, and definitions that denigrate Black life, culture, history,

civilization, and thought by confirming African descendants are quite capable of managing their business in the present and future.

Afrofuturism, in part, includes African descendants throughout the diaspora recognizing their shared historical experiences with an eye and vision towards a liberating, self-defined future. The irony is that African descendants have historically (or, for that matter, even in contemporary times) been told they have no history of significance, yet Europeans have been impeccable models of African appropriation (Bartol, 2021; Davis & Troupe, 2005; Hardesty, 2016; Hegel, 1956; Marcoux, 2007).

Therefore, this study is significant because it will examine how *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were teasing out future spaces: culturally, musically, sonically, philosophically, and spiritually. Khan (2007) even went as far as to opine that *Bitches Brew* launched an entire school of jazz (p. 186). What makes this study unique is that it will look to the past (Davis's recordings) to contextualize and make sense of the present (period recordings were released) while speculating about the future (where Davis wanted his music to go).

Terms Used Throughout This Study – Explanation of Terms

Usage of terms throughout this study are congruent with an Afrocentric perspective. This means terms will reflect shared historical experiences of African descendants that Africans created, defined, and developed versus those imposed upon us by others (Anderson, 2004; Hardesty, 2016; Porter, 1988; Rogers, 1925). These terms may conflict with quotidian nomenclature but are not intended to confuse readers. They are used consciously and purposely in the spirit of Black self-definition and liberation from Eurocentric hegemony, the latter which has marginalized Black

spaces, culture, history, language, life, and spirituality for too long (Hegel, 1956). Some terms are embedded in the fabric of our lexicon and are used to help us more closely define and/or describe the parameters of our ideas. The problem, though, is when terms and definitions are applied to groups of people, their ethos, history, culture or creative production without input or consent.

Terms: African, African America, and Black

African is used to refer to indigenous people of the African continent and throughout the diaspora. African American is used to refer to African descendants who are citizens of the United States. I argue that people taken from their indigenous lands and dispersed throughout the globe still have a historical connection to their original land base. For example, an enslaved Ghanian on a Florida plantation was still a Ghanian, and just because they were stolen from their indigenous land does not eliminate, negate, or nullify their place of origin.

Moore (1992) posited that the name you call a person should reflect their land, history, and culture. Otherwise, you are calling them out of their name (p. 6). African, then, is used when referring to African descendants and phenomena throughout the diaspora while African American refers to African descendants who are American citizens. It is important to note the term Black, at times, is used. This is not meant to confuse the reader. It is a matter of allowing the text to flow more smoothly yet also a very conscious acknowledgement of Pan-Africanist ideology. I argue it is important to connect people to land, history, and culture, and by doing so, it better equips us to contextualize their historical experiences and understanding of who they are as a collective (Moore, 1992).

Terms: European, European American, and White

Throughout this study, European will be used to refer to indigenous people of the European continent and throughout the diaspora. European American will be used to refer to European descendants who are citizens of the United States. As noted above, I argue that people dispersed from their Indigenous lands, by choice or coercion, are still historically connected to their original land base. For example, a person from the Netherlands who immigrates to South Africa to colonize the land is a Netherlander who became a South African citizen. That is, they are a European who became a South African by citizenship. Similarly, a Ukrainian who immigrated to the United States and became a citizen is still Ukrainian and an American by citizenship. As El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, then Malcolm X (n.d.) bellowed, “A cat can have kittens in an oven, but that does not make them biscuits...”

Use of the terms above is important for two reasons. Firstly, doing so recognizes that all people have a collective historical experience and have a right to define themselves, aesthetics, history, and culture. When we call people by their correct names, we recognize their humanity and existence. When we call people out of their names, we deny their history, existence, and humanity. Also, we disconnect them from their land, history, and culture (Moore, 1992). Secondly, and most importantly, these terms are an act of resistance to the colonial ethos that attempts to define others' reality and that groups of people can immigrate to another country, colonize that country, destroy its inhabitants, and then call themselves by the name of the country they colonized. The term White is used when it is a direct quote from another source.

Term: Jazz

Throughout this study, the term jazz is used to describe music born out of the African American tradition in New Orleans, Louisiana in the late 1800's. I argue the term jazz is problematic (discussed below) but chose to adopt it only because it was used exclusively in archival documents as well as the term structured interview participants referred to. Therefore, I wanted to maintain consistency and avoid confusion among structured interview participants to avoid confusion, for example, instead of using terms such as Creative Music or Black American Music.

There are three reasons the term jazz is problematic. The first reason is the definition of jazz is too fluid and has too many interpretations, all of which are negative. Secondly, and most importantly, the history of the term jazz is steeped in racism and misogyny (Payton, 2012). Thirdly, and equally important, the term jazz was not developed and defined by early founders or past and present African American musicians even though the idiom was birthed out of an African experience (Bartol, 2020; McGregor, 2009. Iyer, 2021).

The definition of jazz varies too much, which means defining, understanding, and interpreting it has the proclivity to confuse musicians and the public. A term such as Creative Music does not pigeon-hole artists into a particular style of music, which artists like Abbey Lincoln, Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus referred to. All three, among others, criticized the term because it had the connotation and implication that was the only music they could play. This is important because a concrete definition of an aesthetic so integral to world history begs a definition devoid of racism and

misogyny. Again, the term jazz is used throughout this study for consistency, yet this study begs further exploration for future research addressing music nomenclature.

The Afrocentric paradigm and its corresponding academic discipline, Africology, seek to establish the centrality and historical connection African descendants share. As Mazama (2001) argues, “Africology concerns itself with the whole African world, that is, is Pan-African in its scope” (p. 397). My rationale for delineating the above terms is to establish a point of departure. That is, to clearly articulate that Afrocentric and Africological enterprises recognize all people have an inherent right to view, interpret, and define the world from their respective location. What distinguishes the Afrocentric perspective from the Eurocentric perspective is the former does not desire, nor wishes to, serve as the universal center, location, and voice for *all* groups of people which, too often, the latter paradigm has done. Firstly, we “wish to plead our own cause” (Cornish & Russwurm, 1827) and, secondly, we respect the sanctity of others’ right to see, interpret, define, and construct the world from their place minus hegemony. This study was largely about agency in terms of African descendants claiming their history and narratives from their perspective just as other ethnic groups have a right to do.

Terms: Afrofuturism and Afrocentric Futurism

Dery (1994), who is credited with developing the term Afrofuturism, defines it as such “Afrofuturism is speculative fiction that treats African American themes and addresses African American concerns in the context of twentieth-century technoculture— and, more generally, African American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future (p. 180).” Dery’s description has merit as a point of departure and certainly helped stimulate discussion about an

area of study that has thematically has historical roots as far back as 1903 in the work of, among others, DuBois.

What Dery may be lacking is a deeper articulation and infusion of Afrocentric agency, culture, psychology, and spirituality in the context of African descendants, e.g., Pan-Africanists examining their past to construct alternative futures. In other words, Afrofuturism is bereft of utility for African descendants if the *ba* and agency are not part its application and existence. Or, put another way, technology is useless without having an African-centered, humane method of putting it into action, i.e., culture. If we are going to move the field forward, it is imperative that we examine the historical and cultural foundation from which the field stands upon. Therefore, this study adopts tenets of Afrofuturism and Afrocentric Afrofuturism as articulated by scholars Anderson (2016), Smith (2023), and Steinskog (2018). It is my contention these scholars take Dery's concept to a deeper level culturally and historically.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“I’m Jack Johnson, heavyweight champion of the world. I’m Black! They never let me forget it. I’m Black, all right. I’ll never let them forget it!”- Brock Peters as the voice of Jack Johnson on Miles Davis’s album Jack Johnson, soundtrack to the documentary on Jack Johnson, 1971.

The theoretical prism and foundation from which this study departs, is centered, grounded, and located in is the Afrocentric paradigm as articulated by Asante (1998, 2003, 2006, and 2021), Kershaw (1992), Keto (1994), and Mazama (2001). The Afrocentric paradigm refers to placing Africans at the center of analysis. This approach demands that when examining, analyzing, and articulating phenomena one’s location is paramount. In this case, from the shared historical experiences of African descendants throughout the diaspora. Rhetorically, this approach yields questions such as “Where are Africans situated?” “What role do Africans have?” “To what extent are Africans agents and participants versus appendages?” “To what extent are Africans liberated and self- defining?” “How are Africans controlling their own narrative? Or are others assuming that role?” Laconically, the Afrocentric paradigm can be described as the mantra for John. B. Russwurm’s and Samuel Cornish’s seminal newspaper, Freedom’s Journal in 1827: “We wish to plead our own cause. For too long, others have done that for us.” Taking the Afrocentric paradigm a step further, not only will African descendants plead their own cause, but they will document and correct previous hegemonic and Eurocentric interpretations and writings of history.

The Afrocentric framework for the paradigm consists of categorical, functional, and etymological concepts. That is, these domains serve the purpose of locating and placing areas of study, i.e., components/areas from which to examine phenomena. For

example, categorical refers to issues related to race, gender, and class. Therefore, this study examines Davis in the context of those domains. What was his perception of being a Black man in America? What impact did his family's economic status, e.g., class, have on his development and worldview?

Regarding the functional component of this study, what policies, etc. impacted Davis's life? For example, New York City's notorious Cabaret Card policy impacted scores of artists, from 1940 – 1967, and this had grave implications for Black performers. The cabaret card was an identification card requirement for artists and performers in bars and clubs. The law also required club owners to obtain a special permit if patrons were going to be dancing. The impact of this law affected the financial well-being of artists such as Billie Holiday, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and, most notably, Charlie Parker. Arbitrary enforcement of the policy had devastating effects on Black artists, especially Parker, who was an icon on the New York City jazz scene yet was relegated to traveling and performing outside of New York City because his card was revoked etymological refers to concepts of language (Asante, 1990).

These are fundamental issues, especially for this study because historiography of jazz music, fundamentally, has never been controlled by Black people. Worse, throughout history, historiography has too often marginalized or ignored its Black creators. Blauvet (2017) teases some of these questions out, and he further examines the etiology of the term jazz, a term which Black creators had no significant input in defining. Yet, despite the idiom part of their creative production, Black people sat on the sidelines as other "experts" pontificated about that they thought they heard. This is the crux and significance of this study in terms of the Afrocentric paradigm.

Strangely, Black people have been creators of the music, yet have not fully been participants in writing, analyzing, defining, and, worse, controlling their own creative production. The Afrocentric paradigm, then, serves the role of reclaiming music historiography and places it in the hands of its creators, i.e., Black people. This, of course, is not to suggest that European descendants should not have a place or role in writing about music called jazz or any other form of Black creative production.

To the contrary, European descendants, as well as any other group of people, have a right to write about Black creative production and its creators. In fact, many do it very well and have been authentic in maintaining Black agency. However, some, and even some who are considered highly respected, have been egregious in their hegemonic Eurocentric admonitions of what they think Black artists are trying to do or say. Worse, though, are those who chastise Black artists whose work is the epitome of Black agency and, further, whose work serves to liberate the spiritual, cultural, and psychological spaces of African descendants.

One of the most lauded jazz critics of the 20th century, Ira Gitler, had the unmitigated gall to verbally admonish Abbey Lincoln in a Down Beat Magazine review of her 1961 recording, *Straight Ahead*. Lincoln, whose work spoke of Black agency, self- definition, liberation, and freedom obviously drew the ire of Mr. Gitler, the presumed gatekeeper of what jazz *should* be. Tunes such as *African Lady*, *Retribution*, and *When Malindy Sings*, the latter being a consummate African American spiritual, were too much for Mr. Gitler to stomach. He, in his exalted position as an esteemed music critic, admonished Ms. Lincoln, “pride in one’s heritage is one thing,

but we don't need the Elijah Muhammed (sic) type of thinking in jazz" (Down Beat Magazine, 1961).

Did Mr. Gitler presume that African descendants standing up for each other, telling their stories on their terms, arguing for the right to be human, and resisting oppression were unconscionable offenses? Did Mr. Gitler tell his own people they did not have a right to tell their stories? To stand up for themselves? Define themselves? Resist oppression? Thus far, I have been unable to find evidence of either query. Why would Mr. Gitler assume his patriarchal, ill-suited diatribe was appropriate? Who extended to Mr. Gitler the right to tell Ms. Lincoln what she should sing? And who is he referring to by saying "we don't...?"

Equally reprehensible, yet indicative of why this study is important, is that Mr. Gitler did not even have the courtesy to spell the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's name correctly. To suggest this mistake may have been a mere unintended oversight on Mr. Gitler's part is, at best, specious and disingenuously fatuous. Surely this was not an oversight as Mr. Gitler authored several books, including contributing to encyclopedias. Suffice it to say, Mr. Gitler was an accomplished writer and possessed a high modicum of editorial skill. This may be why jazz has not received the level of respect and accolades, financial and otherwise, that it may have been warranted.

Historically, at least in the United States, jazz has not received the commensurate level of financial support from foundations (grants), corporations (sponsorships), and organization donations as European classical music. There are myriad explanations for these financial gaps and disparities. Chief, among others, is that jazz, at least on the historical timeline, is new in comparison to European classical

music's four hundred year-plus lineage. As well, jazz in its early days of development was often maligned by those outside of the music community such as preachers and policymakers. Applerouth (2016) examines efforts among policymakers to demonize jazz while elevating European classical music. Again, this is an issue of location among historiographers. In its early periods of development and growth, music was often demonized and vilified as being primitive, lascivious, and immoral. Jazz historiography, documented by Levine (1989), of the late 1800's and early 1900's often described the music in brutal terms, even to the extent of describing it as uncivilized, and barbaric devil music (6 – 22).

This is not to say contemporary scholars have not attempted to correct false assumptions and narratives from years past about jazz because many have. However, one foci of this study concern itself with the deleterious effects of jazz historiography of the late 1800's and early 1900's. That era of historiography may have done more harm than good by discouraging prospective supporters, listeners, funders, and musicians, the latter of whom may have been interested in pursuing music professionally. It might be argued that had the historiography been more favorable or, at least, balanced that jazz as an academic field of endeavor may have come sooner, having been perceived as a legitimate academic pursuit or field of study to the extent European classical music was. While the first college degree-granting program in jazz education occurred at North Texas State University in 1947, European classical music's academic foundation extended back much further to 1865, when Oberlin College developed the first music conservatory program to offer a bachelor's degree in music education.

Another prevalent explanation for economic disparities that exist between jazz and European classical music is America's legacy of racism against African descendants, i.e., African Americans. This line of reasoning posits that America's history of racism and segregation against African Americans manifests itself in the music field as well. The rationale for this perspective argues that jazz is an African American creation and, as such, cannot be divorced from the politics and social climate of America.

Writer Ralph Gleason (1970) penned the liner notes for *Bitches Brew*. He, too, questioned musical monikers that relegated musicians to metaphorical boxes where they had no input in describing and defining the very music they produced. According to Gleason, "the music we have called jazz, and which I never knew what it was because it was so many different things to so many different people, each apparently contradicting the other and one day, I flashed that it was music." It is no amazing discovery to understand that Black music production in America has never involved Black people participating in discussions about "what to call the music" or defining music and its parameters. Consistently, the formula has always been Black people create and White people define, commodify, and monetize it. This formula has, and is, part of America's musical history. So-called "Nigger music" is the foundation of what was to become "Race music" and "Blues."

When Rap music's popularity began to increase in the 1980's, the prima facie reception was nothing short of abysmal, and it was summarily dismissed as utter gibberish. That is, until economic opportunities became evident. We witnessed, yet again, a formerly despised Black art form become commodified and ruthlessly

monetized. The music-marketing-monetization lunacy reached its apex in the late 1980's when corporate giant Pillsbury ruthlessly produced not one, but two ad campaigns steeped in Black music history: Blues and Rap.

The company had separate ad campaigns for each style of music, so they were trying to reach an older Black audience with the Blues campaign and a younger Black audience with the Rap campaign. The ominous spectacle of Pillsbury's popular company mascot, Poppin' Fresh, singing Blues (even playing a harmonica!) and Rapping was yet another example of White corporate America's cultural regurgitation of Black art.

Fewer economic opportunities, disparate funding, and social acceptance of jazz are congruent with the dearth of economic opportunities, disparate funding and social acceptance Black people experience in the broader society. Therefore, it stands to reason that since jazz was developed by Black people, and that America has a contentious relationship with those whom Curtis Mayfield (1970) called "the people who are darker than blue," then it makes sense why jazz, much like the people who produced and developed it, are maligned by White historiographers.

One of the preeminent artists of the 20th century, pianist Billy Taylor (1986) argued that America has not supported and cultivated jazz as an indigenous American art form. Instead, he argues, America has neglected an art form that represents the very fabric of American culture. Taylor posits:

Jazz is America's classical music, yet many Americans have been consistent in their bias against it. They believe that western- European classical music is superior to any other in the world and therefore, the only music that warrants serious and intensive study. This belief has resulted in the systematic exclusion of jazz from much of the American cultural experience. For the most part, jazz has not received serious or consistent attention from educators, media

programmers, music critics, symphony orchestras, concert performers, manager or presenters, funding agencies, or the Black community. Therefore, the general public has been deprived of appropriate exposure to jazz and receives too little accurate and up-to-date information about it. (25)

Finally, economic disparities discussed above may exist because key figures in jazz vehemently resisted having their music categorized, especially since they were excluded from discussions about how best to describe, label, or categorize music they created and produced. These musicians resisted categorization of their artistic production, hence, defying scholars' and writers' assumptions about what the music was about, its purpose, and its future. As Teachout (2013) quoted Duke Ellington, "I don't write jazz, I write Negro folk music." (20)

This is unfortunate because jazz reflects society and vice versa. Jazz is a metaphor for life and society. If we consider that two fundamental tenets of jazz are improvisation and group cohesion, then we are more likely to understand that society, too, is just like jazz. In other words, people's interactions with others in society are often improvised and unplanned, and people negotiate space to peacefully coexist (or colonize). For example, in a quartet format, the bassist is but a lone performer, yet when the drums, saxophone, and piano join in, the sound is more collective and cohesive.

The literature review is arranged by four themes. The first theme examines literature about the historiography of jazz. The second theme examines literature about Black aesthetics, and third theme examines literature about Black resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. The fourth theme examines literature about Afrofuturism.

Literature on Historiography of Jazz

In *Sociology and the Meaning of Music*, Appelrouth (2013) provides a comprehensive examination of sociological conditions that impacted how jazz was received and interpreted by others. His work is relevant here in that it places music, jazz, in historical context by examining how America's Puritanical notions of what "sacred" music entailed; how "real" music, which did not apply to jazz, was to "performed in concert halls" which, in part, impacted how audiences perceived and interpreted jazz. The impact of historiographers had the capacity to shape the public's mind about what was "good" or "sacred" music and what was not. As we examine the history of jazz through the prism of those early historiographers, jazz was not only an appendage, but also unfit for public consumption. This legacy of condemnation persisted for years in the formative years of jazz, which meant Black jazz musicians' creative production that came out of their historical experience was judged by others who had no understanding nor interest in understanding Black people; at least until that same Black creative production could be commodified and monetized.

In a previous article, *Boundaries and Early Jazz: Defining a New Music*, Applerouth (2011) examines the "diffusion of jazz into the musical mainstream during the 1920's" from a music, the product of Black creative production, to an "accepted" art after White artists became the "face" of the music, e.g., Original Dixieland Jazz and Paul Whiteman. These sentiments, of course, are not new because the political baggage of America's racist, segregationist history was resplendent with discourse that vilified Black people as unsophisticated while praising Whites for civilizing the heathens. For

jazz historiography, its lineage is embedded in language that condemns Black creative production.

Similarly, Porter analyzes the schism between Black musicians who create jazz yet have nothing to do with its historiography. Not because they do not want or like to write, but because “most jazz research has been done by individuals who are neither musicians nor academics” but, worse, “racism in our society makes it all too easy for White authors to take a condescending attitude to the jazz they write about.” (1988, 199). Porter in no way is suggesting that all White jazz critics and historiographers are racists. To the contrary, his salient point is the intellectual and cultural location of writers is paramount in the context of jazz historiography being balanced or skewed, i.e., in favor of Whites at the expense of Black.

Kofsky’s (1971) *The Jazz Tradition: Black Music and Its White Critics* may seem dated to some, but its relevance and utility continue to have implications for jazz historiography. His central question was, “Who is to have custody over the interpretation of Black music, and what uses will its future custodians make of it?” Further, he found it curious that while African Americans created jazz, and that they historically have been the center of the music, there remains a large cadre of White writers on the topic. He critiques White jazz writers for their lack of understanding African Americans’ “sociocultural history” (p. 404), which he believes is a critical element of being able to interpret and understand jazz; a disconnect between what White writers perceive and interpret about the music while ignoring historical conditions that created the music. This, Kofsky argues, is critical to how African American musicians and their music are perceived by the public, which, he posits, is

often negative because the lens of White writers is jaundiced because of their lack of understanding the African American social, cultural, and historical experiences.

Jenkins's (2022) edited seminal work, *Ain't But A Few Of Us: Black Music Writers Tell Their Story*, is a contemporary work that is far more expansive than Kofsky's (1971) in terms of delineating and analyzing the most fundamental, long-standing, and puzzling realities of jazz music and jazz historiography: the music comes out of the African American experience, yet since its early days of development until today, writers, critics, and historiographers have almost exclusively been White men. Jenkins is unabashed in his examination and analysis of this paradox where White people control, at the very least, the avenues by which jazz, i.e., music that Black people gave birth to, is written about and where it is written.

Jenkins's work is also valuable because it is written from the perspectives and experiences of those who have been excluded from writing about jazz: Black people. *Ain't But A Few Of Us* consists of those few Black writers, editors, magazine publishers, newspaper columnists, etc. who write or have written about jazz. This is the epitome of Fetterman's (1998) discussion of the significance of the emic perspective. Jenkins's assemblage of Black professionals across the full spectrum of jazz historiography is monumental and, to my knowledge, the first of its kind in jazz historiography.

Congruent with Jenkins's perspective, this study acknowledges there is nothing inherently wrong with White people writing about jazz. Most importantly, this study recognizes that because of their primary control of outlets from where and how jazz is written, White people have been invaluable in terms of the dissemination of

information about jazz music. What is critical, however, has been the writers' perspectives or, as Asante (1998) posits, their location. Regarding White jazz critics, Jenkins' position resonates with this study's perspective:

There is nothing inherently wrong with White people writing about jazz. There are very talented White jazz writers, undoubtedly, and I am not taking anything away from them. What I think they sometimes lack is the cultural and philosophical understanding of what the Black experience is, the experience from which this music arises. (W. Jenkins, personal communication, March 1, 2024).

Quincy Jones, in the Preface to Ginell's (2013) *Walk Tall: The Life & Music of Julian "Cannonball" Adderley*, echoed corollary sentiments of Jenkins', but with a particular focus on musicians. Jones referred to music being the conduit by which musicians tell *their* respective stories, with music being the mode of communication. He noted, "You can have all the technique and knowledge in the world, but if you haven't lived and don't have your own story to tell, you'll have nothing to say musically." (Preface, X) One shortcoming of jazz historiographers and critics has been their descriptions of *other* musicians' music, not their own, and doing so from *their* own location, not that of musicians'.

This study has no interest nor aim in suggesting, even mildly, that White writers cannot skillfully write about Black musicians' work. Nor is this study suggesting that White musicians cannot play any type of Black music at an elevated level of proficiency. In both cases, many can and do. My argument revolves around the centrality of musicians' perspectives and how, or if, historiographers, writers, and critics accurately capture their music and its meanings, i.e., an emic perspective.

Jones' admonition is applicable to this study because, as previously discussed, "jazz in its early years of development" was often marginalized and maligned in academic and popular literature, in large part, because it presumably "did not meet the

standards of European classical music's" perceived elevated level of technical proficiency. Braithwaite's (1925) essay, *The Negro in American Literature*, while dated, refuted the notion that White writers were even capable of being unbiased when writing about Black people. Referring to Whites' ability to write about Black people, Braithwaite warned Black writers it was their responsibility to write about themselves and not leave that to Whites:

We shall have to look to the Negro himself to go all the way. It is quite likely that no White man can do it. It is reasonable to suppose that his White psychology will always be in his way... Such a (Black) writer, to succeed in a big sense, would have to forget that there are White readers; he would have to lose self-consciousness and forget that his work would be placed before a White jury. (41)

In *Marshall Winslow Stearns and the Politics of Jazz Historiography*, Dunkel (2012) examined the politics of jazz historiography among scholars, musicians, and policymakers. The article focuses on Stearns' role in jazz historiography from the 1930's onward. Stearns was a strong proponent and supporter of jazz, having established the first Institute of Jazz Studies in 1952. Stearns, Dunkel argues, was staunch in his perspective that jazz was an African American creation, despite having published *The Story of Jazz* (1956), which was considered "the first standard history of jazz." (Dunkel, 470)

Dunkel opined "Stearns' political impetus was not only true for his organizational efforts, but also for his jazz historiography" (469) and "despite his great knowledge of the music and his vast record collection and private archives, Stearns never attempted to write an objective history of jazz" (469). The shortcoming of this perspective is that it does not acknowledge that jazz historiography, like research in general, is not always an objective, measurable enterprise.

Misconceptions in Linking Free Jazz with the Civil Rights Movement by Gridley (2007) argues there is no social or musical evidence and/or basis to suggest “free jazz” and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s was intertwined. Any suggestion thereof, Gridley argues, is confusing and merely coincidental. Further, Gridley asserts that confusion tends to arise when scholars “teach musical innovations in the context of history” as doing so runs the “risk the possibility that students will infer cause-and-effect relations where there are none.” (152).

Responding to Gridley’s article, Harker’s (2008) *In Defense of Context in Jazz History: A Response to Mark Gridley* argues the antithesis. That is, Harker posits that ignoring the relationship between an artist’s creative production and the social climate suggests that music is created “in a vacuum,” which, Harker suggests, is short-sighted, and that it denies the notion that musicians do not consider social milieu when creating music.

Kenney’s (1995) work, *Historical Context, and the Definition of Jazz: Putting More of the History in “Jazz History”* addresses one of the biggest problems in jazz, which is defining the term. Kenney asserts that part of this problem revolves around a lack of continuity and understanding, or acceptance that attempting to define jazz strictly in musical terms lacks social and historical context. Conversely, defining jazz in purely social and historical contexts often leads to a diminished level of understanding about what jazz is sonically. The quandary Kenney refers to is connected, in part, to the inability of writers and musicians to devise cogent, definitive definitions of music.

Kenney categorizes these obstacles as “nonmusical approach” versus “musical approach.” Individually, he argues, neither approach is sufficient. Instead, he calls upon historiographers to devise a definition that captures musical elements while acknowledging nonmusical elements, i.e., social, and historical impacts on jazz.

In *The White Reception of Jazz in America*, Anderson (2004), critiques how popular magazines and periodicals during the early twentieth century such as *Literary Digest*, *Current Opinion*, and *Ladies’ Home Journal*, among others, were resplendent with racism and hegemonic Eurocentric definitions of African aesthetics, as well as African people. Anderson critiques how these publications were used as tools to infiltrate the minds of readers and musicians with the sole purpose of implanting racist dogma in readers’ minds. Thematically, Anderson argues these racially inflammatory articles were more than mere fodder for readers’ enjoyment. Instead, they served to transmit and transfer racist dogma to the academy, public, and music community, all with the purpose of portraying African people as “contemporary savages.” (136).

Casey’s (2020) *That Modern Malice: Exploring Representations and Understanding of Bebop and Modern Jazz in 50 Years of Jazz Historiography* examines what he describes as fifty years of contradictions in jazz historiography, namely inconsistencies about the origins, definitions, and developments of modern jazz. Casey, therefore, defines and summarizes major strains of thought regarding the origin of Bebop and respective arguments posed by historiographers with the goal of teasing out the merits of modern jazz being defined and/or perceived as being what he describes as evolutionary or revolutionary.

In *Jazz in Los Angeles: Finding A Black Audience* (2005), Becton and Bivins explored the lack of African American presence at jazz clubs and in jazz media (radio, print, and television). They found several reasons for the virtual absence of African Americans at jazz performances and in media. The late Abbey Lincoln suggested it was because of a lack of marketing jazz in African American communities. Gary Bartz was more succinct: “Racism has everything to do with jazz. This country is in denial about racism. It needs a 12-step program.” Others, like Archie Shepp posited “Up until the ‘40’s and ‘50’s, much of this music still had roots in the African American community. Coleman Hawkins lived in Harlem. This used to be people’s music. It is no longer. The music has been taken out of our community and awarded to middle class White communities...” The ripple effect of these sentiments carried over into jazz media as well which, ironically, this study will reveal how most historiographers of jazz are Europeans and European Americans despite jazz being born in African American communities.

Lewis’s (2008) *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* documents the formation of the Chicago-based Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians in 1965. Lewis, a member of AACM provides first- person narratives of AACM’s genesis, as well as members’ familial history. Most useful to this study is Lewis’s critique of jazz historiography which, he argues, has historically been from the distorted lens of some White critics, thereby critiquing the critics.

Lewis saw music described as avant-garde as a form of authentic Black creative production, and his critique of the critics suggests he vehemently disagreed with

critics' assertions of the "new music" as being atonal noise. He argued, "It is doubtful that any music, anywhere, has received such harsh criticism as did this new music in its formative years." (46) Further, like musicians Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Miles, Davis, and Archie Shepp, Lewis resists musical, social, and cultural boundaries imposed on artists by critics to the extent he describes AACM's creative production as Great Black Music.

This is important to this study because it supports one of this study's primary contentions: Historically, music called jazz has been written by White historiographers and critics, which is not inherently deficient in any form. However, what is salient and relevant is the lens from which these historiographers and critics write. Even more significant is the fact that many of jazz's greatest and impactful artists have not been participants in describing and defining *their* artistic production. That role has been served, usually without permission and/or discussion, by historiographers and critics. Interestingly, scholars such as Salamone (2005) argue that jazz historiography has not sufficiently recognized jazz's impact on European classical composers and their corresponding music. He posits that respected intellectuals such as Theodore Adorno were "anti-jazz." (735)

Billy (1982) astutely explains potential obstacles when historiographers and critics write about jazz, but are oblivious to psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual domains of the Black musician that created the music:

Though Harrison concedes the fact that jazz was created by Blacks, he does not understand the psychological or cultural climate that forced displaced Africans to restructure their music as a survival tool. Perhaps this is due to his total dependence on recordings as his principal source of aural information. They were made at a later time and under different social and psychological conditions. In addition to this, he did not choose to consult the works of

respected Black writers such as Maud Cuney Hare, Eileen Southern, LeRoi Jones, or Hildred Roach. By ignoring the African musical traditions, Harrison finds it easy to discount "African survivals" in jazz and trace the music through its "European parallels," an unfortunate choice. (271)

Taylor's skillful admonishment of Harrison's quasi-ethnocentrism is not only needed, but critical. One of the core goals of this study is to reclaim historiography about jazz and, for that matter, all Black creative production. Again, it is imperative to understand this perspective is not, nor interested, in attempting to claim that White people are incapable of writing about Black music. The imperative, then, must be that African descendants control the definitions and narratives of their creative production. And, if other people will engage in the pursuit of telling our stories, then they must be fully equipped to understand the spiritual, cultural, philosophical, and psychological elements that are embedded in shared historical experiences of African descendants and sanctioned to do so.

Laubenstein (1929) was, to put it diplomatically, less than receptive to jazz as a legitimate aesthetic. In fact, to even suggest he detested jazz was a dire understatement. Yet, as a historiography of music, his voice had the ability to impact others' perceptions and interpretations of jazz which, at least as far as jazz is concerned, his vision was less than optimal.

It may be that jazz, too, can hope to find its life only by Losing it, by surrendering those very characteristics which make it jazz. Perhaps it was brought forth to be but the creature of a day, a highly specialized phenomenon evolved solely for the highly peculiar War and post-War eras. Or jazz may be destined ever to play the court-fool in the kingdom of music, irritating and yet amusing us by the sardonic quality of its jest (624)

Literature on Black Aesthetics

In *Blues People* (1963), Baraka, known as LeRoi Jones at the time, theorized

that Black people's music reflects who they are. And, by extension, Black music is inherently a tool and strategy for self-definition, liberation, and resistance. Baraka theorized:

The path the slave took to citizenship is what I want to look at. And I make my analogy through the slave citizen's music- through the music that is most closely associated with him: blues and a later but parallel development, jazz. And, it seems to me that if the Negro represents, or is symbolic of... American culture, this certainly should be revealed by his characteristic music. (IX)

Fundamentally, Baraka is arguing that Black music and Black identity cannot be separated. Black music is an expression of who Black people have been, where they are, and where they are going. This point, in large part, is the crux of this study. One key goal of this study is to correct historiography that vilified jazz in its early years of formation, and in some cases, well into the 20th century. Correcting false narratives will allow Black people to revise, reimagine jazz, and document its history, current, and future unfolding on their own terms and by their own definitions, not those terms and definitions imposed upon them.

In *The Black Arts Movement*, Neal (1968) lays the foundation of the Black aesthetic. The Black aesthetic is the collective of Black art, literature, dance, music, poets, etc. that serves to liberate and improve life conditions of Black people in America and throughout the diaspora. Black artists and their creative production, he posits, should be directly aligned with the interests, and needs of the Black community. Black art, then, is not art for art's sake, but art that serves the purpose of capturing the experiences of the Black collective from their lens. The Black aesthetic, therefore, is a tool of Black liberation and not an artifact evaluated for intrinsic beauty. The beauty is in Black art's ability to speak to Black lives via Black lens.

Asante, in Davidson's (2021) *African American Studies*, delineates the Afrocentric paradigm that undergirds African aesthetics, as well as other fields of study. That is, he develops and defines essential elements of the Afrocentric paradigm whereby aesthetics serves the interests of African descendants. Further, he discusses the priority of Afrocentric thought as a method of correcting and critiquing the historical narrative of Eurocentric hegemony.

SOS--Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader by Bracey, Sanchez, & Smethurst (2014), is a broad collection of essays that define the Black aesthetic, trace the formation and trajectory of the Black Arts movement, and covers the social, political, cultural, and spiritual landscape of Black creative production. *SOS* serves as a manifesto for Black artists as well as placing the work of Black artists in historical and cultural context, reminding Black artists that art must be functional, committed, and purposeful.

Similar to *SOS*, Gayle, Jr.'s (1971) seminal treatise, *The Black Aesthetic*, consists of premier writers, activists, and thinkers of the 1960's who advocated, unapologetically, for a Black aesthetic that defined and guided Black life, arts, and activism. Contributors in this edited work provide a blueprint for Black people across artistic domains as poetry, fiction, music, and drama. Most importantly, however, is how contributors define Black aesthetics on their terms and how Black aesthetics are far more than a collage of artistic movements, pictures, dances, music, etc. Yes, Black aesthetics are all of those, but primarily, Black aesthetics are functional and liberating. Black aesthetics, the authors echo, not only is what makes Black people unique, but

also what allows Black people to resist the mental, cultural, philosophical, and spiritual onslaught they experience at the hands and paradigms of white supremacists.

Jazz as a Black American Art Form: Definitions of the Jazz Preservation Act by Farley (2011) examines the impact of the Jazz Preservation Act of 1987, confirmation that African Americans created jazz. Farley also discusses the Act's impact on jazz education and, more importantly, how the Act debunked the notion that White artists were responsible for jazz's development. Farley also discusses how the Act challenged America's social, political, and cultural climate of Black inferiority.

In *Connective Threads: Jazz Aesthetics Jazz Music, and the Future of Jazz Studies*, Guarino & Oliver (2022) posit that jazz is a distinct African American art form, despite Latin American and European American influences. In part, they argue, America's history of tumultuous race relations and subjugation of African Americans is responsible for jazz being distinctly an African American art. They argue the lens by which jazz in America is unique from jazz in other countries is related to African American artists responding to a racist climate in America, a climate different from racist climates in other locales, i.e., Latin America and Europe.

Where Guarino and Oliver incorporate African dance into the African aesthetic, Bolden (1981), instead, utilizes poetry as a method of defining the African aesthetic, specifically as it relates to Miles Davis, in *To Quote a Black Prince or: Miles Davis V.S.O.P.* Bolden flips the narrative of critics who used negative monikers to describe Davis, i.e., Prince of Darkness, etc., Instead, Bolden converts the myriad negative descriptors into liberated, self-defining, and victorious expressions of Davis's Black excellence.

In *The Coloring of Jazz: Race and Record Cover Design in American Jazz from 1950 – 1970*, Dougherty (2007) argues that issues of race and ethnicity are embedded in every facet of American culture. Further, she argues that jazz, even as a form of music, is a metaphor for American society. That is, America's nature and history of racism as a social construct, concomitantly, reveals itself in music in general, and jazz. Dougherty also critiques the dearth of African American album cover designers and artists, which is also a result of America's unwillingness to address its racist history.

Sacred Freedom: Sustaining Afrocentric Spiritual Jazz in 21st Century Chicago, a dissertation by Zanolini (2016) examines and critiques music and its changing landscape from various lens, namely spiritually, culturally, linguistically, socially, musically, and historically. He argues that not only does the landscape change sonically, but also socially. However, he posits, music, that is, Great Black music/jazz will be unaffected by social tectonic forces, i.e., the musicians may change, and the audience may change, but the music will forever be imbedded in Black culture. Zanolini articulates the significance of language and diction as going beyond social constructs in favor of having the capacity to construct identities. For example, he examines how the word Black cannot be defined or truncated to describe a color. Instead, as he suggests, Black is culture; spirit; being music; space. Similarly, he teases out the significance of music as being more than a collage of sounds. In his view, music is a construct intricately connected to and with society as well as social movements/shifts. For example, the shift from Nigger-to-Black represents shifts in society *and* identity.

Literature on Black Resistance to a Eurocentric Aesthetic

Literature on African resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic has two levels. On one level, literature specifically addresses and/or challenges hegemonic Eurocentric historiography. On another level, even more salient, literature addresses African descendants defining themselves on their terms without any consideration of a Eurocentric aesthetic.

Paulette Hopkins, one of America's premier literary figures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries forewarned Black writers and historiographers in *Of One Blood: Or The Hidden Self* (2014), originally written between 1902 – 1903. Hopkins urged Black people to construct their own narratives as European American writers would most often portray African Americans in a negative way.

No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the innermost thought and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history, *and as yet unrecognized by writers of the Anglo-Saxon Race.* [emphasis in text] (IX)

Hopkins' literary criticism is congruent with the Afrocentric perspective, albeit with a particular focus on literature and aesthetics. An Afrocentric perspective will allow us to discard a Eurocentric hegemonic jazz historiography that traditionally has marginalized, ignored, or eliminated narratives of African descendants.

Baskerville (2003) posits "an essential component of the Black liberation struggle was the idea that Black people had the right to create their own identity (with its related terminology), and to have this new lexicon recognized by the larger society." (72) This premise is significant because it more accurately reflects African

agency, i.e., putting Africans at the center of analysis. For example, in my interview with one of Miles Davis's former drummers, Lenny White, the latter argues:

I don't think it was a question of whether Miles was resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic as much as it was Miles defining his music on his terms. Miles was doing what he wanted to do, and he didn't care what others thought. (L. White, personal communication, September 16, 2023)

Baraka's (2010) *Digging: The Afro-American Soul of American Classical Music*, is a collection of essays that challenge the European onslaught of cultural and aesthetic appropriation of African thought and creative production. *Digging* is a collection of essays on African creative production that sought to reclaim African creative production from the lens of African people. *Digging* is more than a collection of essays. It is a call-to-action. It is a manifesto of reclamation Baraka unapologetically bellows:

The critical establishment, like society itself, consistently attacks the profoundest advances and innovators in the music and therefore, objectively aggressively opposes and weakens the music's historical development. The criticism openly attempts to retard the music and make impossible independent development. (82)

Luckett's (2020) *African American Arts: Activism, Aesthetics, and Futurity*, is a collection of essays from writers and activists across the spectrum of Black aesthetics. Essays focus on different areas, e.g., fashion, Afrofuturism, visual arts, and music, but their collective purpose is to tell the stories of Black people with a particular focus on elevating Black creative production, thereby resisting Eurocentric paradigms of aesthetics. The relevance of this text is it validates and valorizes Black aesthetics and Black lives. It provides a blueprint not only of what Black aesthetics are intellectually, but how Black aesthetics are applied to improve life conditions of Black people.

Anderson's (2014) dissertation, *Seeing (for) Miles: Jazz, Race, and Objects of Performance* examines the intersection of jazz and race as they impacted Miles Davis's perspective and, by extension, choices he made about where he lived, how he lived, the type of automobile he drove, etc. This work details how jazz musicians, despite their popularity, still contended with a society and racist system that impacted fundamental choices of their existence.

Thematically, Farber's (2020) sentiments mirror Anderson's in the former's piece, *It Sounded Like the Future: Behind Miles Davis's Greatest Album*. Here, Farber discusses Davis's desire and commitment to carving out his own musical space, regardless of what critics thought of one of Davis's seminal albums, *Bitches Brew*. According to Farber, this recording, while met with criticism, reflected Davis's desire to chart yet another course on jazz's landscape. Farber asserts that Davis's work, while new, was but a continuation of his decades-long career of being integral to developments and shifts in the jazz arena; in this case, the melding of "jazz/rock" and "fusion."

Lopes (2019), in *The Unreconstructed Black Man In Modern Jazz*, examines how and why Miles Davis's desire to define himself and his music on his terms conflicted with the dominant Eurocentric aesthetic and ideology. Further, Lopes asserts Davis's perceived defiance to the Eurocentric perspective led to clashes with the establishment, i.e., music historians, critics, and, at times, law enforcement. Lopes places and locates Davis in the historical and social context of African Americans who resisted European definitions, domination, and aesthetics.

Friedberg (2021) in *Is Miles Davis's 'Bitches Brew' A Tradition-Carrier or a Sellout?* poses this question to the late Greg Tate and the latter responds, “A friend of mine once said that you could not love being Black and not love Miles Davis because Miles was the quintessential African American... For some of us coming from the African-centric tip, Miles Davis *is* the Black aesthetic. He doesn't just represent it, he defines it... The music of Miles Davis is the music of a deep thinker on African American experience.” Others, like the late Stanley Crouch vehemently disagreed with Tate's assessment, stating, “W]ith *Bitches Brew*, Davis was firmly on the path of the sellout. It sold more than any other Davis album, and fully launched jazz-rock with its multiple keyboards, electronic guitars, static beats, and clutter. Davis's music became progressively trendy and dismal...”

Black Music (1968), much like *Blues People* (1974), both by Amiri Baraka, attempts to reclaim and celebrate Black creative production from the talons of White jazz historiographers and critics. Further, *Black Music*, a collection of essays, was a searing indictment of the state of jazz historiography, specifically the fact that “most jazz critics have been white Americans, but most important jazz musicians have not been.” (15)

This is significant because it suggests that jazz historiography has been in the hands of White writers attempting to describe Black creative production without any substantive input from Black creators and innovators of the idiom, i.e., jazz. Imagine, then, given the racial politics of America, the uproar and disdain some White connoisseurs of Bach, Listz, and Beethoven would have if the majority, if not all, European classical historiographers were of African descent.

Central to the notion of African resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic was the realization among African descendants, i.e., creative artists, was that the European colonial legacy in America and the world continued to impact life chances of Black people. Baskerville's (2003, 43) *The Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American Jazz Music of the 1960's and 1970's* argued that "Black playwrights, authors, visual artists, dancers, and musicians, by analyzing and realizing their position in America's colonial system began to connect political significance to their artistic creations." This is significant, Baskerville argued, because those Black artisans understood that art and politics could not be separated and, in fact, were intricately entwined. He went on to posit this realization led to a "banner of Cultural Nationalism", which referred to art serving the purpose of "advancing the Black power/Black nationalist agenda."

Cultural nationalism, according to Baskerville, had two foci that were distinct "yet interrelated" which consisted of the 1) creation of a Black aesthetic and 2) understanding that Black art could "communicate Black political ideology and be used as tools for revolutionary movements." Baskerville's perspective echoed those of DuBois (1926), who unapologetically stated "all art is propaganda." More specifically, DuBois was arguing that Black art was just as valuable and necessary as White art, yet the racial politics of the times warranted Black art as primitive and unsophisticated. Like DuBois, Baskerville believed that Black art should serve the purpose of advancing Black interests and, more importantly, serve as a mechanism by which Black people defined themselves and their art on their terms, the former being insistent that Black people create their own standards of beauty.

Literature on Afrofuturism

Kreiss's (2013) *Performing the Past to Claim the Future: Sun Ra and the Afro-Future Underground, 1954 – 1968*, examines the Afrofuturistic vision of Sun Ra when he lived on Chicago's South Side during the 1950's. Some may have mistaken Sun Ra and the Arkestra's performances as gimmickry, but *Pathways* demonstrates the on-stage persona was far more than hyperbole. *Pathways*, an exhibit of Sun Ra's archives and artifacts, demonstrates his vision of a utopian society, Afrofuturistic, was more real than imagined. Artifacts include Sun Ra's plans to acquire land in Chicago to build a research center and construct a community free of social ills. As a result, *Pathways* has attracted the attention of an entire cadre of Afrofuturism and Afrodiasporic researchers who view Sun Ra as the epitome of applying theory and praxis, via science and technology, to re- imagine optimal futures for African descendants.

Soul, Afrofuturism & the Timelessness of Contemporary Jazz Fusions, by Solis (2019), examines what he describes as “poly” or “omnigenericism” in music, particularly jazz, where unique styles of music and technology attract different audiences. The overarching goal is to build a collective audience and sound that resists musical categories yet have community as their primary foci. These terms, Solis argues, represent a melding of past and current milieu while using technology to carve out future directions in jazz; reflective of an Afrofuturist enterprise that defies musical categorization yet utilizes technology to assert purpose, meaning, and identity.

In *Afrofuturism 2.0 & the Black Speculative Arts Movement: Notes on a Manifesto*, Anderson (2016) discusses the history and development of Afrofuturism

2.0, a speculative movement that corrects and sheds historical shackles of Eurocentric narratives about Black life. Anderson recognizes Afrofuturism is not “new” nor monolithic and is, instead, part of a lineage of African resistance to Eurocentric paradigms, i.e., early twentieth century movements, the Black Arts Movement, Negritude, and Harlem Renaissance. Black speculative thought, Anderson posits, re-imagines the past and utilizes science and technology to forge new identities and futures for African descendants, hence 2.0.

Avant-Gardes, Afrofuturism, and Philosophical Readings of Rhythm, by Campbell (2019), examines the significance of rhythm viewed as an area of “inquiry” juxtaposed to rhythm viewed as a “theoretical framework.” Campbell asserts that both are aligned with and connected to the tradition of African American music as a form of liberation vis-a-vie movements of African American liberation.

Cole’s (2005) *The Last Miles: The Music of Miles Davis, 1980 – 1991* merits inclusion in the existing body of literature on Afrofuturism because it examines and analyzes how each of Davis’s recordings served as building blocks for future recordings. That is, Cole examines how Davis’s work from the past informed future recordings. A central tenet of Afrofuturism is examining the past to chart new futures, which is the central premise of Cole’s work, i.e., Davis looked to the past to explore the future terrain of his music.

Zuberi (2016), in *The Transmolecularization of Black Folk: Space is the Place, Sun Ra and Afrofuturism* deconstructs Sun Ra’s *Space is the Place* as symbol and metaphor for what he describes as “post-human” existence. That is, *Space is the Place*, on its surface structure may be perceived as a “B-movie” because of its quality of

production, but on its deeper structure, is a metaphor for the experiences of African Americans in a hostile society. African descendants trapped in a world where they are marginalized, harassed, violated, and their very being denied, hence, post-human as it relates to the concept of Afrofuturism. Yet, through Sun Ra's music, African Americans are sonically transported to a safe realm of existence, a liberated literal and figurative "space" where their spiritual and material are no longer threatened.

In *Further Considerations on Afrofuturism*, Eshun (2003) lays the groundwork for imagining possibilities. A space where African descendants are free of oppression. Physically free. Psychologically free. Spiritually free. Sonically free. Free to be Africans. Free of worry about Africa's colonization. While the notion of being free above is noted, Eshun argues, in part, that it is the role of the Afrofuturist to resist and provide strategies to thwart the mental, physical, digital, and intellectual onslaught. In his treatise, Eshun describes the not-so-impending, but the here-and-now role and strategies corporate futurists have, in effect, satiated the unaware, uninformed, and unwilling with trinkets of nothingness. Also, he recommends that Afrofuturists work diligently to circumvent and resist what he describes as futurism fatigue, proleptic intervention, etc. Finally, he argues that Afrofuturists should be initiative-taking against the assault waged by corporate colonists, information colonists, sonic colonists, and all who either oppose, do not know or care about their impending service to futurists, the latter who appear to come in good faith, but have colonization in all its permutations at the forefront of their minds.

Steinskog's *Afrofuturism and Black Sound Studies* (2018) is an extensive work that examines and critiques, not only the term Afrofuturism, but its meaning as it relates to the larger project, i.e., speculative thought *and* what he describes as Black Sound Studies. That is, Steinskog takes discourse on Afrofuturism to a broader context,

i.e., music, the sonic. This is significant because it broaches the argument that sound, i.e., the sonic, is just as apt a mechanism for examining historic, current, future, and alternate conceptions of reality. Steinskog delineates how Afrofuturism is not only about speculative thought and creative production that involves looking to the past to carve out futures. Instead, he deftly invokes another critical element in Afrofuturism discourse by asking the question “How do we construct and deconstruct futures that never occurred?” This seminal query challenges Afrofuturist scholars, musicians, activists, etc. to consider alternate realities of, to coin the title of James Baldwin’s work, “*the evidence of things not seen.*”

In other words, Steinskog’s examination of Afrofuturism implores us not only to think about how futures unfolded vis-à-vis historical milieu that *did* occur, but more importantly, imagining futures and possibilities of things that did *not* occur. The result is a more authentic perspective of alternate realities, i.e., imagining possibilities. This study, in part, will address possibilities and alternate realities. The possibilities of Black artists defining their creative production, i.e., jazz historiography, in *their* words on *their* terms. Or, as Steinskog echoes,

The future is dependent upon the past, and therefore the understanding of an African American culture addressing the future is simultaneously taking part in a conversation about history and time. (4)

Eshun’s *More Brilliant Than The Sun* (1998) is what this researcher would describe as a treatise on *hierosonic futures* or, more appropriately, *Medu Neter sonic futures* (as in *hieroglyphics* – words/semiotics, *sonic* referring to sound/vibrations, and *futures* connoting literal and figurative spaces that have yet to be realized, i.e., uncharted, unrealized, and unfathomed futures). In other words, *More Brilliant than*

the Sun examines and critiques how music has been and is shaped by the use of electric instruments to the extent the shaping and future of music is not so much in the hands of artists/musicians as it is in the role of electronic devices. This is significant because Eshun argues that “new music”, whether that of Alice Coltrane, Miles Davis, Sun Ra, or many others, have had their musical directions altered as a result of electronic devices, instruments, etc., all of which focused on taking music to higher plains.

Eshun challenges the academy and purveyors of music to imagine futures vis-à-vis sonic movements, i.e., electronic innovation. Each “discovery” will yield more innovation just as the “scratch mix” on a turntable led to “new” music in the Hip Hop community. Similarly, particularly as it relates to this study, Miles Davis’s use of electronic devices, instruments and engineering helped pioneer sonic futures in his discography, e.g., *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*.

Flyboy in the Buttermilk (1992) by Tate, subtitled *Essays on Contemporary America: An Eye-Opening Look at Race, Politics, Literature, and Music* is relevant to this study in particular because of Tate’s treatment of Davis’s work, specifically his electronic-induced recordings. More importantly, Tate examines the “continuity between electric and acoustic Miles” (69), which adds credence to this study that key recordings of Davis’s can aptly be described as Afrofuturistic sonic ventures, although Tate places *Miles Smiles* (1966) at the center.

Of particular note is Tate’s discussion of Davis’s recordings *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson*. Tate’s reverence for these recordings, as well as extolling their historical and future relevance, is evident in his pronouncement, “*Jack Johnson* is a signpost because it’s a prelude to *every* major act of fusion in the ‘70’s” (77. emphasis mine)

This is significant to the premise of this study, i.e., Davis's recordings demonstrate and embrace an Afrofuturistic vision of looking to the past to carve out future space(s).

Further, and even more salient is Tate's analysis of *Bitches Brew*, which reflects tenets of Afrofuturism:

On evidence of the music that Miles released following *Bitches Brew*, it's clear he was out to create not only a new trumpet voice, but also a new improvisational process – one which would enable his electric band to make music equal, on its own terms. (76)

Tate's argument, like this study's premise, is that Davis was very much looking towards the future, imagining, and acknowledging the "What if?" and musically transferring that query into a "Why not?" sonic future.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

“I had seen the way to the future with my music, and I was going for it like I had always done. Not for Columbia and their record sales, and not for trying to get some young white record buyers. I was going for it for myself, for what I wanted and need in my own music. I wanted to change course, had to change course for me to continue to believe in and love what I was playing.”—Mile Davis (Davis, M. & Troupe, Q., 2005, 298)

A key question is “What is this study’s methodology?” Before that question is teased out, it is important to articulate the perspective from which this study is approached, i.e., Afrocentric perspective, and the rationale for this approach.

McDougal (2014) defines methodology as “the aspect of research that contains the paradigms, theories, concepts, and methods that shape approaches to study and social intervention.” (30).

Historically, African descendants have been *objects* of social, scientific, and medical research. Africans have, and are, prodded, examined, lacerated, drugged, injected, mutilated, and even killed at the hands of European American doctors sworn to protect the sanctity of life as (Washington, 2008). Traditionally, African Americans, and rightfully so, have been skeptical of participating in research projects because of European Americans’ historical and contemporary diabolical uses of scientific research on them as seen in the cases of Henrietta Lacks and the Holmesburg Prison experiments in Philadelphia from 1951 – 1974, among others (Guthrie, 1976; Hornblum, 1999); Jones, 1992 and 1993; Lacks, 2020; Washington, 2008). As a result, securing research participants in African American communities has not come easily.

The impetus behind European American scientists’ outright disdain for the sanctity of Black life has been, and is, their ontological and teleological perspectives of

science and research. The hegemonic Eurocentric perspective and application of science and research has served to benefit Europeans to the behest and expense of African descendants, as was the case of Henrietta Lacks, among others (Lacks, 2020). What is needed, specifically as it relates to African descendants, is a worldview and paradigm intended to place Black people at the core of analysis for the good of the Black community. An approach to research and science where Black people define their reality, are developers and conductors of research, and are subjects rather than appendages, is sorely needed (Mazama, 2001; McDougall, III, 2014; Nobles, 2022).

The Afrocentric paradigm delineates three categories that undergird the paradigm: *categorical*, *functional*, and *etymological*. Categorical refers to issues related to race, gender, and class. Functional refers to policy, needs, and action. Etymological refers to concepts of language (Asante, 1990). This is significant because it determined the approach to examining and analyzing data and the lens from which examining and analyzing data would be viewed, hence, Afrocentric. In the Afrocentric paradigm, a researcher's approach to enterprise is important, but what is paramount is the researcher's lens from which to place and locate the research exercise (Mazama, 2001). This study will focus only on the categorical and etymological categories.

Categorically, data related to Davis's race, gender, and class is examined and analyzed. Data related to the etymological category of language concepts consisted of discussion and analysis of linguistic issues related to how Davis described himself, was described by others, particularly his critics, as rude, arrogant, and the "Prince of Darkness," the latter which has been described and interpreted in numerous ways and for various reasons (Bolden, 1981). As well, discussion and analysis included

examining and analyzing liner notes and album covers from which to cull themes. This Afrocentric paradigmatic approach is significant because it revealed the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric, hegemonic aesthetic.

There is a dearth of literature by Afrocentric jazz historiographers who write about jazz. For example, in *Ain't But A Few Of Us*, Jenkins (2022) argues:

Despite the fact that most of jazz's major innovators and performers have been African American, the overwhelming majority of jazz journalists, critics, and authors have been and continue to be White men (back cover).

It should be made clear there is nothing inherently problematic about White people, or any other ethnic group, writing about jazz. What is critical, however, is the location from which those writers depart, i.e., Afrocentric, Eurocentric, etc. A writer's location serves as the foundation for how their work is written and, by extension, interpreted by others. Therefore, this study examined and analyzed the extent to which those writers articulated their perspectives from an Afrocentric perspective with a particular emphasis on analyzing 1) archival data, 2) structured interviews, and 3) unstructured interviews.

This study addressed these vital axiological, epistemological, and ontological issues, yet do so in the context of Black aesthetics, i.e., music, and African futures - Afrofuturism. Most importantly, this study was centered, grounded, and located through the lens of the Afrocentric paradigm as articulated by Asante (1998, 2003, 2006, and 2021), Kershaw (1992), Keto (1994), and Mazama (2001) and attempted to tease out the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were/are more than a collage of sounds. They are sonic and cultural acts, i.e., creative production of

Black self-definition, self-reliance, and grounded in the Afrocentric perspective.

Creative production used here refers to the interrelated nature of Black art, Black music, and Black literature, etc. (Asante, 1998; Asante & Welsh-Asante, 1985; Baraka, 2010; Hill, 1998; Bracey, Sanchez & Smethurst, 2014; Gayle, 1971; Karenga, 2010; Thompson, 1984).

The first goal of this study was to connect *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* to a Black aesthetic as articulated by Baraka, 2009; Bracey, 2014; Gayle, 1971, all of whom argued for the agency of Black aesthetics designed for and by Black people. I previously defined Black aesthetic as: music, art, literature, poetry, and theater that locates and places African descendants as central agents and participants in their lives and shared historical experiences. That is, a Black aesthetic tells stories (whether visual, tactile, spiritual, or auditory) of African descendants from their lens based upon shared cultural, economic, historical, political, psychological, social, and spiritual experiences.

This goal is significant because it demanded that African descendants speak for themselves, define themselves, and liberate themselves without expecting or relying on others, whether the latter has good intentions or nefarious aims (Karenga, 2010; Nobles, 2022). The definition of Black aesthetics as used above was also applied in structured interviews. When structured interview participants were asked about the extent to which recordings were reflective of a Black aesthetic, the definition above was explained to them prior to them responding. The purpose was to make sure there was uniformity and that all interview participants would be responding to the same definition of Black aesthetics.

Data related to Black aesthetics consisted of examining and analyzing *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*, album covers, liner notes, structured interviews and unstructured interviews to ascertain the extent to which these domains were connected to this study's overarching research questions. These data merited the opportunity to assess the extent to which the recordings were congruent with tenets and traditions of Black aesthetics. The approach to this research question was significant because, firstly, it sought to validate findings generated from the first research question and, secondly, it served the purpose of adding to the existing body of knowledge about these recordings' impact and their place among the existing body of literature on and about Black aesthetics. In other words, this study attempted to add these three seminal recordings, as a collective, to current research and literature about Miles Davis, his recordings, and their relationship to Black aesthetics, self-definition, and physical, mental, and intellectual liberation of African descendants throughout the diaspora.

The second goal of this study was to examine and analyze the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were resistant to a Eurocentric aesthetic. It may be construed these recordings were musical acts of resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. What this study found, however, was that these recordings reflected self-defining moments for Davis. In other words, it is critical to understand that resistance implies Davis was concerned with what others wrote about his music and felt compelled to defend his work. He was not. He was not concerned about what others wrote about him, which means he created music on his terms as he saw fit: self-defined and liberated. As will be discussed later in this study, Davis's perspective in this regard was connected to this study's premise that his work was reflective of a Black aesthetic and reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism.

Most importantly, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were primary sources and examples of Davis defining and determining how he chose to expand the direction of his music and creative production. This is significant because it further connects Davis to a Black aesthetic especially since he was an accomplished musician and prolific visual artist, the latter of which is beyond the scope of this study. This is also significant because it located and placed Davis among the lineage of African descendants, artistically or otherwise, who challenged and resisted hegemonic, Eurocentric paradigms and criticism (Baumgartner, 2001).

By extension, this goal challenged the oft-repeated mantra that Davis was rude or disrespectful when he turned his back to audiences while performing and/or when he resisted the role of being an entertainer for audiences by laughing, joking, and smiling. In this regard, Davis' music was the neutralizer to White audiences' assumptions that Black performers were expected to genuflect at their command. Zuberi (2016) makes the same claim about Sun Ra in that "most important potent weapon was his music."

In a *Playboy Magazine* interview in 1962, Davis discussed how he did not perceive himself as an entertainer and, by extension, saw no value in laughing and smiling with audiences. Worse, he despised the notion of pandering to stereotypes Whites had of Blacks as shuffling, grinning buffoons. Davis was also quite insistent that, too often, writers, critics, and concert attendants ascribed negative descriptors such as him being "bad tempered" or "disrespectful" to his audience. In that same *Playboy Magazine* interview, Davis explained his rationale for walking off the stage during another musician's solo, not announcing tunes, and not talking to people after sets:

“The reason I don’t announce numbers is because it’s not until the last instant I decide what’s maybe the best thing to play next. I sometimes walk off the stand because when it’s somebody else’s turn to solo, I ain’t going to just stand up there and be detracting from him. What am I going to stand up there for?”

Considering that many of Davis’s concert attendees were White, I argue there is a subtext to why he was highly criticized for not pandering to White audiences. My rationale is that he was an unapologetic Black man who understood the history and impact of shining, shuffling, and smiling Negroes who came before him. The disgust Davis had with these types of artists, in large part, was because he grew up in a household that had a considerable amount of wealth. He knew what poverty looked like in its broader social context, but he did not come from an environment where Black men were expected to kowtow to White people. The above discussion serves as the Afrocentric lens from which this study departs. During a post-performance interview, Sommers (1985) queried Davis about his unfavorable opinion of White people and the irony of having a majority White audience. Davis echoed Zuberi’s (2016) sentiments about Sun Ra and music as a weapon of resistance by responding, “I don’t have to listen to them. They listen to me. If I had to listen to them, I wouldn’t be here, but they listen to me. I’m giving them something.”

The third goal of this study was to examine the connection of *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* to tenets of Afrofuturism as articulated by Anderson and Jones (2017), Eshun (2003), Solis (2019), Smith (2023), and Steinskog (2018). This body of literature helped lay the framework for my perspective and approach to examining the extent to which Davis’s work reflected tenets of Afrofuturism. Considering Davis was instrumental in either changing or significantly impacting the direction of music at least five times throughout his career, literature related to

Afrofuturism was particularly useful in culling out that even when he was playing in the moment, he was impacting the future of jazz. Since Afrofuturism, in part, involves imagining and constructing a future where science, technology, and art coalesce to improve life chances of African descendants, it could be argued that Davis's exploration into new styles of music mirrored Afrofuturism (Anderson, 2016; Anderson & Fluker, 2019; David, 2007; Dery, 1994; Gateward, Jennings, & Anderson, 2015; Kreiss, 2008; Youngquist, 2016).

This is important because it suggests Davis consistently aspired to new musical heights and arenas rather than being what Crouch (1990) called a "sell-out." More importantly, one of the key tenets of Afrofuturism involves examining the past to create liberated futures. Davis (Davis & Troupe, 1998) was clear about his intentions of moving forward, noting "I never liked to look back much anyway." (11) This is also one of the areas that supported the research question regarding Davis' music being reflective of Afrofuturist tenets.

The third research question queried the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflected tenets Afrofuturism. Dery (1994) defined Afrofuturism as "speculative fiction that treats African American themes and addresses African American concerns in the context of twentieth century techno culture - and, more generally, African American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future." (180)

While Dery's contribution to the field deserves commendation, this study, instead, adopts the definition and perspective of Afrofuturism as espoused by scholars Anderson (2016), Anderson and Jones (2017), Eshun (2003), Solis (2019), Smith

(2023), and Steinskog (2018) in its examination and analysis. Of particular note is Smith's (2023) term Afrocentric Afrofuturism, which is more reflective of the scope of this study, i.e., Afrocentricity as its foundation. Smith argues that "in order for Afro Futurism to launch into the next generation with powerful, culturally grounded, Pan-African intentionality, the Afrocentric method must be properly implemented." (5)

It should be noted that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were released in 1970, 1971, and 1992, respectively. Therefore, this study examined the past to ascertain the extent to which these recordings represented the future, a core tenet of Afrofuturism. This approach was significant because it merited the opportunity to juxtapose historical documents to tenets of Afrofuturism. These recordings were placed alongside tenets of Afrofuturism to discern the validity of the third research question, i.e., extent to which Davis's recordings were conscious and purposeful actions on his part as he envisioned the future. This approach was important because it allowed me to triangulate multiple sources of data points to enhance reliability and validity of this study.

Methods – Materials for Analysis

A key question is "What methods does this study employ?" McDougall (2014) defined method as a "tool of data collection" (p. 30) while "methods allow the researcher to collect data" (p. 31). This study triangulated and analyzed three data points: 1) archival data, 2) structured interviews, and 3) unstructured interviews.

Archival Data

Archival data consisted of analyzing materials such as album covers, album liner notes, and magazine articles (Banerji, 2021; Bates, 2008). This approach proved most feasible so as to triangulate data to increase this study's reliability and validity. Results for each data point are discussed according to this study's research questions. For example, after each data point, e.g., structured interviews, etc., results from each research question are discussed.

Structured Interviews

Prior to proceeding with including structured interviews as data points for this study, I contacted, via email and telephone call, representatives from Temple University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I was informed that since I was not conducting a behavioral study, would not have a large participant sample, and was conducting structured interviews that I would not have to apply for IRB approval. After I was informed of this, I then began developing a sample structured interview protocol.

Initially, my intent was to conduct structured interviews with a small sample, i.e., $N = 5$. However, the sample expanded to $N = 9$. While this was not my original intention, the process of acquiring additional interview participants was organic, so I embraced that unintended outcome. In particular, Vince Wilburn, Jr. is a key interview participant, and he was on my original "wish list." Wilburn, Jr. is the nephew of Miles Davis. Wilburn, Jr. is a co-curator, along with Miles' children, Cheryl Davis (daughter) and Erin Davis (son) of Miles Davis Properties, LLC. Miles Davis Properties, LLC is responsible for continuing the legacy of Davis's work through music and product

licensing, education, outreach, performances, and recordings. My “wish list” consisted of people who knew Miles Davis much more closely than others, people who were members of his family. Others on the wish list were those who recorded and performed with Davis over the course of several years, such as Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter, Chick Corea, and others.

Vincent Wilburn, Jr. is monumental to this study on three levels: 1) he is Miles Davis’s nephew, 2) he lived, recorded, performed, and traveled with Miles Davis, 3) he is co-curator of Miles Davis Properties, LLC, and so he knows the importance of continuing Davis’s legacy. Consequently, Wilburn, Jr.’s contributions give this study a much deeper level of insight and legitimacy. Even greater, as referred to above, Wilburn, Jr. recruited Bennie Maupin as an interview participant as well as Osten S. Harvey, aka Easy Mo Bee! Maupin performed and recorded with Davis on *Bitches Brew* and Easy Mo Bee produced Davis’s last recording, *Doo-Bop*. Maupin and Easy Mo Bee contributed phenomenally to this study!

Davis passed away while *Doo-Bop* was being recorded and at the time, of the recording’s nine tunes, only six had been completed before Davis made the physical transition. Before Davis physically passed away, he gave Easy Mo Bee complete freedom to develop the recording, including naming all the tracks on the recording.

My sample interview protocol consisted of 23-questions designed and intended to assess levels of knowledge such as “Please rate your level of knowledge about *Bitches Brew*...” My rationale was to confirm if interview participants were familiar with the recordings and, by extension, were in a position to cogently discuss the recordings. This is important because it lent legitimacy to the project as well as

confirming that interview respondents were beyond reproach in terms of their knowledge, experience, and understanding of Miles Davis, his recordings, and recordings' social and cultural significance. Twelve protocol questions were closed-ended and presented on a Likert Scale:

1 = None

2 = A Little

3 = Moderate

4 = A Lot

5 = Quite A Bit

A separate column was also included, N/A for Not Applicable. Six questions were demographic questions. My rationale was to confirm if interview participants were professionally qualified to participate in the study. These questions were open-ended and consisted of queries such as "What is your occupation?" I wanted to confirm that interview participants' professions were congruent with the nature of the study. That is, it was important to confirm that interview participants worked in the music industry, directly or indirectly, as a musician, music historiographer, or music educator and, the extent to which they recorded/performed with Miles Davis, wrote about Davis's music, or taught about Davis's music. For example, one interview participant, Lenny White, recorded and performed with Davis on *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* recordings, and both recordings are central to this study. Further, White currently teaches a class at New York University entitled "The Miles Davis Aesthetic." White, therefore, is exemplary as an interview participant for this study. The remainder of questions are open-ended and, in some cases, follow-up, probing questions such as "Tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?"

I developed two structured interview protocols, one for musicians and the other for non-musicians. The rationale for having distinct interview protocol for each cohort, i.e., musicians versus non-musicians, was that I anticipated musicians' feedback would be nuanced in a particular way such as discussing how the music was played, particular types of notes played, comparing and contrasting the recordings to previous recordings, and, in general, focusing more on the musical aspects of *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo Bop*.

Conversely, I anticipated non-musicians' feedback would be nuanced by discussing *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* in the context of their social, philosophical, and cultural impact. I also anticipated non-musicians' feedback would lean towards how the recordings impacted social and cultural phenomena and, by extension, how society impacted the music as well as how their peers, i.e., writers and educators responded to the recordings. These assumptions proved to be accurate in terms of how each cohort responded to interview questions.

I recruited prospective interview participants by reaching out to a pool of musicians, writers, critics, and historiographers I knew. The process, while challenging, was facilitated by my having established relationships with the music community over the course of twenty-plus years. I have been a producer and host of *The Jazz Journey*, a weekly radio program on KXLU 88.9 FM – Los Angeles, for ten years. The station is located on the campus of Loyola Marymount University. Over the course of ten years, I hosted and interviewed a range of jazz musicians, some locally and others nationally and internationally renowned. This position allows me to establish relationships with musicians and stakeholders in the jazz community. A

favorable outcome of producing and hosting *The Jazz Journey* is I did not have to “cold call” prospective interview participants for this study. Because relationships were established with musicians and stakeholders, the recruitment process went smoothly, yet it was securing interviews that proved to be more daunting than I initially anticipated. I utilized social media outlets for initial outreach to prospective interview participants, especially people I did not have a personal or professional relationship with. In other cases, I had personal relationships with some interview prospects, so I was able to reach out directly via telephone and/or text message.

My approach to securing interview participants consisted of developing a “wish list” of musicians and stakeholders who 1) recorded and/or performed with Miles Davis, 2) were related to Miles Davis and/or knew him personally, 3) taught classes or conducted lectures about Miles Davis’s work. The initial list consisted of approximately twenty people from various sectors of the music industry, i.e., musicians, critics, and educators with the intention of striking a balance between people in those fields. Since this study was not a large-scale oral history project, my intention was to narrow the list of interview participants down to five people although I ended up with nine.

A snowball sampling effect yielded $N = 9$ because one interview participant was able to secure two prospects who were on my initial “wish list,” two of whom I previously had no success in securing on my own. I was unable to make progress with securing those participants and during an impromptu call with another interview participant, he told me “Let me make a call. You definitely should interview these

folks.” As a result, my initial goal of interviewing five participants eventually became nine interview participants.

Another reason my sample size was small is because I wanted interview data to supplement other data, e.g., archival data, hence, a triangulated approach. It was not the scope of this project to have a full-blown oral history project, although this study has implications for further exploration of that endeavor. The final number of interview participants consisted of $N = 10$ and the breakdown by musicians and non-musicians consisted of $n = 5$ musicians and $n = 4$ non-musicians.

I developed two structured interview protocols, one for musicians and one for non-musicians, i.e., educators, historiographers, and writers. There was some overlap in questions on both protocols, but I developed distinct protocol because I suspected musicians who knew Davis and performed with him would have a deeper understanding of him, his perspective, and his music versus those who did not. Conversely, I was interested in ascertaining if there would be consistency in what musicians said in comparison to non-musicians. My rationale was to cross-reference these perspectives to test for internal consistency of research questions as well as research results. Interview protocols are located in APPENDIX A and APPENDIX B.

Both interview protocol consisted of an $N = 23$ questions that determined 1) interview participants’ occupation as it related or was relevant to Miles Davis’s work and/or jazz education, 2) years of experience in that occupation, 3) years of experience teaching and/or listening to Miles Davis’s work, 4) level of knowledge about Miles Davis’s overall discography, 5) interview participants’ assessment of the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of a Black aesthetic,

6) interview participants' assessment of the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of Miles Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic, 7) interview participants' assessment of the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism, and 8) interview participants' perceptions of what messages Miles Davis was attempting to convey in *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* recordings.

Once protocols were developed, I pilot-tested them to assess the extent to which they were clear, relevant, easy to understand, and captured what I was examining. Once protocols were finalized, I began setting-up interviews with interview participants. Of the N = 9 interviews, n = 7 were conducted via Zoom, n = 1 was conducted in-person at interview participant's home, and n = 1 was conducted via telephone.

This study examined and analyzed themes culled from data sources related to Black aesthetics. For example, themes that had Black creative production as their foci and had African history and culture as their primary interest. Secondly, this study examined and analyzed themes related to Black resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic such as Black Power, self-definition, and self-termination in defiance of and resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. Thirdly, this study examined and analyzed themes culled from data sources related to Afrofuturism. For example, themes that involved African descendants examining the past to envision a self-defined, liberated future for Black people such as how Davis spoke futuristically of his music.

These methods were chosen because they generated first-hand accounts, which increased reliability and validity of data. It was not the scope of this study to employ

quantitative methods because of the proclivity to garner less receptive, in-depth, quality data from first-hand accounts. Contextually, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by being more aligned with and authentic to Davis's voice versus others' such as critics. Far too much of the existing data, i.e., jazz historiography, was from a Eurocentric worldview disconnected from a Black aesthetic, as well as lacking cultural, historical, philosophical, psychological, and social grounding in the shared historical experiences of African descendants.

Unstructured Interviews

One of the benefits of producing and hosting *The Jazz Journey* is being able to meet and interview internationally renowned musicians, writers, and artists such as Ahmad Jamal, Les McCann, Brenda Russell, and many more. On February 17, 2007, I conducted a live, on-air interview with award-winning poet Quincy Troupe. Troupe was scheduled to conduct a lecture that week at Loyola Marymount University. I knew about his writing and relationship with Miles Davis, so I reached out in advance of his lecture, and he obliged. Troupe is the author of the book *Miles and Me* (2002) and he collaborated with Davis for *Miles: The Autobiography* (1998).

During the interview, we talked about his relationship with Miles Davis, Davis's music, autobiography, and legacy. The interview was unrelated to this study. In fact, this study had not even been developed as I was not a graduate student at that time. It is ironic that seventeen years later, that interview would provide rich data for this study and, by extension, contribute to the existing body of Miles Davis literature.

The interview was unstructured in that I had no predetermined set of questions nor did I develop an interview protocol. I wanted the interview to be improvisational

and organic, which is why I told Troupe, “Hey, man, we’ll just talk.” That approach was beneficial in that it provided him with the opportunity to stretch out and not feel compelled to answer a prescribed set of questions. Data culled from that interview, even some seventeen years later, is rich and relevant to this study. The interview lasted approximately one hour and fifteen minutes and key themes that arose from this interview are located in the Results section of this study.

The rationale for including Troupe’s interview in this study is to triangulate archival data, structured interview, and unstructured interview data. The purpose is to cross-reference data points to enhance reliability and validity of this study’s research questions. What makes data from this entire so valuable is that it occurred seventeen years ago. This translates to testing validity of archival data and structured interviews. If data from this interview confirms data points from archival data and structured interview data, then validity of my research questions become even more salient.

On October 13, 2013, I interviewed the family and co-curators of Miles Davis Properties, LLC. Cheryl Davis (daughter), Erin Davis (son), and Vincent Wilburn, Jr. (nephew) on KXLU 88.9 FM - Los Angeles. The purpose of this interview was to assist them with promoting *Miles Davis: The Collected Artwork* (2013), which is a coffee table book of various Miles Davis paintings. As with the unstructured interview with Quincy Troupe, the rationale for including this interview in this study is to triangulate archival data, structured interview, and unstructured interview data. The purpose is to cross- reference data points to enhance reliability and validity of this study’s research questions. Also, if data from this interview confirms data points from

archival data and structured interview data, then validity of my research questions become even more salient.

During the planning phases of this study, interviews with people from the “wish list” were my primary targets, i.e., musicians, historiographers, and educators. My vision was myopic in that I had not considered interviews I conducted from past years. In fact, in addition to unstructured interviews of those mentioned above, I conducted an interview with famed bassist Marcus Miller several years ago. The results from that interview are not included here as the full transcript is unavailable. However, one of Miller’s quotes from that interview is included.

Methodological Challenges

There were some methodological challenges, but they were not insurmountable to the extent they disrupted or derailed this study. For example, the most obvious and significant challenge was that Miles Davis made the physical passage in 1991. Having Davis as an interview participant would have yielded a substantial amount of depth to thick data, more specifically and crucially, the categorical, functional, and etymological paradigms Asante (1990) refers to.

The second most significant methodological challenge was securing structured interviews with other key musicians who performed with Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. Wayne Shorter, James Mtume, Chick Corea, and Joe Zawinul made the physical passage, so obtaining their verbal feedback was impossible. These musicians would have been able to provide the most significant insight about Miles Davis and his music. Although not as finite, a related challenge was availability and access to Miles Davis insiders who were his friends and/or recorded with him. For

example, outreach to Ron Carter, John McLaughlin, and Marcus Miller, three musicians who knew Miles Davis personally, as well as having recorded with him, proved to be daunting giving their intensive touring and performing around the world. Their feedback would have been monumental for this project, but I was not able to make those connections come to fruition.

However, this methodological challenge did not derail the approach and quality of data for this study. I was still able to secure interviews with other Miles Davis insiders such as Vincent Wilburn, Jr. and Lenny White. Vincent Wilburn, Jr. is Davis's nephew and co-curator of Miles Davis Properties, LLC. Properties, LLC is the organization designed to curate and continue Miles Davis's legacy. Wilburn, Jr. also recorded with Davis.

Drummer Lenny White performed on two recordings this study examines, *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson*. I also secured an interview with producer Osten S. Harvey, aka Easy Mo Bee, who worked with Davis on the latter's recording, *Doo-Bop*, which was released posthumously in 1992. Wilburn, Jr. was instrumental in securing my interview with Easy Mo Bee. Aside from having access to other key musicians who recorded with Davis, even still, the biggest methodological challenge was actually getting on interview participants' calendars. In some instances, setting-up structured interviews was more time-consuming than I originally anticipated because some interview participants traveled a fair amount while others simply had other professional commitments.

Again, while there were some methodological challenges, those obstacles did not diminish the overall scope or quality of this study. As well, methodological

challenges did not derail the approach and quality of data for this study because Davis left behind a sufficient amount of archival data such as his biographical works with Quincy Troupe and other archival documents such as interviews, he conducted. It was not the scope of this study to be a full-blown oral history project so while I was unable to secure interviews with people such as Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, or Mtume, the interviews I was able to secure were equally critical and top tier.

Another challenge was recall ability of interviewees. That is, since the crux of this study involved analyzing two recordings from the 1970's and one from the early 1990's, some interviewees may not have been able to readily recall information more precisely. This did not prove to be a major obstacle, however, but even so, this challenge was addressed by triangulating data, i.e., culling data from archival and secondary sources to confirm interviewees' responses.

Another challenge with collecting archival data was the availability and condition of those data. For example, access to archival data from Davis's record labels such as Prestige, Columbia, and Warner Brothers were unavailable. Archival data such as record contracts, recording date notes, and record label executive meetings clearly would have enhanced this study, but I was aware of the challenges to securing this information would have been impossible to obtain anyway. As such, I did not rely on securing that data nor were these data a priority. The alternative approach, then, was to secure equally viable archival data that were readily available such as interviews with Davis and historical records.

Finally, unstructured interviews with Cheryl Davis, Erin Davis, Vincent Wilburn, Jr. and Quincy Troupe provided rich data and context to Davis's works. The

value of these data are critical because they, too, helped triangulate data points such as archival data and structured interviews, all of which helped lend reliability and validity to my research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

“I hated the way they were treating Black musicians by giving all the Grammys to white guys acting like Black guys. That shit is tired and sickening, but they get mad if you say something about it. You’re supposed to let them take your shit, grit your teeth, but don’t get mad and just bear the pain while they make all the money and all the glory. It’s strange the way many white people think. Strange and deadly.” - Miles Davis (Davis, M. & Troupe, Q., 2005, 325)

Results are discussed according to their respective method per the methodology section of this study. This study’s research questions guided my approach to examining and analyzing data. The rationale was to triangulate methods with the intent of securing richer, more accurate data, specifically to attain higher degrees of reliability and validity. This triangulated approach was most feasible for a qualitative study of this nature because data consisted of archival records and personal testimonies, both of which may have a proclivity for subjective interpretations. Thus, a triangulated approach increased this study’s reliability and validity since data were culled from multiple sources and served the purpose of ascertaining the extent to which data supported findings (McDougal, 2014).

Categorical Paradigm Results

The categorical component of the Afrocentric paradigm refers to issues related to race, gender, and class (Asante, 1998). I chose this component because race, gender, and class are major domains that shaped Davis’s worldview and his approach to music. Undoubtedly, his race, gender, and class impacted his worldview. His worldview, even musically, was shaped and determined when he was a child growing up in Alton, Illinois. His father, a dental surgeon, owned a farm and the family was far from being economically destitute. Right across the Mississippi River, though, St. Louis, Missouri

was a segregated city that had its share of interethnic strife, least of which consisted of Blacks being redlined to neighborhoods that were less than desirable. Davis, at least initially, was immune to racial hostility of Missouri's formerly "slave state" status. Nevertheless, Davis learned early that his race had an impact on his life. As a high school student, he learned "I was the best in music class on the trumpet, but the prizes went to the boys with blue eyes. I made up my mind to outdo anybody white on my horn." (Playboy Magazine Interview, 1962). These types of experiences instilled in Davis a recognition that America's "color line" was drawn, with White people benefitting and Black people being discriminated against solely because of the color of their skin.

At Juilliard, the experiences Davis had with "race relations" as a teen also impacted his cultural seed to the extent he believed there was a difference between the way Black and White musicians played. For example, at Juilliard, he bemoaned, "If I stayed any longer, I was going to have to play like a White man. I was going to have to *act* [emphasis his] like a white man toward music. The direction, you know what I mean, so I left." (Maher, P. and Door, D., 247)

As an adult, Davis experienced racial politics of America in the most horrendous way. In 1959, he was standing outside New York's famed club, Birdland. It was there where he was severely beaten by a police officer for no reason other than the officer attempting to assert his power over Davis. Shortly after that incident, he was arrested for an assortment of non-violent infractions, i.e., not having a license plate on the front of his car, improper automobile registration, and carrying brass knuckles in his car. According to Davis, the incident "wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been a

Black man driving a red (Ferrari) car. On the way to the station, the cop keeps saying ‘I’ve got Miles Davis’ like I was Jesse James (Maher, P. and Door, D. p. 71).’

In describing his treatment in America versus in Europe, Davis opined “All over Europe, I’m treated like royalty... the only place I’m not given that respect I get everywhere else is in the United States. And the reason why this is because I’m Black and I don’t compromise.” (Davis, M., & Troupe, Q., 383)

These testimonies reflected how Davis’s worldview was, in part, shaped by the racial dynamics of America, specifically his race, class, and gender. The “uppity Negro” gone awry. The categorical paradigm here, then, is critical because it is indicative how America’s racial politics are imbedded in the fabric of this country and that one’s economic status as a Black person does not make one immune from said racial politics. In fact, to the contrary, it could be argued, at least from Davis’s testimony and experiences, that he as a wealthy Black man made him a target of nefarious antics and harassment on the part of police officers.

Etymological Paradigm Results

In the Afrocentric paradigm the etymological category refers to concepts of language which includes diction, and on a deeper level, perception (Asante, 1998).

Another way of explaining this is that language allows people to communicate.

Communication involves words, which refer to diction, i.e., word choice. Language and words people use impact how others understand, interpret, and analyze messages. The result is language and words impact what people think and how they behave or respond to others.

In the context of this study, Miles Davis did not conform to White America’s perceived behavior of how he and Black people should behave, i.e., subservient. When Black people do not assume subservient roles or demeanor to White people, they are

often called a slew of names like radical, angry, uppity, defensive, and difficult. In Davis's case, he was called all of these names and more, yet he never capitulated to stereotypical roles White people ascribed and subscribed to Black people.

Boyd's (1997) work is utilized here in that it dissects how Black men such as Miles Davis "used his knowledge of the tradition to inform the masses" and even though Davis had "crossover appeal" he did not "sell out" because "Black culture and Black audiences were still their primary focus... he was true to the game" (p. 16). Inherent in Boyd's argument is how the phrase, "stay Black", an etymological issue refers to Davis.

I chose this component to examine and analyze what Davis said about himself in contrast to what others said about him. My rationale was that he was often maligned by people who did not understand his life experiences as a Black man in America, his perception of his music and its purpose, and his relationship to and with his band. For example, Davis, at least in his words, turned his back to audiences because he was focusing on the play of his bandmates. Also, at times, he simply wanted to listen to bandmates more intently. However, he was often heavily criticized as being "disrespectful" and "aloof" because he refused to kowtow to White audiences.

White America's history of demanding that Black people shuffle and smile for the former's folly was antithetical to Davis's ideology. It was antithetical to his upbringing. He loathed the notion of being perceived as a caricature of buffoonery, and coupled with expectations that he ingratiate himself with audiences was not his purpose nor desire:

Why I sometimes walk off the stand is because when it's somebody else's turn to solo I ain't going to just stand up there and be detracting from him. I ain't no

model, and I don't sing or dance, and I damn sure ain't no Uncle Tom just to be up there grinning. (Playboy Magazine, 1962)

In that same interview, Davis expressed equal disdain for Black people who genuflected for White people in exchange for some false sense of equality, as if smiling and shuffling would result in acceptance. He added:

I ain't saying I think all Negroes are the salt of the earth. It's plenty of Negroes I can't stand, too. Especially those that act like they think White people want them to. Thy bug me worse than Uncle Toms. (Playboy Magazine, 1962)

Davis was known for expressing his disdain for the word jazz. In fact, he loathed the fact that White record executives were responsible for categorizing his and other musicians' music. According to Davis, "Now they say *Bitches Brew* is a Goddammed masterpiece but, hell, those critics hated it. Jazz-rock, my ass! They couldn't see that I was hip to the way Black folks were hearing *their* [emphasis his] music. I wanted to play for my people!" (Maher, P. and Door, M., 266)

Archival Data Results

Archival data includes materials such as personal testimonies, cover art, album liner notes, and magazine articles. These data served as methods for cross-referencing structured interview data. Again, this approach proved most feasible so as to triangulate data to increase this study's reliability and validity. Results for each data point are discussed according to this study's research questions. For example, after each data point, e.g., personal testimonies, results from each research question are discussed.

Structured Interview/Personal Testimony Results

There is no universal Black aesthetic. As well, there is no static definition of Black aesthetic that applies to *all* Black people. However, this study adopts an

Afrocentric perspective of Black aesthetics as espoused by Baraka (2010) Neal (1968), and Gayle, et.al, (1971) along with my operationalized definition of Black aesthetics in the Introduction of this study. These writers, among others, have a foundational part of departure that resonates with the shared history of African descendants in America and throughout the diaspora. Neal (1968) best synthesizes the collective perspective of Black aesthetics by arguing the “Black aesthetic is the collective of Black art... that serves to liberate and improve life conditions of Black people... [and] is a tool of Black liberation. The beauty is in Black art’s ability to speak to Black lives via Black lens (p. 28).” It is not necessary to include results of every interview respondent because there are instances of thematic overlap. Therefore, personal testimony results noted below capture overall themes of all interview participants.

To what extent are Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, and Doo-Bop reflective of a Black Aesthetic?

A. Scott Galloway: I would go five [5 being highest on the scale] on that because of what inspired it, and it really tapped into, for lack of a better word, at the same time, the badassness of Jack Johnson. That came out right after or around the same time period where we were really tapping into Black masculinity, Black male suffering, overcoming, and strength. Style. You know, I mean, you know, Jack was the man. He was a very stylish, brother and Miles always tapped into things that had to do with style. (S. Galloway, personal communication, February 11, 2024)

Chet Hanley: It means pretty much all that has been endured by Black folks worldwide. The indignities, the obstacles that, in spite of those elements, we've endured and in this case endured in the arts and more specifically in the music, which has in many cases set the pace for future endeavors by folks from all over the world. In other words, we have been out front in establishing that aesthetic, which has subsequently been recorded and re-recorded by others and used as a guide for what they produce. (C. Hanley, personal communication, January 17, 2024)

Drummer Lenny White recorded with Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson*. White teaches a class at New York University entitled *The Miles Davis Aesthetic*. Consequently, the depth of his knowledge as a personal friend and professional associate of Davis is extensive. In response to my query about the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* are reflective of a Black aesthetic, White's response was far more expansive than Galloway's and Hanley's, so it was important to contextualize why his response is separated from Galloway's and Hanley's. Here, White provides an assortment of rich data points that are incisive testimony regarding his understanding of Davis, socially and professionally. I included dialogue between him and me to give even more context into his response.

Lenny White: Me knowing Miles, meeting, knowing him, and knowing what his intention was, I don't think it was a matter of resisting. I think it was a matter of defining what a Black aesthetic is. You know, there's a question, what is Black music? And people go through all of these histrionics about this, about that. But Black music is music played by Black people. No matter what music it is. But it's music, which is a language, played through Black people's vision, through Black people's language. And if you think about it, where does music come from?

Eddie Becton: You mean in a general sense?

Lenny White: Yeah.

Eddie Becton: I think music comes from people's expressions, musical expressions of what they are feeling, thinking inside. And I think along with that, it's an expression of their experiences, life experiences, how they look at reality. Music to me is life. If I were to say it in a word.

Lenny White: So now, I understand, and I agree with you. Let me ask you. Where do People come from?

Eddie Becton: People are a connection or continuation of generations that came before them.

Lenny White: Where were the first people?

Eddie Becton: Well, in a geographical sense, the evidence suggests Olduvai Gorge, right, in East Africa, in terms of what the bones say.

Lenny White: Okay. So, it's very interesting we have this conversation. I don't want to spend too much time this way, but in order for you to legitimize what you're saying we have to understand it. Eddie you said, "the first people came from Africa." So, if that's the case, where did music come from?

Eddie Becton: Out of Africa.

Lenny White: Thank you! So, when you said, was Miles Davis resisting the European aesthetic, Miles Davis was playing *his* aesthetic. The European musical aesthetic comes *from* an African musical aesthetic.

Eddie Becton: I get it. I get it.

Lenny White: But what I was trying to say is that Miles Davis didn't resist the European aesthetic because Miles Davis listened to [European] classical music, too. But Miles Davis's musical approach was shaped *by* Black people. He included European. You know, when you look up the word "classical" or classical music, it says classical is Greco-Roman and jazz is *not* Greco-Roman.

Eddie Becton: Correct.

Lenny White: He didn't resist a Eurocentric aesthetic. He defined *his* aesthetic. (L. White, personal communication, September 16, 2023)

To what extent are Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, and Doo-Bop reflective of Miles Davis' resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?

The most significant lesson learned from this study revolved around this particular research question. Interview participants' results from this question forced me to re-think and re-interpret this research question. For example, in the formative stages of this study, I conceived of Davis and his musical output, specifically *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* as examples of his resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. To the contrary!

The results indicate that Davis, whether in his own words, personal testimonies, historical records, or this study's interview participants' feedback, was not, in fact,

resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. As demonstrated by results of the aforementioned domains, Davis was unconcerned with a Eurocentric aesthetic. Instead, what Davis was doing was creating music on his terms. He was not attempting to measure and/or evaluate his work by comparing it to European American musicians or attempting to earn accolades from European American writers, critics or historiographers. Davis, quite succinctly, echoed:

Miles Davis: I don't pay attention to what critics say about me, the good Or the bad. The toughest critic I got is me (Playboy Magazine Interview, 1962).

Miles Davis: I don't see why our (Black people's) music can't be given the same respect of European classical music. Beethoven's been dead all these years and they're still talking about him, teaching him, and playing his music. Why ain't they talking about Bird, or Trane, or Monk, or Duke, or Count, or Fletcher Henderson or Louis Armstrong like they're talking about Beethoven? Shit, their music is classical." – Miles Davis The Autobiography (Davis, M. & Troupe, Q., 2005, 361)

Chet Hanley: I really don't think of it in those terms, Eddie. I think more and more that Miles, you know, let's face it, is one of the great musicians, one of the, you know, composers, performers, trailblazers. We're talking here. And I don't know if there's so much resistance to that European aesthetic, but more, this is the direction I've chosen to go into. So I can apply some of my knowledge of rhythmic differences and colors. giving the musicians working with me the opportunity to stretch? That's a good question. But I'm leaning towards not so much a reaction or a response to that whole European aesthetic. (C. Hanley, personal communication, January 17, 2024)

To what extent do Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, and Boo-Wop reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

One of the lessons learned from this study is that Miles Davis consistently looked to the future. In a practical sense, each recording laid the foundation for the next recording, with each recording metaphorically representing a stone as he were constructing a pyramid searching for higher ground. In that regard, the historical record, whether Davis in his own words or musicians who recorded with him, supports

the premise that his perspective and recordings reflect tenets of Afrofuturism. Personal testimony results below are culled from Davis and open-ended questions posed to structured interview participants.

Miles Davis: I had seen the way to the future with my music, and I was going for it like I had always done. Not for Columbia and their record sales, and not for trying to get some young white record buyers. I was going for it for myself, for what I wanted and needed in my own music. I wanted to change course, had to change course for me to continue to believe in and love what I was playing. Miles Davis: The Autobiography, (Davis, M. & Troupe, Q., p. 298).

Reggie Quinerly: You know, and I really think it comes down to, you know, Miles has a magnetism, you know, how is it that it's been over thirty years since he's departed, and there have been more books written about him, there have been more articles that reference him, you know, there have been so many recordings that have come out, since he's passed away, you know, even in his past, and he still has this magnetism, that really pulls in people to like, be like, "Yo, what is what is this cat about?" Miles was a true innovator, pulling from the past, the present and informing the future. (R. Quinerly, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Structured Interview/Personal Testimony Results Summary by Interview Participant

Structured Interview/Personal Testimony Results by Interview Participant are organized here by interview participants' major themes and responses from their structured interviews. They are discussed and contextualized with a specific focus on this study's research questions. In this study's previous section, key quotes and themes were culled from specific interview participants as those responses represented overarching themes of all interview participants. This section captures major themes and responses from their interview, so more context and deeper-level data are discussed. Also, this section goes deeper into feedback from interview respondents' open-ended questions whereas the previous section of this study focuses a bit more on

closed-ended questions. The purpose for this approach is to provide overall context for interview participants' feedback.

Dr. Todd Boyd Semi-Structured Interview – April 8, 2024

Dr. Todd Boyd is one of the preeminent scholars on culture. He is a professor at University of Southern California (USC) where some of his work centers on cinema and media studies. Boyd is one of the premier scholars on Hip Hop music and its history, and he just released the comprehensive volume, *Rapper's Deluxe*. The interview with Boyd was not the same length as other interview participants. Because of time and schedule constraints, the interview was limited to about thirty minutes. I knew I would not be able to complete the full-length protocol, but it was important to obtain Boyd's feedback because of his value as a scholar who has a firm grasp on American culture, especially as it pertains to young Black audiences. His knowledge and understanding of *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* and ability to place them in historical context was important to this study.

The most important lesson from the interview was Boyd's perspective about Davis's work being reflective of a Eurocentric aesthetic. His perspective mirrored all interview participants who argued that Davis was not resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic at all. As with all interview participants, Boyd posited that Davis was defining his music from his perspective, transforming music from his historical and cultural location. The result is Davis as his authentic self and not as artist appealing for inclusion and/or acceptance into a paradigm that was not his. Boyd's comments are exactly as other interview participants, he just used different words, i.e., his message is

the same as every other interview participant, the exception being Maupin since the interview protocol was not the focus of his interview.

Another key theme from Boyd's interview is his perspective about Afrofuturism as evident in Davis's work. Boyd employs the term *psychedelica* to refer to artists such as Jimi Hendrix and Sly Stone and how they were "interacting with something that was not historically Black, i.e., Rock music. Boyd explains how these iconic Black musicians were able to adapt and deconstruct music and culture in a way that was reflective and responsive to their aesthetic and worldview. The result, according to Boyd, is "this is not so much resistance" as it is these artists making it their own.

What is interesting here is the deeper structure and analysis that speaks to African descendants' ability to transform an aesthetic that is not inherently theirs but flip it in a way that it speaks to their cultural and historical experience. In essence, this is what Black music and Black aesthetics are all about, i.e., Black people constructing realities and futures that, in some cases, attempt to eliminate, deny, or marginalize their existence. This, too, is what Black music and Black aesthetics are, i.e., Black people defining themselves on their terms. So, the very act of this construction is not so much resistance as it is deconstructing a paradigm and developing it in a form that is reflect of Black people. As I mentioned previously, this is one of the most significant lessons I learned from this study, and that is Davis creating his own aesthetic while being uninterested in adopting or resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. Boyd echoed this theme again when discussing Bebop when he noted "Bebop was about (Black musicians)

deconstructing America's standard songs. But, it's their (Black) version and since they have deconstructed the canon, they could then speak freely.

While Boyd did not discuss Afrofuturism per se, his comments allowed me to delve deeper into contextualizing his analysis. For example, when he discussed Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone, and Bebop music, thematically, these were salient and important discussions, particularly as they relate to Black people, their creative production, and how Black aesthetics look, feel, and sound.

African people, from the day we were stripped from our indigenous lands and transported to strange lands have been forced to recreate ourselves. The critical point here, though, is that re-creating, re-constructing, and re-imagining ourselves, perhaps, was not as much out of resistance, but more about us recognizing who we were and how the Eurocentric worldview and aesthetic were/are antithetical to our *ba*. In this instance, then, it is not about resisting. It is about African descendants defining ourselves on our terms, and through our own narratives. Or, as Boyd described, African descendants “deconstructing and re-mixing Eurocentric impulses.”

A. Scott Galloway Structured Interview – February 11, 2024

When asked how many years he has listened to Miles Davis's music, writer and music journalist A. Scott Galloway responds, “You know, I don't want to sound crazy, but pretty much all my life.” Galloway is almost sixty years old, and his parents were ardent music fans who exposed him to all types of music as a child. His father introduced him to the music of Davis while his mother's taste leaned towards the Motown sound. Galloway has over 30 years of experience writing about music, writing liner notes, and working with and for record companies.

During the interview, I asked Galloway about his description and understanding of a Black aesthetic, which revolved around the premise of “cultural artistic production by Black people with a focus on reaching Black audiences or expanding Black people’s intellectual level.” Asked how he rated *Bitches Brew* as being reflective of a Black aesthetic using a Likert Scale from 1 (1 = Not at all) all the way up to 5 (5 = Quite a bit), Galloway responded “I would say four.” His response was a combination of examining *Bitches Brew* on a couple of levels. On one level, he perceived Davis as attempting to reach younger audiences which led to the next level: economics.

He would have described the recordings *One the Corner* and *Get Up With It* as most reflective of a Black aesthetic because of the music and motifs of each album. Economically, he believed that Davis saw how artists such as Jimi Hendrix were reaching young people and selling lots of albums. Visually, *Bitches Brew*’s album cover captured nuances of Black culture and aesthetics. One theme that surfaced among other interview participants was how the music of *Bitches Brew* did not seem as if it were musically recruiting the ears of young Black-only audiences. But, its album cover art, with its color and bold African imagery was reflective of a Black aesthetic. Unequivocally, Galloway rated *Jack Johnson* a 5 on the Likert Scale. Deconstructing the recording, he noted “I would give that a five because of what it inspired.” As he mentioned previously, he saw Jack Johnson as representative of what Black manhood explored during the period this recording was released. Jack Johnson became the first African American heavyweight boxing champion of the world in 1908. In 1910, Johnson fought Jim Jeffries, the so-called Great White Hope, for the championship. Jeffries was White America’s hero challenger whose aim was to show Negroes they

were inferior. Johnson represented hopes and aspirations of Black people who were fighting against racist laws, resisting White supremacy, and just trying to live in peace. Johnson bludgeoned Jeffries and immediately after the match, mobs of angry White people in neighborhoods all across America descended upon Black neighborhoods and destroyed Black life and property. White America was incensed that a wealthy, boastful, and unapologetically Black man, Johnson, had pummeled their idol and symbol of supposed superiority.

Galloway continued, “the thing that makes *Jack Johnson* (the recording) a little more revolutionary is it was... completely different. It was, you know, very Black very Afrocentric” and on a deeper level regarding the impact of Jack Johnson (the boxer) now and in the future for Black men, “somebody we can stand upon now, and that we need to be meditating on that Brother and his legacy into the future as Black men.”

Miles Davis’s life, in myriad ways, paralleled Johnson’s. Like Johnson, Davis was wealthy, unafraid of White people, and never apologized for embracing his Blackness. Part of the reason Davis was assertive around White people was because throughout most of his life, he witnessed how frequently Whites stacked odds in their favor such as creating racist segregation laws that relegated Black people to disenfranchisement and second-class citizenship. Galloway’s response here is emblematic of the time period, 1971, when the recording *Jack Johnson* was released.

Chet Hanley Structured Interview – February 17, 2024

Educator and former curator of World Stage Stories, Chet Hanley brings a wealth of knowledge to this study. He estimates he has been listening to Miles Davis’s music for sixty-five years. The most salient theme that arose from Hanley’s interview was our discussion about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* and a Eurocentric aesthetic.

Hanley fervently posited “I really don’t think of it in those terms at all, Eddie.” After hearing his explanation and rationale, I began to reconsider my research question, which was “To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of Miles Davis’s resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?”

The reason his response made me reconsider is when I was developing research questions for this study, I hypothesized the recordings were examples of Davis’s resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. I read quite a lot of literature, whether from the autobiography with Troupe, hearing Davis in interviews, or articles in music magazines. I recall Davis discussing how he grew up in a wealthy family and eventually being exposed to segregation throughout his life. I made the false assumption that Davis was responding to a society that was intent on squashing Black people’s dream, socially, politically, or legally, i.e., resisting segregation, racism, and oppression.

When Hanley explained, “I think more and more that Miles... let’s face it, is one of the greatest musicians, composers, performers, and trailblazers” I was not sure where he was going. However, when he continued, “I don’t know if there’s so much a resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic, but more Miles deciding this is the direction I’ve chosen to go in.” Hanley was emphatic about this and the more I thought about his discussion and rationale, the more I thought about my interview with Lenny White four months prior. White, too, was emphatic that Davis was not resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic at all. To the contrary, White argued, Davis was creating his own aesthetic.

One of the most significant findings and lessons learned from this study was how all interview participants shared the same line of reasoning as Hanley and White.

Some interview respondents were more emphatic than others, but the fact remained: All interview participants rejected my hypothesis and research question asking the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of Davis resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. That is, all of them argued that Davis was his own person and created art as he saw fit, and in a way that resonated with his perspective.

Another key finding and lesson learned from Hanley's interview was the oft-discussed premise that "Miles never looked back" in terms of music he previously recorded. What was interesting about Hanley's feedback is that it mirrored the same sentiments White made. White posited that because "Miles was a visionary" he was compelled to at least consider previous recordings as points of departure to build (record) new ones. Hanley also echoed this perspective. Regarding the notion that Davis "never looked back" Hanley countered "that's not true at all because Miles brought all of his work with Bird, the first classic quintet, second classic quintet, and all the great cats he worked with between those seminal bands." Hanley's and White's perspectives merit discussion to perhaps clarify what White considers a misunderstanding. Neither Hanley nor White are suggesting that Davis "stayed in the past." To the contrary, both are suggesting that in order for Davis to move forward and create, then it is plausible he at least considered where he had been. Rhetorically, how could he grow and create new music if he did not acknowledge what he created previously? How could he build if he had no foundation from which to draw from? As White explained previously, Davis was a visionary, and visionaries examine what they have done in order to build upon that work.

What is important to consider, though, is to caution us about getting sidetracked by semantics. Hanley and White make a distinction between considering the past and living in the past, the latter of which both agree Davis did not. That perspective seems to be reasonable in that innovation and creativity inherently entail examining the past to improve upon the future, and this applies to music, technology, and human relationships.

Osten S. Harvey, Jr., aka Easy Mo Bee Semi-Structured Interview – March 20, 2024

The primary focus of my interview with Osten S. Harvey, Jr., aka Easy Mo Bee (hereafter referred to as Mo Bee) was about the recording *Doo-Bop*. Mo Bee produced *Doo-Bop* and it is Davis's last recording before he made the physical transition. *Doo-Bop* is unique aside from it being Davis's last recording. Firstly, the style of the recording, Hip Hop music, was new terrain for Davis. According to Mo Bee, Davis had been interested in recording a rap album and Mo Bee's manager, Francesca Spero, informed him that Davis had been "hanging out with Russell Simmons" and was thinking about doing a Hip Hop album. At Spero's suggestion, Mo Bee assembled some beats to be presented to Davis. It is not the scope of this study to delve into the intricacies of how and why Mo Bee was selected from a group of music producers, all of whom were auditioning for Davis, yet suffice it to say, Davis liked the beats Mo Bee presented to him and the collaboration began.

When queried about working with Davis, Mo Bee was enthusiastic in responding, "Listen. I was amazed because he gave me the complete freedom, the complete autonomy to do whatever I wanted and the only time he would speak is maybe if he wanted a different change." Considering *Doo-Bop* was specifically

targeting a young, Black audience, Mo Bee opined that making a Hip Hop record represented the apex of Davis's career. Contextually, Mo Bee is correct in that Davis had performed and recorded virtually all genres of music, the exception being Hip Hop. This is significant because on the surface level, the recording was shredded by music critics, Stanley Crouch being one. While there was a slew of criticisms hurled at Davis and his decision to "go Hip Hop" what many people may not understand a critical point Mo Bee referenced: "Miles is the only musician who has performed with Charlie Parker and Prince. Who can say that?" This theme was echoed by several interview participants, and it speaks volumes to Davis's range as an artist.

When examining the extent to which Davis represents a Black aesthetic, resisted a Eurocentric aesthetic, or represented tenets of Afrofuturism, it is important to note that his over fifty-year career spanned virtually every musical genre, perhaps exceptions being Gospel and Country. Mo Bee noted, "In my mind, from Bitches Brew to Doo-Bop, he felt like he had done everything, except Hip Hop." Going deeper, Mo Bee continues, "It's almost like he didn't do that (Hip Hop) he probably felt like his journey wouldn't have been complete." This argument is plausible when we consider not only testaments from interview participants, but Davis's own words. He was always looking towards the future by building upon his past. When probed about the impact of Davis' work and its meaning, Mo Bee ventured into a key ontological theme when he responded, "what's crazy about it is that he did (record a Hip Hop album) that, and seemed like, like seconds right after that, he was gone."

When Davis was admitted to the hospital in 1991, his manager Gordon Metzler, reached out to Mo Bee about the project. Initially, Mo Bee was concerned the project,

since it had not been completed, would be scrapped. However, Metzler told Mo Bee they had to complete the recording. The goal was to create three more songs to complete the album, which is what happened. When examining *Doo-Bop* as it relates to tenets of Afrofuturism, I argue it undoubtedly does. To clarify, of course, there were no glaring new beats per se that arose from the recording. By 1991, Hip Hop rhythms, many of which Mo Bee had been associated with, had already solidified its place in global culture. So, musically, Davis was not necessarily “breaking ground” with new music. However, it is important to understand that Afrofuturism is not static in that it refers to a list of boxes to be checked-off. To the contrary, the crux of Afrofuturism is examining the past to construct alternative futures. And Afrocentric Afrofuturism demands that African descendants are at the center of analysis. If these assumptions are true, then without a doubt, Davis was considering the totality of his body of work while considering his present state to forge a new musical direction. In this regard, Mo Bee is accurate and succinct by adding “maybe he didn’t know exactly how it was gonna be when he experimented with Hip Hop, but he just felt like he knew he had to at least try.”

Willard Jenkins Structured Interview – March 1, 2024

Writer and curator Willard Jenkins has been an avid music fan for over sixty years. He began learning about jazz as a child when he would read album liner notes while sitting with his father listening to jazz. From his college years onward, Jenkins has been immersed in music-related activities. Like some of the other interview respondents, Jenkins was not as enthusiastic about the recording *Doo-Bop*. And, like others, he understood the historical significance of the recording as well as its artistic merit. The

recording was incongruent with his usual taste in music. This is a thematic pattern that existed with other interview participants.

Conversely, Jenkins' interest in and knowledge of *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* were high. Jenkins was a college student at Kent State University in 1970 when the Ohio National Guard shot their weapons into a crowd of college students, killing four and injuring several. *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* were released around the same time as social and political turmoil across campuses were at their peak. For Jenkins, the chaotic beats and rhythms of *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* resonated with the political climate of the late 1960's and early 1970's. *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* also resonated with Jenkins because both recordings reflected a sense of Black pride and unity. Considering Jenkins was actively involved in Kent State University's Black Student Union, it makes sense how and why these recordings resonated with him. Jenkins recalled his activism days as he and other Black students joined the wave of students and activists around the country who demanded Black Studies Departments on college campuses.

The most significant theme that arose from Jenkins' interview was that he, too, believed that Miles Davis did not resist a Eurocentric aesthetic. He believed that Davis had no interest in resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic because he didn't care about a Eurocentric aesthetic. Jenkins posited that Davis was too concerned about creating music on his terms to be concerned about a Eurocentric aesthetic. Jenkins' perspective is congruent with every other interview participant which, yet again, leads me to conclude the formulation of my hypothesis and research question were insufficiently posed.

Another key theme Jenkins articulated related to a Black aesthetic. He did not fully support my hypothesis that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of a Black aesthetic. That is, he did not necessarily believe that Davis was specifically targeting Black audiences, and this was congruent with some other interview participants. Jenkins' rationale was more along the lines of Davis attempting to broaden his base to a larger audience, largely young people, but not necessarily young Black people. This rationale makes sense, especially considering, on one level, the historical period and location where and when he was in college. He was surrounded by multi-ethnic students who were committed to resisting institutional and political tyranny on college campuses. In fact, one anecdote he shared was the Oakland Police Department coming to Kent State to recruit students for employment. This was at the height of the Oakland, California chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense protesting police brutality in Oakland. Jenkins recalled how student protest and activism on campus were so strong and widespread that Oakland police had no chance nor hope of recruiting students, especially those students who challenged authority and convention. Davis also challenged convention and defied "rules" about what jazz should be, how it should be played, and what it should sound like.

The last theme that echoed during Jenkins' interview that resonated with all interview participants was Davis's impact on individuals and global culture. All interview participants articulated the exact or similar theme. In Jenkins' case, he noted "Miles Davis was like an orbit with all these planets surrounding him." He was referring to Davis's impact on musicians who are now proverbial household names such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter, Tony William, and many more.

Bennie Maupin Unstructured Interview—March 18, 2024

Multi-reed instrumentalist Bennie Maupin recorded with Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew*. Maupin's interview was limited in contrast to other interview participants because of scheduling constraints and availability. Maupin was unable to participate in a full interview as other interview participants because interviews typically lasted one hour and he was only available for approximately fifteen minutes. I knew I would be unable to administer the entire interview protocol with Maupin. However, considering he recorded with Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew*, my rationale was that he might at least have some rich data points to share regarding the recording session.

Even though Maupin's interview was truncated, he provided valuable feedback about the climate, energy, and scope of the recording session. When asked about how he was invited for the recording session, Maupin recalled that Davis called him and invited him to the recording session. Interestingly, Davis did not provide Maupin with any charts nor instructions prior to the recording session. Davis simply requested that Maupin "show up" for the session and he later recalled that was one of the first times he met Davis.

In August of 1969, Maupin arrived at the studio and recognized there were no written charts, arrangements, or instructions about what to play, how to play, or when to play. It is customary and even expected that musicians participating in recording sessions receive at least a basic understanding of what they are going to play even if they receive arrangements at the last minute. However, in Maupin's case, he arrived to learn there were no arrangements or charts that would guide the session.

When I queried, “What did Miles say to you about the session?” Maupin replied, “He didn’t tell me anything. In fact, we did not talk a lot at all. He was talking to Wayne (Shorter) when I got there, so when I walked up to them, Miles just told me to play my horn, which I did.” I inquired further, “What did he tell you to play?” Maupin reiterated, “He didn’t even say much of anything to me. He just told me to play. There was no real conversation other than him telling me to play. Mind you, he’s still talking to Wayne as I’m playing. I keep playing, but I don’t know when to stop. He (Davis) is nodding as if he likes what I’m playing, but he **still** doesn’t say anything. So, I keep on playing.”

During my interview with Maupin, I was surprised, and we both laughed at the fact he had no idea of what to play, when, or how. He recalled, “I’m just standing there playing. I don’t really know what to do, so I keep on playing. When I felt like I had played enough, and was about to stop, Miles just nodded as if to say, ‘Keep playin’ so I did. After a while, I just kept playing while looking at him and I didn’t stop until he told me to. Whenever I would look up as if I were about to stop, he’d say ‘Keep going, don’t stop!’ Other than that, he did not say much to me the whole time.” I convey to Maupin how the visual of that scenario makes me laugh and then he, too, laughs before adding, “We did that for about three hours and Miles never directed me to do anything except when it was time to stop.”

Maupin, on several occasions, reflected upon how the session allowed so much freedom, which is a staple of his playing. A cursory review of his discography as a band leader will reveal that Maupin does not allow himself to be categorized, and how he stretches the boundaries of the 32-bar, AABA format. To the contrary, he stretches

boundaries. I can hear and feel Maupin's enthusiasm increase as he describes how "I had total freedom to do what I wanted. Miles knew what he wanted so he never explained anything." He concluded the interview by ebulliently adding, we "didn't play any longer than three hours for the session. I came back the next day and we did it all over again."

On the surface level, it may seem surprising that Davis did not provide Maupin with any information about the recording session, what would be played, how music would be played or anything remotely close to what a typical recording session includes. On a much deeper level, however, Maupin's experience makes perfect sense when we consider Davis's priority with *Bitches Brew*: total improvisation! Miles was clear in that he wanted to record "the best Rock album" by assembling a cadre of musicians whom he believed had the ingredients to fulfill his goal. Davis's insistence on improvisation is echoed by Maupin as the interview ends: "We never talked about music the whole time. Everything had to be in the moment."

Reggie Quinerly Structured Interview – February 2, 2024

Drummer, composer, and educator Reggie Quinerly considers himself a "student of the music." Several themes that came out of his interview were congruent with this study's research questions. Of particular note is his perspective about the extent to which Davis' work is reflective of a Black aesthetic and the extent to which Davis's work represents tenets of Afrofuturism. Upon cross-referencing structured interview results, it became clear there were some overlapping themes across Quinerly and White interviews, perhaps because both are drummers. Whatever the reason, both interview participants, believed Davis was cognizant of his past recordings and used the past to

construct innovative future recordings. Quinerly, in using almost the exact interpretation of White's description of Davis's Afrofuturism tenets noted "Miles, you know, was a true innovator and is pulling from the past and present while informing the future." This is a key finding in terms of supporting my hypothesis that Davis, like Sun Ra and George Clinton understood the contemporary while looking to the past and simultaneously creating the future. How ironic that two drummers, Quinerly and White, who do not know each other very well, and were roughly 2,800 miles apart would utter almost the exact words in describing Davis as reflecting tenets of Afrofuturism!

Similarly, Quinerly's discussion mirrors Mo Bee's in terms of Davis charting new terrain by using electric pianos and synthesizers, i.e., musical tenets of Afrofuturism. Regarding *Bitches Brew's* status of creating new musical futures, Quinerly stated that "everything that he (Davis) is experimenting with involves electrics in some kind of way" and "and this is the same person playing this instrument but using it in a different context." Mo Bee made the same assessment when he was asked about how he, Mo Bee, influenced Davis instead of the inverse. Mo Bee, responding to that query noted, "I guess, helping him to feel like sampling equipment, electronics, per se, I think he probably learned to accept that and view it as art."

Lenny White Structured Interview – September 16, 2023

Among interview participants, music educator and drummer Lenny White knew Miles Davis very well. Having recorded with Davis, White had a relationship with Davis that was personal and professional. As such, his emic perspective of Davis

allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how Davis approached music as well as how he navigated through his personal life. What makes White's contribution to this study and its research questions even more relevant is that he teaches a class at New York University entitled *The Miles Davis Aesthetic*. As such, White is able to examine and critique the merits of this study and its research questions in a deeper way than some of the other interview participants are unable to. This is not a value judgement of "his perspective is better" or anything of the sort. I make this distinction to emphasize multiple layers upon which White is able to contribute to this study.

In fact, when I was explaining to White why I chose *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*, his response was "I think the three albums you picked were great because he put his foot in all these different kinds of musical approaches." It is important to understand that I chose these recordings prior to inviting White to participate in this study. This is important because it supports my hypothesis that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* are particularly unique, musically and culturally, in contrast to other recordings Davis created. What White was referring to is exactly why I chose these recordings. Each recording represents, in some ways, a musical departure from previous recordings. It is important to understand that in referring to musical departures, Davis played the same way for decades. The notion of musical departures refers to how he selected different musicians at different times to complement his sound. The result is a musical illusion that appears that he changed his playing technique over the years. Quincy Troupe, who assisted Davis in writing the latter's autobiography emphasized this point. "No, no, no! Miles never really changed his approach to playing. What he **did** do was change the musicians around him." He

went on to explain that Davis, in terms of style and technique, “had been playing the same way for years.” (Q. Troupe, personal communication, February 17, 2007)

White was emphatic in echoing the same sentiments that Troupe posited some sixteen years prior, i.e., Davis did not change his technique and style of playing as much as he changed the personnel around him. According to White, “people will say ‘when he (Davis) played with Prince, he played different than he played with Charlie Parker.’ That’s not true!” White, like Troupe, was referring to a key misunderstanding people sometimes have about how Davis “changed” his sound over the years. The point is, he did not. He was astute about selecting musicians to create sounds at given points in history who captured what he was trying to accomplish musically.

This is also evident in the exchange Davis had with White at the recording session for *Bitches Brew*. White, who apparently was expecting Davis to provide arrangements for the recording was told by Davis, “I want you to be the salt” in reference to the role White played on the recording. Befuddled, White had no clue what Davis was referring to, initially, but then understood that Davis was creating a musical gumbo, which is why he had so many musicians, twelve, on the recording. Davis told White, “think of this (recording) as a big pot of stew and I want you to be the salt.” White jokingly shared with me, “Now, what am I? Salt? I don’t know no drum thing I’m supposed to do to sound like salt.”

According to White, Miles Davis exemplified tenets of Afrofuturism as the latter was always looking ahead and creating new sounds that stretched and challenged convention. However, White was cautious about adhering to the inaccurate assumption that “Miles never looked back.” According to White, that reasoning is inaccurate, in

large part because “Miles was a visionary and whatever he plays, it’s because he plays it in a different space and time. It’s futuristic!” Even more akin to Afrofuturism tenets, White noted, “I could go through all parts of his life and grasp things that do three things: They show where the music comes from where, where it’s at in time, and the possibility of what the music can become in the future.” White’s analysis supports my hypothesis that Davis should be included in discussions about Afrofuturism along with figures such as Sun Ra, George Clinton, and others. His approach may have been different than Sun Ra’s and George Clinton’s, but the overall perspective and behavior, i.e., Afrocentric Afrofuturism, is difficult to deny.

White’s discussion also supports my hypothesis that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* are reflective of a Black aesthetic. In fact, White took a historical approach that other interview participants did not, which can be attributed to his occupation as a music educator and former bandmate of Davis. I made reference to this distinction previously, suggesting that White’s would be deeper in its analysis. He argued, “Black music is music played by Black people. It is music with a language, played through Black people’s vision, through Black people’s language.” This definition is congruent with the definition of Black aesthetics I initially articulated as part of this study’s theoretical framework.

In fact, White addressed two of this study’s research questions in one response when he asked, “Where does music come from?” and went on to note that the first people we have archaeological evidence from came from the continent of Africa. “If that is the case, Eddie, then where did music come from? Africa!” Regarding a Eurocentric aesthetic, White’s response forced me to rethink and reformulate my

second research question, i.e., the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of Davis resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. White clarified my perspective by adding, “Miles didn’t resist a Eurocentric aesthetic. He was playing *his* aesthetic!” Further, “Miles listened to European classical music, too, but his musical approach was shaped by Black people. When you look up the word ‘classical’ or classical music, it says Greco-Roman. Jazz is not Greco-Roman.” White’s response helped me to understand that Davis was not concerned about a Eurocentric aesthetic at all! He defined his aesthetic on his terms or, as White concluded, “He (Davis) didn’t resist, he defined *his* aesthetic.”

Vincent Wilburn, Jr. Semi-Structured Interview – March 15, 2024

Vincent Wilburn, Jr. is the nephew of Miles Davis. He is also co-curator of Miles Davis Properties, LLC. Wilburn, Jr. has a unique perspective to add to this study. As a family member, he also recorded, traveled, and lived with Davis. Also, he has the ability to speak in depth about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* as well as having a sense, musically and personally, of where Davis was and wanted to go.

As Wilburn, Jr. begins to describe Davis and his approach and attitude towards music, almost immediately his discussion is steeped in themes and tenets of Afrofuturism. When asked about Davis’s perspective on music, Wilburn, Jr. noted “he (Davis) was thinking about what’s next” and how Davis was never content with where he was musically, but not in terms of feeling as if his playing was subpar. Davis was not complacent because he was fervent in his belief that in order to grow, one had to change. This is congruent with sentiments shared by Lenny White who posited that Davis acknowledged past recordings to build upon future recordings. So, when Davis

argued “I don’t play that old stuff” he was referring to the act of performing previous tunes. As White discussed, “Of course, Miles was conscious of his past recordings, and he had to think about them in order to move forward. That’s what a visionary does. They take what they have and build upon it to create a new sound.”

In considering the past to construct alternative futures, Wilburn, Jr. was more succinct: “I think he was from another planet. I call him a superhero. He was from another cosmos!” He went on to add, “We just marvel in it (Miles’ vision). You know, you can’t put a tag on it because long after we’re gone people in our next life will be trying to figure out what Miles did.” This is a significant point because it speaks to a central tenet of Afrofuturism, which is examining the past to understand where we are now as we construct and define our future. In other words, even though Davis physically departed us in 1991, his spirit, legacy, lessons, and music help us to make sense of the now as we plan for the future.

One of the most salient points Wilburn, Jr. discussed that is especially relevant to this study was Davis’s range. At the beginning of this study, I referenced how Davis was either directly involved or, at the very least, a creator or innovator in at least five genres of jazz. This fact cannot be contested, but Wilburn, Jr. poses the penultimate question regarding Davis’s range, longevity and impact on music: “Dig this! Name one musician other than Miles that’s played with Charlie Parker and Prince. You can’t!” How ironic that Lenny White posed a similar question during his interview six months prior, yet the fact remains: Davis not only had, but continues to have a tremendous impact on music and culture.

Archival Interview Results

Miles Davis Family Unstructured Interview - October 13, 2003. On October 13, 2003, I invited the curators of Miles Davis Properties, LLC on my radio program, The Jazz Journey on KXLU 88.9FM - Los Angeles. The curators still serve in that capacity now and they consist of Cheryl Davis (daughter), Erin Davis (son), and Vincent Wilburn, Jr. (nephew). When this study was being developed, I knew I wanted to conduct structured interviews to triangulate as data points. As I discussed above, my original intent was to interview five participants. That number increased, in large part, because of the “snowball” effect of Vincent Wilburn, Jr. reaching out to other interview prospects.

During a conversation I had with Wilburn, Jr. prior to our March 18, 2024 interview date for this study, we struck up a conversation about “that interview we did a long time ago.” I remembered that I recorded the interview and in thinking about this study, I thought that interview might be a useful data point for this study. It was only a matter of me retrieving the interview from my archives.

On turning his back to the audience:

“He was vibing off each band member on stage. A conductor will conduct, and the conductor faces the band. He was a conductor. He loved the interaction.”

-Vincent Wilburn, Jr.

On ‘retiring’ and ‘returning’ in the ‘1980’s:

“I wasn’t retired. He decided when it was time for him to play. I didn’t have anything to say.”

-Vincent Wilburn, Jr.

On people coming up with negative monikers about Davis:

“They forget that his boyhood was in the Midwest. His intention was to make the world a better place. He wasn’t about doing anything dark, so this Prince of Darkness...”

- Cheryl Davis

On not playing some of that old shit:

“When you’re around somebody who’s ahead of time. Far back is really far back. Because they’re so far ahead.”

-Cheryl Davis

You can’t cue anybody when you’re on stage. The stage is not even really set-up right, conducive to cueing the band up.”

- Erin Davis

Quincy Troupe Unstructured Interview – February 17, 2007. On February 17, 2007, I invited Quincy Troupe on my radio program, The Jazz Journey on KXLU 88.9FM - Los Angeles and he agreed. When this study was being developed, I knew I wanted to conduct interviews to triangulate as data points. I discuss above how the interview with Davis’s family arose. From the discussion with Wilburn, Jr., I remembered a previous interview with Quincy Troupe in 2007. I retrieved that interview from my archives. As I discussed above, my original intent was to interview five participants. That number increased, in large part, because of the “snowball” effect of Vincent Wilburn, Jr. reaching out to other interview prospects. This is an interview from my radio station archives.

Davis was always looking ahead musically, which is part of the reason he seems to fit well into tenets of Afrofuturism. One of the prevailing themes across all interview participants was that Davis was always evolving. This theme came out with Troupe as well even though it was some seventeen years prior. This, I argue is yet another example of Davis representing tenets of Afrofuturism. According to Troupe, “One day we were walking through the Metropolitan Museum of History, and we walked passed a mummy, a sarcophagus, and he said, ‘You see that right there?’ and when I said I did, he said, “I don’t ever want my music to be like that... dead!” His

idea of continuously evolving as an artist changed the music; surrounded himself with other musicians, younger musicians.

Visual Nommo: Cover Art and Liner Results

In *Redrawing Afrocentrism: Visual Nommo in George H. Ben Johnson's Editorial Cartoons*, Bates et al. (2008) articulate an apt method for examining African creative production via *nommo*. *Nommo*, in its basic sense, refers to the power of the spoken word. However, *nommo*, and this must be echoed loudly, is not merely the process or act of uttering words, vowels, or symbols. *Nommo* is the result of the manifestation of life through speech. In other words, *nommo* is sacred. The authors provide a foundation and blueprint for examining and analyzing rhetoric, i.e., the oral tradition, and its relationship to culture, how people express themselves, and identity.

Bates et al. (2008) expand upon rhetorical analysis through the spoken word by including visual art, i.e., visual *nommo*, in their discussion and critique. This is critical because visual art is just as, if not more, important, informative, and inspiring as rhetoric yet it is important to understand they should not be subjected to an “either or” type of analysis. They both are important. The authors quote Prelli (2006) as saying: “Spoken words, written words, images, and display that are intertwined such that the presentation of self, identify, and peoples can co-occur in multiple forms as an expression of a community or a culture.” (279).

This is important because it recognizes that meaning can occur through imagery and not only through words. Bates and his colleagues define visual *nommo* as the expression of the word through African uses of sight, texture, color, irony, metaphor, narrative, and other visual strategies. (279) This point is especially poignant and seminal for this study because album covers for *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-*

Bop are examined with a particular focus on linking them to a Black aesthetic, resistance to a Eurocentric, and Afrofuturism.

In some ways, an album's liner notes are akin to a scholarly article's abstract. An abstract informs a reader about the article's topic, key points, themes, etc. so readers can have an overview of the article even if they do not read the article. Similarly, album liner notes often provide listeners with what an album is about, its key personnel, and the high and low points of the recording. Abstract and liner notes, then, serve the overall function and purpose of informing readers/listeners from the perspective of the writer who is penning the abstract or liner notes.

This study examined liner notes of *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* to cross-reference them against what Miles Davis said about the recordings, interview participants' testimonies, and magazine articles. This approach proved most feasible so as to triangulate data to increase this study's reliability and validity. Results for each data point are discussed according to this study's research questions. For example, after each data point, e.g., album liner notes, results from each research question are discussed.

According to Bates et al. (2008), there are five visual "manifestations" of *nommo*:

- 1) *Indirection* - making a statement without being overtly direct; backhanded;
- 2) *Visual depictions of African history* – liberating, uplifting images of African being;
- 3) *Repetition of images* – repetition of an image until it "sinks in";
- 4) *Depiction of visual symbols of mythification* – otherworldly imagery; divinity;
- 5) *Stylin'* – crafty use of words, body language, dress, etc. that recognize Africa as key.

Visual Nommo: Bitches Brew Cover Art and Liner Notes Results

Bitches Brew is Miles Davis's most notable recording in the context of its music style, instrumentation, album cover art, and social climate during which it was released. *Bitches Brew*, unlike previous recordings from Davis's discography represented a new dimension and direction, least of which its level of a fundamental tenet of jazz, that of improvisation. This was one of, if not, the first recordings where Davis's recording approach was entirely improvised. There were no music charts. No written arrangements.

The album cover for *Bitches Brew* is one of the most iconic and remembered among Davis's discography. Artist Malti Klarwein created the cover and its colorful motifs. This cover is resplendent with Afrocentric parameters of visual *nommo*. The cover is an excellent depiction of visual *nommo*, perhaps largely via the mythification manifestation. According to Klarwein, "While it's easy to see how the cover might represent dichotomies, it is really more about tandems and shared experiences, coupled with the acknowledgement that individual perspectives can create an otherworldly experience." (Banerji, A. 2021)

Visual Nommo: Jack Johnson Cover Art and Liner Notes Results

Jack Johnson primarily captures stylin' in its manifestation of visual *nommo*. Firstly, the title of this recording speaks volumes of a Black aesthetic as operationalized previously. Jack Johnson, who became the first African American heavyweight boxing champion of the world in 1908 went on to pummel Jim Jeffries, also known as the "Great White Hope," in 1910. Johnson represented the hopes and dreams of Black people around the globe, but particularly in America.

To many White people, he represented the disgust and hate many of them felt

and expressed towards Black people. Some Whites demonstrated their angst when immediately after Johnson bludgeoned Jeffries, White mobs took to the streets across America and rioted, leaving scores of Black people injured and killed. This boxing match was a metaphor for ethnic relations in America. Jeffries, at least prior to the match, opined that he would win the title back for the White race. That dream not only was deferred, but it exploded. This match was a Black aesthetic resisting white supremacy and a Eurocentric aesthetic.

Artistically, Johnson was the epitome of a Black aesthetic, i.e., self-defined, proud, and unapologetically Black. In fact, he metaphorically seared his Blackness into the psyches of racist Whites who, according to Davis in the liner notes, “His (Johnson’s) flamboyance was more than obvious. And no doubt, mighty Whitey felt ‘No Black man should have all this.’ But he did and he’d flaunt it.”

Miles Davis wrote lengthy liner notes for the Jack Johnson recording

Miles Davis: The rise of Jack Johnson to world heavyweight supremacy in 1908 was a signal for White envy to erupt. Can you get to that? And, of course, being born Black in America... we all know how that goes down. The day before Johnson defended the title against Jim Flynn in 1912, he received a note ‘Lie down tomorrow or we string you up – Ku Klux Klan.’ Dig that! (Liner notes to Jack Johnson)

Visual Nommo: Doo-Bop Cover Art and Liner Notes Results

The album cover for *Doo-Bop* is most aligned with the stylin’ manifestation of visual *nommo*. Davis is relaxing, shirt off, and ready to play his trumpet. The image, of course, is a surface level interpretation. The image’s deeper structure reflects Davis being perceived as the epitome of two domains: Black masculinity and coolness. Like Jack Johnson, Davis loss extraordinarily little sleep from worrying about what others thought of him, especially White people. His wealthy upbringing and distance from

racism, at least until he got older, may have contributed to his attitude about some White people.

Some writers and music critics described Davis as unapproachable, distant, cold, etc. It is possible he could have been neither, nor that those writers may have been ignorant of cultural nuances Black men often engage in. It is plausible that Davis was presenting himself as cool or hyper-masculine for survival reasons. Lopes (2019) suggests Black men present themselves as cool when their Black masculinity is under siege by Whites for not “fitting in” with dominant White society. This often translates to Black men, like Davis and Johnson, who were described as “unreconstructed” and “unforgivable” Blackness and masculinity have been central to selfhood and self-presentation of black jazz musicians as well as their interpretation by White critics and fans. My rationale for selecting stylin’ is the picture has overtones of Black masculinity, i.e., no shirt on, sitting on a couch, etc. This picture captures sentiments of the time, i.e., late 1980’s and early 1990’s, the image of Black man machismo and braggadocio were *en vogue*.

Popular Magazines Results

The purpose of including some themes from popular magazines is to triangulate and cross-reference all data points, i.e., what Davis said in comparison to family members, bandmates, educators, and music critics. This approach tends to yield a higher level of reliability and validity to the overall study. This section includes reviews or listener responses to *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. Comments are grouped by this study’s research question theme. Quotations are used sparingly to

control feedback from professional writers or disgruntled listeners. As such, data from this section will only serve as supplemental data.

To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of a Black aesthetic?

Jack Johnson is a tremendous album, and in its particular concentration of biting, staccato rock (if this is rock/jazz fusion, rock is winning), it's unique in Miles' body of work. If it was meant to break through to rock audiences, it failed, and of course it did: while this is loud, amplified, improvisational music, it's too harsh and perhaps too Black-sounding for fans of the Grateful Dead or the Charles Lloyd Quartet. *All About Jazz* 1/9/2005

To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?

Some reviewers had ambivalent feelings about Davis's electric work. Davis secured legions of fans over the course of several decades, so there were some who felt "betrayed" that Davis was going in a different direction, musically.

I admire Miles' originality - his constant shape-shifting and desire to 'make it new'. However, 'Bitches Brew' is an amorphous jam session. Everybody should listen to 'Bitches Brew' at least once, but I find it dull compared to the masterpieces on Miles' other albums. I have read the review that says: "Possibly the most overrated album of all time. Emperor's New Clothes and all that. When one compares it to earlier works, one must surely weep." I would not go that far, but the writer has a point! Online music review (June 9, 2020)

1988, Jon Pareles of the New York Times wrote, "Mr. Davis plays trumpet phrases that jab, interrupt, punctuate or, very rarely, sketch a narrative; he'll also engage his band members in dialogues...song forms and linear development have submerged in roiling, open-ended funk."

To what extent do *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

Some music critics and musicians appreciated the fact that Davis was charting new, fresh musical terrain and even applauded his efforts. Others, though, lambasted Davis with the utmost disdain.

You only have to look at American man-of-letters Stanley Crouch venting his spleen on Davis for supping with the devil in the inexcusably bad final episode of the Ken Burns documentary *Jazz* from 2001 to get a sense of outrage it caused for some – and this was 31 years after its release.

An album whose saving feature is that laid further the foundations of Fusion but otherwise is very dull, uneventful and unremarkable. Approach with caution. Jazzwise Magazine February 25, 2020

Structured Interview Results

This study included structured interviews with N = 9 participants. The rationale for including voices and perspectives of participants was to get an emic perspective of those who 1) were related to Miles Davis and knew him very well, 2) performed and/or recorded with Miles Davis, 3) taught classes and/or gave lectures about Miles Davis's work, and 4) were professional writers and historiographers who wrote about Miles Davis's work. This emic perspective was critical because it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of Miles Davis from the perspective of family members, co-workers, and educators who were knowledgeable of his work. These testimonials were critical to reliability and validity of this study because they were intended to assess the extent to which data could validate archival data and secondary sources of data. As posited previously, my goal was to triangulate data to achieve the highest degree of accuracy and consistency.

The structured interview protocol consisted of twenty-three questions. Of that, three questions were my overarching research questions: 1) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of a Black aesthetic, 2) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of Miles Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic, and 3) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

Nineteen questions from the interview protocol, which are described below, were Likert Scale questions that were specific to the recordings. The final question of

the interview was an open-ended question, which was “Regarding *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*, what feedback would you add that we have not discussed?”

Using structured interview protocol, located in the APPENDIX, allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of Davis’s work from knowledgeable and reliable sources that archival data lacked, largely because the latter data were culled from third person accounts and did not have the inherent depth that structured interviews possessed. The insiders’ “perception of reality is instrumental to understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviors.” (Fetterman, 1998, 21) Therefore, these data were crucial for they allowed me to 1) develop a deeper understanding of *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* from the perspective of professionals who were directly or indirectly involved with these recordings, 2) cross-reference validity of multiple sources of data, 3) determine the extent to which my research questions were valid, 4) discern to which this study could be replicated. Common themes arose from interviews, and not only did their feedback corroborate and support this project’s research questions, but they also supported each respondent’s perspective. The primary exception is the research question about Davis’s recordings reflecting resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. Otherwise, themes were consistent across interview participants.

Structured interview results are grouped by four categories. The first category of results consists of **demographic** data about interview participants. These data are seminal to this study’s validity because they: 1) determine who interview participants are, 2) their occupations, 3) how long they have been in these professions, 4) how well they knew Miles Davis’s overall body of work, 5) where applicable, how many times

they recorded with Davis, and 6) how many years they taught and/or wrote about Davis and his music.

For example, some of the queries interview participants were asked to respond to included “What is your profession?”, “How long have you been in this profession?”, and “How many years have you taught about Miles Davis’s music?” These queries allowed me to assess the extent to which how much experience interview participants had in their respective fields related to Miles Davis’s body of work, how many years they performed with Davis, etc.

Results from demographic data provide the foundation of this study. That is, the reliability and validity of this study are driven by and from the extent to which interview participants know what they are talking about. If interview participants were not highly qualified to contribute to this study and were, by all intents and purposes, charlatans, then this study would have absolutely no research, theoretical, experiential, practical, or intellectual significance and/or relevance. More importantly, it would serve no use to be replicated to add to the existing body of knowledge whose purpose should be to improve life chances of African descendants.

The second category of results consist of interview participants’ **knowledge base** of and about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. These data are important to this study because they ascertain the level of specific knowledge interview participants have about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. For example, I utilized a Likert Scale to query interview participants with “Please rate your level of knowledge about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* on a scale from 1 to 5. One means *None*, 2 means *A Little*, 3 means *Moderate*, 4 means *A Lot*, and 5 means

Quite a Bit.” This query allowed me to ascertain the extent to which interview participants could speak with authority about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*.

Research question responses are the third category of results. Data in this category are important to this study because they are the crux of what this study is examining and analyzing. To reiterate, the overarching research questions of this study are: 1) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of a Black aesthetic? 2) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of Miles Davis’s resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic? 3) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism? Interview participants were asked to respond to these questions using a Likert Scale with 1 being *None*, 2 being *A Little*, 3 being *Moderate*, 4 being *A Lot* and 5 being *Quite a Bit*.

The fourth category of results consists of **follow-up probes**, what McDougall, III (2014) describes as *probing* questions. These questions were important to this study because they allowed interview participants to delve deeper into their thoughts and beliefs about Miles Davis, his work, my research questions, etc. For example, some follow-up probing questions were, “What are your overall thoughts about *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*?” and “What message(s) do you think Miles Davis was trying to get across with *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*?” These open-ended questions allowed interview participants, as some of them did, to delve deeper into the social, cultural, and philosophical relevance/meaning of the recordings. This

data proved to be rich as they also allowed me to cross-reference how each person responded.

Demographic Data Results by Interview Participant

Todd Boyd, Ph.D.

Katherine and Frank Price Endowed Chair for the Study of Race and Popular Culture, Division of Cinema & Media Studies, University of Southern California. Boyd has written extensively on popular culture and Hip Hop music. Dr. Boyd is an author, film consultant, and a sought-after scholar on popular culture, cinema, Hip Hop, and documentaries.

A. Scott Galloway

A. Scott Galloway has over thirty years in the music industry in various capacities, in radio and print formats. As a music journalist and historiography with decades of experience, Galloway has penned in excess of 300 liner notes, essays, and reviews on and about iconic recordings. His liner notes appear on seminal recordings by artists such as The Isley Brothers, Nancy Wilson, Phyllis Hyman, Grant Green, and many more.

Galloway has also interviewed a range of musicians and bands from across various genres of music such as Wayne Shorter, Terence Blanchard, Ohio Players, WAR, and many others. He is important to this study because of the depth and range of his music knowledge, music industry experience, and his emic perspective of the purpose of this study is about.

Chet Hanley

Chet Hanley is a retired educator and jazz historian. He taught *Jazz in the*

Modern Era (JITMA) at California State University – Dominguez Hills for seventeen years. He is the former co-curator of over seventy episodes of *World Stage Stories*, a series of artist interviews, at The World Stage. The World Stage is one of America's longest-running education and arts programs and was founded by iconic master jazz drummer Billy Higgins and poet-activist Kamau Daaood. Hanley is officially retired but has volunteered for the last eight years as a jazz educator at California State University – Dominguez Hill's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute where he conducts lectures about jazz history.

Finally, Hanley has conducted interviews with national and internationally renowned musicians for over two decades, so he has a wealth of knowledge about jazz. Hanley is critical to this study because he has been a music educator and insider for several decades and is knowledgeable about jazz in general and Miles Davis's work in particular. As a music educator and historian, he understands the social, spiritual, cultural, philosophical, historical, and economic implications of jazz, not only as a style of music, but also how jazz is connected to society and vice versa. This is significant because his perspective aids this study's ability to locate and place Davis's recordings in context, particularly as it relates to the overarching purpose, themes, and tenets of this study.

Osten S. Harvey, Jr. aka Easy Mo Bee

Osten S. Harvey, Jr., aka Easy Mo Bee is a music producer and, most relevant to this study, producer of Davis's final recording, *Doo-Bop* a recording that Davis personally chose Osten to produce. Osten has over thirty years of experience in the music industry with most of those years serving as a producer. His production work

has appeared on a litany of artists such as Tupac Shakur, Biggie Smalls, Alicia Keys, L.L. Cool J, and many more.

Osten's contributions to this study are critical because he worked directly with Davis on *Doo-Bop*. Osten's perspective is also relevant because Davis allowed Osten to name the title of the recording, *Doo-Bop*, as well as all tracks on the recording. Osten's feedback is also important because he is able to contextualize not only the recording, but it was completed and released posthumously. When Davis passed away, only six of nine recordings on *Doo-Bop* had been completed.

Willard Jenkins

Willard Jenkins is a 2024 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Jazz Master, the nation's highest honor for jazz artists and advocates. He is also the editor of *Ain't But A Few Of Us: Black Music Writers Tell Their Story*, published by Duke University Press in 2022. The publication has contributions from prolific scholars, jazz journalists, and critics, some of whom include Dr. Robin D.G. Kelley, Greg Tate, and Farah Jasmine Griffin. One of the central questions the book teases out is the fact that most of jazz's innovators and performers have been African American, yet the majority of jazz critics, journalists, writers, and historiographers have been and continue to be white men.

Willard Jenkins is critical to this study because of his vast body of work, over half a century, in areas such as jazz education, broadcasting, writing, advocacy, artistic director, and broadcasting, among other myriad jazz-related endeavors. He is unquestionably an expert on jazz music, and his contributions represent the epitome of the emic perspective.

Bennie Maupin

Bennie Maupin is a musician who performed with Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew*. Maupin was also a member of Herbie Hancock's renowned group, Headhunters, as well as Hancock's Mwandishi sextet. A world-class musician, Maupin has the distinction of playing to two of jazz's most iconic and record-breaking recordings, *Bitches Brew* by Davis, and Headhunters with Hancock. Maupin's contribution to this study is not a full interview as the other interview participants. Maupin was limited for time, so the interview only consisted of his thoughts about recording with Davis on *Bitches Brew*.

Reggie Quinerly

Reggie Quinerly, educator (The Julliard School and Hunter College), composer, and professional musician (drummer), has over thirty years of professional experience and five recorded albums as a bandleader. He has taught classes on the works of jazz collaborators, specifically Gil Evans and Miles Davis, and has consistently studied and listened to Davis's work for approximately thirty years. As well, he has performed with a host of music veterans such as Joe Lovano, Wynton and Brandford Marsalis, Greg Osby, and many others.

Quinerly's participation in this study is valuable because he brings a unique perspective about Miles Davis's work, i.e., from the vantage point of a drummer, bandleader, and educator. His contributions to this study are enhanced as a result of his studying under Jimmy Cobb, the iconic drummer who performed on Miles Davis's quintessential and all-time selling jazz album, *Kind of Blue*.

Lenny White

Lenny White is a professor at New York University-Steinhardt, where he

teaches a class *The Miles Davis Aesthetic*. However, White is primarily known as one of the world's most formidable drummers and his professional resume spans almost six decades. His legacy includes tenure with one of the premier jazz fusion groups of all time, Return to Forever, a band that featured White, Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, and Al Di Meola. He has also recorded and performed with legends such as Herbie Hancock, Joe Chaka Khan, Carlos Santana, and many more. White was only nineteen years old in 1969 when Miles Davis selected him to perform on the epic genre-stretching recording, *Bitches Brew*, one of the recordings this study examines. In 1970, Davis invited White back into the recording studio, this time for yet another seminal recording, *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*. This recording was released in 1971 and it, too, is one of the recordings this study examines. A recipient of four Grammy Awards, Lenny White provides exceptional musical, cultural, social, and philosophical context for the recordings this study examines, especially *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson*.

Vincent Wilburn, Jr.

Vincent Wilburn, Jr., Miles Davis's nephew, is a member of Miles Davis Properties, LLC, which is responsible for curating and continuing the legacy of Miles Davis's legacy. Wilburn, Jr. remembers Miles Davis from the former's infancy days until the latter's passage in 1991, which accounts for almost thirty-three years. Also, Wilburn, Jr. lived with Davis, so he has a unique and personal understanding of Davis as a family member and musician.

Structured Interview Protocol Tables

Structured interview protocol, as described in the Methodology, were administered to interview participants. During interviews, participants were given the

same definition of terms to maintain consistency and avoid confusion. When asked about terms such as Black aesthetic, Afrofuturism, etc., all participants were given the same definition to maintain consistency across interviews as well as to minimize confusion about what terms referred to. For example, interview participants were told that Black aesthetics referred to music, art, literature, poetry, and theater that locates and places Black people as central agents and participants in their lives and shared historical experiences. Art that was created with a particular interest in capturing Black people's experiences.

Table 1 reveals that interview participants were knowledgeable about *Bitches Brew*. This is important because it validated that they could speak with authority on the subject along with having professional experience as musicians, historiographers, and educators. Fundamentally, this table laid the foundation for interview participants' remaining responses to the interview protocol particularly after they were all provided definitions of terms. The aim of this question was not to glean the extent to which my research questions could be validated. Instead, the question was designed to provide a baseline to make sure they all had a level of knowledge about the recording before interviews could proceed. In explaining this scale to interview participants, I operationalized level of knowledge as "the extent which you are familiar with the recording as well as the social climate during its release." My rationale was to cross-reference the degree to which interview participants were familiar with the recording as well as the social, political climate the recording was reflective of.

TABLE 1. *Bitches Brew* Rating

Please rate your level of knowledge about Bitches Brew:

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.					X	
Galloway, A.S.				X		
Hanley, C.					X	
Harvey, O.					X	
Jenkins, W.					X	
Maupin, B.					X	
Quinerly, R.				X		
White, L.					X	
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

Table 2 shows the majority of interview respondents were knowledgeable about *Jack Johnson* yet three participants were not as much. One explanation is that *Jack Johnson* was not promoted very well by the label. Tinggen (2001) wrote that the session was scarcely promoted, noting when the album was released in February 1971, “it was barely promoted by Columbia (record label) and sank into semi-obscurity” As a result, even the most ardent Davis fans had not heard much about the release until it began to get more recognition years afterward. Also, it is important to note that upon querying these interview respondents further, their lower ratings were attributed to having lower interest in the recording, i.e., it was not necessarily among their favorite Davis recordings. This helps to explain why their responses differ from other interview participants.

TABLE 2. Jack Johnson Rating

Please rate your level of knowledge about Jack Johnson:

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.					X	
Galloway, A.S.			X			
Hanley, C.					X	
Harvey, O.		X				
Jenkins, W.					X	
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.			X			
White, L.					X	
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

Table 3 shows that *Doo-Bop* knowledge level ratings for Hanley, Jenkins, and Quinerly were lower than other interview respondents. The primary reason for their lower ratings is the recording to them was not as musically appealing. For example, Hanley noted his preference for Davis's work described as Bebop and Hard Bop. Again, while their ratings are lower than other interview respondents, this is not reflective of them being unfamiliar with the recording. This is important because it represents interview respondents' musical preferences, but not their knowledge level about Davis's work.

TABLE 3. *Doo-Bop* Rating

Please rate your level of knowledge about Doo-Bop:

	None 1	Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.					X	
Galloway, A.S.					X	
Hanley, C.			X			
Harvey, O.					X	
Jenkins, W.		X				
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.		X				
White, L.				X		
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

In Table 4, Interview respondents consistently noted that *Bitches Brew* captured cultural nuances of a Black aesthetic, particularly in terms of its album cover design, which had African motifs and captured the Black pride energy of the late 1960's and early 1970's. This is important because it demonstrates interview participants were evaluating the recording beyond its musical attributes and, instead, focused on the visual and cultural aesthetics of the album cover. Musically, however, there was less discussion about the recording being reflective of a Black aesthetic. Harvey did not add to the discussion here, largely because his responses focused on the recording he produced, i.e., *Doo-Bop*. Responses from Boyd and Maupin were not included here as time constraints were not amenable to completing the structured interview.

TABLE 4. To what extent is *Bitches Brew* reflective of a Black aesthetic?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.						X
Galloway, A.S.				X		
Hanley, C.				X		
Harvey, O.						X
Jenkins, W.					X	
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.					X	
White, L.					X	
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

Table 5 shows interview respondents overwhelmingly described sentiments that *Jack Johnson* was reflective of a Black aesthetic, in large part, because of the recording's dedication to the boxer Jack Johnson. Johnson was seen as an unapologetically Black icon in American history who challenged flaunted his blackness in the face of White society. Responses from Boyd and Maupin were not included here as time constraints were not amenable to completing the structured interview.

TABLE 5. To what extent is Jack Johnson reflective of a Black aesthetic?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.						X
Galloway, A.S.					X	
Hanley, C.					X	
Harvey, O.						X
Jenkins, W.					X	
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.					X	
White, L.					X	
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

In Table 6, the prevailing theme among interview participants about *Doo-Bop* being reflective of a Black aesthetic was its perceived notion of attempting to reach and broaden Davis’s young Black audience. Respondents suggested that Davis incorporating Hip-Hop rhythms into this recording was a direct appeal to young Black listeners. Responses from Boyd and Maupin are not included here as time constraints were not amenable to addressing this part of the structured interview and interview protocol.

TABLE 6. To what extent is *Doo-Bop* reflective of a Black aesthetic?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.						X
Galloway, A.S.				X		
Hanley, C.			X			
Harvey, O.					X	
Jenkins, W.			X			
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.				X		
White, L.				X		
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

Table 7 had the most glaring findings of this study. These findings conflicted with my original hypothesis in that all interview participants rated 1 = None for the extent to which *Bitches Brew* was reflective of Davis' resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. At the beginning of this study, I hypothesized the recordings would be reflective of Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. That is, I anticipated interview participants would posit the *Bitches Brew* was very much reflective of Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic, i.e., 5 = Quite a bit.

These results, however, were incongruent with my original hypothesis in that I argued the recording would be reflective of Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. Overwhelmingly, though, interview participants stated that Davis was unconcerned with a Eurocentric aesthetic and that, in fact, was only concerned about

creating his own aesthetic. Interview participants articulated this position in interview protocol and open-ended responses on the protocol. Therefore, my hypothesis for this research question was not substantiated by data. While this finding did not confirm my original hypothesis, interview participants, frequently and unsolicited, returned to this question when queried about Davis' work being reflective of a Black aesthetic and reflecting tenets of Afrofuturism. For example, on several occasions, interview participants made comments akin to "Miles was always looking ahead (Afrofuturism), but he definitely was not interested in a Eurocentric aesthetic."

In other cases, interview participants echoed sentiments such as "Miles represented Blackness (Black aesthetic) and Black masculinity, and this was his way of defining himself on his terms, not a Eurocentric." In other words, interview participants frequently reminded me that Davis and his recordings had nothing to do with resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. This could be interpreted as their responses further validating my research questions about recordings being reflective of Black aesthetics and Afrofuturism. So, there was still some value that came out of my original hypothesis not being confirmed for resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic.

TABLE 7. To what extent is *Bitches Brew* reflective of Miles Davis’s resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.	X					
Galloway, A.S.	X					
Hanley, C.	X					
Harvey, O.	X					
Jenkins, W.	X					
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.	X					
White, L.	X					
Wilburn, Jr., V.	X					

Table 8’s findings were also skewed in one direction and they, too, conflicted with my original hypothesis that Davis’s recordings were reflective of his resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. Interview participants reported that *Jack Johnson* was not reflective of a Eurocentric aesthetic. Contextually, their open-ended responses were the same as those of their responses to the same query for *Bitches Brew*, and that Davis had no concern about a Eurocentric aesthetic because he was “being Miles” and creating music on his terms, not attempting to gain approval from music critics or anyone else. Davis was doing what he wanted to do, defining himself on his terms, and pushing the music forward. My original hypothesis was this recording was going to be described as Davis resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. To the contrary, the findings did not support my hypothesis.

TABLE 8. *To what extent is Jack Johnson reflective of Miles Davis’s resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?*

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.	X					
Galloway, A.S.	X					
Hanley, C.	X					
Harvey, O.						X
Jenkins, W.	X					
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.	X					
White, L.	X					
Wilburn, Jr., V.	X					

As noted in Table 9, the reason ratings for this table were all consistent across the scale is because interview participants believed that Davis had no interest in appealing to a Eurocentric aesthetic. This was the same pattern for the previous two tables, so it became evident that 1) interview participants were steadfast in their belief that Davis was unconcerned with a Eurocentric aesthetic and 2) my original hypothesis was not confirmed and/or supported for this recording either. They echoed the same theme for this recording as they did for the previous two slides. And, again, my original hypothesis was not supported by the findings. Yet again, all interview respondents were clear in arguing that “Miles was being Miles. He didn’t care what other people thought about him or his music.”

TABLE 9. To what extent is Doo-Bop reflective of Miles Davis’s resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.	X					
Galloway, A.S.	X					
Hanley, C.	X					
Harvey, O.	X					
Jenkins, W.	X					
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.	X					
White, L.	X					
Wilburn, Jr., V.	X					

In Table 10, everyone except Hanley rated *Bitches Brew* as 5 = Quite a Bit. This was another of the findings where there was uniformity among all interview participants’ responses except one. That is, interview participants felt strongly that *Bitches Brew* was very much reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism. There were, however, a range of reasons why they responded as they did. For example, there definitely was uniformity in terms of interview participants talking about the music’s direction, instruments utilized, and the improvisational nature of the recording session. In describing the improvisational nature of the recording session, Bennie Maupin shared in an open-ended query, “He (Miles) didn’t say one word to me other than ‘Play!’, so I did. I didn’t know when to stop, and when I was about to stop, he just motioned for me to keep going. So, shit, I just kept playing, but we never talked one bit

about the music. We never said anything! This went on for a few days.” Time constraints prohibited Maupin from completing the entire protocol, but his descriptions about how forward-thinking Davis approached the recording were worth noting. Responses from Boyd were not included here as time constraints were not amenable to addressing this part of the structured interview and interview protocol.

TABLE 10. To what extent is *Bitches Brew* reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.						X
Galloway, A.S.					X	
Hanley, C.		X				
Harvey, O.					X	
Jenkins, W.					X	
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.					X	
White, L.					X	
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

Results for Table 11 are not surprising considering interview respondents believed the recording targeted a historical figure, boxer Jack Johnson. Thus, they did not view this recording as being reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism. Responses from Boyd and Maupin are not included here as time constraints were not amenable to them completing the interview in its entirety. Responses from Boyd and Maupin are not

included here as time constraints were not amenable to addressing this part of the structured interview and interview protocol.

In retrospect, it would have been a good idea to probe deeper into why interview participants did not perceive and rate *Jack Johnson* higher for being reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism. It would have probably yielded interesting data had I queried,

Considering Afrofuturism involves looking into the past in order to construct alternative futures and that Jack Johnson was described as a Rock album, tell me why you did not rate this higher? Wasn't Davis moving forward with the recording by looking back at an historical figure?" Unfortunately, I missed an opportunity that may have yielded some interesting data points.

TABLE 11. To what extent is Jack Johnson reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.						X
Galloway, A.S.	X					
Hanley, C.	X					
Harvey, O.						X
Jenkins, W.	X					
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.	X					
White, L.	X					
Wilburn, Jr., V.	X					

The pattern I discovered in Table 12 was that interview respondents who did not particularly enjoy *Doo-Bop* as much as previous Davis recordings were not as likely to rate *Doo-Bop* higher on the scale. Again, this is not necessarily an indication they did not believe the recording resonated with tenets of Afrofuturism as much as the recording did not resonate much with them. Also, this is consistent with their previous responses, and especially in comparison to *Bitches Brew*, which they rated higher because of the recording’s cultural and artistic themes, as well as the music. Responses from Boyd and Maupin are not included here as time constraints were not amenable to addressing this part of the structured interview and interview protocol. Responses from Boyd and Maupin are not included here as time constraints were not amenable to addressing this part of the structured interview and interview protocol.

TABLE 12. To what extent is Doo-Bop reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

	None 1	A Little 2	Moderate 3	A Lot 4	Quite a Bit 5	N/A
Boyd, T.						X
Galloway, A.S.					X	
Hanley, C.		X				
Harvey, O.					X	
Jenkins, W.		X				
Maupin, B.						X
Quinerly, R.			X			
White, L.					X	
Wilburn, Jr., V.					X	

Overarching Theme Results – Structured Interviews and Archival Data

Overarching theme results are results that are culled and summarized across all interviews. In other words, these are results that cut across all interviews and represent a common thread among and across their responses. The rationale for this approach is to assess the extent to which common themes could be culled across interviewee responses. The rationale for this approach was also, as discussed previously, to triangulate data sources to better assess reliability and validity of my research questions and resultant data.

For example, the most significant theme that arose across all interviews was that Miles Davis was *not* consciously attempting to resist a Eurocentric aesthetic. In fact, all participants argued that Davis focused on creating music on his terms and from

his location; that he had no concern whatsoever with not only resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. More importantly, that a Eurocentric aesthetic was not even relevant to his work nor at the forefront of his consciousness. This supports the premise, along with other data points, that Davis was his own person, unapologetically defined himself, and worked to push art forward by always looking to the future. While this was a collective thematic result, Vincent Wilburn, Jr.'s statement captures the sentiments of other interview participants. According to Wilburn, Jr., "Miles never listened to his previous records, even the ones that were considered milestones because he was always looking to the future." This is significant because one of this study's research questions was examining the extent to which Davis's work was reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism. In other words, Davis recognized his accomplishments, but he, according to Wilburn, Jr., "never rested on his laurels. He was always moving forward.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest, with some modification, there was evidence to support its research questions: 1) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of African resistance to a historical Eurocentric jazz narrative? 2) To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of an African/Black aesthetic? 3) To what extent do *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflect tenets Afrofuturism?

This study's most significant finding was culled from one of its research questions. The research question, To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of African resistance to a historical Eurocentric jazz narrative? was a seminal to this study's foci. That is, it was my original query to ascertain the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of African (that is, Davis') resistance to a historical Eurocentric jazz narrative. What I found, though, was that Davis, as supported by findings was not concerned about resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic.

Results revealed that not only was Davis not concerned about resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic, but more importantly, he was not even *thinking* about a Eurocentric aesthetic! He was not trying to prove anything to anybody other than himself about the type of music he wanted to create and what direction he wanted to traverse. Further, he was not attempting to speak, via his music, for the masses of African descendants and their collective successes or struggles. He was not trying to prove to Black audiences that he was "black enough" nor was he appealing to White

jazz critics and historiographers that his music was resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. What Davis vehemently resisted, though, were feeble attempts by others to define his music, how he should play, what he should play, and for whom he should play.

The impetus behind Davis's resistance, in part, is attributed to his upbringing. He was born into a family that was far from poverty. He was born into a family that owned horses, had a farm, owned acres of land, and was on the higher rung of the financial ladder. He grew up in Illinois, a state "free state" in contrast to Missouri, a "slave state" steeped in racial segregation. Unlike many of his Black contemporaries in St. Louis who experienced segregation on a daily basis, Davis's parents did not instill in him a sense of "knowing his boundaries as a Black person." In fact, just the opposite. He was not inculcated with a sense of racial inferiority or "knowing his place" as many Black people had internalized in St. Louis, a city steeped in racism and segregation. The residue and racial dynamics of the Supreme Court's infamous Dred Scott case in 1857 continued to permeate all sectors of St. Louis society, whether in politics, education, business, or social life. Scott, formerly enslaved in Missouri, had reached free land in Illinois. However, Chief Justice Roger Taney, in ruling that Scott should be remanded to slavery, including in his ruling that "Negroes have no rights that White people are bound to respect."

Missouri's antebellum legacy was embedded in the fabric of St. Louis, yet this was an environment that was foreign to Davis, yet he was fully aware of White America's inhumane treatment of African Americans. This is significant because it lends credence to the notion that he was not intimidated by White people to the extent he would not allow them to dictate the parameters of his life or artistic production.

Implications

What, then, are the implications of this study? What relevance does it have for Black resistance to a European aesthetic? Afrofuturism? What are the implications of this study to the liberation of African descendants throughout the diaspora? Firstly, the very nature of this study's Afrocentric perspective is important because it emphasizes the importance of Black people documenting their history from their perspective. As mentioned in this study, Eurocentric music historiography has tended to marginalize, ignore, or besmirch Black artistic production while valorizing European aesthetics.

To be able to articulate the merits and value of jazz from an Afrocentric perspective is significant because it provides a sense of agency for Black people and their place in historiography. Too often, a Eurocentric paradigm of music historiography has assumed to be universal. A music historiography that has ignored or, at least, been negligent in viewing, analyzing, and articulating phenomena from the perspective of African descendants, which has often led to inaccurate portrayals of Black people. For example, as noted previously, Miles Davis was lambasted as "being rude" by some music historiographers for "turning his back to the audience" while performing without those writers ever considering Davis's rationale and explanations for doing so.

Another implication of this study is that it serves as an alternative narrative to the barrage of Eurocentric critics and music historiographers whose presence, at least at the decision-making level, dominates the entire music field as echoed by Jenkins' (2023) "Ain't but a few of us" referring to the abysmally low level of Black music critics and historiographers in a field that Black people created. This music that many

people call jazz is dominated and owned by European and European Americans whose ancestors were not the original creators or innovators of the music. This is not to say White people did not or do not contribute to the music. That argument, at best, would be asinine. The point here, again, is to issue a “call to action” to and for Black people to gain control over the discourse of a field and medium that comes out of their historical experience.

Sudhalter (1999) does an excellent job of documenting Whites’ “contributions to jazz” and his work deserves commendation. What jazz historiographers might include in their desire to extol the contributions of White jazz musicians are more discussions about the socio-economic conditions that relegated, and relegate, Black musicians to be creators of jazz while White men have reaped hefty financial compensation from Black creative production, i.e., jazz. This study, in part, attempts to serve as a corrective to jazz historiography and how it is written, i.e., the perspective from which historiography is approached. Asante (1998, 2003, & 2006) has argued relentlessly that agency, location, and centeredness are critical to *any* Afrocentric enterprise. This study attempts to stand upon those Kemetic pillars.

Another vital implication of this study is the urgency of which oral history projects about African descendants’ shared experiences are sorely needed. A full-scale corrective documentation of African descendants’ shared historical experiences must be maintained, enhanced, and expanded to thwart the onslaught of what Wright (1984) described as the war for the African mind. This endeavor, then, has implications far beyond music historiography such that African descendants’ historical record will not be whitewashed or eliminated from the annals of world history.

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study is Miles Davis passed away in 1991. Since then, myriad changes in music and society have occurred. Considering Davis was always at the forefront of music and culture, not having his perspective today represents a major limitation of this study in terms of the type and depth of data. An in-person or direct interview with him would have been ideal and unequivocally provided me with a better understanding of his ethos and music, as well as an opportunity to collect richer data. The difficulty, in part, with this limitation is its relevance for future, replicable studies. Future researchers and scholars who replicate this type of study can schedule and organize structured interviews in advance, but the reality is there are no guarantees how long prospective interview participants will be around. This was one of the limitations I faced in that I had a reasonable opportunity to secure an interview with Wayne Shorter, one of Davis's most revered band mates. However, when this study was being developed, Shorter's health was already deteriorating until his passage in 2023.

Studies that replicate this project might consider addressing this limitation prior to execution by assembling a team or core group by making sure multiple sources of data and interview participants are available. The absence of Davis's contemporary perspective impacted the deeper structure of this study yet did not alter the meaning and impact of the study.

Interviews with his children would have supplemented data, yet those interviews were not an integral part of this study's methodology. Methodologically,

structured interviews I conducted were designed to supplement archival data, not serve as the primary source of data. Having first-person, current accounts from Davis's children would have provided a deeper understanding of his personality, perspective, and approach to music, yet those accounts were not the primary foci of this study. Fortunately, however, I addressed this limitation because I interviewed Vincent Wilburn, Jr., who is a member of Miles Davis Properties, LLC. Miles Davis Properties, LLC, the organization responsible for curating Davis's legacy, consists of Cheryl Davis (daughter), Erin Davis (son), and Vincent Wilburn, Jr. (nephew).

Another limitation was the inability to secure interviews with more of Davis's band members who performed on *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. Again, structured interviews were not the primary foci of this study, but it should be noted that testimonials from more Davis bandmates such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and John McLaughlin, among others, would have significantly enriched emic data sources. More Davis band alumni would have been fruitful, but I was able to interview Davis band alumnus Lenny White and Davis's nephew Vincent Wilburn, Jr., both of whom provided rich, deep structure data. White was particularly valuable in providing direct insight about *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* because he played on both recordings.

Again, it should be noted that inherent and experienced limitations did not compromise the overall value of this study nor its results. In large part, limitations involved the "Who?" in terms of interview participants. Yes, this study clearly could have been enriched by having interview participants such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Mtume, Chick Corea and others.

Conversely, though, it must be articulated that the interview participants included in this study were intimately and actively involved in Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, and Doo-Bop, and that interview participants had an extremely elevated level of knowledge about Davis's work. And, it must be articulated interview participants have the credentials of multiple Grammy Awards, scores of Platinum-selling recordings, and decades of experience teaching about Davis's music.

Recommendations

I have always loved music, particularly music many people call jazz. As I became more involved in music, i.e., writing about jazz in internationally renowned publications such as *all about jazz*, producing and hosting a popular jazz program on KXLU 88.9-FM Los Angeles, and teaching a class called *History of Jazz in America* at Loyola Marymount University, I began to give more thought about the relevance and impact of jazz. This study was the result of several decades of my curiosity about the role and impact of music, specifically the work of Miles Davis. The result of this curiosity was the development of my research questions, i.e., my desire to examine, analyze, and interpret selected recordings from Davis's vast discography.

As I consider implications for this study on current and future generations, there are recommendations I have that arose from the conception of this study to its completion. Further, these recommendations might prove to be beneficial for other scholars who embark upon such a project, whether it be the works of Miles Davis or any other artist whose work has been integral to the intellectual and physical emancipation of African descendants. The stories of Black people must be told. More importantly, though, they must be told from an Afrocentric perspective. Otherwise, we

risk missing out and/or misinterpreting cultural, philosophical, and spiritual nuances that are germane to Black people in general and Black music in particular. This is critical, among other reasons, because when we allow others to tell our stories, we often find ourselves being marginalized, knowingly or unknowingly.

In retrospect, one query might be how the study would have unfolded had I assembled a group of jazz musicians, historiographers, educators, and broadcasters during the phase of developing research questions, i.e., prior to finalizing my research questions? What might this study have looked like were this group included in the process of developing research questions? How might my research questions have been different had this occurred? How might this group have modified, if at all, my research questions? What results and recommendations would have resulted had this group been included in the process?

These are important questions because they reflect the Afrocentric perspective of conducting research that has the purpose of, as Kershaw (1992) echoed, “improving life conditions of Black people” as well as connecting the academy to and with the community. Both tenets are fundamental to how the academic discipline of Black Studies began. Authoring a dissertation, in myriad ways, is a lonely process. Yet, the above queries do merit consideration. In other words, a communal approach may have yielded different results. We do not know that, nor can confirm it, but it is at least worth considering how African scholars approach conducting such studies. In one sense, one might ask, “When an Afrocentric scholar embarks upon a dissertation project, to what extent does that scholar have a responsibility to include key stakeholders during the planning process?”

Therefore, one recommendation for future studies of this nature is that scholars consider including key stakeholders, i.e., musicians, in planning and research question development phases. Scholars replicating this study, of another musician, might consider securing structured interviews with musicians *before* the study begins. The rationale and intent are to make scholarly work as relevant and useful as possible to the academy and community, as well as securing data that will enrich the overall study.

Another recommendation for scholars considering replicating this study is to conduct a study that is strictly an oral history project, i.e., structured interviews. This recommendation germinated out of a limitation noted above, i.e., richer data that may come to fruition as a result of first-person accounts of interview participants. The findings in this study lead me to conclude that more oral history projects are sorely needed among African descendants in America and throughout the diaspora. These stories are, and have been, critical for our survival, lest of which serving as tools for African descendants to conceive and actualize our own futures. Not only are these stories necessary for our survival, but they are also necessary for the construction of our narratives on our terms and from our location. That is, our stories serve as shields to protect us from hegemonic Eurocentric narratives that, historically, have had the sole purpose of denigrating our humanity.

The most significant, long-range recommendation is the formation of a national consortium (from universities and community-based organizations) of Afrocentric scholars be developed whose sole purpose is to collect, document, and disseminate stories of African descendants, by geography. The results of those collectives should produce, at the very least, research and study groups, political action committees, and

in-school and after-school education outreach programs. These collectives might even result from a collaboration of the National Council and Black Studies and the Association of Black Psychologists, among other Black organizations. Logistically, this recommendation might be constructed as such:

- Designation of five regions of the United States: 1) Northern Region, 2) Midwestern Region, 3) Southern Region, 4) Eastern Region, and 5) Western Region.
- Northern Region: Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.
- Midwestern Region: Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky.
- Southern Region: Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- Eastern Region: Washington, D.C., Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Maryland.
- Western Region: Alaska, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington, Idaho, and Hawaii.

In each region, selected universities and community-based organizations would serve as lead institutions. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) would serve as primary leaders at educational institutions. Colleges and universities that are not HBCUs would be designated and approved by the National Council of Black Studies to serve as lead institutions. It would be imperative for this consortium and network of institutions to have strong ties and collaborations with community-based

organizations, community stakeholders, and Black-owned businesses to maintain funding should educational institutions face fiscal crises that inhibit sustainability.

Consortium leadership would be governed by a national board of directors with local leadership selected by a voting process. Each region would have a representative and the consortium would have a national team of officers. When organizations and leadership have been established, the consortium would be tasked with responsibilities mentioned above, as well as initiatives that may be specific or relevant to particular regions. This recommendation is, of course, a general approach that has as its priority the collection, documentation, and dissemination of information about African descendants in America and throughout the diaspora. This recommendation also has international implications in that it can be replicated in other countries throughout the world. The overarching theme of this recommendation is to emphasize the dire need for Afrocentric scholars to tell the stories of our people.

There clearly is a problem of a severe lack of Afrocentric historiography in jazz. How, then, can this study be used to address that problem? Having served for four years as a judge of an international jazz competition, I see, up close and personal, not only a lack of Black writers, but also of more young Black jazz musicians. One obstacle, of course, is school districts eliminating music and arts programs in the United States. How, then, can we address this inherent obstacle, which also related to a lack of Black writers?

For starters, how do we get more Black children interested in jazz? The most direct and successful approach is to expose them to it. As El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, Malcolm X opined, “Speak to a man in a language he understands.” Therefore, in order

to reach more Black youth, we must speak their language. If they are fans of Hip-Hop, then it is incumbent upon us to use Hip-Hop as a medium to reach them. For example, when I give presentations on jazz, I do not begin my presentation with Thelonious Monk's seminal tune *Epistrophy* or Charlie Parker's *Ornithology*. No! I start with music they understand. In fact, two tunes I use that immediately get their attention are the subject of this study, Miles Davis's *Doo-Bop* recording, specifically the tunes *Doo-Bop Song* and *Duke Booty*.

I have also given presentations to Black and Latinx elementary school children in Los Angeles under title "Jazz and You." On one particular occasion, without even uttering my name at the beginning of the presentation, I walked over to the computer and loaded You Tube. Then, I played the tune *The Next Episode* by Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. Immediately, students sat up in their chairs and aside from the music, the room was quiet. I had spoken to them in a language they understood. After I played the tune, I asked students, "Where did that beat come from?" Immediately, they enthusiastically screamed, "I know, I know! That's Dr. Dre and Snoop!" Not satisfied, I asked, "Okay, but *where* did they get the music from?" Still thinking they knew, they screamed "Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg" as if I could not hear them. Recognizing I had their attention and had sparked their inquisitive nature, I then played the original song Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg sampled from. The sample is from European classically trained musician, David McCallum and the tune is a 1967 recording entitled *The Edge*.

The result of utilizing an Afrocentric approach to exposing more Black children to jazz will have the effect of stimulating more interest in music and among youth and also lead to more interest in the field, which includes writers, historiographers, and

critics, i.e., those who have the capacity to document the accomplishments, experiences, and lessons of African descendants. We must train the next cadre of keepers of our cultural flame.

The results and implications of this study motivated me to think about the relationship of and connection to jazz and Afrofuturism. One of the fundamental goals of this study was to examine, analyze, and correct the historical record of hegemonic Eurocentric jazz historiography. The term jazz is consistently used by those music critics and historiographers who describe/described it as such. It was my attempt to respect the term they used for the sake of clarity, although I prefer the term Creative Music.

One of the most innovative and recent programs to engage and prepare youth in the field of computer science is called EarSketch. On the surface level, EarSketch is a software application that is designed to engage youth in computer science applications. On its deeper level, youth learn how to code by using JavaScript and Python, and the result is a sustainable skill, i.e., coding, and it engages youth through a music database where they create music via EarSketch. The implications of this type of work can be extended to teaching youth how to learn coding while also learning about jazz history and the musicians who created it.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study was driven by three research questions: To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of a Black aesthetic? To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic? To what extent are *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism? The residual effect of this study begs an additional question now: What is the alternative future of jazz?

Firstly, results from this study validated the hypothesis that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of a Black aesthetic as operationalized. Data from structured interviews and archival data, which were separated entities, supported my hypothesis. And, even within and among interview participants, results supported my hypothesis.

Secondly, results from this study did not validate my hypothesis that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were reflective of resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic. In fact, results from interview participants and archival data suggested my hypothesis was inverted. That is, Davis had no interest in resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. In fact, his sole interest was in creating his music on his terms without regard for resisting a Eurocentric aesthetic. This is important because I originally hypothesized that because these recordings were, in varying degrees, so revolutionary that Davis was consciously attempting to resist a Eurocentric canon. To paraphrase the prevailing results from all interview participants, “Miles didn’t care about a Eurocentric aesthetic. He was doing his thing on his terms.” This was the opposite of

what I initially hypothesized, so results forced me to rethink the location from which I perceived, examined, and analyzed his work. Frankly, even though the results conflicted with my original hypothesis, they left me with even more admiration and understanding just how forward-thinking Davis was! This is, yet again, significant, especially in the context of examining the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflected tenets of Afrofuturism.

Thirdly, results from this study regarding the extent to which *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* reflected tenets of Afrofuturism varied by recording. For example, results from interview participants overwhelmingly supported the hypothesis that *Bitches Brew* was reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism. For *Jack Johnson*, however, results were not glaring in one direction or another. To examine this further, I delved into open-ended responses to this query. The prevailing themes of interview participants' responses were "*Jack Johnson* was more direct. That is, it was about a specific person in history, so I don't really see it as looking towards the future." In that regard, it makes sense that interview participants did not view *Jack Johnson* in an Afrofuturist vein because the recording was about a specific public figure from the early 1900's. Then, it makes sense the recording and my hypothesis were not necessarily supported, at least in terms of the album and its imagery. However, interview participants thought the music was forward-thinking in terms of its style and instrumentation, but not so much in terms of being reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism.

One goal of this study was to demonstrate that *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop* were more than a collage of sounds and recordings. I argued these recordings were sonic and cultural acts of Black self-definition, and self-reliance. Results of open-

ended structured interview questions supported this study's premise that, yes, all three recordings were reflective of Black art, Black self-definition, Black self-determination, and, in the case of Davis, an uncompromising sense of his identity as a Black man in America.

Reflecting upon the research process for this study, overall, I am pleased at the methodological approach. As may be common among budding scholars such as myself, there still was a sense of "I wonder if I could have done more?" On one hand, my approach was sufficient, in large part because I had multiple data points from which to examine and analyze my research questions. On the other hand, there's a sense of wondering what this project may have looked like had it been a full-scale oral history project with structured and semi-structured interviews with one hundred jazz musicians.

Part of this feeling is the fact I was denied the opportunity to interview some musicians whom I thought would have added a tremendous amount of insight to this study. In this regard, there were some musicians whom I believe would have contributed to teasing out terms. Admittedly, and this is the part of the study that "nags" at me: I am still searching for a term that I believe aptly describes what this music is. A term that captures the cultural, historical, philosophical, and spiritual nuances in a sonic form. As Duke Ellington echoed, "There are two types of music: good music and bad music." So, I must ponder if I "have" to call it anything other than music. My rationale and motivation, though, is that I am fearful that this music, which comes out of the historical and cultural experiences of African descendants, will be co-opted by capitalistic vultures who have no interest in African descendants claiming and

controlling the political and economics of their creative production. This was the most important takeaway for me, intellectually, academic, culturally, and spiritually.

This study has some major implications, particularly related to contributing to existing literature about Miles Davis as well as future research. Firstly, this study, at the very least, brings attention to examining Miles Davis recordings as a triad. That is, this study brought to the fore the premise that it might stimulate interest in examining other recordings by Davis as a collective. For example, it is my hope this study will stimulate current and future scholars to, say, perhaps examine and analyze recordings by Davis from his entire “electric period” alongside other artists and groups such as Weather Report, Return to Forever, Mahavishnu Orchestra, etc., because all these bands grew out of the “seeds” of Miles Davis, i.e., musicians who played with Davis and went on to establish themselves individually and as bands.

The other implication that I hope arises out of this study is to garner support and attention among Afrocentric scholars to delve deeper into telling our stories from our perspective. As discussed previously, part of the impetus of this study was that music historiography has too often marginalized or ignored contributions of African descendants and, above all, lacked the cultural, philosophical, spiritual, psychological nuances that inspired African descendants to use music as a tool not only of and for entertainment, but most importantly, as a tool of liberation and self-determination. It is my hope this study will encourage and inspire young Black scholars and musicians to reclaim our heritage and feel a sense, in a DuBoisian sense, to understand, develop, and utilize art with a purpose.

This study taught me a lot about the significance and role of Black aesthetics and Black artistic and creative production. In that sense, I am reminded of Dr. Karenga's contention that a "cultural crisis" is a focal point of rescuing and reclaiming African minds so we may move towards the total liberation of our communities, whether in America or throughout the diaspora. It is my hope, then, that somehow this study will stimulate others to reclaim and write our past, current, and future agency from our collective lens.

What, then, is the future of Afrofuturism in jazz? Or, better yet, what is the future of jazz in Afrofuturism? Afrofuturism is in "good hands" in terms of control, discourse, definitions, direction, energy, and purpose. Specifically, this growing field of study is largely defined, etc. by African descendants, which is unique. It is interesting that Afrofuturism as a term gained a lot of "buzz" compliments of Mark Dery. Now, however, the growing field of study seems largely in the hands of and is controlled by African descendants. This, of course, is not to suggest that discourse, theoretical assumptions, etc. about Black people began with Dery coining the term. We know African descendants have been teasing out the meaning and place of their existence and its relationship to the past, now, and future have been occurring for millennia.

Historically, African descendants have been marginalized and have not been "at the table" during critical discussions about phenomena affecting, effecting, determining, influencing, determining, and guiding our daily lives. Interestingly, too often, those discussions have been the fodder of European descendants, i.e.,

policymakers, philanthropists, etc. whose interests in African people were (or, are) limited only to the extent those Europeans could benefit, i.e., profit.

The field of Afrofuturism has a tremendous amount of potential, and not just to grow, but to serve as a transformative field where equity, harmony, and Maatian principles can reign in a world obsessed with the acquisition of more... more of anything that leads to the acquisition. What, then, does this have to do with the future of Afrofuturism in jazz? First, as is one goal of this study, and that is for African descendants to reclaim and take ownership for the creation of jazz. Reclaiming ownership, by extension, includes historiography and who is responsible for recording historical records. As it stands, historiography of jazz is in very few Black hands. Most important, though, is the historiography must be written from the perspective of its creators, not its conquerors. Therefore, employing the Afrocentric paradigm to music historiography is one key approach to moving in the correct direction. Those who define jazz and its historiography will control its past, now, and future.

Secondly, it almost seems moot to even discuss the future of Afrofuturism in jazz until we talk about ownership. Nevertheless, at least musically, there is a sense of hope in that a cadre of fresh, forward-thinking artists abound. Bands and artists such as Kamasi Washington, Flying Lotus, Esperanza Spaulding, Emile Martinez, Jonathan Pinson, Mimi Jones, Cameron Graves, Robert Glasper, and many more - I have not even scratched the surface - have nurtured the seeds of the music and planted fertile histories of the future.

Thirdly, I suspect so-called jazz purists are in for a rude awakening over the next five-to-ten years or so, but thanks to CD, DVD, reel-to-reel, and God forbid, 8-

Track players, they will manage to survive. Instruments will have some adaptations, but fundamentally will be the same. Musically, technology will, to some, become more intrusive, yet these same technologies will provide opportunities for others. All we need remember is how sampling machines, mixers, and turntables impacted jazz. When Nicholas Payton released Sonic Trance, the “jazz police” lost their collective minds.

Considering America is a land of “here today, gone tomorrow” there is one staple I argue will *never* perish: Vinyl! Data consistently show that vinyl sales are on the rebound, but the fact is, vinyl is a medium that will always attract a core group of hardcore “vinyl heads.” And vinyl will always attract a core of curious DJs who got burned out by streaming their music.

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APPENDIX A

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR MUSICIANS

Structured Interview Protocol for Eddie Becton, Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University

Interviewer: Eddie Becton

Interview Participant:

Format: Zoom Call Date:

Introduction and Purpose of Interview

My name is Eddie Becton, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Temple University's Department of Africology and African American Studies. My dissertation is entitled *Miles Davis's Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, and Doo-Bop: Resistance by Any Other Name Is Still Resistance*. The purpose of the dissertation is to examine the following questions:

- To what extent are the recordings reflective of a Black aesthetic?
- To what extent are the recordings reflective of Miles Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?
- To what extent are the recordings reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism, i.e., looking towards the future by examining the past?

The purpose of this interview is to find out what you think about Miles Davis's recordings, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. The information you share in this interview will be included in my dissertation. As such, it will become part of the historical record should you agree to participate, i.e., available to academic and public communities. However, you have *sole* and *complete* discretion to request that your name remain confidential and, thus, be identified in general terms as, for example "a music artist" rather than your full name.

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this interview. While there is no financial benefit to you, your insight will add to the existing body of literature about Miles Davis's work and, by extension, become part of the historical record for current and future generations to learn from. Finally, you will not experience any physical or emotional duress throughout the interview, and you may end the interview at any time. May I have your permission to continue?

1. What is your name?
2. What is your occupation?
3. How long have you been in this occupation professionally?
4. How well did you know Miles Davis?
5. Please describe how well you know Miles Davis's music.
6. If applicable, how many times did you record with Miles Davis?
7. If applicable, how many times did you perform with Miles Davis?
8. Using the scales below, please respond to questions about Miles Davis' recordings, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*.

Please rate your level of knowledge about the following recordings:

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
10. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
11. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?

To what extent are the recordings reflective of a Black aesthetic?

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

12. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
13. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
14. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?

To what extent are the recordings reflective of Miles Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

15. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
16. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
17. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?

To what extent are the recordings reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

18. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
19. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
20. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?
21. What message(s) do you think Miles Davis was trying to convey with *Bitches Brew*? *Jack Johnson*? *Doo-Bop*?
22. What are your overall thoughts about *Bitches Brew*? *Jack Johnson*? *Doo-Bop*?
23. Regarding the recordings, what feedback would you add that we have not discussed?

APPENDIX B

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR NON-MUSICIANS

Structured Interview Protocol for Eddie Becton, Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University

Interviewer: Eddie Becton

Interview Participant:

Format: Zoom Call Date:

Introduction and Purpose of Interview

My name is Eddie Becton, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Temple University's Department of Africology and African American Studies. My dissertation is entitled *Miles Davis's Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, and Doo-Bop: Resistance by Any Other Name Is Still Resistance*. The purpose of the dissertation is to examine the following questions:

- To what extent are the recordings reflective of a Black aesthetic?
- To what extent are the recordings reflective of Miles Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?
- To what extent are the recordings reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism, i.e., looking towards the future by examining the past?

The purpose of this interview is to find out what you think about Miles Davis's recordings, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*. The information you share in this interview will be included in my dissertation. As such, it will become part of the historical record should you agree to participate, i.e., available to academic and public communities. However, you have *sole* and *complete* discretion to request that your name remain confidential and, thus, be identified in general terms as, for example "a music artist" rather than your full name.

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this interview. While there is no financial benefit to you, your insight will add to the existing body of literature about Miles Davis's work and, by extension, become part of the historical record for current and future generations to learn from. Finally, you will not experience any physical or emotional duress throughout the interview, and you may end the interview at any time. May I have your permission to continue?

1. What is your name?
2. What is your occupation?
3. How long have you been in this occupation professionally?
4. Please describe how well you know Miles Davis's music.
5. How would you describe the social significance of Miles Davis's work overall?
6. How would you describe the cultural significance of Miles Davis's work overall?
7. How would you describe the political significance of Miles Davis's work overall?
8. Using the scales below, please respond to questions about Miles Davis's recordings, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson*, and *Doo-Bop*.

Please rate your level of knowledge about the following recordings:

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
10. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
11. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?

To what extent are the recordings reflective of a Black aesthetic?

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

12. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
13. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
14. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?

To what extent are the recordings reflective of Miles Davis's resistance to a Eurocentric aesthetic?

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

15. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
16. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
17. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?

To what extent are the recordings reflective of tenets of Afrofuturism?

	None	A Little	Moderate	A Lot	Quite a Bit
<i>Bitches Brew</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jack Johnson</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Doo-Bop</i>	1	2	3	4	5

18. Please tell me why you gave *Bitches Brew* your rating?
19. Please tell me why you gave *Jack Johnson* your rating?
20. Please tell me why you gave *Doo-Bop* your rating?
21. What message(s) do you think Miles Davis was trying to convey across with *Bitches Brew*? *Jack Johnson*? *Doo-Bop*?
22. What are your overall thoughts about *Bitches Brew*? *Jack Johnson*? *Doo-Bop*?
23. Regarding the recordings, what feedback would you add that we have not discussed?