

Performing Authenticity “In Your Own Sweet Way”

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In a 2001 interview for a PBS documentary titled *Rediscovering Dave Brubeck*, jazz critic Ira Gitler volunteered that the songs “In Your Own Sweet Way” and “The Duke,” both Dave Brubeck originals, became jazz standards “when Miles Davis played them, that gave them the official stamp of approval.”¹ When interviewer Hedrick Smith asked Gitler why Davis could give the songs a stamp of approval that Brubeck himself could not, Gitler responded, “Well because Miles Davis, in giving his stamp of approval to these Brubeck compositions by recording them, here was a black jazz man who was respected in both the black and white circles, and when he did it black people had to say, you know, ‘that’s cool.’”² Put simply, Davis’s versions were “cool”—were somehow *authentic*—while Brubeck’s versions were not, despite being considered by most critics and audiences to be part of the cool jazz genre. In distinguishing between these uses of the term “cool,” Gitler rooted Davis’s authenticity and jazz authority in his blackness, implying that Brubeck’s whiteness kept him from achieving the same status.

However, it was not enough for Davis to be accepted as an authority figure by black musicians, critics, and audiences; as Gitler notes, Davis’s authority also came from “white circles.” For Gitler, Davis only “counted” when white critics and audiences saw and heard him; however, his authority in jazz could only be determined by black people who said, “that’s cool.” But despite being recognized by black and white audiences, Gitler attributed Davis’s authenticity to his blackness, and the blackness of those confirming his authority, rather than his musical, stylistic, or improvisational prowess, which ultimately diminished the extent to which Davis was recognized by whites beyond his race.

Gitler is not alone in considering Davis to be the more “authentic” performer; historian Ted Gioia also explains that, “Miles Davis probably deserves as much

¹ Ira Gitler, interviewed by Hedrick Smith, “Rediscovering Dave Brubeck: The Music: The Critics: Ira Gitler,” Public Broadcasting Service 2001, accessed September 19, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/brubeck/theMusic/criticIraGitler.htm>.

Miles Davis performed a Gil Evans arranged version of “The Duke” on *Miles Ahead* (1957).

² Ira Gitler, interviewed by Hedrick Smith, “Rediscovering Dave Brubeck: The Music: The Critics: Ira Gitler,” Public Broadcasting Service 2001.

credit as Brubeck for establishing ‘In Your Own Sweet Way’ as a jazz standard.”³ “In Your Own Sweet Way,” a piece initially composed by Brubeck but recorded by both musicians, is a prime example of the relationship between authorship, authority, and authenticity within jazz, as perceived by Davis, Brubeck, and the critics who wrote about them. In discussing the distinctions between Brubeck and Davis’s versions of the same musical work, I address crucial questions of authenticity central to jazz scholars, critics, and listeners: Which version is “real” jazz? Who can play authentic jazz, and who makes these determinations? What does it mean to be more authentic within the context of a jazz performance? In comparing each musician’s approach to this piece and against critics’ interpretations, I ask how visual evidence of difference informed sonic evidence of difference. I do not simply argue that critics, audiences, and other musicians recognized Davis to be the more authentic jazz musician; rather, I argue that for critics, Davis’s authority relied heavily upon a simplistic interpretation of his racial identity—his blackness.

Though Gioia reports that Brubeck wrote “In Your Own Sweet Way” in the early 1950s, Brubeck did not record the piece until 1956, the same year Davis recorded both of his versions.⁴ Figure 1 lists the albums featuring “In Your Own Sweet Way” recorded and released in the 1950s by Davis and Brubeck.⁵ In order to understand Brubeck and Davis’s assertions of authority—assertions I argue were made to attain authenticity—I focus on two important differences between the Brubeck and Davis recordings: 1) the presence of Brubeck and Davis’s voice on their respective recordings; and 2) the discrepancy of one note: Brubeck’s written F-natural and Davis’s performed F-flat in ms. 8. As I argue, these sonic differences

³ Ted Gioia, *The Jazz Standards: A Guide to the Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 197.

⁴ Brubeck’s first program or setlist with “In Your Own Sweet Way” is from a “Program of Modern Jazz,” New Haven, CT, February 23, 1954. Dave Brubeck, “Program of Modern Jazz,” February 23, 1954, MS1F Dave Brubeck Collection, Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA.

⁵ Dave Brubeck Quartet, “In Your Own Sweet Way,” *Live from Basin Street*, with Paul Desmond, Norman Bates, and Joe Dodge. (c) 1956 by Jazz Band; Dave Brubeck, “In Your Own Sweet Way,” *Brubeck Plays Brubeck*. (c) 1956 by Columbia Records; Dave Brubeck Quartet, “In Your Own Sweet Way,” *Dave Brubeck and Jay and Kai at Newport*, with Paul Desmond, Norman Bates, and Joe Dodge. (c) 1956 by Columbia Records; Miles Davis Quintet, “In Your Own Sweet Way,” *Collectors’ Items*, with Sonny Rollins, Tommy Flanagan, Paul Chambers, and Art Taylor. (c) 1956 by Prestige Records; Miles Davis Quintet, “In Your Own Sweet Way,” *Workin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet*, with John Coltrane, Red Garland, Paul Chambers, and Philly Joe Jones. (c) 1959 by Prestige Records. Brubeck’s recording of “In Your Own Sweet Way” featured on the *Live from Basin Street* album was actually a radio broadcast from the Blue Note in Chicago, re-released with a broadcast from Basin Street.

further demonstrate the racial connotations of authenticity, composition, and improvisation within mid-twentieth century jazz commentary.

	Album	Month/Year recorded (Year released)	Studio/Live
Dave Brubeck	<i>Live From Basin Street</i>	February 1956	Live
	<i>Brubeck Plays Brubeck</i>	April 1956	Studio
	<i>Dave Brubeck and Jay & Kai at Newport</i>	July 1956	Live
Miles Davis	<i>Collectors' Items</i>	March 1956	Studio
	<i>Workin'</i>	May 1956 (1959)	Studio

Figure 1. Albums by Dave Brubeck and Miles Davis featuring “In Your Own Sweet Way.”

VOICING AUTHORITY

One of the ways in which Brubeck and Davis’s recordings of “In Your Own Sweet Way” differ is in their inclusions of extra-musical sounds—that is, each musician’s voice and words. Davis’s recordings in particular enact authenticity through his distinctive whisper, a whisper so synonymous with Davis that when other musicians quote Davis in interviews, they alter their voices to replicate it. Though both of Davis’s recordings of “In Your Own Sweet Way” are studio recordings, Davis uses his distinctive voice to insert himself into the *Collectors’ Items* recording, recorded in March 1956. At the end of “In Your Own Sweet Way,” Davis, in his characteristic hoarse whisper, murmurs, “Oh yeah, Rudy,” to Rudy van Gelder, the recording engineer for Davis’s album on Prestige Records. In his analysis of extra-musical sounds on Davis’s “Old Folks” (from the 1961 album *Someday My Prince Will Come*), David Ake discusses speech on jazz albums with regard to jazz’s ideal “real-time performance.”⁶ Ake writes that jazz recordings “tend to cloak their constructedness,” often by including extra-musical sounds such as speech, laughter, and horn flourishes outside the actual song, as if the listener has just caught the musician warming up. Likewise, ethnomusicologist Gabriel Solis notes that jazz recordings often engineer live sound, “to present the impression of ‘being

⁶ David Ake, “Musicology Beyond the Score and the Performance: Making Sense of the Creak on Miles Davis’s ‘Old Folks,’” in *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time Since Bebop* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 45.

there.”⁷ Ake explains, “Davis’s voice serves to reinforce understandings of the trumpeter as not merely the recording session’s titular leader but, more important, its artistic visionary, as well,” in addition to providing an image of a black male authority figure.⁸

Davis’s insertion of his own voice into “In Your Own Sweet Way” serves the same purpose Ake understands in Davis’s other Prestige recordings featuring extra-musical sounds. However, in this excerpt Davis is not asserting his dominance by providing instructions to a producer, sound engineer, or musician as he is in the examples Ake provides. Instead, Davis bestows his stylistic blessing on the track, or as Ake puts it, demonstrates his role as “artistic visionary.” Surprise mixes with tenderness as Davis speaks, further suggesting that the listener has just been made privy to an off-the-cuff recording, perfect despite and because of its spontaneity. In his statement, “Oh yeah, Rudy,” Davis affirms that the track is a worthy display of his aesthetic vision.

Brubeck, on the other hand, does not typically speak on studio recordings, and his halting, educational speeches and corny jokes on his live recordings have the opposite effect: though there is no doubt that Brubeck’s Blue Note and Newport recordings of “In Your Own Sweet Way” were both live recordings, Brubeck’s on-stage statements make them seem like each will be the same, replicating the privilege of repeated listenings that are more prevalent in European classical music. For instance, on the Newport recording of “In Your Own Sweet Way,” Brubeck speaks with the dry and halting monotone he used so often on stage, explaining to the crowd that, “We’d like to do [pause] all new things...tonight...mostly. [pause] Not just because we’re, recording, but I feel this is an opportunity to...try, some of the new things I’ve *written*. We’ll start out, with a...*new* ballad, called ‘In Your Own Sweet Way.’” Even the way Brubeck emphatically states the title, “In-your-own. Sweet. Way,” with the first three words running together and the last two exaggeratedly separated, demonstrates a certain discomfort, perhaps with the size of the Newport crowd, or the echoing of his voice. Notably, Brubeck actually preferred live audiences because they allowed for audience participation, and he believed that his live recordings were superior to his studio recordings; however, in his early career, his ability to engage with the audience lay in his music—as he put it, “the trading back and forth of human emotion”—and not in speaking to the audience.⁹ Davis’s recordings, in contrast, seem to offer an artistic stamp of

⁷ Gabriel Solis, “A Unique Chunk of Jazz Reality’: Authorship, Musical Work Concepts, and Thelonious Monk’s Live Recordings from the Five Spot, 1958,” *Ethnomusicology* 48, no. 3 (Fall 2004), 341.

⁸ Ake, 46.

⁹ Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, “A Quiet Beat in California,” *High Fidelity*, April 1955, 98.

approval through the promise of a new listening experience each time the tune is performed, highlighting the expectation in jazz that each musical experience should be spontaneous.

NOTATING AUTHORITY

Despite any number of stylistic and extra-musical differences between Brubeck and Davis's versions of "In Your Own Sweet Way," many critics and listeners can point to a crucial and specific musical difference—a single note, in fact—that sets each Davis version apart from each Brubeck version: Davis's F-flat in ms. 8, known to jazz musicians as the b5. "In Your Own Sweet Way" is in 32 bar AABA form, and the F-natural/F-flat occurs in the final measure of the three A sections. Though Brubeck's performances feature an F-natural (Ex. 1), most jazz musicians' performances of "In Your Own Sweet Way" feature the F-flat first performed by Davis (Ex. 2). In addition to demonstrating each musician's position within the field of jazz, this note also demonstrates each performer's unique understanding of the intersection between compositional versus improvisational authority and jazz authenticity.

Figure 2. Dave Brubeck, "In Your Own Sweet Way," 1956. Transcription by author.

For more on Brubeck's interest in live performances over studio recordings, see: Dave Brubeck, "The Jazz Scene Today," *Down Beat*, June 3, 1953; Dave Brubeck, "The New Jazz Audience," *Playboy*, August 1955; Ralph J. Gleason, "Brubeck: For the First time, Read How Dave Thinks, Works, Believes, and How He Reacts to Critics," *Down Beat*, July 25, 1957; Gene Lees, "About This Man Brubeck...Part 2," *Down Beat*, July 20, 1961; John Wm. Riley, "Brubeck's Key to Jazz: Improvise, Let Audience In," *The Boston Globe*, January 21, 1954. In his early career, Brubeck apparently could not speak in front of groups. He taught an extension course on the history of jazz through the University of California, Berkeley: "Iola [Brubeck's wife] did the lecturing to the class, because she was a speech major in college, and acting. So it wasn't a problem for her. At this point I couldn't open my mouth in front of people, but I played." Dave Brubeck, August 6-7, 2007, Jazz Oral History Program Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

The image shows a musical transcription of Miles Davis's "In Your Own Sweet Way" in 4/4 time. The key signature has three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). The transcription consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note Eb, a quarter note Bb, and a quarter note Gb. Above the staff are the chords Eb6, Am7, D7, Gm7, C7, Cm7, F7, Bb7, and Ebmaj7. A triplet bracket is placed under the first three notes. The second staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note Ab, a quarter note Bb, and a quarter note Gb. Above the staff are the chords Abm7, Db7, Gbmaj7, Bmaj7, F7alt., B7, and Bb7(b5). A triplet bracket is placed under the first three notes of the second staff.

Figure 3. Miles Davis, "In Your Own Sweet Way," 1956. Transcription by author.

While Davis's artistic authenticity stemmed in part from the authority of his voice, Brubeck's statements about "In Your Own Sweet Way" to the Newport crowd, cited above, emphasized his perceived compositional authority. Brubeck highlighted the newness of his Quartet's set at three different points, explaining that he—the leader and (at this point) sole composer of the group—wanted to try new things, possibly suggesting to the audience some of the thrill of authentic improvisation promised by Davis's studio recordings. However, Brubeck explained further that he had *written* the new pieces. Of Brubeck's short speech, this is the only word that he pronounced with any emphasis. According to John Gennari, the Newport audience recognized jazz as having cultural capital, "a homegrown cosmopolitan form breathing new life over faded Euro-gentility," which was likely the kind of audience that would have appreciated the compositional authority Brubeck asserted in his statement, perhaps over his ability as an improvising performer.¹⁰ Furthermore, Brubeck's emphasis on newness and his compositions matched what Gennari describes as Newport Jazz Festival organizer George Wein's "respectability-by-osmosis" uplift strategy.¹¹ This strategy was based on Wein's belief that "the worst enemies of jazz are often the musicians themselves." It was also closely linked to the canonization of jazz through both the event's publicity and Wein's dedication to treating jazz as a "serious" music worthy of study by respected scholars, including Marshall Stearns. As the self-professed sole composer of "In Your Own Sweet Way," Brubeck demonstrated the same commitment to unifying jazz with narratives of respectability through compositional authority

¹⁰ John Gennari, "Hipsters, Bluebooks, Rebels, and Hooligans: The Cultural Politics of the Newport Jazz Festival, 1945-1960," *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*, ed. Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 129.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

(which no doubt came at least in part from his training in the European classical music tradition with Darius Milhaud).

In an interview with pianist Marian McPartland on her radio program *Piano Jazz* decades after these recordings, in 1984, Brubeck explained that he once asked Davis why Davis had performed the F-flat, when Brubeck had written an F-natural. Davis's response, according to Brubeck, was, "Man, why'd you *write* it that way?"¹² In quoting Davis, Brubeck takes on Davis's gruff whisper, stating Davis's words in a defensive and argumentative tone. Brubeck and McPartland continue:

Brubeck: "I had *written* it, he said, with the E-natural [F-flat]. In other words: [quickly performs Davis version]."

McPartland: "Yeah, I always thought that was a Miles Davis-ism. I always thought he just *did* that."

Brubeck: "Well, *he* said *I* did it."

McPartland: "Well, I think he was...wrong." (both laugh) "I just happen to think he's wrong."

From this conversation, it seems Brubeck's assumption was that Davis meant that *Brubeck* had initially written the F-flat; in other words, that Brubeck had written two versions of the piece, one with an F-natural and one with an F-flat. Even McPartland herself questioned Brubeck's understanding of the encounter by suggesting that Davis was wrong in thinking Brubeck had written the F-flat, thereby implying that Brubeck was wrong in his interpretation of Davis's claim. Still, Brubeck maintained his compositional authority over both the F-natural and the F-flat, stating at the beginning of the conversation, "You know, there's a lot of different ways to do this tune ["In Your Own Sweet Way"] than the way I wrote it, because I wrote it two different ways." However, it seems more possible that Davis's response was simply meant to challenge Brubeck's questioning of the F-flat, rather than suggest that Brubeck had written two versions of the piece. While Brubeck's recollection clearly presents Davis's statement as, "Man, why'd you *write* it that way?" emphasizing "write" as if to suggest that Davis was simply playing what Brubeck had written, Davis could have said, "Man, why'd you write it *that* way?" emphasizing "that" in order to highlight another way of performing the piece. In other words, Davis may have interpreted Brubeck's question as an assertion of compositional authority, to which Davis responded in kind. Put simply, in

¹² Dave Brubeck, Interview with Marian McPartland, *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz: Dave Brubeck*. (c) 2003 by The Jazz Alliance. TJA-12043-2.

this conversation, Brubeck attempted to claim both the F-flat and the F-natural as his own compositional decisions, perhaps striving to access the authenticity Davis brought to performances of Brubeck's piece. However, Brubeck's method of claiming authenticity with "In Your Own Sweet Way" relied primarily on his compositional skills—not his skills as an improvising performer.

While it may seem as though the discrepancy between Davis and Brubeck's F-flat and F-natural was a simple case of poor penmanship or misread musical symbols, the copy of "In Your Own Sweet Way" signed "Thank you—Miles Davis" in the Brubeck Collection clearly indicates the note in ms. 8 to be an F-natural (Fig. 2). While this may not have been the copy of "In Your Own Sweet Way" Brubeck originally gave to Davis, it nevertheless suggests that Davis was aware that Brubeck had written an F-natural.

Figure 4. Dave Brubeck, "In Your Own Sweet Way," Manuscript score. Dave Brubeck Collection, Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library. (c) Dave Brubeck.

the 1959 album *Workin'* (recorded in May 1956), the pianist, Red Garland, accentuates Davis's suggestion of a whole-tone scale with the Bb7(b5) by playing one in its entirety in the transition from ms. 8 to ms. 9. This suspension of tonality creates a vague harmonic effect, negating any clear feeling of resolution at the end of the eight-bar phrase.

Though pianist Red Garland accentuated Davis's F-flat with a whole tone scale in the May 1956 recording, Davis's pianist in the earlier March 1956 recording, Tommy Flanagan, did not. In fact, Flanagan consistently plays the F-natural every time the phrase occurs. After the first two phrases, in which Flanagan resolves Davis's F-flat to an F-natural both times, Davis must have realized that Flanagan was not catching on to his harmonic alteration. In the final phrase of the head, Davis changes his melodic line so that it also resolves to the F-natural, though the unprepared change ultimately sounds flubbed. Davis's musical conflict with Flanagan demonstrates that Davis had not verbally communicated or written the F-flat for his pianist for the March 1956 recording, but that, perhaps, this was an in-the-moment decision for Davis. Even if Davis's F-flat became a standard feature in his second performance, its initial performance was clearly improvised. Like the extra-musical speech Davis included on his records, Davis's first, somewhat flawed (according to standards from European classical music) recording of "In Your Own Sweet Way" with Flanagan positions the piece as a spontaneous musical event, valued for its imperfections.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of Brubeck's versions of "In Your Own Sweet Way" include the F-flat. While Brubeck's harmonic language is often very complicated, his performances of "In Your Own Sweet Way" feature an unproblematic progression in ms. 8 from B7 to Bb7 (with B7 serving as the tritone substitute of F7, a common harmonic substitution for jazz musicians). Brubeck's recordings therefore demonstrate his reliance on compositional authority and authorship, while Davis's value improvisational authority, a kind of authorship occurring in-the-moment. These distinctions in authority are rooted in a legacy of racial stereotypes, in which white musicians ostensibly perform intellectually stimulating music, while black musicians are supposedly spontaneous performers of emotionally expressive music.

RACING AUTHORITY

At first glance, it may seem as though the distinctions between how Brubeck and Davis conceived of their authorities were based largely in stereotypical understandings of race; in other words, that black musicians were spontaneous

improvisors, while white musicians demonstrated intellect through written compositions. The broader scope of my research explores how the language surrounding cool jazz and its musicians highlighted intellectual effort as defined by standards from the European classical music tradition, thereby implicitly linking intellect, European classical music, and whiteness.¹⁴ In his 1963 *Blues People*, Amiri Baraka notes such racialized distinctions of musical performance in his critique of twentieth century jazz journalism:

Thus an alto saxophonist like Paul Desmond, who is white, produces a sound on his instrument that can almost be called legitimate, or classical, and the finest Negro alto saxophonist, Charlie Parker, produced a sound on the same instrument that was called by some ‘raucous and uncultivated.’¹⁵

While, as Baraka suggests, the sonic distinction between Parker’s tone and that of Desmond is nearly undeniable, Baraka took issue with the way critics described these musicians in terms laden with implicit racial connotations. Words such “pure,” “legitimate,” and “classical” juxtapose harshly with words like “raucous” and “uncultivated,” and the resulting implication—that Desmond’s sound was supposedly more intellectually evolved than Parker’s “naturally” expressive and “impure” tone—reinforced primitivist stereotypes.

These traditions are important to mention in the context of Brubeck and Davis’s differing authorities, as 1950s critics often understood the difference between compositional and improvisational authority to be a racial difference. Because racist ideologies informing such narratives suggested that black musicians and composers could not or should not perform or compose European classical music, in the 1950s few black musicians and composers, like Davis, could claim access to the European tradition. An account by Miles Davis from his autobiography in which he recalled his dissatisfaction with the Juilliard Symphony orchestra makes clear the effect segregationist practices within the European musical tradition generally and concert hall spaces specifically had on the professional opportunities, or lack thereof, for black musicians: “I knew that no white symphony orchestra was going to hire a little black motherfucker like me, no matter how good I was or how much music I knew.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Kelsey A. K. Klotz, “Racial Ideologies in 1950s Cool Jazz” (PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2016).

¹⁵ Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones], *Blues People* (New York: W. Morrow, 1963), 30.

¹⁶ Miles Davis, *Miles: The Autobiography*, with Quincy Troupe (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 59.

That white cultural gatekeepers (i.e. critics, conductors, record producers, cultural commentators, etc.) would consider black jazz musicians' primary "authentic" musical contributions to be emotional, "natural," or self-expressive improvisations stems from a legacy of European and American exoticism. Simon Frith argues that Western epistemological distinctions based on problematic Cartesian dualisms—disembodiment versus embodiment, seriousness versus fun, mind versus body, and intellect versus physicality—were a primary way white critics and audiences understood the difference between white and black musicians and their music throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁷ Ted Gioia calls such exoticist discourses the "Primitivist Myth," a stereotype that white jazz critics have invoked to describe jazz as a primarily emotional, rather than intellectual, experience, and the implicitly black male jazz musician as "the inarticulate and unsophisticated practitioner of an art which he himself scarcely understands."¹⁸ According to Gioia, French critics of the 1920s, such as Hugues Panassié, Charles Delaunay, and Robert Goffin, were among the first to write critically about jazz, and their early writings often promoted the "primitive's unreflecting and instinctive relationship with his art," as opposed to the "overly refined and self-conscious attitude" of European artists.¹⁹

Early American jazz critics continued the legacy begun by French jazz critics; as Gioia writes, "they saw the jazz artist as a creature of inspiration who, in his own rough and unskilled way, would forge a musical statement that was of the heart and not necessarily of the mind."²⁰ Despite the movement of jazz into concert halls in the mid-twentieth century, for many critics, the authentic jazz musician was the musician who created self-expressive improvisations, and this expression was understood as stemming from African Americans' African, and therefore primitive, heritage.²¹ Importantly, Miles Davis, though emphasizing his

¹⁷ Simon Frith, "Rhythm: Race, Sex, and the Body," in *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 123-144.

¹⁸ Ted Gioia, "Jazz and the Primitivist Myth," In *The Imperfect Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 36.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Scott DeVeaux, "The Emergence of the Jazz Concert, 1935-1945," *American Music* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 25. Histories of jazz from the mid-twentieth century through the 1970s frequently highlighted jazz's African retentions. Of course, many scholars, including Samuel Floyd and Melville Herskovits, studied connections between African American musics and African musics in order to highlight African Americans' expansive and complex cultural history. Jazz critics, too, noted these connections; the intent of these sources, often by writers keenly sensitive to racism, was usually to praise jazz for these retentions, but the results at times continued to implicitly link jazz to primitivist discourses. For more mid-twentieth century sources by jazz critics discussing jazz's African retentions, consult Rudi Blesh, *Shining Trumpets* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1946); André

improvisational authority through his speech and harmonic alterations, would likely not have been consciously relying upon a racist connection between authority and improvisation; rather, critics, musicians, and audiences implicitly made this link in their respective receptions of Davis and his music.

Conversely, as a white musician and self-described composer with ties to prestigious European modernist composers Darius Milhaud and Arnold Schoenberg, Dave Brubeck attached himself, whether consciously or not, to an intellectual tradition that privileged notated music, and critics and audiences were quick to make the same connection. For many white critics—and some black critics, as Burton Peretti explains—musical intellect was demonstrated through deployment of European classical techniques, emphasis on notated compositions, references to European classical works and composers, and education in European classical methods.²² Through their association with European classical music, a genre unattainable to most black musicians, these skills, methods, and techniques serving

Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, trans. David Noakes (New York: Da Capo Press, 1956); *Jazzmen*, ed. Frederic Ramsey Jr. and Charles Edward Smith (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939); Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976); Hugues Panassié, *Le Jazz Hot*, trans. Lyle and Eleanor Dowling (New York: M. Witmark & Sons, 1936); Marshall Stearns, *The Story of Jazz* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

²² Burton Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 61. Peretti writes, “Black ministers, lawyers, doctors, and educators—what W.E.B. Du Bois called the ‘talented tenth’—strove to exercise civic leadership for all blacks in the realms of culture, morals, religion, and politics. Their values and culture were often close to those of genteel, Victorian whites, which called for a strict code of education, self-control, male authority, female domesticity, and industriousness.” (61). Though Peretti’s focus is on the 1920s, the same tension between largely middle-class African Americans who wanted to downplay the importance of jazz as an African American art form and African Americans who celebrated jazz as the result of a uniquely black experience existed throughout the mid-twentieth century.

This is not to suggest that black musicians did not also perform techniques associated with European classical music. Indeed, as Peretti argues, not only did the 1920s “black elite encourage [black southern migrants] to admire, place, and listen to genteel white art music and to pursue formal musical instruction,” but “[Chicago’s] South Side’s [black] migrants were often receptive to these calls for refinement.” Likewise, as Patrick Burke writes regarding Maxine Sullivan and John Kirby, who performed during the 1930s on New York’s 52nd Street, “by demonstrating their mastery of music in the European canon, these musicians asserted their own sophistication as serious artists and demonstrated that African American performers need not be bound to a restrictive standard of racial authenticity.” However, even if black musicians used these musical tools to associate themselves with intellect, sophistication, and refinement, critics by and large considered these musicians to be unique as compared to other black jazz musicians. Peretti, 61-2; Patrick Burke, *Come In and Hear the Truth: Jazz and Race on 52nd Street* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 90.

as evidence of musical intellect implied whiteness.²³ Ultimately, the story in which Davis's improvised F-flat and recorded speech offers listeners a more "authentic" jazz experience, as compared to Brubeck's composed and written F-natural and halting speeches, is a centuries old narrative derived from racial distinctions in authority and authenticity.²⁴

Davis's F-flat further demonstrates Davis's position as an "authentic" jazz musician within the broader jazz tradition. Most jazz musicians' subsequent performances of "In Your Own Sweet Way" feature Davis's F-flat, rather than Brubeck's F-natural, a process that has canonized Davis's version, even though Davis's authority to create the "authentic" version of "In Your Own Sweet Way" was based on the intersection between his *improvisational* ability and racial identity, not his compositional ability.²⁵ Therefore, it is Davis's improvised rendition of "In Your Own Sweet Way," not Brubeck's, that has found a prominent place in the jazz canon.

CONCLUSION: RECEIVING AUTHORITY

This article began with an account by Gitler, who asserted Davis's authenticity within jazz as compared to Brubeck by relying on Davis's blackness. However, Gitler is not alone in simplifying the differences in authority, authenticity, and authorship between Brubeck and Davis to racial binaries; in fact, the implication that Davis's blackness lends him authority and authenticity within jazz is often anecdotally replicated in classrooms, lessons, and gigs. Ken Burns's 2001 *Jazz* documentary illustrates the ubiquity of race as a defining feature in understanding

²³ Kelsey A. K. Klotz, "Racial Ideologies in 1950s Cool Jazz" (PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2016). The broader project centers on the 1950s genre of cool jazz in order to understand how critics' musical descriptions were often informed by their perceptions of race. These included discussions of counterpoint, references to European classical music in improvised solos, discourse on the modes of listening practices needed to listen to different musicians, and the places in which white and black musicians were allowed or expected to perform.

²⁴ Mariana Torgovnick argues that Homer's *Odyssey* (ca. 8th century BC) anticipated later colonial encounters with the "primitive" Other (particularly in the scene in which Odysseus encounters the cyclops Polyphemus). Mariana Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 23.

²⁵ Musicians who perform the F-flat (either alone or mixed with the F-natural) include Joe Pass, McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett, Wes Montgomery, Kenny Dorham, Tommy Flanagan's solo recording, Marcus Printup, Marc Copland and Gary Peacock, and Chet Baker. Two notable exceptions include saxophonist Benny Golson and pianists Bill Evans, who was part of Miles Davis's first sextet in the late 1950s, and Marian McPartland, both of whom consistently played the F-natural in the majority of their recordings (including a joint recording on McPartland's radio program, *Piano Jazz*).

musical sounds, particularly with regard to Davis and Brubeck: though Brubeck and Davis are both known for their contributions to the cool jazz genre, Burns only considers the cool jazz movement in relation to white musicians Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, and Dave Brubeck.²⁶ Burns places Miles Davis (and other black cool groups, such as the Modern Jazz Quartet) outside the main body of the “cool” section of the documentary. This approach implicitly relies on a racial binary between white and black to define cool jazz. Furthermore, Burns’s approach marginalizes the musical contributions of potentially “cool” black jazz musicians while implicitly suggesting cool musicians’ supposed lack of blackness is synonymous with a lack of authenticity.

Historian Bernard Gendron notices a similar construction of racial binaries based on musical difference between swing and bebop. When analyzing the “new aesthetic discourse” of the bebop movement, Gendron writes, “The unity of this new aesthetic discourse was a ‘unity in dispersion,’ to use Foucault’s phrase—that is, a unity that propagated discursive opposition, that created points of discursive repulsion.”²⁷ Gendron further explains that the binaries critics created regarding the bebop movement “virtually assured the existence of diametrically opposed aesthetic views.”²⁸ In *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, Michel Foucault theorizes about contradictions in discourse, writing that “contradiction is ceaselessly reborn through discourse,” while at the same time the purpose of contradiction is to “maintain discourse.”²⁹ The contradiction between white and black aesthetics, or rather between stereotypes regarding those aesthetics, therefore is simultaneously born out of and sustains critical discourse.

The presence of binary oppositions between black and white musical aesthetics, between jazz and European classical music, and between Davis and Brubeck, implies what Foucault calls a “calm unity of coherent thought” for both black and white aesthetic discourses, with each racialized discourse representing its own “calm unity.”³⁰ Foucault argues that discourse is really “a space of multiple dissensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described.”³¹

²⁶ “Risk,” *Jazz*, DVD, directed by Ken Burns (New York: Public Broadcasting Service, 2001).

²⁷ Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 139.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 140. The binaries Gendron cites as constructing the bebop movement were: art/commerce, authenticity/artificiality, swing/jazz, European/native, folk culture/refined culture, technique/affect, modern/traditional, black/white, fascism/communism, and right wing/left wing (139). While only some of these binaries have explicit ties to race, nearly all are implicitly tied to race.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, trans. AM Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 151, 156.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Davis, Brubeck, and jazz critics each sustained the discourse of primitivism and intellect by pitting terms associated with black musical aesthetics and European classical music against each other, such as improvisation and composition, which continually implied a sense of self-unity in the discourses of each distinct aesthetic. This ultimately created and sustained the idea that there existed two distinct sets of aesthetics defined by composition and improvisation that, though Davis and Brubeck blurred the boundaries by using elements of each, remained separate in most critics' descriptions, as well as in Davis and Brubeck's accounts.

"In Your Own Sweet Way" teaches us what there is to be gained by complicating binaries that determine authenticity based on race. I have analyzed Brubeck and Davis's recordings of this piece, presenting myriad reasons why Davis may have been considered the more "authentic" jazz musician: through Davis's style, the speech he included on his recordings, or his F-flat and assertion of compositional and improvisational authority. However, the simplistic difference between Brubeck and Davis as described by Gitler, that is, white versus black, is all too common in history books, documentaries, the jazz canon, and conversations among musicians, critics, and audiences. Such means perpetuate this simple binary, enabling it to override and define the larger issues of authorship, authority, and authenticity in stories like that of Brubeck, Davis, and "In Your Own Sweet Way."

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