

## Listening to Electric Miles: Creativity, Authorship, and Identity in the *Jack Johnson* Sessions<sup>1</sup>

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When Miles Davis entered the recording studio on February 18, 1970, he faced at least two competing demands. The first of these was a request by boxing promoter Bill Cayton that Davis produce music for *Jack Johnson*, a documentary that Cayton was making about the famous African American boxer. The second was the need to create a follow-up to his experimental album *Bitches Brew*, which, although it had been recorded in August 1969, had yet to be released. The eventual release of *Jack Johnson* in 1971 (titled *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* in re-releases) signaled that Davis was clearly in the middle of one of his periods of re-invention, transitioning from his post-bop work with the “Second Quintet” to early experiments with jazz-funk fusion. This transition affected everything from the musicians that Davis played with and the instruments they played to the way that the musicians worked together and recorded in the studio.

This article analyzes the aesthetic, technical, and social dimensions of record production in *Jack Johnson*. The study of this recording is facilitated by the abundance of information made publicly available in *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*, an enhanced reissue of *Jack Johnson* released in 2003. The complex way in which the album was recorded and produced sheds light on the creative process and encourages a consideration of authorship: who is responsible for what in such a complex, multiply-mediated event? The question of authorship will be pursued through a study of the many takes and alternate takes contained in *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*, as well as of statements made by a range of actors, including musicians, producers, critics, and academics. The end of the article turns to an analysis of the role of genre and racial identity in terms of both the creative decisions and interpersonal relations that shaped the recordings; and how the recordings and the events surrounding them were subsequently interpreted. The argument of this article goes beyond asserting that creation in

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank the friends, colleagues, audience members and students who commented on earlier versions of this paper, especially Lisa Barg; and for his feedback and work on figure 1, Luke Riedlinger. Thanks also to *Journal of Jazz Studies* editor Sean Lorre and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. This research was supported by the Canada Research Chair program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

the studio is a collaborative act; I argue that, without considering who the actors are and their relationships with one another, we are missing an important part of the creative dynamic.

The methodology and focus of the article derive from two primary scholarly interests. First, the article participates in the growing body of scholarship on Miles Davis devoted to his early “fusion” recordings of the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Second, it seeks to contribute to an emerging field that has been referred to variously as the “Musicology of Record Production” (the term I will use throughout this article), “The Art of Record Production,” and other, less wieldy designations.<sup>3</sup> As the scholarly approaches of this field have rarely been applied to jazz, the Musicology of Record Production merits a bit more explanation for the readers of this journal.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Philip Freeman, *Running the Voodoo Down: The Electric Music of Miles Davis* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005); Jeremy Allen Smith, “Sound, Mediation, and Meaning in Miles Davis’s *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*,” PhD Dissertation, Duke University (2008); Paul Tinggen, *Miles Beyond: The Electric Explorations of Miles Davis, 1967-1991* (New York: Billboard Books, 2001); Simon Zagorski-Thomas, “Directions in Music by Miles Davis: Using the Ecological Approach to Perception and Embodied Cognition to Analyze the Creative Use of Recording Technology in *Bitches Brew*,” *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (October 2018): 850-874.

<sup>3</sup> For a sampling of this literature, see Albin Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Paul D. Greene and Thomas Porcello (eds.), *Wired for Sound: Engineering and Technologies in Sonic Cultures* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005); Nicholas Cook, et al (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Simon Frith and Simon Zagorski-Thomas (eds.), *The Art of Record Production: An Introductory Reader to a New Academic Field* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012); Simon Zagorski-Thomas, *The Musicology of Record Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Samantha Bennett and Eliot Bates (eds.), *Critical Approaches to the Production of Music and Sound* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); Paul Thompson, *Creativity in the Recording Studio: Alternative Takes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Although for exceptions, see Zagorski-Thomas, “Directions in Music”; Michael Jarret, “The Self-Effacing Producer: Absence Summons Presence,” in Frith and Zagorski-Thomas (eds.), *The Art of Record Production*, 129-48; Lisa Barg’s discussion of the reissued box set for *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Duke Ellington Songbook* (1999) in *Queer Arrangements: Billy Strayhorn and Midcentury Jazz Collaboration* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2023), 69-76; and Steven F. Pond’s chapter, “Hands on the Knobs: How Production Techniques Changed the Music,” in *Head Hunters: The Making of Jazz’s First Platinum Album*, 117-54 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005). Other work that discusses the role of the recording studio or the materiality of sound recordings in jazz includes Darren Mueller, *At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024); and Gabriel Solis, “‘A Unique Chunk of Jazz Reality’: Authorship, Musical Work Concepts, and Thelonious Monk’s Live Recordings from the Five Spot, 1958,” *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Fall 2004): 315-47.

The Musicology of Record Production has coalesced over the past 20 years or so, and has brought (and continues to bring) together a wide range of scholars and practitioners in an inter-disciplinary, inter-professional mix of musicologists, ethnomusicologists, sociologists, media studies scholars, engineers, producers, and performing musicians. As such, it seeks to overcome divisions between the way that different kinds of music are studied, and draws from participant-observation, textual study, and Science and Technology Studies; one of the Musicology of Record Production's strengths is that it derives from modes of study that are not specific to any one type of music.<sup>5</sup>

Several theoretical strains recur across the Musicology of Record Production, including the "systems approach" to creativity (associated with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi), and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT—associated with Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, John Law, and others).<sup>6</sup> The advantages of these theoretical approaches to studying interaction in the recording studio is apparent: analyzing the work of producing a recording provides the ideal situation for studying creativity as a collaborative process (as in the "systems approach"); and the recording studio is also an exemplary environment for tracing the shifting interactions and reciprocal effects between human actors, non-human actors, and mediators (a scholarly focus associated with ANT). The shortcomings of the systems approach and ANT also tend to appear in some of the work on record production in that they deemphasize the meta-analysis of larger social forces, institutions, and demographic categories, and how these might impact interactions in the studio.<sup>7</sup> Through an analysis of the reception

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<sup>5</sup> This contrasts with, for example, the use of tonal-harmonic analysis derived from the study of 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Western art music, which is much better suited (when used without modification) to some types of music than to others.

<sup>6</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "Society, Culture and Person: A Systems View of Creativity," in R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The Nature of Creativity: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 325-29; Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). For applications and discussion of these approaches as applied to record production, see Philip McIntyre, "Rethinking Creativity: Record Production and the Systems Model," in S. Frith & S. Zagorski Thomas (eds.), *The Art of Record Production* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 149-161; Paul Thompson, *Creativity in the Recording Studio*; and Zagorski-Thomas, *The Musicology of Record Production*.

<sup>7</sup> Eliot Bates, in his review of Simon Zagorski-Thomas's *The Musicology of Record Production* (the most-cited monograph in the Musicology of Record Production literature), writes that "the present book downplays or sidesteps issues of power, identity, politics, and culture" (*Twentieth-Century Music*, Vol. 13, No. 2 [2016]: 331); see also Bates and Bennett, "The Production of Music and Sound: A Multidisciplinary Critique," in Bates and Bennett (eds.), *Critical Approaches*, 11-12. For work that explicitly considers the role of power and identity in the

history of *Jack Johnson*, and of statements by the participants after the fact, this article will consider the role played in the studio by who the actors are (i. e, their “identities”) and analyze the impact of power relations in the studio, expanding the theoretical approaches that have heretofore dominated the Musicology of Record Production.

*The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* provides an ideal site for exploring various approaches that have participated in the Musicology of Record Production, including collaborative creativity and the interactions of humans (in the roles of performer, producer, and engineer) with technology: it contains a number of alternate takes and “inserts,” recorded between February and April 1970, that were cut up and spliced together to create extended tracks on several albums by Davis released from 1971 to 1981.<sup>8</sup> Jack Chambers, Davis’s biographer, spells out both the difficulty and the allure of this project for scholars (and listeners): “the [original] LP poses so many discographical challenges that the music on it may never be identified in all its parts.”<sup>9</sup> On a practical level, the box set makes it possible to respond to these “discographical challenges” more fully than in the past. It also provides the fringe benefit of fulfilling the dreams of the stereotypical jazz collector/scholar in its abundance of new material and its implicit claim to render the recording process transparent. At the same time, the box set frustrates these desires in its omission of many alternate takes and the relative paucity of “studio chatter” that often form an element in the expanded reissues of famous recordings. Despite their failure to produce a truly “complete” account of these recording sessions, the recordings that are included enable, in an inevitably partial way, an analysis of the relationship between the countless decisions in the studio and the sound that results and eventually reaches the public.

*The Complete Jack Johnson* represents an opportunity for understanding the creation of music as a collaborative endeavor due to the wealth and nature of the material. A study of *Jack Johnson* also has much to contribute to jazz history (especially the history of early fusion) because it enables an analysis of the interaction of the participants, many of whom are well known and celebrated within jazz history. In addition to the materials in the box set, the archive for *Jack Johnson* presents us with abundant journalistic discourse and after-the-fact interviews from a variety of participants, including Davis’s own statements about

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recording studio, see Bates, *Digital Tradition: Arrangement and Labor in Istanbul’s Recording Studio Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); and Louise Meintjes, *The Sound of Africa: Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> The albums on which the material recorded early in 1970 appear include the following: *Jack Johnson* (1971), *Live-Evil* (1971), *Big Fun* (1974), *Get up with It* (1974), and *Directions* (1981).

<sup>9</sup> Chambers, *Milestones II: The Music and Times of Miles Davis since 1960* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 202.

the sessions. A picture of the collaborative, social dimensions of the *Jack Johnson* sessions thus emerges from reception history as well as from the box set. The emphasis on creativity as a collaborative act, so often emphasized in the *Musicology of Record Production*, is expanded by discourse analysis and employed here to intervene in the scholarship on Davis's electric period.

The discussion that follows presents the effort that produced *Jack Johnson* as resulting from two collaborative modalities, both of which touch on the notion of authorship. The first of these modalities is the collaboration between the musicians playing in the studio who were responsible for turning Davis's skeletal ideas into grooves and textures that became the basic building blocks of the two tracks on *Jack Johnson*, "Right Off" and "Yesternow." The second modality occurs in the production or post-production phase of making the recording in which the raw material created by the musicians was shaped into the finished tracks heard on *Jack Johnson* via editing, splicing, and looping.

#### MODALITY I

A discussion of an excerpt from *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* illustrates how the first modality of collaboration functioned on the track that originally filled side two of *Jack Johnson*, "Yesternow." Most accounts agree that Miles Davis taught Mike Henderson the bass line, derived from James Brown's "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud," and coached the musicians, but otherwise gave very few additional verbal instructions to them. During the first minute of the track (derived from "New Track 4" on *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*), Mike Henderson establishes a bass ostinato, which is followed by McLaughlin's guitar processed with delay, which, in turn, is followed by the beginning of Davis's trumpet solo. From here to 12:23 of the track, the following occurs:

1. The bass maintains its ostinato, and McLaughlin continues to interject chords in support of the melodic soloist;
2. Davis solos from 0:52 to 7:31;
3. Drums (played by Billy Cobham) enter at 2:35, and steadily become more active, especially after 7:31;
4. a splice occurs at 7:31 that skips the next three minutes (featuring a soprano sax solo by Steve Grossman) of "New Take 4";
5. McLaughlin begins playing in a more soloistic fashion at 9:20 up to Herbie Hancock's entrance on a (Farfisa?) organ at 10:05;
6. at 10:48 the drums play the first groove with a clear pulse heard on the track; and Steve Grossman begins what would have been his second

soprano sax solo on the original “New Take 4” (but it is the first sax solo we hear on the final, edited version of “Yesternow”).

Figure 1 reproduces the foregoing information in a timeline:

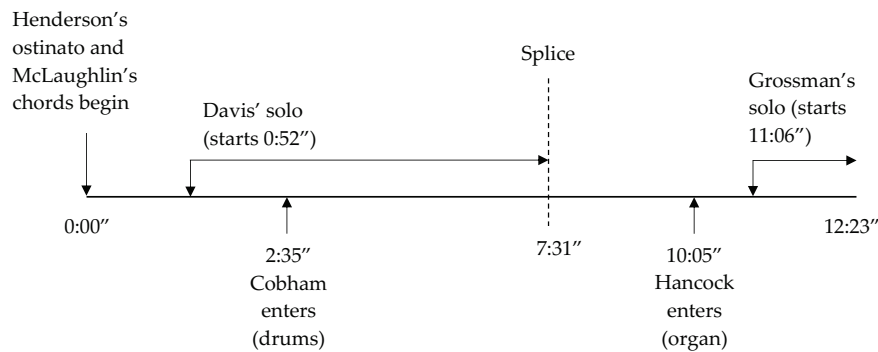


Figure 1. Timeline for “Yesternow,” 0:00-12’23.

The model of authorship, then, would appear at first glance (or first listen) to be quite dispersed. Davis retains nominal priority for introducing the bass ostinato around which the track is based, but otherwise he relies on what his collaborators bring to the session to flesh out his ideas. Players were in fact chosen for their style and for their ability to contribute. For example, in the middle of the sessions out of which *Jack Johnson* would be created, Davis replaced bassist Dave Holland with Michael Henderson, who had no experience playing jazz. According to Davis scholar Paul Tingen

Miles did not hire Henderson for his jazz skills, but because the bassist had a very different ability, namely a remarkable talent for creating and holding down circular, repetitive grooves. Henderson recalled, “At that first meeting at his house, Miles said to me that he wanted me to hold the band down. He wanted me to hold it together. He wanted me to be a rock.” Drummer Billy Cobham added, “Miles wanted Michael Henderson because he had a different feel, definitely.”<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to the dispersion of authorship detailed here, many of the musicians who were involved in these sessions almost seem to disavow their own creative contributions, returning again and again to the dominant authorial voice of Davis. John McLaughlin gives the following recollection:

<sup>10</sup> Paul Tingen, *Miles Beyond*, 104.



Miles himself *didn't* exactly know what he wanted, but he was a man of such impeccable intuition that at the moment it happened, he knew it."<sup>11</sup>... What happened with all the musicians who played with Miles in the studio was strictly Miles' doing.... Let's make that perfectly clear. Miles' records were always quite carefully directed by him, orchestrated in a way that was not quite obvious. Because he had that thing, that ability to be able to make musicians play in a way that they would not normally think of. He had a way of pulling things out of them that they were unaware of. He certainly did it to me. So it was absolutely Miles' vision. We all had ideas. Everybody would come up with things—a riff or a motif. But they were all really in the function of Miles and his music. We were only concerned with what we could do to contribute to what he was playing, and I think everybody more or less had that same idea. So it's a kind of useless question: Who wrote what? Because the concept and the way the music grew and was recorded was truly, absolutely Miles.<sup>12</sup>

Other comments by guitarist Sonny Sharrock, bassist Dave Holland, and drummer/percussionists Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, and Airto Moreira reinforce McLaughlin's observations.<sup>13</sup> These accounts provide a glimpse into a particular form of collaboration, that is, the power of *listening* to guide musical interactions. In other words, the musicians who play with Davis play differently because of how he *listens* to them, because of how he subtly guides them to modify their ideas until he indicates that they have found what he is looking for.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bill Milkowski, "Miles' Rock Manifesto," in the liner notes for *Miles Davis: The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* (New York: Sony Music Entertainment Inc., 2003), 26.

<sup>12</sup> Bill Milkowski, "Unleashing the Avatar of Guitar," in the liner notes for *Miles Davis: The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* (New York: Sony Music Entertainment Inc., 2003), 42. Originally published in Bill Milkowski in 1992 for *Jazz Times*, and then re-printed in full in *Rockers, Jazzbos & Visionaries* (New York: Billboard Books, 1998), 175-81. This quote appears on p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Dan Morgenstern, "Different Strokes (Airto Moreira)," *DownBeat*, March 15, 1973, p. 20; Brian Priestley, "Alone ...He's Cool: Billy Cobham." *DownBeat* (14 March 1974); Gregg Hall, "Miles: Today's Most Influential Contemporary Musician," *DownBeat* (July 18, 1974): 16-20.

<sup>14</sup> This aspect of Davis's collaborative practice is discussed in Chris Smith, "A Sense of the Possible: Miles Davis and the Semiotics of Improvised Performance," in Bruno Nettle and Melinda Russell (eds.), *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 261-89. The situation here is reminiscent of Freud's description of group psychology in *Group Psychology and the Ego*. To take the two examples given by Freud, members of the group are oriented around the ideas and approval of a charismatic leader, as in a religious setting, or the military. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959).

Davis himself expanded upon the notion of collaboration in an interview he gave in the summer of 1970:

I play off of musicians that are in my group. I mean, I react to them. So actually I'm not playing the horn, they are. I just have the physical thing to control, the mouth piece and stuff. But they've given me the stuff to play. The vibes they give, so that's the reason it sounds like that, we're enjoying ourselves.... It's a combined sound of everybody. I play something and they respect me so much, and they know I wouldn't play it unless I felt it or it fit. So they'll follow me. And they'll follow me and give all they have in it. When we're playing you can actually hear new things being reborn.<sup>15</sup>

This way of collaborating made sense because of the type of music these musicians were making. The music was based on open-ended sections created around a bass ostinato and a groove. Textures could ebb and flow; different musicians might come to the forefront to assume responsibility for melodic interest in what could be called a "solo." This is a far different type of contribution than in music in which there is a written arrangement, as in swing-era jazz; or in solos over sections of a defined length that repeat in a given order, as in post-bebop, "mainstream" jazz from the late 1940s up to the present.<sup>16</sup> Davis and the other musicians could make music this way, however, because they understood that they were producing raw material that would be transformed during a second stage of creative collaboration.<sup>17</sup> The grooves they created did not have to transition into other sections or endings; they only had to begin and generate interest at some point while the tape was rolling.

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<sup>15</sup> "Miles Davis: The Prince of Darkness Also Brings Light," *Zygo* (August 12, 1970): 28.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of forms in jazz that no longer rely on a blues-based or standard-based model, see Andrew Raffo Dewar, "Searching for the Center of a Sound: Bill Dixon's *Webern*, the Unaccompanied Solo, and Compositional Ontology in Post-Songform Jazz," *Jazz Perspectives* 4, no. 1 (2010): 59–87.

<sup>17</sup> This understanding is clear from many recollections of the sessions that describe recording short fragments in addition to long grooves; see, for example, the interview with Lenny White about *Bitches Brew* in Julie Coryell and Laura Friedman, *Jazz-Rock Fusion: The People, the Music* (New York: Delta Books), 84; and bassist Harvey Brooks recounted the following about the *Bitches Brew* sessions: "Miles was recording like the way we would write songs. You know, you just jam until you find something and that becomes part of the song" (Bob Belden, "Session-by-Session Analysis," liner notes for Miles Davis, *The Complete Bitches Brew Sessions*, New York: Columbia Legacy, 1998). However, not all the musicians may have understood the status of what they were playing; Joe Zawinul stated in an interview recorded in 1997 that he did not know during the recording of *Bitches Brew* that the tape would later be edited (Pond, *Head Hunters*, 137–38).



## MODALITY II

In the second modality of collaboration, authorial emphasis shifts from Davis and the musicians to a collaboration between musicians, the producer, engineers, music technology, and the studio space itself, with particular weight given to the roles of Davis and producer Teo Macero. The first aspect of this modality concerns studio layout, which determines in part the creative choices that will be possible later in the recording process. Simon Zagorski-Thomas, writing about the *Bitches Brew* sessions (the sessions immediately preceding *Jack Johnson*), writes that producer Teo Macero, engineer Stan Tonkel, and whoever else might have been assisting them “set up the studio so that there was relatively good separation between the instruments on the eight tracks.... Macero... attempted to ensure that Tonkel and he would be able to edit the eight-track multi-track tape master together in a way that would create order out of the seeming chaos that Davis was producing.”<sup>18</sup> Another feature of the second modality with a more obvious impact on the released recording occurred during the editing stage of the recording. Tape editing, or splicing, in Davis’s early fusion recordings relied on using grooves that were recorded as raw material that was then shaped into a closed form. The description of the first 12:23 of “Yesternow” included one example of creative editing in the splice that occurred at 7:31 that eliminated three minutes from “New Take 4.”

Two passages from “Yesternow” illustrate this process in a more dramatic fashion. At 12:24 there is a cut from the end of the first section to a new section. To summarize the earlier discussion, during the first half of the track the overall texture increased in density, acquiring the following by the 12-minute mark: active groove-based drumming with a clear pulse, chromatic chords played on the organ, and an increasingly fluid soprano sax solo. Henderson’s bass ostinato repeated without interruption or variation from the beginning of the track. McLaughlin’s interjected sustained, distorted wah-wah-ed chords, were also present from the opening, although McLaughlin constantly varied what he was playing, interjecting single note lines, arpeggios, and changes in the micro-timing of the chords. The new section at 12:24 is comprised of two parts: a portion of the track “Shhh/Peaceful,” recorded a year earlier during the sessions for *In a Silent Way*; and a trumpet solo that Davis recorded in November 1969. Both passages that comprise this section possess a completely different sense of audio space (i.e., the sound of the space in which the recording was made), different instrumentation, a different groove and—compared to those who

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<sup>18</sup> Zagorski-Thomas, “Directions in Music,” 866.

contributed to the *Jack Johnson* sessions from February to April 1970—many different musicians.

At 13:56, after the rather abrupt shift to “Shhh/Peaceful” and the trumpet solo, the recording crossfades to a track recorded early in the *Jack Johnson* sessions, titled “Willie Nelson (Take 3).”<sup>19</sup> Relative to the “Shhh/Peaceful” interjection, the sound of “Willie Nelson” more closely matches that of the opening of “Yesternow” even though only Davis and McLaughlin played on both sessions. Another remarkable moment occurs beginning at 18:34, with a series of quick edits from different takes of “Willie Nelson”:

1. 18:34-18:49: from “Willie Nelson, Insert Take 1.” This excerpt introduces a change of groove, evoking a double-time feel;
2. 18:49-18:53: from a different segment of “Willie Nelson Insert, Take 1.” The tempo stops while a chord from a distorted electric keyboard is sustained;
3. 18:53-23:50: the groove resumes, derived from what was originally labeled “Willie Nelson, insert 2, take 1,” which is based on a different, more active ostinato from the other takes of “Willie Nelson” played in unison by Holland and McLaughlin, and embellished by Sonny Sharrock’s heavily processed guitar.

This breakdown of the passage from 18:34 to 18:53 calls attention to a brief span in the recording with particularly rapid cuts. “Yesternow” features many other cuts, which are otherwise more spread out. The following table presents the editing process for “Yesternow”:<sup>20</sup>

<u>Timing in “Yesternow”</u>	<u>Original Track</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Personnel</u>
0:00-7:31	“New Take 4,” 0:00-7:31	April 7, 1970	Miles Davis (tpt.), Steve Grossman (sop. sax), Herbie Hancock (organ), John McLaughlin (gtr.), Mike Henderson (el. Bass), Billy Cobham (drums)
7:31-12:23	“New Take 4,” 10:20-15:10	April 7, 1970	Same as above

<sup>19</sup> Another version of “Willie Nelson” was eventually released on *Directions* in 1981.

<sup>20</sup> This table is adapted from Smith, “Sound, Mediation, and Meaning,” 161.

12:23-13:56, right channel	Unaccompanied tpt. solo w/overdubbed bass	November 1969 (tpt. solo)	Miles Davis (tpt.), unknown bass player
12:23-13:56, left channel	Excerpt from “Shhh/Peaceful”	February 18, 1969	Miles Davis (tpt.), Herbie Hancock (el. pno.), Chick Corea (el. pno.), Joe Zawinul (organ), Dave Holland (bass), John McLaughlin (gtr.), Tony Williams (drums), Wayne Shorter (sop. sax, but not heard in this excerpt).
13:56-18:34	“Willie Nelson,” take 3 to 4:34	February 18, 1970	Miles Davis (tpt.), Bennie Maupin (b. cl.), Chick Corea (el. pno.), Sonny Sharrock (el. gtr.), John McLaughlin (el. gtr.), Dave Holland (el. bass), Jack DeJohnette (drums)
<b>18:34-18:49</b>	<b>“Willie Nelson,” insert 1, 5:48-6:03</b>	February 18, 1970	Same as above
<b>18:49-18:53</b>	<b>“Willie Nelson,” insert 1, 6:22-6:26</b>	February 18, 1970	Same as above
<b>18:53-23:50</b>	<b>“Willie Nelson,” insert 2, complete</b>	February 18, 1970	Same as above
23:50-25:35	Unaccompanied tpt. solo, wind ensemble, Brock Peters narration	November 1969 (tpt. solo)	Miles Davis (tpt.), Brock Peters (narration), others unknown

Table 1. Production Chart for “Yesternow,” with sections from 18:34 to 23:50 highlighted in **bold**.

#### *Who Is the Author?*

These many cuts, taken from different takes of different songs recorded at different times with different musicians, illustrate how, at this stage of the recording, authorship shifted from a collaboration between Davis and the musicians to a collaboration between Davis and producer Teo Macero. As with the collaboration between Davis and the musicians, statements about where authorial weight should fall were not without their controversies. In lieu of being able to ascertain which account is more factually accurate, the different narratives about the *Jack Johnson* sessions can be read according to what sort of values and

assumptions they privilege. When the record came out, Davis himself seemed to give Macero credit in the liner notes: “The music on this album speaks for itself! But dig the guitar and the bass—They are ‘Far-in’—and so is the producer Teo Macero. He did it again!”<sup>21</sup> Although it is not clear what exactly Macero “did,” the overall tone towards Macero is positive. Many years after the fact, Macero himself recounts how

Miles never came to the editing room. In 25 or 30 years he was there maybe four or five times. So I had a carte blanche to maneuver, do things with his music that I couldn’t do with other people’s.... I’d record everything. And then when I’d go back to the editing room, I would edit everything. I listened to everything back. Miles would say, “You remember that thing in the second take?” I said “yeah.” And I would maybe make a loop and create it.<sup>22</sup>

In another interview, Macero described the making of *Bitches Brew* in words that could have applied equally well to the making of *Jack Johnson*: “I would take out what we might have recorded for five months and I’d say ‘Oh I need a piece there.’ I might go back to one of his tracks and take something out and put it in *Bitches Brew*. And I’d do that with a lot of his stuff.”<sup>23</sup>

However, the later account in *Miles*, Davis’s autobiography, emphasizes a more traditional authorial role during the recording of the music.<sup>24</sup> In the

<sup>21</sup> Miles Davis, liner notes for *Jack Johnson*, Columbia KC 30455 (1971).

<sup>22</sup> Iara Lee, “Interview with Teo Macero.” *Modulations—Cinema for the Ear* (September 1997). <http://www.furious.com/perfect/teomacero.html> (accessed August 23, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> Teo Macero. 2004. “On Creating ‘Bitches Brew’ with Miles Davis. *Artists Hours Music*. Interview at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnStkHmHQoE> (accessed February 24, 2024). In fact, Macero was probably thinking of *Jack Johnson* and many of the albums that followed, as the material for *Bitches Brew* was all recorded within the space of three days, August 19–21, 1969.

<sup>24</sup> The question of authorship in Davis’s autobiography is controversial. Numerous writers have demonstrated that the text has multiple sources, of which Troupe’s interviews with Davis comprise only an unascertainable portion. Other parts were written by Troupe, some passages were likely plagiarised from Jack Chambers’ biography of Davis, *Milestones*, while others may have been provided by anonymous staff at Simon & Schuster (the publisher of *Miles*). Chambers details some of Davis/Troupe’s borrowings in the introduction to the 1998 Da Capo edition of *Milestones* (xvii–xxv). Following in the path of previous writers, I will continue at times to refer to statements from the autobiography as if they were Davis’s own. The tendency for the book to be taken as Davis’s unmediated opinion is made possible, as Ken Prouty argues, because for many readers, “the book sounds like Miles, or at least what they imagine Miles would sound like” (“Plagiarizing Your Own Autobiography, and Other Strange Tales: Miles Davis, Jazz Discourse, and the Aesthetic of Silence,” *Jazz Research Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 [2010]: 34). Examining further the possibility of presenting Davis’s “unmediated opinion,” we could also question whether even transcriptions of Davis’s interviews provide direct access to his interior self. A notoriously

discussion of *Bitches Brew*, Davis's autobiography states that he "would direct, like a conductor, once we started to play, and I would either write down some music for somebody or I would tell him to play different things I was hearing, as the music was growing, coming together" (this description resembles those made by other participants in the session). Later in the same passage, Davis directly confronts ideas that the shaping of the raw material into tracks with something approaching a "through-composed form" resulted from a collaboration with Macero:

Some people have written that doing *Bitches Brew* was Clive Davis's or Teo Macero's idea. That's a lie, because they didn't have nothing to do with none of it. Again, it was white people trying to give some credit to other white people where it wasn't deserved because the record became a breakthrough concept, very innovative. They were going to rewrite history after the fact like they always do.<sup>25</sup>

While the autobiography's version of collaboration undoubtedly has more than a grain of truth vis-à-vis the racial dynamics between Davis and the white people in positions of power at his record company, this version of the story contrasts with that in the original liner notes ("the producer Teo Macero.... did it again!"), and the assertions of Macero himself.

It is also not safe to assume that *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* followed the same working method. A letter has surfaced from Davis to Macero in which Davis provides a detailed list of edits that he wanted Macero to make on the track "Bitches Brew" (from the album of the same name).<sup>26</sup> As Zagorski-Thomas has argued, however, Davis's directions do not account for all the edits made by Macero in the sections described by Davis in this track.<sup>27</sup> In addition to this, we are not privy to all the communications that may or may not have taken place

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difficult interviewee, many of his interviews can be interpreted as performances in the service of sculpting a public "Davis" persona; that is, it is difficult if not impossible to know whether these statements are "sincere." In the words of Krin Gabbard, "It may be too much to ask for the real Miles Davis, whoever that might be ("How Many Miles? Alternate Takes on the Jazz Life," in *Thriving on a Riff: Jazz and Blues Influences in African American Literature and Film*, ed. Graham Lock and David Murray [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008], 191).

<sup>25</sup> Miles Davis (with Quincy Troupe), *Miles: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 300.

<sup>26</sup> This letter is reproduced in Smith, "Sound, Mediation, and Meaning," 150. Bassist Harvey Brooks's recollections about the *Bitches Brew* sessions reinforce the role of Davis in the editing process: "Miles knew what he wanted to do—he had a plan before he went into the studio. I heard him argue with Teo over where an edit should be when they were assembling the album" (Belden, "Session-by-Session Analysis," 131).

<sup>27</sup> Zagorski-Thomas, "Directions in Music," 868.

between Davis and Macero before or after this letter. When one considers that a similar complexity of interactions may have occurred for other tracks on other albums during this period, the matter of attribution becomes murkier.<sup>28</sup>

Although few would dispute that *Bitches Brew* was Davis's "idea" (i.e., that Davis came up with the concept for the album) in an abstract sense, Davis's later account emphasizes a vision of authorship in which Davis is more of a traditional *auteur*, a creator responsible for imprinting his unique vision onto the work, in the process diminishing the creative contributions of his collaborators. The clear de-emphasis of the input of others is true explicitly at what I am calling the second modality of collaboration—the level of mixing, overdubbing, and splicing in which Macero was involved—and implicitly at the first modality (i.e., collective improvisation), in which now, instead of guiding by empathy and listening (as in the accounts of his collaborators as well as of Davis at the time), Davis presents himself as a "conductor." While it is true that Davis could have both guided by empathy and acted as a conductor at different moments in the recording process, it is significant that Davis stresses his authority in later narratives about the sessions.

A fascinating collection of interviews by Michael Jarret with those involved in producing *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson* does little to resolve attributions of authorship. For example, Bob Belden, the re-issue producer for *Bitches Brew*, stated that after reviewing the unedited session tapes, it was clear that "in some cases, he [Macero] was a major player. In other cases he was just there, along for the ride." And, in another passage, Belden discovers "how much of an influence Miles had on the sessions. He was directing the band to start and stop. He was even saying to Teo, 'You can put this part and edit it onto this part.' He was telling Teo what to do." Yet, in the same volume (in an interview conducted in 1998), Macero, in a discussion of the production of *Jack Johnson*, remembers, "Miles comes to me. He says '... I'll give you \$1,500. You put some music together from the vault'.... He [Miles] left for California, and I went to the vault, found some music. I pasted it together, edited it together, and we turned it all around." Again, two different sessions are being discussed here, and the working methods and the form of collaboration probably varied between the two.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For an analysis of an earlier collaboration, see Darren Mueller's discussion of Macero's post-production work with Charles Mingus in *At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024), 256-68.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Jarret, *Pressed for All Time: Producing the Great Jazz Albums from Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday to Miles Davis and Diana Krall* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 135, 136, 143. In his remarks, Belden strongly suggests that Macero was prone to self-aggrandizement (*ibid.*, 135).



The passage of time does many things. It may heal all wounds, but it can also transform memory. According to various forms of external evidence—other peoples’ recollections, touring schedules, written memoranda—Davis’s role in the editing of his recording sessions between 1969 and 1974 changed significantly. Because of the way in which the music was created, narratives about the sessions have repercussions in terms of how creative credit is assigned. It is clear that Davis was quite involved in the construction of the two albums recorded in 1969, *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*, but that his involvement diminished afterwards in the sessions that followed, beginning with those for *Jack Johnson*.<sup>30</sup> In his retrospective comments, Davis seems to have projected his role forward in time from *Bitches Brew*, so that he became the main creative agent at all stages in all the recordings that followed, while Macero projected his role backward from the end of the 1969-1974 period.

*The Second Modality and Musical Style*

The possibility for this controversy over credit for the final form of *Jack Johnson* was created by the type of music that Davis was creating. Up until 1965, the sound of Davis’s small groups on record remained rooted in a sound, texture, conception of form, and a balance of improvised and composed elements that was established in the 1940s: that of a small bebop-oriented band with individual instruments based in an acoustic sound with song forms derived from Tin Pan Alley. The *sound* of the recordings could all be reproduced closely in live performance. Davis’s “Second Quintet” from 1965 to 1968 anticipated some of the changes in his music that became overt with the recording of *In a Silent Way* in early 1969. The Second Quintet merged elements of avant-garde jazz with hard bop, especially in songs that featured their “time, no changes” approach in which, after the statement of the head, the band would improvise over a steady pulse with an open form without harmonic progressions.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, this band still included standards in live performance, some new songs featured circular closed forms, and, with a few exceptions, the freest improvised sections

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<sup>30</sup> The evidence includes the aforementioned letter written by Davis with instructions for edits on *Bitches Brew*, the more limited time frame for the sessions that produced *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew* compared to *Jack Johnson*, and Davis’s touring schedule beginning during the editing of *Jack Johnson*. See the discussion in Smith, “Sound, Mediation, and Meaning,” 126-66, esp. pp. 153-56.

<sup>31</sup> For an overview of this music, see Keith Waters, *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-39; Jeremy Yudkin discusses the period within the larger context of Davis’s career and offers a formal analysis of *Miles Smiles* (1966) in *Miles Davis: Miles Smiles and the Invention of Post Bop* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008).

were not based on open-ended ostinati as with the post-1968 electric recordings. *In a Silent Way* marked a clear break with these practices.

The way in which Davis's music from 1969 to 1974 was recorded assumed that mixing and editing would play a role in the finished recordings. During this period splicing, overdubbing, and looping became regular, constituent features of creating the music. Live performance might resemble a recording, but only because the band had learned how to play a piece constructed in the recording studio, not because the recording documented a live performance.<sup>32</sup> New developments in studio technology facilitated the greater separation of instruments via eight- and 16-track recording and direct input (DI) recording (which increased the creative possibilities during the mixing phase of production), while post-production processing of individual instruments created new opportunities for timbral manipulation. Perhaps even more radical (in the context of the musical values of the jazz world) than the exploitation of the technological affordances of the recording studio for timbral manipulation was the use of (pre-production) sound processing and electronic amplification as a resource. The distorted, overdriven guitar sound, use of electronic keyboards and bass guitar, and devices such as the echoplex, wah-wah pedal and fuzztone transformed the overall ambiance of the recording and the timbre of individual instruments. In *Jack Johnson*, changes in musical style were therefore intertwined with the increased use of electronic effects and the manipulation of form and sound in post-production. Highlighting the role of technology in the pre- and post-production phases of *Jack Johnson* had implications for how authorship and collaboration would be understood in the project, with technology now taking on the role of a "non-human" agent (in the sense employed in ANT)—and thus acting as a kind of collaborator in the recording.

#### AUTHORSHIP AND POWER RELATIONS IN THE STUDIO

All of the musicians on the *Jack Johnson* sessions agree that—despite the spontaneous, collaborative nature of the project—Miles Davis deserves authorial credit; even Teo Macero could at times appear to concur: "There were many times in Miles' records that something didn't please Miles. So we cut them out. That's why those records are so tight. They're all Miles."<sup>33</sup> I want to focus on

<sup>32</sup> Such a relationship between "live" and "recorded" music mirrored that of many rock bands of the time as discussed by Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, Second Edition (London and New York, Routledge, 2008). Pond discusses how Herbie Hancock's bands, first with the *Mwandishi*-era sextet and later with the Headhunters' band, used recording to develop songs for live performances (*Head Hunters*, 140-42).

<sup>33</sup> Iara Lee, "Interview with Teo Macero."

John McLaughlin's comments for how they illustrate the relationship between authorial credit and interpersonal power relations.

John McLaughlin was born in the U.K. and moved to New York City in early 1969 to play with the Tony Williams Lifetime group. After moving to New York, he received a call from Miles Davis to participate in the *In a Silent Way* sessions. McLaughlin played a large role in that album and in the two that followed, *Bitches Brew* and *Jack Johnson*. Here is the first part of a quote presented earlier, in which McLaughlin is describing the genesis of the track "Right Off" (the track that constitutes side one of the album, with "Yesternow" making up side two):

For his recordings, Miles frequently arrived at the studio with some chords written on a brown paper bag, the kind they give you in a coffee shop to hold your coffee or juice. This time he didn't even have a paper bag. He went into the control room and began speaking to Teo. After 15-20 minutes we (the musicians) began to get bored... In the studio I started playing... a kind of shuffle. Michael (Henderson) picked it up quick and then Billy (Cobham) jumped on the wagon and we hit a groove very quickly. And at that moment Miles ran into the studio with the recording light on. He then went on to play some of the most inspired trumpet I have ever heard. He must have played for about 20 minutes, which I had never seen him do before in the studio. It was a situation where he just walked in and everything was happening already, and he played so fine. It was so spontaneous, such a great moment. That whole record was."<sup>34</sup>

Most accounts of this moment stress McLaughlin's agency in the creation of the track, yet McLaughlin seems to refuse credit, deferring to Davis. Even if Davis were responsible for "directing, like a conductor" during the sessions, this would not necessarily negate the important role played by McLaughlin's guitar riff, which he must have played a large part in creating. Why would McLaughlin not want to take credit in this situation? One possibility is that McLaughlin genuflected towards Davis due to how association with a musician of Davis's stature could redound to McLaughlin's credit.<sup>35</sup>

More subtle dynamics could be at work, however, in how authorship was understood in this situation. The complexity created by collaboration,

<sup>34</sup> Bill Milkowski, "Unleashing the Avatar of Guitar," 40-42.

<sup>35</sup> In another take on a related matter, Philip Freeman implies that the phrase "Directions in Music by Miles Davis"—a phrase appearing on *Filles de Kilimanjaro* (1968), *In a Silent Way* (1969) and *Bitches Brew* (1970)—could be understood as a "pre-emptive strike, an attempt by Miles to seize credit publicly for records that others—Macero, some of his freely-improvising sidemen—might think were the results of *their* creativity as much as the trumpeter's" (Freeman, *Running the Voodoo Down*, 29).

improvisation, and authorial attribution is also endemic to jazz more generally, especially in small groups, in that musicians are responsible for creating their own parts, improvising their own solos, accompaniments, etc., all of which contribute to the success or failure of performances and recordings. Yet, leaders for recording sessions or performances receive greater authorial credit due, in part, to their ability to set the scene and create the framework for collaborative creativity to happen. This mode of attribution is one of the conventions of the genre (and in certain other genres of popular music as well); that is, the person who comes up with the initial idea for a song (or track), or who is the leader of the session, generally receives the majority of the songwriting credit.<sup>36</sup> But even when the bandleader/session leader is not credited as the songwriter (i.e., the “author” in the legal, copyright sense of the word), the responsibility for which ideas are kept, and for how they are modified rests with the leader.

Accounts of how Davis interacted creatively with musicians in the “Second Quintet” in the period immediately prior to his electric recordings support this description of collective creativity in the studio. Davis described the process to Art Taylor as “Herbie [Hancock], Wayne [Shorter], or Tony [Williams] will write something, then I’ll take and spread it out or space it, or add some more chords, or change a couple of phrases, or write a bass line to it, or change the tempo of it, and that’s the way we record.”<sup>37</sup> In terms of attribution, Ron Carter explained that the person who brought the song in would receive credit regardless of the contributions of the other musicians: “When we’d bring in tunes, we would all work on them. Herbie would still get credit for the tune, but it would be changed by all of us to make it do what we tried to do collectively better.... Whatever it would take; maybe take out these two bars, maybe it’s in the wrong key... whatever it is... like in a workshop.”<sup>38</sup>

“Like in a workshop”—this description finds echoes in accounts of the sessions Davis led in 1969–1970. Returning now to Davis’s interactions with McLaughlin, one of the only instances of studio chatter on *The Complete Jack*

<sup>36</sup> This can vary depending on a multitude of factors, including the power relations (based on economics and professional/artistic prestige among other things) between the participants. A famous example is the creative partnership between Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, in which Strayhorn did a greater share of the work than what was acknowledged at the time; for two critical views on the Ellington/Strayhorn partnership, see Walter van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Barg, *Queer Arrangements*.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1977), 13. Quoted in Waters, *The Studio Recordings*, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Todd Coolman, “The Miles Davis Quintet of the Mid-1960s: Synthesis of Improvisational and Compositional Elements,” Ph.D. diss. (New York University, 1997), 23; quoted in Waters, *The Studio Recordings*, 11.

*Johnson Sessions* occurs at the beginning of take 10 of “Yesternow” wherein Davis gives McLaughlin explicit instructions: “Alright John, play, play it up and then drop down. Bang bang bang bang.” Earlier scholarship on *Jack Johnson* has attributed significance to this comment due to its possible influence in the creation of McLaughlin’s guitar part, which dominates the texture of the track.

Other communications between Davis and McLaughlin offer more clues as to how they collaborated in the creation of McLaughlin’s guitar parts. On McLaughlin’s first session with Davis, in February 1969 for *In a Silent Way*, Davis told McLaughlin “to play like he didn’t know how.”<sup>39</sup> In an interview recorded in 2012 McLaughlin expands on Davis’s indirect technique for guiding musicians:

I remember Jack DeJohnette was on one session and he [Davis] came up and stopped everything... he said: “Pum—pumpum-pumpum, okay?”.... And so this was a kind of “request” that Miles would give us. And what that did was... put us in the state of mind that we would play something other than what we knew. We had to, by necessity, move out of the box, and do something we didn’t know we could do. And this was masterful, in my opinion... he would get people to play and get music that would make them happy, ‘cause he never wanted to impose his will.... He wanted them to be themselves... he wanted the new, spontaneous thing, but something that was not clichéd.... He wanted something that we didn’t know about, he wanted to bring the unknown in us out. But somehow we would conform to what he wanted, in the direction he wanted to go.<sup>40</sup>

This is a very precise and insightful refutation of the “genuflection” idea presented earlier and does an excellent job of approaching the uncanny kind of exchange that occurs between musicians when creative input from all participants is required. Davis guides the musicians here by indirection, suggestions, and non-verbal communication of different sorts (via his musical interaction, body language, etc.). As Greg Tate put it, a bit more poetically, “*Jack Johnson* is a bitch because of Miles’s brilliant use of space and swinging single notes, and for the funky rhythms and passing chords he provokes McLaughlin into. (Their dialog here goes beyond call-and-response into formulating a communications system as complex as the Yoruba people’s talking

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<sup>39</sup> Freeman, *Running the Voodoo Down*, 131.

<sup>40</sup> Larry Applebaum, “Interview with John McLaughlin, Conclusion” 2 June 2012 (published 5 April 2013). <https://larryappelbaum.wordpress.com/2013/04/12/interview-with-john-mclaughlin-conclusion/> (accessed 16 December 2023).

drums.)”<sup>41</sup> In other words, in a way that echoes McLaughlin’s statements, Tate senses that Davis guides the musicians not through explicit verbal instructions, but rather through “provoking” them via a kind of non-verbal musical communication.

#### BOXING AND IDENTITY

At the 23:30 mark of “Yesternow,” something extraordinary happens. First, we hear the end of a section discussed earlier, the one labeled “Willie Nelson insert 2, take 1” in *The Complete Jack Johnson* sessions (and in table 1). After about 20 seconds there is a rather abrupt transition (softened a bit by a slight crossfade) to a very different texture based on an unaccompanied harmon-muted trumpet solo that Davis recorded in November 1969 (part of this same recording that was used earlier at the 12:24 mark of the song). The solo is modified by echoplex and accompanied by a wind ensemble arranged (and composed!) and overdubbed onto Davis’s solo by Teo Macero, who uses modernist harmony based on extended triadic harmony with some dissonant chromaticism (reminiscent of Gil Evans’ orchestral arrangements written for Davis). Then, after about a minute, we hear a brief speech recorded by actor Brock Peters that forms the conclusion of the original release of *Jack Johnson*: “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’ voice reminds us that Davis created *Jack Johnson* as the soundtrack for a documentary on the African American boxer Jack Johnson—the first African American heavyweight champion, who reigned from 1908-1915. Johnson was a symbol of pride for the Black community. Davis clearly identified with aspects of Johnson’s legacy and image, a fact made plain by the Davis-penned liner notes: “Johnson portrayed freedom—it rang just as loud as the bell proclaiming him Champion. He was a fast-living man; he liked women—lots of them and most of them white. He had flashy cars because that was *his* thing.... His 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.”<sup>42</sup>

Davis’s love of fast cars, his highly publicized relationships with women, and his dedication to boxing made plain his identification with Johnson. His involvement in boxing went beyond an admiration for Johnson: he trained intensively at this time *as* a boxer, an activity documented by nearly all

<sup>41</sup> Greg Tate, “The Electric Miles (Parts 1 and 2),” in *Flyboy in the Buttermilk* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 77-78. This essay was first published in 1983.

<sup>42</sup> Miles Davis, liner notes for *Jack Johnson*.



contemporaneous journalistic accounts of Davis.<sup>43</sup> He often mentioned boxers such as Sugar Ray Robinson and Joe Louis as role models. Moreover, in addition to Jack Johnson, other tracks from the *Jack Johnson* sessions were named after famous boxers: Johnnie Bratton, Archie Moore, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Roberto Durán.<sup>44</sup> More pertinent to the discussion here is what impact Davis's identification with Jack Johnson and boxing may have had on the making of *Jack Johnson*.

Davis's involvement with boxing as a both a participant and an artist has implications for understanding the role of gender and sexuality in the *Jack Johnson* sessions. The macho associations with boxing had a corollary in the kind of competitive bravado that has been a feature of jazz playing almost from its inception; in the male-dominated, post-bebop musical world in which Davis came of age, masculine codes took a new form that had a strong impact on Davis's public persona. According to Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., "The young black men in the bebop movement found in its aesthetic and assorted politics a patriarchal, heroic performance space, one that became the new musical language of 'jazz manhood.'" Davis's actions and statements reinforce the sense in which he could use the "heroic performance space" of jazz to project the (in Ramsey's words) "traditional advantages of male power."<sup>45</sup> The heroism of this performance space was facilitated by the exclusion of women. Davis's public image promoted a sense of high fashion and luxurious style conjoined to a macho projection of pride, power and bravado. In a 1970 article, an interviewer of Davis observed, "Miles Davis doesn't step aside for or pander to anyone.... It is part of his heritage that he has been fighting against all his life. His house, his car, his

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<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Don DeMicheal, "And in This Corner, the Sidewalk Kid," *DownBeat* (Dec. 11, 1969), repr. *The Miles Davis Reader: Interviews and Features from DownBeat Magazine*, ed. Frank Alkyer (New York: Hal Leonard Books, 2007), 87-92; Ralph Gleason and Don DeMicheal, "I Could Put Together the Greatest Rock and Roll Band You Ever Heard," *Rolling Stone* (December 12, 1969), 22-26; "Miles Davis: The Prince of Darkness Also Brings Light," *Zygoté* (August 12, 1970), 25-40; Dan Morgenstern, "Miles in Motion," *DownBeat* (Sept. 3, 1970), repr. *Miles Davis Reader*, 92-96; Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Of course, "Wille Nelson," one of the most important sources for "Yesternow," does not refer to a boxer but rather to the famous country singer. Davis told Cheryl McCall in 1981 that "I love the way Willie sings; the way he phrases is great. He phrases sometimes like I do" (Cheryl McCall, "Miles Davis," *Musician, Player and Listener*, March 1982, p. 42; see also Tingen, *Miles Beyond*, 102).

<sup>45</sup> Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 121, 124. For a concept of "jazz masculinity" as a performative practice not necessarily tied to gender, see Nichole Rustin-Paschal, *The Kind of Man I Am: Jazzmasculinity and the World of Charles Mingus, Jr.* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017).

women, his clothes, all his possessions state, 'I am not as good as you are, I am better.' It is almost as if Miles would be *emasculated* if he accepted the past."<sup>46</sup> Davis rarely collaborated professionally with women, even if he did credit women with influencing many of his creative decisions.<sup>47</sup>

Few would contest, therefore, that the world of the *Jack Johnson* sessions was highly homosocial. Davis's identification with Jack Johnson, however, correlates not only with ideas about gender and sexuality, but also provides a frame for understanding the complex racial dynamics of the recording sessions for *Jack Johnson*. Davis's critical view of racial politics dates back at least as far as the 1950s. From that point onwards, he rarely hesitated to critique the effects of institutionalized racism in the music business, in the social relations of jazz, in politics, or in racial representations found in mass culture. In addition to Davis's personal understanding of power and race, several factors, occurring across varying time scales, could have played a role in racial relations during the *Jack Johnson* sessions. Taking a long-range, historical view, few would dispute that the canon of jazz is dominated by African American musicians. After the advent of bebop in the late 1940s, the demise of swing music, and the separation of jazz from commercial popular music, this identification of jazz as an African American art form grew stronger.<sup>48</sup> Davis's outspoken criticism of racism, and his sometimes essentialist equations between genre and race in his interviews, did not equate to professional aversion: Davis was one of the Black bandleaders who regularly employed and collaborated with white musicians even though he was often criticized for doing so, dating back to the "Birth of the Cool" sessions in the late 1940s.

This background provides another framework for understanding McLaughlin and Davis's relationship, and another possible reason for why McLaughlin

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<sup>46</sup> "Miles Davis: The Prince of Darkness," 34.

<sup>47</sup> Hazel Carby's chapter on Miles Davis and Samuel Delany uses Davis's autobiography as the primary material for her psychoanalytical critique of Davis's relationship to masculinity and homosociality (*Race Men*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 135-65. Farah Griffin and Salim Washington comment on the apparent contradictions between Davis's projection of vulnerability in his playing, and his misogyny and abusive relationships with women in *Clawing at the Limits of Cool* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 9. In a discussion of how Davis's performance persona disrupts mind-body dualisms, Kelsey Klotz argues that Davis "retained dualistic gender roles that privileged creative expression as masculine" ("Your Sound Is Like Your Sweat': Miles Davis's Disembodied Sound Discourse," *American Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 4 [2019]: 47).

<sup>48</sup> Scott DeVeaux, in his pioneering work on jazz historiography, recognizes African American identity as one of the factors that holds the concept of jazz together in historical accounts beginning in the 1970s ("Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography," *Black American Literature Forum*, Vol. 25, No. 3 [Autumn]: 525-60).

refused claims of authorship. Being a white musician in such a situation could be tricky: at the risk of stating the obvious, within European and North American society at large, white identity was (and is) associated with power, whereas within the jazz world, the situation was (and is) frequently inverted. The most public response to this inverted power dynamic came from some white critics beginning in the early 1960s, who created the term “Crow Jim” to complain that white musicians were being unfairly treated by Black musicians and critics. Similar to other proposals advocating a “color-blind” approach for dealing with “reverse racism,” these critics ignored the role of systemic and institutional racism that negated the equivalence between Jim Crow and “Crow Jim.”<sup>49</sup> In this climate, white musicians could easily seem insensitive and/or egocentric at best, or racist at worst, if they were perceived to be taking credit for the creative genesis of a track.<sup>50</sup> All evidence, however, suggests that this was not the case with McLaughlin, whose comments differed little from what African American musicians such as Jack DeJohnette or Sonny Sharrock said at the time. Moreover, less well-known sidemen than McLaughlin tend to defer to famous bandleaders, regardless of race. Neither McLaughlin nor Davis ever mentioned race as a factor in their interactions and professional relationship.

#### GENRE, IDENTITY, AND MUSICAL VALUE

*But ...what isn't fusion? What isn't fusion?! - John McLaughlin*<sup>51</sup>

Another route for approaching racial identification in the creation of *Jack Johnson* analyzes the role of genre in the discourse used by musicians who participated in the session and in the reception of the work. Ideas about genre influence 1) how ideas about audiences and musical values affected musical decisions in the making of *Jack Johnson*—in other words, how the musical world outside the studio impacted the musical world inside the studio; 2) the racial identifications that could be projected onto the music; and 3) how the activities of these sessions were described. Let us begin with point #1: first consider that jazz is a type of music in which spontaneity and instrumental proficiency are highly valued.

<sup>49</sup> For a latter-day defense of applying the concept of “color-blindness” in jazz criticism, see Gene Lees, *Cats of Any Color: Jazz, Black and White* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>50</sup> For a study that analyzes the impact of racial relations in the society at large on the interactions in the recording studio, see Louise Meintjes, *Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> Larry Applebaum, “Interview with John McLaughlin, Conclusion,” 2 June 2012 (published 5 April 2013). <https://larryappelbaum.wordpress.com/2013/04/12/interview-with-john-mclaughlin-conclusion/> (accessed 16 December 2023).

These values in turn affect the types of narratives that were created about the recording of *Jack Johnson* (point #3). Recall the story about how the track on side one, “Right Off,” was based on a riff by guitarist John McLaughlin that he began to play during a lull in the recording with other musicians then spontaneously joining him. This was take 10, however, suggesting that there were nine previous takes. What happened in those earlier takes, which were not included in the reissue? We can’t know based on the evidence in the not-really-complete *Jack Johnson Sessions*, but the fact that this was take 10 does throw the previous anecdote, with its emphasis on spontaneity, into doubt.<sup>52</sup> Jeremy Allen Smith, who had access to the unedited tapes for *Jack Johnson*, confirms this hunch: “[take 10] was a culmination of no fewer than twenty-two starts and stops occurring over nearly thirty minutes of studio time, including extensive rhythmic and harmonic instructions from Davis.”<sup>53</sup>

The spontaneous combustion that initiated “Right Off” as described in McLaughlin’s anecdote would appeal to participants in the jazz world (musicians, audiences, critics, etc.) more than an alternate description that emphasized the idea of a groove established over the song’s ten takes that were filled with modifications from one take to another. It is possible that both versions of the genesis of the track could co-exist and not rule out one another. In other words, the recording of multiple takes does not by itself rule out the possibility of spontaneous interaction and musical improvisation. Nevertheless, for those who would most likely write and read about ongoing activities in the jazz world of the early 1970s, the process of recording ten takes, and cutting and splicing sections from different takes (and even different songs) would have likely been identified with the “studio trickery” of jazz’s arch nemesis at the time, rock. Due to public beliefs about the musicians and audience associated with the different types of music, rock music typically evoked (and evokes) ideas of whiteness while jazz evokes ideas of Blackness, thus making the argument opposing spontaneity to studio contrivance also an argument about white influence on the music.<sup>54</sup> Additional differences in cultural/musical value could

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<sup>52</sup> See Smith, “Sound, Mediation, and Meaning,” 101-12, for an analysis of the unedited tapes, which included several instances of verbal instructions from Davis to the other musicians.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, “Sound, Mediation, and Meaning,” 111. Paul Tingen also questions previous accounts of the spontaneous genesis of “Right Off” (“The Jack Johnson Sessions.” <http://www.miles-beyond.com/jackjohnson.htm> [accessed 20 February 2024]).

<sup>54</sup> A point also made by Smith, 113-26. For more on how genre connotations participated in the associations of whiteness with rock, see David Brackett, “Improvisation and Value in Rock, 1966,” *Journal for the Society of American Music*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2020): 197-232. And, for how musical genres are strongly linked with demographic associations, see Brackett, “Questions of Genre in Black Popular Music,” *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 25, Nos. 1/2 (Spring/Fall):

be found in different attitudes between the two musics towards economic and symbolic success (i.e., valorization by critics and other artists). On the one hand, economic success/value was accepted in many rock contexts (e.g., artists such as the Beatles and Bob Dylan were successful in both economic and symbolic terms), while it tended to be viewed with suspicion (i.e., “selling out”) in most jazz contexts. On the other hand, symbolic value played a significant role in both rock and jazz.<sup>55</sup>

The associations of jazz with spontaneity and the idea of the recording studio in jazz as a conduit for the representation of an unmediated live performance help explain why certain narratives about the *Jack Johnson* sessions took hold. The need to emphasize spontaneity in the recording of *Jack Johnson* can seem somewhat bizarre in light of how the album would have been unthinkable without the influence of rock music and other contemporary forms of popular music. Recent developments in rock music shaped not only the music Davis was making, but also ideas about the album as an art form, which may have also played a role in the conception of Davis’s albums beginning with *In a Silent Way*.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast with the role played by rock (with its associated white audience) in Davis’s changing conceptions about the album-as-art form, Davis’s autobiography contends that he wanted to direct his music towards “young Black people,” an audience most associated at the time with soul music.<sup>57</sup> Although a

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73-92; Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre in Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Georgina Born, “Music and the Materialization of Identities,” *Journal of Material Culture* (2011): 376-88; Born, “Music and the Representation/Articulation of Sociocultural Identities,” and “Techniques of the Musical Imaginary,” in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 31-47.

<sup>55</sup> For more on the opposition of economic value to symbolic value, see Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production: or The Economic World Reversed,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29-73; and Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). For the application of Bourdieu’s concepts to the study of jazz, see David Brackett, “Jazz at the Crossroads of Art and Popular Music Discourses in the 1960s,” in the *Routledge Companion to New Jazz Studies*, ed. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rustin and Tony Whyton (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 347-56.

<sup>56</sup> This point is stressed by Zagorski-Thomas, “Directions in Music,” 857-58. On the other hand, Davis had arguably been producing “concept albums” since the late 1950s with albums like *Sketches of Spain*, most obviously, but also with *Kind of Blue*, whose consistency of mood and tone could fit some of the ambiguous criteria for concept albums.

<sup>57</sup> Davis, *Miles*, 324, 328.



bridge between rock and soul music of the time did exist in the form of an artist like Sly Stone, who had caught Davis's attention, listening to *Jack Johnson* now one may wonder how he ever thought this would reach a young audience that liked contemporary soul music?

Despite such retrospective statements about courting younger, Black audiences, it is clear that Davis and Columbia records realized the advantages of reaching out to rock audiences, with Davis and Columbia directing their promotional energies accordingly (and also overtly accepting the importance of economic success). Jazz and rock were explicitly opposed, not only in musical terms and in values such as the importance of spontaneity, and not only in terms of public beliefs about how race and genre were intertwined, but in the actual audiences associated with these musics.<sup>58</sup> The rock audience, due to its vastness in relation to jazz (and Black popular musics) was highly coveted. Davis hoped that the newfound openness of this audience to improvisation and musical experimentation (via late 1960s' blues rock and psychedelic rock) would make it amenable to his jazz-funk projects. Davis's hope was fueled by his perception of rock musicians as musically incompetent. After he had some exposure to rock, Davis recounted that "I started realizing that most rock musicians didn't know anything about music.... I figured if they could do it—reach all those people and sell all those records without really knowing what they were doing—then I could do it."<sup>59</sup>

Miles Davis and Clive Davis, the president of Columbia Records, both shared this interest in reaching rock audiences. Clive Davis lobbied rock promoter Bill Graham to present Miles Davis at his shows, and he succeeded in interesting Graham: Miles Davis's concerts at Graham's Fillmore East and Fillmore West auditoriums in 1970 resulted in two live albums, *Miles Davis at Fillmore* (rec. June 1970; rel. October 1970) and *Black Beauty: Miles Davis at Fillmore West* (rec. April 1970; rel. 1973).<sup>60</sup> Davis's inroads with the rock audience and his success at fusing different genres can be gleaned from a review of a performance in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1970:

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<sup>58</sup> For a history of the opposition of jazz and rock in journalistic criticism up to 1967, see Matt Brennan, *When Genres Collide: Down Beat, Rolling Stone, and the Struggle Between Jazz and Rock* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

<sup>59</sup> Davis, *Miles*, 302.

<sup>60</sup> See Clive Davis's letters to Bill Graham, dated November 17, 1969 and April 20, 1970 (Macero Collection, NYPL: Box 13, Folder 18); and, for a discussion of how *Jack Johnson* fit into larger strategies about marketing Miles Davis at Columbia, see Smith, "Sound, Mediation, and Meaning," 224-66; and Jeremy A. Smith, "'Sell It Black': Race and Marketing in Miles Davis's Early Fusion Jazz," *Jazz Perspectives*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2010): 7-33.



The Davis Quintet strikes very close to where many white listeners are at, and I think that has to do mostly with guys in his group.... They're out front, mixing together everything new—spontaneous jazz, rock rhythms and a whole spectrum of sounds.... I bet if Miles were to cut a “live” college performance album, he'd find himself in some pretty unlikely company, like the Stones; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; Beatles; etc.<sup>61</sup>

In part due to his newfound popularity with rock audiences, questions of the audience and attributions of Davis's motivations for pursuing fusion dogged the nebulous genre, with participants in the jazz world virulently opposing the music because of its “selling out” and “commercialism,” and its association with rock via its use of electric guitars, electric basses, electronic effects, and manipulations of tracks in the studio.<sup>62</sup>

Davis's thoughts about race and genre went beyond concerns about marketing and audiences. He also considered how the historical figure of Jack Johnson and Johnson's physical gestures might tie into the specific rhythms and the racial connotations of the music he was making:

[I had in mind] that shuffling movement boxers use. They're almost like dance steps, or like the sound of a train. In fact, it did remind me of being on a train doing eighty miles an hour, how you always hear the same rhythm.... The question in my mind after I got to this was, well, is the music black enough, does it have a black rhythm, can you make the rhythm of the train a black thing, would Jack Johnson dance to that? Because Jack Johnson liked to party, liked to have a good time and dance.<sup>63</sup>

One of Davis's first moves to make the music “Black enough” was to encourage McLaughlin to emulate Jimi Hendrix's blend of blues, rock and funk. Davis, always outspoken about interconnections between race and music, and whose statements about these connections could verge on essentialism, made this comment about McLaughlin: “He's not only white, he's English, and you can't get any whiter than that. And yet he has the funk. He plays like he's black and he's so white.”<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Bert Stratton, “Caught in the Act: Miles Ahead in Rock Country, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.,” *DownBeat* (May 14, 1970); reprinted in *The Miles Davis Reader*, 253.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of these issues, see Pond, *Head Hunters*, 12-17. For more on the negative reception of Davis's early fusion music and subsequent controversies about fusion among jazz historians, see Gary Tomlinson, “Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies,” *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall 1991): 229-64 (esp. 245-63).

<sup>63</sup> Davis, *Miles*, 315. Davis's statements about Johnson are very much in line with the portrayal of the boxer in *Jack Johnson*, the documentary for which Davis wrote the music.

<sup>64</sup> Chris Murphy, *Miles To Go: Remembering Miles Davis* (New York: Thunder's Mouth, 2002), 11. Quoted in Smith, “Sound, Mediation, and Meaning,” 200. Kevin Fellez discusses

For Davis, funkiness clearly carried particularly strong associations with Black identity. Davis himself makes this plain in interviews he gave at the time, in which he explicitly groups genres of music and ways of playing music with racial identities. The essentialism of many of these statements is contradicted by other statements made by Davis that made it apparent that he believed that musical style could be learned regardless of the racialized associations of the music or the racial identity of the musician (e.g., McLaughlin “plays like he’s black and he’s so white”).

An interview published in *Rolling Stone* in December 1969 allowed Davis to expand upon his views on race and genre:

White groups don’t reach me. I can tell a white group just from the sound, don’t have to see them.... I listen to James Brown and those little bands on the South Side. They swing their asses off.... Jimi Hendrix can take two white guys and make them play their asses off. You got to have a mixed group—one has one thing, and the other has another. For me, a group has to be mixed. To get swing, you have to have some black guys in there.<sup>65</sup>

The artists mentioned in these statements served as racial-stylistic indexes for Davis: Hendrix, an African American associated with rock music who increasingly incorporated funk elements in his music; Brown, the musician most identified at that time with funky soul music; and McLaughlin, the white guitarist who was to play such an important role in Davis’s music in the 1969–1970 period. Like many if not most musicians, Davis tended to state that he disliked genre terms, especially “jazz”;<sup>66</sup> nevertheless, the mention of specific artists, the use of genre markers such as “rock,” and the reference to musical qualities such as “swing,” create a field of associations and a chain-like string of connections between race and genre.

The identification of the nascent funk genre with African Americans had ramifications for the *Jack Johnson* sessions. The bassist, Michael Henderson, was chosen not only for his ability to “hold down circular grooves” as stated earlier, but also because he was already associated with famous soul musicians, having

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McLaughlin’s attempts to create musical and cultural fusions in the bands that he led following his tenure with Davis in *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 123–47.

<sup>65</sup> Gleason and Don DeMicheal, “I Could Put Together the Greatest Rock and Roll Band You Ever Heard.” This statement typifies how Davis would often state his ideas in an extreme form that was contradicted by other statements he made; for example, Davis’s autobiography talks about the mutual respect Davis shared with white musicians of the time like Jerry Garcia (of the rock group the Grateful Dead) and singer-songwriter Laura Nyro (Davis, *Miles*, 302).

<sup>66</sup> Among many examples, see “The Prince of Darkness,” 35.

played with Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin; this made him attractive to Davis even though he had no jazz experience. The switch of bassists from Dave Holland, who had a more conventional jazz background, to Henderson was thus emblematic of the switch toward the Black-identified funky soul genre. Funk is also present in the models for the bass lines that Davis created for “Right Off”—based on Sly and the Family Stone’s “Sing a Simple Song”—and “Yesternow”—based on James Brown’s “Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud.” As the title of the latter indicates, few songs could be more iconic for African American identity than “Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud.”

#### ENVOI

Reissues like *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* attempt to create a sense of audio cinema verité: the idea that the listener/consumer can really “be there” during the act of creation in the studio. Such reissues appeal to a kind of collector/connoisseur and carefully sculpt a version of history that reinforces established narratives even as they may create conflicts with, or new interpretations of, others. I have argued that two modalities of collaboration suggest that a new model of authorship is required to understand the creative process in such recordings. Most journalists and historians, however, will continue to write about *Jack Johnson* as if creative responsibility for the work lies solely with Davis. Such attributions of authorship demonstrate that whatever fluidity may have existed among the roles of the participants—and however many factors may have impinged upon their actions or the interpretation of their interactions—will not stop the quest by musicians, critics, and listeners for an auteur, nor will it impede the impulses of canonization. In addition to the interpersonal dynamics of the studio situation, we have seen how the power relations of the participants and questions of identity can affect beliefs about authorship. Furthermore, understandings of how the musical genres of jazz and rock were bound up in systems of racial identification and symbolic/economic value affected the creative decisions of the participants, from the macro-level of the studio set-up, to which musicians Davis invited to participate, to how the music was marketed, to the micro-level of moment-to-moment musical decisions.

By putting the Musicology of Record Production and jazz-fusion scholarship in dialogue with each other, this article attempts two critical moves: first, it expands how jazz fusion is studied by analyzing the interactions of humans both with each other and with the setting and studio technology. *Jack Johnson* is studied as a process rather than a thing in order to present a more complex view of authorship. Second, by studying the reception of *Jack Johnson*, the post-hoc

statements of participants in the session, and the position of the recording within the field of genre at the time, this study uses historical detail to address issues of power and identity that have often been neglected within the Musicology of Record Production. The details of the recording process expand our notion of how the creative process works in the early recordings of Davis, and the focus on early fusion continues an expansion of the genres considered by the Musicology of Record Production that is already underway.

Questions yet remain: the artistic/symbolic value associated with participants in studio collaborations affects attributions of authorship, interactions in the studio, the objects of scholarly attention, and much more. Such attributions and interactions may become clearer over time, but cannot account for every interaction and act of influence that occur in the liminal zones created by musicians collectively collaborating and communicating non-verbally in real time. If we respect that it may never be possible to verbalize the non-verbal, we can at least approach the recorded event and the spontaneous collaboration with a sense of awe, and an appreciation of the human complexities (with all their contradictions and flaws) that surround and contribute to the event. And we can listen attentively to the minute tremors that transmit musical ideas between musicians and that transform the musical material. At the same time, historical and cultural forces create the possibility that an event like a recording session can happen; and these forces ensure that the ineffability of non-verbal musical interaction will be translated into a potentially infinite series of verbal interpretations.

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