Absence, Communion, Anarchy: Temporal Experience and the Objects of Pittsburgh's Erroll Garner

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This is a dissertation about Erroll Garner (1921-1977) in time. The Pittsburgh-born, African American jazz pianist was known for his sense of rhythm, the component of music that is responsible for time. The thing about time is that it moves differently for everyone in every moment. However, our objective world – the objects that surround us – can ground our subjective experiences and connect us to each other. This project focuses on four objects that were shaped by Garner: the city in which he grew up, the titles to his music compositions, his solo piano introductions in music performance, and his visual art "sketches" housed at the Erroll Garner archive at the University of Pittsburgh. It considers Garner's production or transformation of the objects to be representative of four fundamental activities expounded by Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* (1958), which are, respectively, speech/action, work, labor, and thought. Garner absorbed the object world around him and, in turn, created new objects that continue to affect us today in the way we feel through our existence. The aim of this dissertation is to suggest ways of approaching Garner's objects in time. Pittsburgh is explored as a polyrhythmic object wherein space is bracketed so that memories can move unencumbered by direction or speed; borrowing from Black Quantum Futurism, three Pittsburgh jazz elders guide the method for finding Garner in the layered present. The titles to his compositions are analyzed as metonyms, words that stand-in for Garner; Ishmael Reed's mystery novel, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), in which Henry Louis Gates, Jr. noticed an aesthetic play in the text, presents us with the double-time absence of language.

Listening to Garner's piano introductions invites a suspended or freed sense of time, a notion embedded in the philosophies of Fred Moten, Alexander Weheliye, and Fumi Okiji; these sonic objects are largely responsible for the 'happiness' quality that Garner's music conjured. Finally, his "sketches" are emblematic of the continuities and discontinuities of the object world; as objects with anarchic potential, they stop us in time to reveal Garner's presence.

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Preface

I would like to express my appreciation for everyone who has helped shape my thinking for this dissertation. It has been a privilege to work under the guidance of Dr. Aaron Johnson who I deeply respect and admire as a philosopher, musician, and teacher. Thank you, "Dr. AJ," for seeing me through a profound growth period of my life with compassion and for intuiting what I needed to hear at the right moments. My appreciation extends to the rest of my committee who have all advocated for and supported me immensely throughout this process – Dr. Michael Heller, Dr. Adriana Helbig, Dr. Christopher Nygren, and Dr. Robin D. G. Kelley. Thank you all for revealing the depths of yourselves through scholarship and in conversation.

Jim Doran, thank you for giving me the tools to dig deep into Garner's music and for your generosity in sharing your own archive and knowledge with me. I admire your dedication and hope to contribute to the effort you started years ago. I would not have wanted to write this dissertation without you, and I will forever appreciate the fact that I didn't have to.

A substantial portion of this dissertation would not be possible without the willingness of three Pittsburgh jazz elders to time-travel in their minds and bring their memories into the present and future – Judge Warren Watson, Mr. Carl Murphy, and Dr. Nelson Harrison. Thank you for making music with me and for entrusting me to write about our time together. To all the musicians and listeners who participated in our sessions directly or indirectly, including Judge Wrenna Watson and Donna Saunders – thank you for enlivening this document.

To my colleagues, fellow musicians, friends, and family – thank you for your presence and patience with me as I navigate the faults, shifts, and extensions of my own being. A special thank you to my mother who inspired me to reach and my father who grounded me.

1.0 An Introduction to Garner's Objects

Besides being the composer of "Misty" and a jazz pianist that 'didn't read music,' who was Erroll Garner?[1] This project is an effort to explore Garner beyond these two simplified observations that most people tend to overstate when talking about him. Of course, condensed 'truths' may bear some merit. The success of his most well-known composition, "Misty," released in 1954, set Garner on a path for fame and as a lucrative profit-maker for the industry. The title, "Misty," represents what is arguably the object that paved the way for him becoming a three-time Grammy Award[2] nominated pianist and probably one of the most televised Black musicians in mid-century America.[3] As for 'not reading music,' which implies one's ability to translate "music notation"[4] into sound, there is some legitimacy in the claim - he, himself, admitted to not reading music.[5] But, reading music "is a matter of degree," not an either-or qualifier.[6] At least for musicians who have any familiarity with the musical codes born out of Europe that date back to the tenth

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[1] Jeff Weston, "Erroll Garner Tuesdays, Week Six: The Award and the Archive," blog, posted 27 October 2015, http://pittarchives.tumblr.com/post/132013277467/erroll-garner-tuesdays-week-six-the-award-and. Accessed 10 December 2018. Weston points out that the effect of plaques and prizes in abundance results in an over-amplification of "the unsaid" about Garner. He asks, "beyond a pianist and *Misty*, who was Erroll Garner?" I add music literacy to Weston's concern.

[2] "All GRAMMY Awards and Nominations for Erroll Garner," Grammy Awards, https://www.grammy.com/artists/erroll-garner/8866. Accessed 29 March 2024. Garner's albums were nominated three times: in 1962 for *Dreamstreet*; in 1969 for *Up In Erroll's Room*; and in 1971 for *Feeling Is Believing*.

[3] Garner was second to Louis Armstrong, in James Doran's estimation, author of *The Most Happy Piano*, personal communication.

[4] Ian D. Bent, "Musical Notation," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, online, https://www.britannica.com/art/musical-notation. Accessed 10 December 2018. "Musical notation" is defined as a "visual record of heard or imagined musical sound, or a set of visual instructions for performance of music."

[5] Erroll Garner, radio interview with Jim Orbey, from the Jazz Museum in Hawaii, 15 June 1972, courtesy of James Doran.

[6] Johnathan JeVon White, It Was All a Dream…Pittsburgh Musicians Local 471: Collective Memory and Alternate Truths (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2020), 153.

century - otherwise known as Western music theory[7] - one's fluency with the literary component of the practice occurs on a spectrum. Even musicians who do not consider themselves to be 'readers' can sometimes recognize certain placements of notes on the musical staff, or they can figure out how to reproduce a musical notation if given enough time. Beyond "Misty" and music literacy, there is much to be discovered in Erroll Garner.

This dissertation analyzes four objects that are attributed to or were transformed by Erroll Garner: his hometown of Pittsburgh, the titles of his compositions, his musical introductions in performance, and his visual art "sketches" which are housed in the Erroll Garner archive at the University of Pittsburgh. Through these objects, one can better appreciate the profound impact that Garner has had on Black[8] cultural production and in realm of the "national American treasure" that is called jazz.[9] Garner reveals himself to us in some way through each of these objects. There are two threads regarding the objects which will be constant foci in determining how the presence of Garner shines forth through them: the objects each proffer a different way to perceive them in time, which challenges the Western, one-dimensional, and unidirectional temporal construct; and, through these objects, one can trace the activities fundamental to the *Human Condition* (1958) as laid out by Hannah Arendt - speech/action, work, labor, and thought.

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[7] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press: 2014), 10, 113.

8 In accordance with the Associated Press, this dissertation capitalizes the word "Black" as it pertains to race, culture, and ethnicity. In the cases in which I cite or reference other authors, individuals, or organizations, I have maintained their verbiage of "African American" or the lowercase "black."

9 Representative John Conyers, Jr., H.Con.Res.57 — 100th Congress (1987-1988), introduced 3 March 1987, passed 7 December 1987, https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/57/text. Accessed 29 March 2024. Sponsored by Representative John Conyers, Jr., the 100th Congress (1987-1988) passed Resolution 57 in 1987 which designated "jazz as a rare and valuable national American treasure."

1.1 Time

The sciences are still trying to understand what time really is, how it functions, what direction it is moving (if at all), and whether or not humans can manipulate it.[10] In the Humanities, time is a culturally-constructed phenomenon.[11] For example, the West recognizes only one dimension of time, while African philosophy supports a two-dimensional conception.[12] Frantz Fanon wrote that "every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time," for which he meant "my own time."[13] Each of us has our own perception of how time moves. But, those who subscribe to the Western philosophical tradition pull from contaminated frameworks, writing histories eclipsed by definitions of time by Isaac Newton ("an inert, universal cosmic stage"), Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (describing "relations between objects and events"), Albert Einstein ("the raw material underlying reality"), among others.[14] Overall, the proliferation of Western scholarship has reinforced a Eurocentric and linear conception of time, one that equates the past with the 'other' and the future with progress.[15] The linear, chronological, and Western model is not the only approach to thinking and writing about history.

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[10] Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), ix.
[11] George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962). Alexander Weheliye, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 89. "Du Bois shows that different velocities are needed in order to depict the souls of black folk, for they cannot be rendered or contained by the narrow confines of one particular genre or single mode of being in the world."
[12] Greene, 360, 377, 382. John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (Portsmouth: Heinemanm, 1990), 18. To explain the ontology of African time to his Western audience, Mbiti uses Swahili terms to indicate the two-dimensions: Sasa and Zamani. For Swahili people on the Eastern coast of Africa, stretching from Somalia to Mozambique, Sasa time encompasses a maximum of a six-month block of calendar time; it reaches from yesterday to six months into the future. Zamani time, although it only covers time passed, overlaps Sasa time in that it reaches anywhere from the past hour or so to the furthest conceivable past.
[13] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 12-13.
[14] Brian Green, 6.
[15] Nikitah Okembe-RA Imani, "The Implications of Africa-centered Conceptions of Time and Space for Quantitative Theorizing: Limitations of Paradigmatically-Bound Philosophical Meta-Assumptions," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol 1.*, works compiled by Rasheedah Phillips (San Bernardino: Afro Futurist Affair, 2018), 32.

Scholars in several fields have come to terms with the ramifications of such a causal and one-directional writing of history, proposing new ways of conceiving time through the analysis of a variety of objects. ("To say that objects occur is to suggest that objects have a temporality; they don't happen to be there so much as they happen."[16]) For example, the art work can be "anachronic" or "heterochronic," rather than the previously-held assumptions that tied them to a specific period.[17] Affective responses "stretch" to resemble the way the present is more of an "impasse" than a specific moment in time.[18] Music can produce multiple different temporalities in order "to resist teleological accounts of music history and musical change."[19] The trombone can "swing" time between words and music.[20] The listening experience of a musical work can expand or contract one's durational perception.[21] Collective free improvisation can lead a musician to "step outside of the moment" and experience "time's absence."[22] Depending on how we interpret them, objects can lend themselves to explaining how the fabric of time feels - enduring or fleeting, revealing itself incrementally or all at once. This project is an effort to contribute to the growing discourse of how objects influence the mysteriousness of time.

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[16] Bill Brown, *Other Things* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 62.
[17] Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 18. Nagel and Wood have examined how works of art might be seen as *anachronic* quality, which is the work's "the ability of the work of art to hold incompatible models in suspension without deciding." The two models of creation that the work hesitates between are the performance model and the substitution model. Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 2. Moxey proffers that time is *heterochronic*, meaning it moves differently depending on the historical narrative to which one subscribes. He admits that the translation between image and text is responsible for reifying or disrupting the chronological accounts that dominated Western modern art historiography.
[18] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 4.
[19] Georgina Born, "Making Time: Temporality, History and the Cultural Object," in *New Literary History*, 2015, (46), 374-375.
[20] Brent Hayes Edwards, *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 77.
[21] Richard Glover, Jennie Gottschalk, and Bryn Harrison, *Being Time: Case Studies in Musical Temporality* (Bloomsbury Academic: New York, 2019), 10.
[22] Gary Peters, "Improvisation and Time-Consciousness," in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, Vol. 1*, edited by George E. Lewis and Benjamin Piekut (Oxford: University Press), 439-457.

This study attempts to draw out four different temporal structures, one from each of Garner's four objects. In music, *rhythm* speaks to tempo, pulse, and overall 'feel.' Rhythm is "the component of music that moves the soundscape through time."[23] The command that Garner had over rhythm was in addition to the control he had over the other three components of music - timbre, melody, and harmony. Pianist and scholar Geri Allen wrote about Garner's "complete freedom to do whatever he wanted" musically, as far as playing any repertoire, in any key, and in any style.[24] But, as this dissertation is most concerned with time, I have adopted a shorthand for referring to familiar structures in jazz that correspond to the temporal perception suggestive of each object: polyrhythm, double-time, free-time, and stop-time.

The polyrhythmic effect, exemplified by the "vitality of African cross-rhythms," thrives in communal playing wherein different tones and timbres can be distinguished.[25] Polyrhythm can also be achieved by a single musician, specifically drummers and pianists who can produce multiple rhythms at once, by "playing or keeping time" while also "play[ing] freely 'against' the time."[26] Garner had an exceptional facility to maintain two complicated rhythmic patterns - one in his left hand and the other in his right hand - while also manipulating where they fell in relation to the overall pulse. Bassist Red Callender noticed that "he had that lagging, delayed style, being a natural southpaw; this is where the beat was."[27] Geri Allen talks about his "unique ability to play

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[23] Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 128-129.
[24] Geri Allen, 2015, liner notes to *The Complete Concert by the Sea*, Erroll Garner, Sony Music Entertainment, 88875120842, CD.
[25] Karlton E. Hester, *From Africa to Afrocentric Innovations Some Call "Jazz," Vol. 1* (Santa Cruz: Histeria Records & Publishing Company, 2001), 88, 89.
[26] Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 52.
[27] Red Callender and Elaine Cohen, *Unfinished Dream: The Musical World of Red Callender* (New York: Quartet Books, 1985), 66.

on the beat in one hand and behind or in front of the beat in the other simultaneously."[28] Allen points to Garner's recording of "Where or When" from his album *Concert by the Sea* wherein he holds a "three-against-two clave" pattern in his left hand while playing fast, "repeated sixteenth-note figures" in his right.[29] This against-ness is ubiquitous in Garner's recordings, but "Where or When" is particularly illustrative of polyrhythm.

Double-time feel can be achieved in two ways. First, a musician (or ensemble) plays twice as fast as what was previously played without changing the speed at which the chords are passing, sometimes referred to as the harmonic rhythm. Garner achieves this on "These Foolish Things" from *Gemini*, wherein he changes the feel half-way through the performance. The number of notes or beats played in each measure by each member of Garner's band - Ernest McCarty, Jr. (bass), Jimmie Smith (drum set), and José Mangual (congas) - doubles, but the speed at which the chords are passing remains the same. The second way that double-time can be accomplished is when not only the number of notes/beats are doubled per measure, but the speed at which the chords pass also happens twice as quickly.[30] (Conversely, half-time works in the reverse, when the rhythm changes to something that feels twice as slow.)

One of the criteria for "freer approaches to 'jazz,'" as stated by saxophonist and scholar, Karlton Hester, is that "all traditional musical rules and elements are open to question, redefinition, and revision."[31] In other words, each individual musician has more freedom to step outside the bounds of what would normally be considered cohesive in other approaches. According to

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[28] Allen, liner notes.
[29] Ibid.
[30] John S. Davis, *Historical Dictionary of Jazz* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 107. Double-time is "the practice of playing twice as fast as a previously established tempo. A soloist can also play double-time by playing rhythmically twice as fast as the accompaniment."
[31] Karlton E. Hester, *From Africa to Afrocentric Innovations Some Call "Jazz," Vol. 3* (Santa Cruz: Histeria Records & Publishing Company, 2001), 92.

trombonist and scholar Aaron Johnson, there are four ways to "free" jazz: from harmonic rules (which includes key signatures), from pulse and/or meter (which includes tempo), from accepted playing techniques and timbres, and from form.[32] And although the stress in playing freely is on the collective,[33] a musician can also produce the effect as a soloist. Playing rhythmically free, in 'free-time,' is illustrated by Garner in his introduction to "My Funny Valentine" on *Nightconcert*, which he plays unaccompanied. Although he maintains a pulse for a portion of the introduction, most of it is intentionally without a discernable time structure.

Stop-Time is defined as "a musical technique where the band plays only on specific accented beats or lays out (stops playing) entirely in order to accentuate a particular soloist or solo section in a song."[34] Its effectiveness depends on the band all stopping and starting at the same time so that only the soloist is heard. In a live recording from 1969, Garner demonstrates stop-time during his solo on "More." For a total of sixteen measures, the band - Jimmie Smith on drum set, José Mangual on congas, and an unknown bassist – alternate between accompanying Garner for two measures and remaining silent while Garner continues soloing for two measures. It is obvious that the bassist was not prepared for the stop-time sequence as he played through the first two measures; the two percussionists, however, who had been playing with Garner regularly, were able to read his cues and anticipate the breaks.[35]

Each object in this study has its own rhythmic feel, and I suggest that by attuning ourselves to it, the object reveals Garner to us in some way. These four approaches to musical time are informed by the theoretical frameworks put forth in each of the corresponding chapters. The

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[32] Aaron Johnson, conversation with the author, 2023.
[33] Hester, Vol. 3, 92.
[34] John S. Davis, 295.
[35] Erroll Garner, "Erroll Garner nice colorclip 1969," Youtube, posted by Thejazzsingers channel, 15 October 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT0Pb97obUY. Accessed 30 March 2024.

attention to *time* does not mean to take anything away from the other side of the equation to what Kant referred to as the "forms of intuition" or what physicists call the "gravitational field" - that of *space*.[36] Space and time are interdependent and are created through action.[37] For example, Farah Jasmine Griffin calls attention to both the "experience of time and space" explained by migration narratives.[38] This project's focus on time, rather than space, emphasizes all of the unanswered questions that we have about time.[39]

1.2 The Human Condition and Methodology

In the same year that Garner returned from his first European tour as a bandleader, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) published *The Human Condition* (1958), a book that sounded alarms not only about how technology was threatening to disconnect humans from earth and from the natural world, but in her critique of Karl Marx (1818-1883). Opposing Marx, Arendt maintained that labor and work must remain distinct.[40] Guided by the questions of what we do and how we are meant to

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[36] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 1969), 79. "There are two pure forms of sensuous intuition, as principles of knowledge a priori, namely, space and time." Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2018), 74, 75. "Spacetime is the gravitational field…only one among [other fields, like the 'electromagnetic' field]." All the fields are flexible and they "constitute the weave of the physical reality of the world."

[37] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 103. Christopher Gosden, *Social Being and Time* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 34. "People create time and space through their actions…Time and space are created on a number of different levels through social action."

[38] Farah Jasmine Griffin, *"Who Set You Flowin'?": The African-American Migration Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4. Migration narratives were "a dominant form of African-American cultural production in the twentieth century."

[39] Greene, 11, 12. Quantum physics allows for the possibility to remove space from the equation when considering the reality of time, implying, "at least in certain circumstances, a capacity to transcend space." Quantum relations means that physical distance is no barrier for what or when something occurs. What Einstein wrote about in 1935 and what researchers confirmed in the 1980s was that "there can be an instantaneous bond between what happens at widely separated locations."

[40] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 2. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1, Book 1,* translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, edited by Frederick

act in the world, *The Human Condition* articulates four activities that provide a framework for negotiating one's existence on earth: action/speech, work, labor, and thought.[41] Each activity bears objects which, in turn, shape human existence:

> The objectivity of the world – its object- or thing-character – and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence.[42]

Holding up Garner's objects as they pertain to *The Human Condition* allows us to appreciate him through a range of activities that all humans commonly experience on earth - action/speech, work, labor, and thought. These four activities also inform the methodological basis for each chapter.

The object of analysis in Chapter 2 is Pittsburgh; it represents the city in which Garner was born and reveals his political being, in action and speech. The human activities of action and speech, which go hand-in-hand, are conditions that make us human; without these inherently social principles of life, we become "performing robots."[43] Action and speech do not inherently produce anything, but they are "reified, as it were, into things – into sayings… documents."[44] Garner's action/speech reveal his political being in the world by differentiating him from other individuals.

Engels (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1887), 127. Marx maintained that labor ("the labour-process") encompasses the activity of work.

[41] Arendt, 5, 49. She groups labor and work together under the determination that they were at one time reserved for the private sphere; but now, the social realm has made them public. Conversely, action/speech and thought, which were once relegated to the public sphere, have been banished by the social realm to the private. She issues a warning that automation has been the last straw in a string of events which has caused humans to unlearn all but one condition, labor, which will eventually be the last to go. At that point, humans will be left with nothing to do on earth. Her book is a "reconsideration of the human condition" from the fears of the 1950s, which had left in its wake "trivial and empty" "truths."

[42] Ibid., 9.

[43] Ibid., 178, 95. Action/speech require "the constant presence of others."

[44] Ibid., 95.

This would include action or speech that is about Garner, but not necessarily derived from him.[45] Katherine Brichacek has synthesized what Arendt meant by one's political action being informed by the collective: "even the political actor who engages in dialogue and debate with other unique individuals in public is capable of being remembered through stories, diaries, and personal connections."[46] Therefore, not only do Garner's own words and actions constitute his political being, but the stories and memories that are said about him do as well.[47] In Chapter 2, action and speech are reified in the form of oral histories, specifically of three African-American elder jazz musicians from Pittsburgh. Their stories are the result of a six-year project documenting the memories of their experience in relation to the object.[48] The methodological basis, oral history, was derived from my participation in collective performance and in conversation with these Pittsburgh elders who are essential to understanding Garner's Pittsburgh.[49]

The objects of Chapter 3 are the titles which were attached to Garner's compositions; they represent the fabrication of his work. Work is the only human condition that produces objects that remain, used as the vessels for which we familiarize and relate to our world.[50] In jazz, the image of the work is the sound of the recording or performance.[51] Titles are essentially images of words

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[45] Katherine Brichacek, *Refuting the Single Story of Political Action in Hannah Arendt: Navigating Arendt's Eurocentrism and Anti-Black Racism* (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University, 2021), 46. "In practice, political action consists of speech and action."
[46] Ibid., 45.
[47] Arendt, 8-9, 4. "Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is, for history." Regarding speech, Arendt states, "whatever men do or know or experience can make sense only to the extent that it can be spoken about."
[48] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the 'Racial' Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 106, 107. "By speaking one forces the audience to repeat one's same words over in their same order." "While writing served its purpose, some matters were of such urgency that the spoken word was demanded."
[49] Arendt, 95. Speech/action and thought don't inherently produce anything tangible; they must be "reified, as it were, into things - into saying of poetry, the written page or the printed book into paintings of sculpture, into all sorts of records, documents, and monuments."
[50] Ibid., 94. She differentiates "things that are used" (permanent things like albums) from "things that are consumed" which "appear and disappear."
[51] Scott Deveaux, "This Is What I Do," in *Art from Start to Finish: Jazz, Painting, Writing, and Other Improvisations*, edited by Howard S. Becker, Robert R. Faulkner, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Chicago: The University of

that act as promotional signs for the underlying image (sound). While "the titles allows us to experience the work," in jazz, they are not the work itself.[52] Work is meant to "guarantee the permanence and durability" of Garner in the world, and titles aid in representing the physical manifestation of the performances of his compositions.[53] A curious detail, however, is that Garner had no need for titles - he did not use them or participate in their creation. (This conclusion is supported by the fact that a dozen or so of his compositions were renamed each time he re-recorded them or each time they were reissued, which suggests that he did not mind if they were re-titled.) Garner's indifference to (and absence from) the title not only questions if what is meant to represent his work in the world is truly his, it allows him to escape being tied to the fabricated manifestation of his sound. With the lack of Garner in the only activity in which the public would experience his permanence, one wonders if he was purposeful in his attempt to evade being caught up in worldliness of work.

Whereas Garner is missing in the titles, Garner is fully caught up in his musical introductions, which represent the activity of labor in Chapter 4. These introductions can be heard on almost every recording of Garner's, and those who were fortunate to hear him in-person suggest that they happened regularly during live performances as well. They occur at the very beginning of each song before the theme or any other musical elements. Arendt notes that the objects produced by labor are the "least durable of tangible things," produced and consumed in a never-ending process in order to sustain human existence.[54] Garner's musical introductions sustained

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Chicago Press, 2006), 124. "The recorded documents, the 'advertisements,' [are] permanent markers… 'works of art' because they're all we have left" of an artist after they are gone.

[52] Brent Hayes Edwards, 187.

[53] Arendt, 94.

[54] Ibid., 96.

him in an economical sense - he made money by incorporating them into his music.[55] But, more than that, as Carolyn Abbate explains, music is "brought into being by labor, and it is in the irreversible experience of playing them or listening to them that the 'meaning of their meaning' is given voice."[56] This means to highlight the ephemerality of the introductions – they happened only once and signal the irreversible nature of labor's demand. Importantly, they only include Garner's piano; the rest of the band (usually bass and drums) did not perform during the introductions. This chapter is concerned with the production of Garner's introductions and their received qualities which included 'happiness.' Arendt tells us that "happiness" is an accompanying feeling to the process of labor, and it has to do with the "exhaustion" and "regeneration" that it brings to human life.[57] Garner's music brought happiness to people, and his introductions act as the means to discovering why.

Chapter 5 looks at Garner's visual art sketches as, primarily, products of his thought. Arendt tells us that thought is "the highest and perhaps purest activity of which men are capable."[58] The sketches probe us to consider what Garner was thinking about at the moment of their creation. Of course, his thoughts had to materialize in their physical form, which requires us to consider their secondary source of human activity - work.[59] Like action and speech, thought does not manifest anything outward in the world without some materialization of it.[60] There are three

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[55] Ibid., 127. "We have almost succeeded in leveling all human activities to the common denominator of securing the necessities of life and providing for their abundance. Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of 'making a living.'"

[56] Carolyn Abbate, "Jankélévitch's Singularity," introduction to *Music and the Ineffable* by Vladimir Jankélévitch, translated by Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), xviii, 15. Jankélévitch says, "music is not above all laws and not exempt from the limitations and servitude inherent in the human condition."

[57] Arendt, 108. "Happiness is concomitant of the process [of labor] itself." "There is no lasting happiness outside the prescribed cycle of painful exhaustion and pleasurable regeneration, and whatever throws this cycle out of balance…ruins the elemental happiness that comes from being alive."

[58] Ibid., 5.

[59] Ibid., 95. Like speech/action and labor, thoughts do not produce a physical object.

[60] Ibid., 90. "The thinker who wants the world to know the 'content' of his thoughts must first of all stop thinking and remember his thoughts."

sketches in particular that this chapter will examine which are housed at the Erroll Garner archive at the University of Pittsburgh. Each one, expressed in pen, crayon, and/or pencil, bares the co-presence of image and text. Arendt stages "human artifacts" as made by the "the work of our hands;" where Garner's "hands" were absent in the process of titling, the "sketches" reveal Garner through his work.[61] Beyond the methodological basis for this chapter, the archive and by extension, three of Garner's sketches offer a material example of how Garner is represented and makes himself present to a current audience. The sketches are the only examples of Garner's handwriting in the archive and the only physically contained object of the four.

One problem with taking up *The Human Condition* in the context of Garner is its underlying white bias. The book is based on ancient Greek and Roman models of what constitutes one's private life versus one's public life, portraying an exclusionary (i.e. utopian, idealized, and Western) view of how people ought to live.[62] Also, according to Kathryn T. Gines, the book is part of a string of writings and statements by which Arendt assigns the problem of racism to one of two different realms of public life (the social or the political), depending on the group of people being targeted. Arendt declared that racism against Jews was a political problem, yet anti-Black racism was a social problem.[63] Gines does not contend that anti-Black hatred should be dealt with in the

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[61] Ibid., 7-8. Arendt mentions "the work of our hands," of mortal hands. Although not directly stated by Arendt, the distinction between the work of humans and the work of the divine is an important one. Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 84. The phenomenon of "images not made by human hands" (Greek: *acheiropoetoi*, Latin: n*on manufactum*), revered icons that are believed to have been created by the divine, dates to early Christian literature in the Sixth Century. The most famous example in the Western church's history is the sudarium of St. Veronica, a piece of cloth that is said to contain the "authentic" image and sweat of Christ's face. "The power of the icon to save or damn, to protect or destroy, derives from its place within a hierarchy of images (from God through Christ to the *acheiropoetos*), each linked to the next through the medium of resemblance."

[62] Kathryn T. Gines, *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 42, 38, 175. In 2017, Gines changed her name to Kathryn Sophia Belle to honor her maternal grandmother. Her personal website, kathrynsophiabelle.com, asks writers who are citing her to note this.

[63] Ibid., 22. She notes that Arendt consistently failed to realize her own white biases, even with her access to and communication with Black intellectuals and political writers (e.g. Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Richard Wright).

political realm, but instead, asks why Arendt thinks that racism against the two groups deserves to be handled differently.[64] Although Arendt claims to be critical of traditional Western philosophy, it is concerning for Gines that, at least in this respect, "her sympathies are with that tradition in spite of all of its hierarchies and inadequacies."[65] This dissertation uses *The Human Condition* as a thread to differentiate the objects based on how Garner created them - through work, action/speech, labor, and thought - with a critical eye on what may have been overlooked by Arendt.

1.3 Theoretical Frameworks

The organization of each chapter produces the following tripartite relation between the object of study, the human activity that produces the object, and the temporal effect it has on the human condition: Chapter 2 - Pittsburgh/speech-action/polyrhythm; Chapter 3 - titles/work/double-time; Chapter 4 - introductions/labor/free-time; Chapter 5 - "sketches"/thinking/stop-time. The following subsections will introduce the theoretical frameworks that can suggest a temporal positioning from which to examine each object.

1.3.1 Chapter 2: Memories of Pittsburgh

Chapter 2 looks at Pittsburgh as an object through Black Quantum Futurism (BQF), a set of theory and practices conceived in 2014. Headed by Rasheedah Phillips and Camae Ayewa, BQF

[64] Ibid., 14.
[65] Ibid., 15.

creators pull from Black/Afro Diasporan traditions about time, which they align with quantum principles, in order to shape the future domain. Their polyrhythmic, layered, and multi-directional concept of time comes from the premise that time "should be treated as consisting of multiple dimensions, not only the mechanical, clock time, or other classic and historic measures of time."[66] As its name suggests, Black Quantum Futurism is built upon three pillars. "Black" refers to the traditional African interpretation of time, which John S. Mbiti explains "moves 'backward' rather than 'forward,' and people set their minds not on future things, but chiefly in what has taken place."[67] Instead of a shortage consciousness of time with an emphasis on progress, African peoples, privileging the relationship that the present has with the past, "produce" whatever amount of time is necessary to evolve and come to terms with the past.[68] Quantum physics is concerned with the operations of the universe at the micro level, yet has "always been encompassed and anticipated" in ancient African traditions regarding cosmology and spirituality.[69] That "Quantum" is preceded by "Black" in the theory's name not only provokes a re-reading of science with "skin pigmentation, race, lineage, and cultural identity" in mind, but also points to the many unanswered questions concerning the mysterious constant of our expanding universe: dark matter.[70] BQF takes its Futurist directive from Afrofuturism, a concept coined by Mark Dery in 1994 with the intent of addressing "technoculture" from the African-American viewpoint, a differentiating term from the Western Futurism movement of the early twentieth century.[71] BQF uses Afrofuturism and "the

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[66] Rasheedah Phillips, "Constructing a Theory & Practice of Black Quantum Futurism: Part One," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory and Practice*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (San Bernardino, CA: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2018), 14.
[67] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1969), 17.
[68] Ibid., 19, 23.
[69] Phillips, "Constructing," 16.
[70] Phillips, "Constructing," 13. Green, 295-296. Scientists do not know the exact composition of dark matter but have estimated that it makes up about 25% of the universe; only 5% of the universe is composed of matter that we can see.
[71] Mark Dery, "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose," *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture,* edited by Mark Dery (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 180.

black speculative imagination" "as liberation technologies to build future worlds" to bring awareness to the challenges Black communities and communities of color face in shaping their futures when they are currently living in a dystopian present.[72]

Pittsburgh has largely been conceived as a space wherein jazz history happened. This chapter proposes a bracketing of space in or order to explore how the process of memory supports a polyrhythmic concept of time. BQF offers a way of thinking about how Pittsburgh jazz elders create reality and bring about desired futures by stretching, manipulating the speed of, and redirecting the arrow of time. Analyzed through BQF practices and modes, such as "retrocurrences" and "reverse time-binding," their oral histories provide a methodology for understanding how memories can reach forward in time to affect change, and likewise, transmit future experiences to the past. In other words, instead of strictly interpreting the past and applying it to the present and future, this chapter confronts the possibility that the elders are reordering the past. The purpose is to document Garner's hometown, privileging the stories of individuals in the community that share his temporal bond and are still around to speak to that perspective.

1.3.2 Chapter 3: Absence Made Present

This chapter analyzes Garner's titles as literary images, "combination[s] of words," using the theory of interpretation expounded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in *Figures in Black* (1987).[73] Here, Gates considers Black literature written in the 1970s and 1980s "against its critical context." By "context," he means the "textual world that a black text echoes, mirrors, repeats, revises, or

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[72] Shanna Collins, "This Artist Collective in Philadelphia Is Documenting Gentrification in the Community," Vibe online magazine, 17 June 2016, https://www.vibe.com/news/national/philadelphia-gentrification-artist-collective-429687/. Accessed 30 March 2024.
[73] Gates, 41.

responds to in various formal ways."[74] Since the seventeenth century, Black writers and theories specific to Black texts were systematically erased by and suppressed from the Western "canon" of predominantly white males as a racist tactic for controlling the image of, and "othering," Black people.[75] Black texts have since been responding to these racist assumptions, intertextually, by "Signifyin(g), the trope of revision, of repetition and difference."[76] Since the decades in which Gates wrote about Signifyin(g), a term that originates from Afro-American culture, the term has been used in countless ways to examine how jazz musicians responded to and transformed the music.[77] I am particularly interested in the way Gates reads *absence* as a way of Signifyin(g) on the text. Specifically, Gates analyzes Ismael Reed's, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), a mystery novel which comments on the Afro-American literary and cultural traditions as much as it does about the West's and delivers the "most humorous anticlimax in the whole of Afro-American fiction."[78] I suggest that Garner's noticeable absence in the images of his "work" makes us doubt their legitimacy and continuity with the images of his music.

Titles can fulfill pragmatic or aesthetic relationships to the musical referent, but they served neither of these purposes for Garner because he was not involved in the titling process nor did he care to use to their given titles in performance. His absence in the titles evokes a suspicion: if the creator of the referent (i.e. recording/performance) did not also know it by its name (i.e. work/title), can we trust the word? I argue that Garner's absence was a way of Signifyin(g) on the "work" aspect of what he *did* in the world. To reveal his presence, I analyze his titles as metonymies.

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[74] Ibid., xxxi.
[75] Ibid., xxiv.
[76] Ibid., xxxi.
[77] Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Robert Walser, "'Out of Notes': Signification, Interpretation, and the Problem of Miles Davis," in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
[78] Gates, 270.

Metonymy lifts the object from its historical context, granting it indeterminacy in historical context and meaning. Through the discontinuity between the word and the music, Garner's presence is revealed. In standing-in for Garner's absent authority, the titles invite us to 'think doubly,' in our quest for language and language's simultaneous inability to signify on its own.

1.3.3 Chapter 4: Communion of Labor

Garner's introductions created a new space from which he could reclaim the status of his labor. Informed by Fred Moten's "aesthetic of the black radical tradition," I analyze Garner's introductions as a resistant object to the "repressive temporal regimes of labor." Garner created space for his labor, in live concerts and on record, that resisted the notion that surplus and quantity is what gives labor its value. Moten provides a way of thinking about how Garner suspended his listeners by piquing their interest about the character and quality of his sonic inceptions. Alexander Weheliye's concept of "sonic Afro-modernity" situates Garner within and against the technologies, in the broadest sense, that allowed him to conjure a reality between the sonic and the tools that Garner used to produce his introductions. Garner freed listeners from the mode of mass consumerism and invited them to get into the music and 'look around.' There was a certain ephemeral (yet opaque) quality of his introductions that made the listener want to stay involved in his process. Fumi Okiji supplies a way of thinking about the social function of the song intro. Against Adorno, she contends that the African American blues form, rather than the verse-chorus form, would have been a better musical structure upon which to judge the communal and self-regulating properties of jazz. Contributing to Okiji's initiative, I return to Adorno's original critique of the verse-chorus, as many of Garner's performances were done in this form. In his introductions, Garner set up a game for he and the listener to play together – no one (not even

Garner, sometimes) knew what chorus would ensue. The introductions were his way of engaging listeners into a 'flow' activity, an experience that brought 'happiness,' and a temporal state that felt free and suspended.

1.3.4 Chapter 5: Anarchy of a "Sketch"

When one is fortunate to hold and view a "sketch" by Garner, it can be a wonderous experience. However, trying to peer into the soul of the work soon gets overtaken by one's sense that maybe the "sketch" was never meant to be seen by people outside of Garner's inner circle. This feeling is amplified when considering the provision under which they are kept. Although the archive is a place of safekeeping, we reach a place of concern that the works are somewhat trapped and are calling out to be heard. This chapter analyzes the "sketches" as anarchic in that what they want is "unimposed order."[79] Anarchy does not have or seek a unified theory, although it is based around certain practices that are driven by reason for the "constant project of enrichment."[80] Two such practices in anarchic thinking insist that we follow the "sketches" in their movement and that we constantly justify their original intent. As it pertains to movement, this chapter seeks to follow the language that bears down on Garner's works, providing the space for them to exercise different signifiers – 'art,' 'drawings,' 'doodles' – that may be more fitting than "sketches." Regarding their intent, this chapter provides a platform for them to question whether Garner meant for his objects, made solely by his hands, were meant to end up in an archive. Considering the anarchic potential in each "sketch," viewers experience time's arresting capacity on two fronts. First, one realizes

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[79] Mohammed A. Bamyeh, *Anarchy as Order: The History and Future of Civic Humanity* (New York: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), 23.
[80] Ibid., 11.

that Garner's works pinpoint where he stopped thinking and looked back on the past. We are able to trace his movements which he performed at an exact moment in time. Secondly, we are stopped in our tracks marveling at our ability to hold the physical remnants of his past, but also equally concerned that the "sketches" have a purpose beyond what they are currently able to exercise.

2.0 Memories of Pittsburgh

2.1 Pittsburgh in Jazz History

Erroll Garner was born in Pittsburgh on June 15, 1921, and the Western Pennsylvania city was his permanent home until about 1944.[81] Pianist Ahmad Jamal, who hailed from the same neighborhood, East Liberty, boldly stated that being from Pittsburgh was Garner's defining feature:

> What was different about Erroll is one word: Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh produced this kind of talent. Wylie Avenue - it's a very, very special place, where all the jam sessions took place. Mercur's Music Bar, [The Crawford] Grill, what a wonderful atmosphere for a person who wanted to learn this art form.[82]

In fact, Garner was born during the "glory years for Black music in Pittsburgh," which lasted between the Northern migration following WWI and the mid 1950s.[83] During that period, the Black community experienced cultural and social progress due, in part, to the musical *spaces* (like those remembered by Jamal) that provided moral uplift and camaraderie.[84]

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[81] James M. Doran, *Erroll Garner: The Most Happy Piano, The Centennial Edition (1921-2021)* (USA: James M. Doran, 2021), 131-141. Garner spent extended periods working in Pittsburgh, California, New York, and New Jersey between 1944 and 1950, when he eventually settled in New York City.

[82] Ahmad Jamal, interview in "Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read," prod. and dir. Atticus Brady, First Run Features DVD, 2012.

[83] Johnathan JeVon White, *It Was All a Dream…Pittsburgh Musicians Local 471: Collective Memory and Alternate Truths* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2020), 13, 111.

[84] Lawrence Glasco, "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh," in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, ed. Samuel P. Hays (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990) 69-109. Pittsburgh's topological space has also been blamed for the concurrent stifling of Black economic and political headway. The reason for this, besides racism and economic stagnation, was, in part, due to the dispersion of Black neighborhoods across the city's hills and valleys. "The city's terrain encouraged this process of spatial differentiation and meant that, unlike other Northern cities, growth of the Black population resulted in several neighborhoods." Rather than a more unified population, empowered to "dominate their own 'turf'," Black residents settled in communities such as the Hill District (41 percent), East Liberty (17 percent), the North Side, Beltzhoover, and Homewood. By the 1930s, the Black

Scholars who have attended to Pittsburgh's jazz history, in addressing what empirical data can tell us about how the object has endured, have done so largely in terms of Pittsburgh as a *space*. Kenan Foley's oral history-based study considered the perspectives of three notable drummers who were either born in or relocated to Pittsburgh (Joe Harris, Ron Tucker, and Roger Humphries) to assess what Pittsburgh, uniquely, has brought to jazz history. If there is an enduring "tradition," Foley concludes, the process of enculturation and development of an individual's drumming style occurs at the *local* level within Pittsburgh's African American community.[85]

Colter Harper has dedicated a portion of his research to what has been dubbed "The Crossroads of the World," a reference to where Wylie Avenue intersects Fullerton Street in the lower Hill District of Pittsburgh.[86] He mentions that the regional approach in musicological discourse gained traction in the 1970s as a way of writing about how the music functions among localized populations. The clubs, restaurants, and social places within Pittsburgh proved conducive to supporting and promoting jazz music over a span of fifty years, 1920-1970. The Hill District, in particular, he suggests, produced such a magnitude of musical activity due to its "liminality," meaning its ability to act as "a conceptual realm that offers the means to subvert rules and norms of more static states of being."[87] For many musicians, the clubs in the Hill "represented a home-away-from-home," even providing spaces for congregating privately before the doors would open

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middle class started to move out of the lower part of the Hill District due to deteriorating housing structures, overcrowding, poor health conditions, and high crime, causing further dispersal among the Black population. White, 108. By the time urban renewal began in 1956, which demolished the epicenter of Black life in Pittsburgh, Garner had been settled in New York City for over a decade.

[85] Kenan A. Foley, *The Interpretation of Experience: A Contextual Study of the Art of Three Pittsburgh Jazz Drummers* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2007), 1, 27.

[86] Colter Harper, *"The Crossroads of the World": A Social and Cultural History of Jazz in Pittsburgh's Hill District, 1920-1970* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2011), iv.

[87] Ibid, 41. Colter Harper, *Jazz in the Hill: Nightlife and Narratives of a Pittsburgh Neighborhood* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2024).

to the public.[88] Harper addresses how these liminal spaces created a "black cultural autonomy from white society" and how photo elicitation (from the Charles "Teenie" Harris collection, most prominently) can activate the recall of memories of those *spaces* that might have otherwise been left untold.[89]

Michael Mackey initiated a dialogue about Pittsburgh's "rich legacy" of pianists through his attention to Ahmad Jamal's career between 1930-1958 in which Jamal traveled between Pittsburgh and other cities.[90] One observation from Mackey's writing is that the Pittsburgh connection seems to remain an enduring part of who Jamal, himself, felt he was. A musician can be transported in *space* away from the object yet remains strongly connected to the object. Another impression drawn from Mackey's study is that, even though a musician might be from a smaller (or surrounding) neighborhood of Pittsburgh, they often still identify themselves as being 'from Pittsburgh.' For example, the pianists from the neighborhood of East Liberty (Erroll Garner, Linton Garner, Mary Lou Williams, Billy Strayhorn, Michael "Dodo" Marmarosa, Horace Parlan, and Ahmad Jamal), Duquesne (Earl Hines), New Kensington (Johnny Costa), and Herminie (Sonny Clark), are all considered to be 'Pittsburghers.' East Liberty and these other neighborhoods are only a few miles away from the famed Hill District, home to pianists Sam Johnson and Walt Harper and Pittsburgh's epicenter of Black life and entertainment during the first half of the twentieth century. Subsuming smaller, highly concentrated areas like the Hill District, East Liberty, and Duquesne under the larger, abstract object (Pittsburgh) is a way of uniting and finding

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[88] Harper, "*Crossroads*," 133.
[89] Ibid., 4, 17, 18. The Charles "Teenie" Harris collection is housed at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund. "Teenie" Harris (1908-1998) was a Black photographer employed by the *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper and a "well-known and respected community member who participated in the neighborhood's social life and someone who represented that same community for artistic and economic reasons."
[90] Michael Paul Mackey, *From Pittsburgh to the Pershing: Orchestration, Interaction, and Influence in the Early Work of Ahmad Jamal* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2017), v, 19. "Rich legacy" is a quote from Ahmad Jamal.

continuity between the people who identify with the object and recognizing that the object encompasses a network of *localities*.

Johnathan JeVon White's research also hints at the problem of trying to fix Pittsburgh as an object in space. Specifically, he considers how, even after clubs shut down, Black Musicians' Union (Local 471) members spoke of them "as if they are still here."[91] The spaces have vanished, however, in the memories of Pittsburgh jazz elders, these places are still very much alive. White found that the act of recording the memory in the here-and-now can act as a conduit that permits one's past to enter the present. White writes:

> Formally documenting their recollections creates bridges linking the past to the present and the future. The story of Local 471 won't collect dust in mental archives. Rather, having their story told allows them to re-live their past life and retrieve those good feelings. It amplifies their humanity.[92]

White concludes that the "true history" of Local 471 - "this powerful black institution at the center of Pittsburgh jazz" - is a collective history and, at times, "convoluted" one. Memory is the mechanism that allows for temporal fluidity, moving from past to present to future. Where the current dissertation takes a different direction is how it conceives of the passage of time. White views time linearly, moving from past to future, as a series of causal events.[93] As an "interlocutor for the public," he tasks himself with attempting to "distill high-definition pictures of the past" in order to write a "true history" of Local 471.[94] But, what if the eternalist perspective - time's flow

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[91] White, iv, 264, 115. The union was founded in 1908 and disbanded in 1971, along with many of the spaces that functioned on its behalf amidst the changing landscape of the Civil Rights era. After a controversial vote, it was decided that Local 471 would merge with their white counterpart, Local 60, which eventually proved detrimental to the moral and economic stability of many Black Pittsburgh musicians. White highlights the contrasting evidence in oral histories, as each interviewee remembered a slightly different version of past events, a mix "between acceptance, anxiety, and rejection, reactions that in many ways mirror[ed] the reaction of the city's larger Black community."
[92] Ibid., 314.
[93] Ibid., 46, 111, 117. The 1940s and early 50s were "overwhelmingly positive," the 1950s "had its own share of conflict," and the 1960s was "a strange mixture of pain and pride."
[94] Ibid., 127-128, 11.

from past to future - is incorrect?[95] What if time flows from future to past and in too many directions and at different speeds to distill unified pictures?

Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) is a set of theory and practices which encourage the reevaluation of how time works, reclaiming consciousness as temporally mobile rather than immobile. Conceived in 2014 by Rasheedah Phillips and Camae Ayewa, BQF offers "a new approach to living and experiencing reality by way of the manipulation of space-time in order to see into possible futures and/or collapse space-time into a desired future in order to bring about that future's reality."[96] The modes, characteristics, and pillars used by its practitioners assume a poly-temporal perspective, not only in that time moves at relative speeds and in different directions, but also that the future and past are "layered in the present."[97] Scholars may be reluctant to grant more weight to time rather than space, for fear that it would only yield a "brief," "bounded," and static image of the object.[98] But such a narrow interpretation of time limits the ontological possibilities for the scene to exist as something other than in service of teleology. In temporally-bound analyses, the function of time is a plane that expectedly moves from past to future while *spaces* are given the platform to endure and bear transformations of the object. Conversely, the current study sees the fabric of time as multi-layered and multi-directional. BQF

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[95] Dean Buonomano, *Your Brain is a Time Machine: The Neuroscience and Physics of Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017) 146, 194. Bob Snyder, *Music and Memory: An Introduction* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 228. The eternalist perspective of humans, for which the physical, presentist, non-human world does not have the capacity, is the faculty that grants us recourse to memory. Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2018), 108. Often referred to as "the block universe" in the applied sciences community and credited to Albert Einstein, an eternalist framework sees the past, present, and future as one long chunk of historical reality, the "present" being the spot that is temporarily illuminated in conscious experience. It is the source of our desire to explain the way things change.

[96] Rasheedah Phillips, "Constructing a Theory & Practice of Black Quantum Futurism: Part One," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory and Practice*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (San Bernardino, CA: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2018), 11.

[97] Rasheedah Phillips, "Conversations / Rewriting the Future: Science Fiction and Contemporary Art," *Art Basel*, 24 September 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCC5kO18YoQ. Accessed 9 February 2024.

[98] Travis Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away: Performance and Meaning on the New York Jazz Scene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 55.

encourages taking away the power of the clock-time - a static conception of memory and history - and giving it over to an individual's temporal flow of consciousness. Addressing time from the BQF lens adds to the variety of other scholars who are also concerned with resisting a teleological concept of history in favor of one that is multiple.[99] Like White's study, memory is still a conduit for temporal fluidity. The current analysis, however, interprets the present as a multitude of overlapping stories that do not necessarily move forward in time or at the same speed for everyone. With this polyrhythmic treatment of memory's access, Pittsburgh serves to appreciate the temporal complexity and multiple histories with which an object can endure. This project does not dispute the importance of space.[100] However, it portends to bracket space and focus, rather, on the object in time. If Pittsburgh is what made Garner special, as Jamal said, is there a way to extract more information about that relationship by privileging the multi-temporal ontology of the object?

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[99] Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1, 3. There is a parallel current in art history regarding time and its relation to space. Moxey posits that the time of the history of art is "heterochronic, that time does not move at the same speed in different places." This has consequences for the Euro-American approach, which has long situated art on a linear timescale. Moxey suggests that subaltern histories should be thought of as something other than mere repetitions or belatedness of those in the West. He says that "if subaltern histories are to be recognized, time's passing cannot itself have meaning, and the truths of the stories that are told about time are justified only by their enduring cultural power." Time moves differently across spaces and cultures in which art participates. Georgina Born, "Making Time: Temporality, History, and the Cultural Object," *New Literary History*, Vol. 46(3) (Summer 2015), 371, 362. Born is "extending the case for the multiplicity of time," both in human and nonhuman actors, "an attempt to develop alternative perspectives on time in cultural production." "Music produces time," she states, proposing four ways or "temporalities" through which this happens. Gary Peters, "Improvisation and Time-Consciousness," *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, Vol. 1*, ed. George E. Lewis and Benjamin Piekut (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 451. Peters uses the term "poly-temporality" or a "pluralization of time-consciousness" to discuss the phenomenology wrapped up in collective free improvisation. Alexander G. Weheliye, *Phonograhies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 92. "The DJ, by repeatedly weaving together different sonic material, manages to create a new musical temporality."

[100] Farah Jasmine Griffin, *"Who Set You Flowin'?": The African-American Migration Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Griffin explores the way that migration narratives were influenced primarily by the change in psychic, material, physical, and discursive spaces.

2.2 The Pittsburgh Elders

Perhaps one project that shares a multidirectional and polyrhythmic temporal conception is the 2018 installation, by the artist collective Postcommodity, entitled *Through Smoke and Tangled Waters, We Carried Fire Home*.[101] Recognizing Pittsburgh's history as a steel, coal, glass, and jazz town, visual artists created a topological map of the city using materials that were common during Pittsburgh's industrial years - lumps of coal, crushed glass, scrap metal, ladders, and old tools with which workers once toiled.[102] Pittsburgh jazz musicians were then invited to create sonic interpretations, using the debris on the Carnegie Museum's marble floor as a graphic score. Accessing the "memories" of people and "spirit of place that's embedded" within materials in order to create improvised music is akin to the present and the past having a conversation with each other.[103] The current project is similar in the way time is approached, polyrhythmic and

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[101] Benjamin Sutton, "Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Postcommodity won prizes at the 2018 Carnegie International," *Artsy*, 15 October 2018, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-lynette-yiadom-boakye-postcommodity-won-prizes-2018-carnegie-international. Postcommodity, a New Mexico-based collective, took home the 57th edition's Fine Prize, one of two major awards given by the Carnegie International, "one of the longest-running recurring art exhibitions in the world."

[102] Glasco, 77. For Garner and others, being able to make living as a musician in the early part of the century was something to aspire to, considering the alternative of "deplorable" working conditions for laborers (especially African Americans) in the coal mines and steel mills. Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 239. Pittsburgh-born drummer Art Blakey remembered that he would be at his music jobs between 11pm and 6am, then had to be at his other job, at the Carnegie Steel Mill, by 8am. Playing music full-time was Blakey's goal: "I didn't dig working in the coal mine or the steel mill and I had to do something to get out, like playing music." Blakey's version of the object is less appealing: "I really developed as a drummer in New York, not in Pittsburgh. That city [Pittsburgh] never contributed anything to me but chaos."

[103] Bill O'Driscoll, "New Artwork Honors Pittsburgh's Legacies of Jazz and Steel," *90.5 WESA*, 29 August 2018, https://www.wesa.fm/arts-sports-culture/2018-08-29/new-artwork-honors-pittsburghs-legacies-of-jazz-and-steel. Accessed 9 February 2024. The Carnegie International brought Postcommodity, a group comprised of three Native American visual artists - Raven Chacon, Crístobal Martínez, and Kade L. Twist - to Pittsburgh as part of the 57th celebration at the Carnegie Museum of Art. Postcommodity's project of bringing material and memory to the fore elaborates the paradoxical legacy of Pittsburgh's productive power - "the struggles of the African Americans who fought to join unions and find work in the mills, even while other African Americans here - Earl "Fatha" Hanes, Billy Eckstine, Billy Strayhorn, Errol[l] Garner, Ahmad Jamal, Mary Lou Williams - were helping push the music to new heights."

multidirectional, but different in that the memories come directly from the living speech and action of Pittsburgh jazz musicians, not from inanimate objects.

There are three seasoned jazz musicians around which the methodology in this chapter revolves: Mr. Carl Murphy, Judge Warren Watson, and Dr. Nelson Harrison, who offers welcomed reminders that "you don't learn the music from a book. You learn the music by people telling you stories about…the possibilities."[104] (For abridged versions of their biographies, please see the Postscript at the end of this chapter.) In an article published on his website, *The Pittsburgh Jazz Network*, Dr. Nelson Harrison writes:

> The post-1970 jazz-gone-to-college movement is yet remiss when it comes to oral history and field research. The colleges are reluctant to present indigenous progenitors (presently an endangered species) to their students…The Pittsburgh Sound of its jazz tradition developed and flourished when there existed a village of indigenous black people largely segregated into a small cultural village wherein the elders of the village fulfilled the roles of ancestral links by transmitting folk wisdom, renewing the community spirit in the next generation, breathing life back into the village by emphasizing the joy of shared memories, the rewards of teamwork and high-quality lasting relationships, encouraging members of the village to bind together their history and needs with respect and continuing a commitment to the indigenous group.[105]

The insight shared by these three "elders," a term which nods to Dr. Harrison's designation, offers invaluable evidence about the object in the form of communal oral histories. Harrison's imperative to "present indigenous progenitors" is justified by what other jazz scholars have noticed about the qualities that are retained through memory. Samuel Floyd, Jr., who founded of the *Black Music Research Journal* in 1980, said that "African cultural memory lives on in the descendants

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[104] Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview by the author, 27 August 2018, Pittsburgh, video recording.
[105] Dr. Nelson Harrison, "The Pittsburgh Sound," *The Pittsburgh Jazz Network*, 2016. http://jazzburgher.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-pittsburgh-sound-an-essay-on-jazz-as-a-spoken-language. Accessed 9 February 2024.

of the ancestors and continues to inform the music and its continuity."[106] Amiri Baraka, one of the leading voices of the 1960s who helped align the literature involving Black music with the African-American experience and an architect of the Black Arts Movement, called for a "reconstruct[ion]" of the music's history by bringing forth "all the voices, the contributors, the pioneers, the innovators, the unknown and little known facts and people, up front where they belong," including new literature on the "various cities and regions" of jazz history.[107] Pittsburgh-born alto saxophonist, Hosea Taylor (1928-2011), even though not a globally-recognized name in music, is an example of how local mainstays are often the most reliable voices as far as documenting a city's legacy. Pulling from his over sixty years of experience playing in the most formidable venues in Pittsburgh, he wrote a book detailing his everyday adventures playing with regional celebrities (and even chance opportunities to share the stage with stars like Art Tatum, Duke Ellington, Erroll Garner, Freddie Hubbard, and Max Roach) which helped build his identity as a musician. He wrote in his memoir, "one might say memories serve no useful purpose after death, like pictures do. They will if I keep writin' these words…". [108]

In March 2018, I received a phone call from Mr. Murphy. I had only briefly met him a few days earlier at an open jam session hosted by the AAJPSP. He and Judge Watson wanted to start a music project and invited me to join them. With Mr. Murphy on drums and Judge Watson on EWI (or "electronic wind instrument" which can produce sounds similar to brass and wind instruments), the group quickly grew to about ten musicians. The group still meets twice per month at Judge Watson's house where we play standard jazz repertoire, mostly songs composed and

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[106] Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 196.
[107] Amiri Baraka, *Digging* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 31.
[108] Hosea Taylor, *Dirt Street* (Pittsburgh: Arsenal Binding & Finishing, 2007), 3, 75, 151, 198, 200. Year of Taylor's death confirmed in email from Dr. Harrison, 27 February 2024.

recorded prior to 1960.[109] A few months after our initial meeting, I was encouraged by Dr. Nelson Harrison, who plays either trombetto[110] or melodica during our sessions, to bring my video camera and record. I had no intention, at first, of using any of the footage as a methodological basis for this dissertation. However, I realized that I was documenting part of the history of Garner's Pittsburgh that was not in any of the existing literature. The elders were telling stories in-between the songs that we were playing. The music inspired other stories and other music, extending most of our sessions to three hours or longer. Their memories are abundant with representations, images, and ideas of how Pittsburgh once was. I wondered what, from their perspectives, I could contribute in the way of writing about Garner. He was no longer here to talk about his experience in Pittsburgh. Did the object change after Garner's passing? Was part of the object lost? Or did the memories through which the object became accessible simply shift? Having conversed or played with Erroll Garner or having experienced Pittsburgh during his time, the memories of Mr. Murphy, Judge Watson, and Dr. Harrison contribute primary evidence about the transformations and endurance of the object through time. Digesting and interpreting their unique voices to which this chapter is indebted necessitates a theoretical framework equipped for handling the sensitivity and urgency of such knowledge.

Black Quantum Futurism supports methods which center around the "collection and preservation of communal memories, histories, and stories," specifically for "mapping out the futures of marginalized communities."[111] Rasheeda Philips, one of the co-founders of the theory

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[109] The Covid-19 Pandemic forced us to take extended breaks in 2020-21 or to relocate our rehearsals outdoors in Judge Watson's front yard.
[110] Dr. Nelson Harrison, telephone interview by the author, 2 August 2023, audio recording. The trombetto is a one-of-a-kind and irreplaceable instrument, as it was constructed by a pawned cornet, Dr. Harrison's trombone mouthpiece, and a rare piston valve made in France in 1870.
[111] Phillips, "Constructing," 29.

who also works as an attorney, advocates for people facing housing displacement due to eminent domain. In 2016-2017, Philips implemented BQF to set up the Community Futures Lab, "exploring the impact of redevelopment, gentrification, and displacement in North Philadelphia through the themes of oral histories, memories, alternative temporalities, and futures."[112] The Community Futures Lab is one example of an oral history campaign that works to preserve the stories of a community who had had their spaces taken from them.

In Pittsburgh, the late trumpeter Charles E. Austin founded and spearheaded a similar endeavor in the late 1990s. The African American Jazz Preservation Society of Pittsburgh's (AAJPSP) Oral History Project is a series of recorded interviews with African American jazz musicians that was done to promote "the recovery of the lost history of Local 471," Pittsburgh's Black Musician Union.[113] The building in which Local 471 was housed between 1941 and 1954, located at 1213 Wylie Avenue, served as an immensely important communal space for jazz musicians and Black audiences.[114] Dr. Harrison has referred to this particular Local 471 location in the Hill District of Pittsburgh as the "hub" of "refinement" for which the city's jazz legacy became known, "where the elders held forth like the Griots of the African traditions."[115] While this chapter is inspired by BQF's Community Futures Lab and the AAJPSP's Oral History Project, their mentions do not mean to imply that the musicians who congregate at Judge Watson's house do so because they have been currently displaced from other spaces of performance. However, the elders are no strangers to displacement due to racial injustice.

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[112] "Community Futurisms: Time & Memory in North Philly 001 - Community Futures Lab," *Black Quantum Futurism*, website updated 2020. https://www.blackquantumfuturism.com/community-futurisms. Accessed 9 February 2024.
[113] "Guide to the African American Jazz Preservation Society of Pittsburgh Oral History Project Records and Recordings, 1995-1999 AIS.1998.04," *Historic Pittsburgh, hosted by the University of Pittsburgh Library System*. https://historicpittsburgh.org/islandora/object/pitt%3AUS-PPiU-ais199804/viewer. Accessed 9 February 2024.
[114] White, 42.
[115] Harrison, "The Pittsburgh Sound."

After a 1966 vote and subsequent merger between Local 471 and Local 60, its white counterpart, Black Pittsburgh musicians found themselves without an official space and, thus, moved jam sessions into their homes. Judge Watson recalled, "If you wanted to play, you invited people to your house. If I saw someone who was trying to play, I'd invite them to my house. If they could play, I'd hire them." His home represents the sort of counterculture that occurred in other cities, decades before and after, to find alternative spaces in which to cultivate musical expression and experimentation. In Birmingham, Alabama, during the late 1930s, Sonny Blount's home (before he became "Sun Ra") was open to any musicians who wanted to stop by. He led sessions from his piano bench, "instructing musicians, telling stories and jokes, and lecturing on a variety of subjects."[116] In the early 1940s, during the advent of bebop, Mary Lou Williams's Harlem, New York apartment "became the setting for a modern-day 'salon' that paralleled nineteenth-century French musical circles." Williams curated a welcoming place for musicians, including Thelonious Monk, Tadd Dameron, Kenny Dorham, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Billy Strayhorn, Sarah Vaughan, Elmo Hope, Marian McPartland, and Benny Goodman, to share ideas: "each one would take turns playing - because most of them needed inspiration and they wrote the music up here at the house."[117]

The problem with emphasizing space is that it regards power as outside the sphere of one's control. Speaking of the Hill District (where Black power and agency was more visible) versus Downtown (where many spaces were off limits to Black people) Dr. Harrison remembers, "we had everything, and we were having a ball. We knew there were certain buildings [in Downtown]

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[116] William Sites, *Sun Ra's Chicago: Afrofuturism and the City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2020), 41.
[117] Tammy L. Kernodle, *Soul On Soul: The Life and Music of Mary Lou Williams* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 113.

we couldn't go in, that's all, no big deal." Garner had confirmed a similar experience of working in Downtown Pittsburgh before he moved to New York City. He and Pittsburgh vibraphonist and drummer, James "Honey Boy" Minor, were the only two "Colored people that worked in certain sections of downtown."[118] Depending on the establishment, Garner might drink and converse with white customers at one place, but might go to the theater next door and have to sit in the balcony section reserved for Black audience members. Like Harrison, Garner's action and speech were not determined by the white *spaces* that were off-limits to the Black community; rather, space was either avoided, attractive, or managed based on patterns of individual experience. The language of "Downtown" versus "the Hill District" may be more metaphorical - used to exacerbate the power of space - than what was reality. "When we think metaphorically, we project patterns that derive from the concrete experience of our bodies and our senses onto more abstract experiences and concepts."[119] Giving power over to space denies that there is a temporal rhythm within each human being that dictates how memory, senses, and perception all impact the energy that they bring to social situations.

BQF wants people to take their power back. Kendra Krueger, an author in the BQF literature, proffers that while patterns in the universe exist, we can choose to remember them or not, and even change the speed at which the patterns come to us, which "will allow us to thrive within the beautiful chaos of the universe."[120] From "elevated" states of "euphoria," Krueger is

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[118] Erroll Garner, radio interview with Gil Noble, *WLIB Radio 107.5*, circa 1966, audio CD.
[119] Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 102.
[120] Kendra Krueger, "The Wild Truth: Casting Spells with Entropy and Lasers," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol. II*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (Middletown, DE: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2022), 36.

able channel or receive messages, memories, and sensations "from the past or future."[121] She explains the feeling in a poem:

> The power to time travel to transcend so much yet I'm almost paralyzed by the sheer joy of sensation. I can only laugh and cry tears of expansion. Why move when the infinite expression of the universe exists for me to feel and create in this moment. I can recall anything. Any sensation. I can be anywhere and feel it fully. I've portaged/portaled on. There always seems to come with it a sensation to find a place to unload the energy. To complete the circuit and release the energy.[122]

Space is secondary to her "power to time travel," her ability to remember and sense. Krueger finds that by creating, by moving, or by being in ritual, "we have the power to observe these patterns and learn how they may aid us or harm us in different situations." "Why move," she asks when she can "be *anywhere* and feel it fully?" Finding "a place" is less urgent than the time portal of information, indicating that the contribution of space should not overshadow the temporal rhythm that is shared between the object and people that rally around it.

According to Hannah Arendt, it is not space that preserves power, but power which preserves space.[123] Power is established wherever there is human plurality (togetherness), that is, a scene comprised of *action* and *speech*.[124] It does not matter that Judge Watson's house is located inside the bounds of Pittsburgh. The import is that the people who come together there, in action and speech, have found communion with each other, bringing their shared experiences and stories about Pittsburgh. Action necessitates speech, and their combined performance creates its own

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[121] Ibid., 34.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 204.
[124] Ibid., 178, 175, 201.

remembrance.[125] It is "the storyteller who perceives and 'makes' the story."[126] Through their stories, the elders can reveal the meaning of actions of those who are no longer living.

2.3 The Problem with Space

Pittsburgh's image in jazz history remains "part history and part misty haze," according to trombonist, composer, jazz scholar, and Pittsburgh resident, Aaron Johnson.[127] This may be due to the sheer abundance of talent that was produced from within the object. There are about a dozen names whose careers get mentioned on-repeat, while the rest of the object largely goes undocumented. For example, it is widely known in jazz circles that Kenny Clarke, a drummer who relocated to Paris from the 1950s to the 1970s, is from Pittsburgh. However, it is lesser known that James "Honey Boy" Minor, was a major inspiration to Clarke.[128] The elders not only hold the most vibrant and detailed image of Pittsburgh but they also highlight that its image cannot be tied to space. While serving in U.S. Army in 1959 during the Vietnam War, Mr. Murphy had the chance to frequent the Blue Note in Paris, where pioneers of the bebop movement - pianist Bud Powell and Kenny Clarke - had a regular gig with French bassist, Pierre Michelot. Mr. Murphy found common ground with Clarke as a Pittsburgher. Their conversation pivoted to the topic of James "Honey Boy" Minor. Mr. Murphy recalled how Clarke invited him to sit-in with the band, saying, "if you know about "Honey Boy," you're all right. You want to play something?"[129] A spatialized

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[125] Ibid., 233, 208.
[126] Ibid., 192.
[127] Aaron Johnson, interview with author, 12 December 2018, Pittsburgh.
[128] Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview with author, 15 July 2023, email.
[129] Carl Murphy, interview with author, 6 August 2018, Pittsburgh, video recording. Doran, 44-47. Erroll Garner joined the Leroy Brown Combo in 1938, his first steady group that wore matching suits. "Honey Boy" Minor would

image of Pittsburgh does not fully grasp the mobility of the object: the "Pittsburgh connection" can be found around the globe.[130]

That scholars have focused on Pittsburgh's jazz history and the memories of the people who have experienced the object as a place is not surprising. It turns out that using spatial references to retrieve memories is a tactic of our human evolution because our sense of time, on its own, is unreliable. Professor of musical composition at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Robert Snyder, has synthesized how auditory memory, specifically, is assembled and accessed via the processes in which neurons create connections in the brain. He writes, "we must often construct external reference systems to find particular events in the past."[131] The thematic cues we use to trigger the mechanisms responsible for long-term memory rely most heavily on the factors that tell us *where* something happened in the past. For example, we spatialize events on a calendar, divide the year into seasons, and use clocks to project images showing the passage of time. In short, we are conditioned to remember *when* something happened based on *where* it happened, so it makes sense why one might employ space to explain the recall of memories. Our proclivity to spatialize time is perhaps why Christopher Small's theory of "musicking" establishes it as the "place" where music and performers come together.[132] However, when those spaces are

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join their group in 1940, one year before they all encouraged Garner's first extended relocation to New York City, which they thought "would be a great opportunity for him."

[130] Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Melbourne: re.press, 2009), 19, 20. Harman speaks of the contemporary philosophical circle surrounding Slavoj Žižek. The group is headquartered in Ljubljana, Slovenian, where Žižek teaches and from where he publishes. For this reason, people expect much more to be 'happening' in the city of Ljubljana than what is really going on there. From a Latourian perspective, Žižek's group and the Slovenian capital are part of a network that has spread worldwide. Using this anecdote to look at Pittsburgh as an object, Latour would say that the city, itself, does not house all the actors of the network that makes up Pittsburgh. Rather, the object's allies are spread throughout a larger network, and wherever the name "Pittsburgh" appears in reference to jazz, that is where the object makes an appearance.

[131] Snyder, 4, 216.

[132] Small, 200.

not something that we can return to, when the object's current spatial condition is vastly different from its past condition, the concept of *space* tends to lose its luster.

Focusing on space, we are left with projections, images, and ideas of the object as it once was. Stories and memories from different angles, even when added together, comprise a static picture that represents the object. Each narrative contributes another piece of what Pittsburgh looks like; none of the parts will ever be perfect or absolute.[133] The immutability of the picture is due to our inclination to spatialize time. When we deal with the constituent parts of an object, "we are compelled to have recourse to an extended image."[134] And that image, Henri Bergson attests, is always accumulated in space.[135] The process by which memory becomes spatialized can be explained by Bergson's notion of "memory at work" in which pure memory (only accessible by the individual) manifests in memory-images (in the present) before finally being realized in perception (narrated).[136] Notwithstanding the ability to comb through oral histories, pour over photographs, or compile lists of traits that try to capture meaning, viewing the object in such *relative* terms will fall short of providing *absolute* knowledge that is gained from "direct

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[133] Jackson, 26. He contends that "history" and "memory" are interchangeable. Memory has a reputation of being inferior to history when memory is just another name for history. History is always *someone's* history - as (im)perfect and (un)limited as one's memory.

[134] Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001), 78.

[135] Sebastian Smee, "Monet's towering obsession." *The Washington Post*, 7 July 2022, online, https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/interactive/2022/monet-rouen-cathedral-paintings/. Accessed 9 February 2024. Bergson's example is probably a response to Claude Monet's Rouen Cathedral series in 1890, in which the French Impressionist painter chose the same subject to paint multiple times in different lighting. Bergson used sketches of Paris to make the point that, no matter how many representations we have of an object, it will never substitute for our ability to reconstitute an object from experiencing it. The two extremes that Bergson contends with are philosophical empiricism and rationalism; neither can explain fully what the object is.

[136] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), 170, 171, 173, 177, 178, 179, 181. The processes of perception, image-memory, and pure memory are continuous and cannot be juxtaposed or detached from one another. Bergson explains that "we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves," first in a general past, then farther back into the deep past. "But the truth is that we shall never reach the past unless we frankly place ourselves within it." This happens by "adopt[ing] the movement by which [the past] expands into the present image."

participation in the immediacy of experience," from the object's interior.[137] Even Mr. Murphy's account exposes the object on its exterior, which leads to our scientific, intellectual, surface, and *relative* understanding, according to Bergson.[138] But it is the *act* of being involved (getting into the object in communion with Mr. Murphy) as he recounts his memories that allows for *absolute* knowledge. Bergson said that to understand an object's endurance and transformation, one needs to participate directly in the action of the object which allows qualities about it to surface in one's consciousness. As those qualities are felt, sensed, perceived, and measured by one's feelings and emotions, memories come to the surface. Spatial representations are bound to happen as the elders earnestly communicate the object as it appears to them in their consciousnesses. But it is in realizing the temporal polyrhythm of memories that invite participation in the object.

Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) takes-up the project where Bergson left off, untethering time from its spatialized image, to give the temporal realm back over to one's consciousness and direct experience. Extending Bergson's concept of time - a succession of conscious states (memories) rather than the images and ideas that account for the sum of time's happenings - BQF "reappropriates clocks and maps to deconstruct hegemonic Western Spacetimes" and reconstructs them by allowing the practitioner to label each memory with a "date or time of [their] choosing."[139] BQF appreciates that time is layered, containing the memories of conscious states from many individuals. BQF pillars also subscribe to the idea that time moves in all directions and at multiple

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[137] Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. T. E. Hulme (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 12.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Black Quantum Futurism, "Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol. II*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (Middletown, DE: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2022), 11, 12.

speeds. Participating in Bergson's "memory at work" through a BQF lens allows for a conception of the object uninhibited by space.[140]

In 1966, during a two-week engagement in Chicago, Garner was asked by radio host, Mike Rapchak, to expand upon why Pittsburgh touted such an exceptional roster of pianists. Garner's answer was generated by his personal experience:

> Rapchak: Why is it that Pittsburgh comes out with all you piano players?
>
> Garner: I think we used to have so many little Saturday night functions, and that's all we could afford, pianos. So therefore, everybody had to learn to play the piano. (both laugh)[141]

Garner's mention of the object's temporal structure is noteworthy.[142] Rather than engaging place (space), he offers a way into the object through time - "Saturday night functions." But, through which Saturday night should one peer at the object? Congruent to BQF, which challenges the notion that time is only something that one might spatialize on a calendar, Garner wanted the listener to choose *when* to enter. Being with the elders as they recall memories has a similar, yet more substantial, effect as they are still here to reveal qualities about the object. Their guidance into the object happens on the temporal scale of their choosing. Their access of the past wherein the multiplicity of successive conscious states lives, their internal syntheses of a unified image of

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[140] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 171.
[141] Erroll Garner, "Erroll Garner Interview with Mike Rapchak WLS Radio Chicago July 22, 1966," transcribed by Tim Clausen, *Erroll Garner Gems*, Vol 3(4), October 1993, 3.
[142] Georgina Born, "The Social and the Aesthetic: For a Post-Bourdieuian Theory of Cultural Production," *Cultural Sociology* Vol. 4(2) (2010): 183. Instead of studying an object in its historical 'context,' Born points to Alfred Gell's anthropological theory (in *Art and Agency*, 1998) and suggests that we approach the object with the assumption that it can create its own relations to the past and future in the present. Extending Born, then, Pittsburgh is an object that produces a particular (musical) culture, mediated by material, social, and temporal assemblages in the present. Garner's holistic way of explaining Pittsburgh's cultural production was through the materiality of pianos and economic resources, the social aspect of communal "functions," and temporal regularity of "Saturday night," by which further meaning can be ascertained by the current object (i.e. via the memory of the elders).

the object, and their narration of the perceived memory witnesses the epistemological process by which one can gain knowledge.

2.4 Epistemology

The Western way to spatialize the future looks like conquering it, as if it is something to progress quickly toward, to take hold of, and to capture. BQF thinks otherwise - the future is not somewhere beyond where we are now. The theory seeks to re-condition or un-condition the future, to spatialize it in a manner that supports communities who have had their voices silenced. "The future is not always in front of us…the past is not always behind us…in some ways [the future and past are] layered in the present."[143] BQF inspires a reconnection of how we gain knowledge about the object, Pittsburgh: what is the order in which knowledge is received, what is the speed of knowledge, and what is the knowledge in service of?

In addressing Charlotte Carter's detective and jazz-themed novel, *Coq au Vin*, Julia Istomina suggests a *polyrhythmic epistemology* as a way of explaining how a deep understanding of the historical and racial politics of the music lends itself to "the inception and transmission of knowledge and resources across time, space, and narrative." Carter's protagonist, Nanette Hayes, is a young, talented, African American female saxophonist from New York City who is tasked with traveling to Paris to reunite with a family member. Although Nanette's mission takes place in the 1990s, she is constantly confronted with the images and legacies of African American musicians who made strong impacts on the French city in the 1920s. She is confronted with two

[143] Rasheedah Phillips, "Conversations / Rewriting the Future: Science Fiction and Contemporary Art," *Art Basel*, 24 September 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCC5kO18YoQ. Accessed 9 February 2024.

different Parises, her own direct participation and the "conversation across erased and barely heard testimonies" from the past.[144] In other words, she comes to know Paris through two different temporalities.

Distinguished professor and contributing author to BQF literature, Michelle Wright, offers a similar argument for epistemology's multiplicity. Recent scholarship has trended away from "Middle Passage Epistemologies" (MPEs), a term coined by Annette Henry in 2006, in favor of more temporally comprehensive models. Originally, MPEs "offer[ed] Africans and peoples of African descent an enabling rather than disabling interpellation," which Wright notes has become "the dominant formation imagining, justifying, and celebrating what has been termed the 'African diaspora' in the 20th century."[145] Although inclusive in terms of *spatial* identity, MPEs are exclusionary based on their *temporal* implications. The problem is that MPEs, such as "Trans-Atlantic slavery," represent a specific period, occluding Black communities that do not identify with these eras, subjectivities, or "consciousness[es]." The interpellation of oneself happens "through time and a specific ordering of knowledge."[146] Wright argues that new epistemologies are needed which "invoke all black communities" and that have *multiple temporal access points* "rather than the fixed time-line" of MPEs.

Empiricism, one branch of epistemology, has been acknowledged for its effective approach in terms of the temporal. Recent case studies in the field of music that investigate temporal experiences of individual listeners, recognize that "the subjective experience of the passage of time

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[144] Julia Istomina, "The Elsewhere Swerve: Polyrhythmic Epistemology and Inclusive History in Charlotte Carter's Jazz Detective fiction Novel *Coq au Vin* (1999)," *Arizona Quarterly* Vol 72(1) (Spring 2016).
[145] Michelle M. Wright, "Black in Time: Exploring New Ontologies, New Dimensions, New Epistemologies of the African Diaspora," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol. II*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (Middletown, DE: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2022), 16.
[146] Ibid., 21.

is neither entirely linear nor proportional…A listener might perceive duration expanding or contracting according to the musical material, or time traveling in loops…or skipping forward and backward."[147] That is to say that each listener has a unique perspective as to which direction and at what speed time is moving. In addition, empirical research, according to sociologist Neil Gross, provides an effective methodology for understanding social mechanisms and the intermediary moments of decision. Gross's theory of social mechanisms urges us to illuminate qualitative research and the time in-between locatable events.[148]

2.4.1 Stretching Time

In a 1970 interview with drummer Arthur Taylor, Garner expressed how his sense of time was influenced by the big bands and, specifically, the rhythm of guitarist Freddie Green, most known for his work with the Count Basie orchestra: "Jimmy Lunceford and Count Basie taught me how to keep time. Those two bands really laid that on me, and it was a thrill. I think Freddie Green is one of the greatest timekeepers in the world."[149] The elders agree that "Erroll Garner was the Basie band on the keyboard," recognizing that Garner made a conscious decision to play in a style that led him away from prescribed time structures.

Judge Watson offered an anecdote that represents Garner's mastery of all the rhythmic elements that comprise a big band sound. Around 1947, Watson's quintet was performing at the Original Caverns, a venue that could be rented out for dances in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. It was also famous for the small hot dog stand outside the front door. When they

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[147] Richard Glover, Jennie Gottschalk, and Bryn Harrison, *Being Time: Case Studies in Musical Temporality* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 10.
[148] Neil Gross, "A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74(3), June 2009.
[149] Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 92.

finished their set at one o'clock in the morning, Garner, who had not yet reached celebrity status, approached the bandstand, and asked to sit-in. After checking with his piano player, a respectful gesture before the pianist would be replaced on-stage by Garner, Watson invited Garner up to play. "When [Garner] was playing, it was very difficult to get a chorus [of soloing in], because he played everything. He played the bass, the piano, the horn - everything was being played. So, when you were trying to play a solo, it was difficult. But still, we managed [laughs]." Garner stayed on the bandstand with them for a few numbers, and they enjoyed their musical interaction "until about 2:30" in the morning.[150]

Dr. Harrison, who sat behind guitarist Freddie Green in the Count Basie orchestra between 1978 and 1980, explained how each instrument of a big band configuration contributes to the notion of the beat by playing somewhere within the "circle":

> A beat is not a point in time. It's a circle. It has infinite points. If you want to swing, you can't swing mathematically, like a computer. A quantized beat will put you to sleep…The phenomenon of jazz is the eternal present moment. It's interactive. It cannot be understood from a mind that cannot get in that bubble.[151]

According to Dr. Harrison, knowing where one's own musical voices fits into the overall temporal structure of the ensemble is "the secret to jazz." The elders' fluency of playing within the "circle" aligns with BQF's practice of event-building, which promotes the idea that space-time contains an infinite number of potential events. During event-building, BQF Creatives insert their conscious awareness within that "most minuscule moment in time before a change occurs in the environment" to consciously direct the point of change.[152]

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[150] Judge Warren Watson, interview by the author, 16 November 2019, Pittsburgh, video recording.
[151] Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview by the author, 9 December 2019, Pittsburgh, video recording.
[152] Phillips, "Constructing," 19, 22.

Materials scientist Ainissa Ramirez posits that in music and physics, alike, "time isn't fixed. It stretches." She uses the example of Louis Armstrong who "made every note do something, allowing him to stretch the present time with his music." Armstrong played notes "a few hundred milliseconds longer, or shorter, or sooner, or later than what was written on a page."[153] Ramirez points to the fact that the flexibility of time cannot be translated to the spatial constructs of the "page," that is, to written music notation. Or, as Dr. Harrison declared, temporal rhythm during performance is "interactive" - it depends on what everyone else is doing in the moment. Poet, educator, musician, writer, and co-creator of BQF, Camae Dennis,[154] says that BQF sound artists need "to listen to each other, to understand we play a role in collective sonic healing." Her strategy of composing music, called "liberation technology," requires "deep listening" and "deep feeling" to the sounds that are already around us. Dennis credits "our great artists like Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra and Alice Coltrane and others" with building "a rich sonic foundation" upon which she contributes her own sounds that mimic "the nonlinear/off-timed rhythms of the heart."[155]

The point is that maps (musical or otherwise) get in the way of making in-the-moment decisions, especially when interacting with others. In Christopher Small's model of "musicking" - whether in listening, performing, or dancing - "music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do."[156] The people who congregate at Judge Watson's house are *acting* in "the surrounding presence of others."[157] Everyone is encouraged to "call tunes" (to suggest the next song that will be played collectively) and to take solos (to improvise on the form of the music

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[153] Anissa Ramirez, *The Alchemy of Us: How Humans and Matter Transformed One Another* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020), 21, 22.
[154] Camae Dennis is also known as Camae Ayewa, Camae Defstar, and Moor Mother Goddess.
[155] Camae Ayewa, "Black Sonics and the Unknown Other," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol. II*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (Middletown, DE: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2022), 42.
[156] Small, 2.
[157] Arendt, 188.

selections). The elders, however, display an elevated sense of timing when it comes to deciding *when* to play, their musical phrases, and the ease with which they begin and end selections. They bring the rest of us with them in time, so to speak, without the use of a predetermined temporal map. Rather than reading a musical map, the Pittsburgh elders encourage learning songs by listening to each other and trying to fit one's voice into the overall "circle" with other instruments. Their process is not unique to Pittsburgh.[158] Yet, their method of playing brings up a durable impression about Garner: that he did not read music. (Dr. Harrison has debunked this misconception, which is elaborated in his biography in the Postscript.)

In dominant American music circles, to "read music" often means to interpret a style of music notation from 17th Century Western Europe. In such cases, musicians read "a system which preserves past musical events while enabling and informing future ones, both describing musical works and giving specific instructions for them to be realized."[159] By definition, the preservation of past musical events in written form gives credence to what has come before it and indoctrinates those same behaviors for future action. And, since "imported Europeanness" exists at the opposite end of American-music historiography in relation to vernacular music, it is inherently problematic to use the systems of European music notation when referring to jazz.[160] It was a pervasive and common practice for jazz and classical music to be characterized and analyzed against each other

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[158] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Thelonious Monk: Storia di un genio americano*, trans. Marco Bertoli (Rome: minimum fax, 2012), 268-9. Thelonious Monk, for example, preferred to aurally teach his compositions to band members out of his New York City home rather than relying on his written scores. David Chevan, "Musical Literacy and Jazz Musicians in the 1910s and 1920s," *Current Musicology*, Vol. 71-73 (Spring 2001/2002): 220. Chevan has noted that New Orleans musicians often had to negotiate their performance practices between written music and what they called "faking" in the early Twentieth Century. "Faking" was a process whereby musicians relied heavily on their ear (instead of on written charts) by memorizing and then "embellishing, eliding, and otherwise changing the part over time."

[159] Mieko Kanno, "Prescriptive Notation: Limits and Challenges," *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 26(2) (April 2007): 231.

[160] Philip V. Bohlman, "Vernacular Music," *Grove Music Online*, 20 January 2001, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000046449. Accessed 10 December 2018.

based on the absence or presence of Western European values.[161] Amiri Baraka was not alone in suggesting that there was a certain "human element" that was stripped from the meaning of the music when one relied on the written score.[162] However, reading music was also a form of "cultural accomplishment" that Black writers such as Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray pronounced as "a marker of freedom, self-mastery, and performative identity within a larger public context."[163] Learning European music systems and "acquiring old-world academic tools was frequently a step along the way to being a professional American musician."[164] Many African American musicians and educators saw a value in achieving fluency in written music notation as a means of eliminating barriers that had intentionally tried to bar them from succeeding in music organizations such as musicians' unions, as well as the strategic tactic of demonstrating Black excellence in order to gain access.[165]

Garner's reputation as a musician who did not read music became an enduring label that preceded him from the start of his career. The New York City music scene quickly took notice of Erroll Garner when he had his first extended residency there in September 1944. Only six months later, Downbeat magazine would introduce him as "brand-new to the local jazz scene and unknown outside of New York at present. He's young, only 23, and comes from Pittsburgh where he never learned to read music."[166] The press coverage from the foremost jazz-centric news outlet at the

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[161] Cheryl L. Keyes, "Sound, Voice, and Spirit: Teaching in the Black Music Vernacular," *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol 29(1) (Spring 2009): 11.
[162] Amiri Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1963), 181, 41.
[163] Daniel Fischlin, Ajay Heble, and George Lipsitz, *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Improvisation, Rights, and the Ethics of Cocreation* (Duham: Duke University Press, 2013), 77, 78.
[164] Ethan Iverson, "Black Music Teachers in the Era of Segregation," Do the M@th, https://ethaniverson.com/black-music-teachers-in-the-era-of-segregation/. Accessed 9 February 2024.
[165] Amy Absher, *The Black Musician and the White City: Race and Music in Chicago, 1900-1967* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 63, 64.
[166] "Erroll Garner, New 88er, Draws Raves," *Down Beat*, Vol 12(4), 15 February 1944, 2, digitized by RIPM Jazz Periodicals. Accessed 2 July 2020.

time would have been appreciated by any musician, much less a newcomer on the scene. New York City has always been known for being a competitive market, and it was no different in early 1945.[167] Musicians would also soon come to know him as a Pittsburgher would did not read music. Kelly Martin, who was Garner's steady drummer from 1956 to 1966,[168] recalled "the first guy that told me about Erroll was Shadow Wilson. He was down here on the street….So he said, 'Man, there's a little cat that's come into town from Pittsburgh…he can't read a note, but man, can this dude play!!'"[169] Drummer Rossiere "Shadow" Wilson played with Garner beginning in 1945 and into the early 50s and coached Martin on what he had learned from playing with him: "Just keep your eyes on him, 'cause he's always thinking."[170] So, Wilson's emphasis on Garner not reading music might have been a way of expressing the thrill of accompanying a pianist who made spontaneous decisions. During the 1940s, "the street" was an idiom for 52nd Street in Midtown Manhattan where speakeasies and clubs (like the Onyx, the Famous Door, and the Three Deuces) hosted up-and-coming bebop musicians.[171] Bassist Red Callender, who played with Garner in the late 1940s, remembers, "Norman Granz had been telling me about this wild little piano player from Pittsburgh…he never did read music."[172]

The emphasis on Garner's music literacy might have more to do with the musicians that came from Pittsburgh before him and the fact that, unlike Garner, their mastery of notated music

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[167] Robert Palmer, "Jazz Thriving in the City in Biggest Surge Since 40's," *The New York Times*, 29 January 1982, https://www.nytimes.com/1982/01/29/arts/jazz-thriving-in-the-city-in-biggest-surge-since-40-s.html. Accessed 9 February 2024.
[168] Tim Clausen, "Kelly Martin: A Biographical Interview," *Erroll Garner Gems*, Vol 2(3), July 1992, 4.
[169] Kelly Martin, interview by Phil Schaap, 29 October 1979, transcription courtesy of James M. Doran, email, 2 October 2019, 7.
[170] Tim Clausen, "Interview with Kelly Martin," *Erroll Garner Gems*, Vol 2(3), July 1992, 9.
[171] Jake Neher, "NYC Music Trail: Swing Street (with Slideshow)," *WFUV.ORG*, 18 July 2012, https://wfuv.org/content/nyc-music-trail-swing-street-slideshow. Accessed 10 February 2024. Bob Egan, "PopSpots' Guide to Legendary Manhattan Jazz Club Locations from the Golden Era of NYC Jazz Clubs, 1930-1950," *PopSpots*, https://popspotsnyc.com/jazz_clubs/. Accessed 10 February 2024.
[172] Red Callender and Elaine Cohen, *Unfinished Dream: The Musical World of Red Callender* (New York: Quartet Books, 1985), 66, 68.

may have served them in becoming outstanding band leaders and recording artists during parts of their careers. Pianists Earl Hines (b. 1904), Mary Lou Williams (b. 1910), Billy Strayhorn (b. 1915), and Johnny Costa (b. 1921), bandleader Billy Eckstine (b. 1914), arranger/trombonist Sammy Nestico (b. 1924), bassist Eddie Safranski (b. 1918), guitarist/saxophonist Ray Crawford (b. 1924), drummer Kenny Clarke (b. 1914), trumpeter Roy Eldridge (b. 1911), organist Glenn Hardman (b. 1910), saxophonist Irving Russin (b. 1911), bassist/tuba player, Ernest Hill (b. 1900), saxophonist Nick Calazza (b. 1914), vocalist/trumpeter Maxine Sullivan (b. 1911), trumpeter/arranger Billy May (b. 1916), drummer Art Blakey (b. 1919), and arranger Leroy Holmes (b. 1913) all came from Pittsburgh before or during Garner's time.[173] None of them, however, became known for "not reading." Garner, on the other hand, was a Pittsburgher who chose not to concern himself with the business of written music, and that combination might have been something of a novelty.

It may be tempting to think that Garner broke the 'mold,' as if Pittsburgh were some kind of machine that churned out talented pianists that could "read" except for Garner who ignored Western music notation altogether. But, as Jacques Attali explains, "molded objects" do not always imply sameness between them. Particularly, "in music, repetition requires an attempt to maintain diversity, to produce a meaning for demands."[174] From this perspective, one could argue that there is nothing exceptionally interesting about the combination of Garner being from Pittsburgh and

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[173] Dr. Nelson Harrison, telephone interview by the author, 31 July 2023, audio recording. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were Black teachers in the community who taught piano using written Western European notation, including Madam Mary Cardwell Dawson and James Miller, both of whom instructed Ahmad Jamal. Out of the Dawson school came another well-respected piano teacher, Fannetta Nelson Gordon, who played in the orchestra with Billy Strayhorn (class of 1934) at Westinghouse High School. Gordon, who was the aunt of Dr. Nelson Harrison, was posthumously awarded the valedictory for Westinghouse's class of 1936. She had been robbed of the title after the racist principal, Dr. Kisler, threatened the then recently hired orchestra director, Carl McVicker, to lower her grade.

[174] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 128-129.

his choosing not to utilize Western European music notational system. In this respect, Garner did not break the Pittsburgh mold. He kept it going by being different, as did Hines, Williams, Strayhorn, and Costa in their own ways. After his early development in Pittsburgh, where he learned to play the piano "by ear," Garner may have found the label easy to adopt as an artistic decision that set him apart.

Garner's method of playing without a musical map was developed in the Kan-D-Kids, a talent group of Black Pittsburgh youth.[175] By age eleven, Garner was learning popular songs by ear, for example, "Mule Face Blues," a composition by New Orleans cornetist, bandleader, and mentor to Louis Armstrong, 'King' Joe Oliver. The Kan-D-Kids often featured him in a few piano solo numbers during public performances.[176] His renditions "would bring the house down with applause" to mixed audiences at Black-owned clubs in Pittsburgh - the Savoy Ballroom, the Granada Theater, and the Roosevelt Theater.[177] Garner, who took the nickname "Gumdrop" in the group, was a stand-out talent and learned how to play piano in the following manner, according to Lee Matthews, the director and founder of the group:

> [Dorothy, my wife,] taught Erroll little riffs on the piano and how to chord a little bit because he didn't know anything about reading. He just went from there and did real good. He could play all the popular songs that were out at the time. I would get a recorder and play the recording at rehearsal with him and let him listen to it. Then my wife would get on the piano and show him how to play it. That little kid would pick up on it right away.[178]

The problematic of the institutionalization of jazz is due to its hybridity as an oral tradition with a literary component that proffers "legitimacy" as well as authorship. For the formidable years

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[175] Doran, 23.
[176] Karlton E. Hester, *From Africa to Afrocentric Innovations Some Call "Jazz," Vol. 4* (Santa Cruz: Histeria Records & Publishing Company, 2001), 204. "King" Joe Oliver was a New Orleans cornetist with whom Louis Armstrong got his start.
[177] Doran, 24.
[178] Doran, 24-25.

of the Pittsburgh elders, jazz happened outside the academy. Besides the space at the Black Musicians' Union, the learning process happened in places like the one we use for our rehearsals - Judge Watson's living room. Following the elders' rhythm of performance interspersed with their cadence of telling stories about Pittsburgh opens one up to experiencing the object on a deeper level. They promote the concept of a collective sense of temporality wherein instrumentalists fill-in the gaps within the "circle." As far as being "readers," it really does not make a difference if anyone in the group reads or not. The elders are reordering time so that the emphasis is placed on our real-time interaction in the present, aligning with BQF's directive of 'listening to each other,' rather than a preconceived map that would give precedence to the past.

2.5 Reordering the Time of Pittsburgh

BQF explores the notion that the past and future are "layered" and able to be "reordered" in the present. Their strategies and practices involve one's awareness to proactively produce time instead of reacting to the temporal order ("clock-time") concocted by Western hegemonic structures. BQF creators question the direction and speed that time is moving, realizing that minority communities have long been robbed of the right to map out their own futures. Using BQF strategies and practices, the following three sections interpret ways to think about how the elders are reordering the temporality of the object. The sessions at Judge Watson's house are a combination of music performance and sharing memories about the history of jazz.

2.5.1 Manipulating Temporal Speed

The idea that certain events seem to move slower, and others move faster is a familiar concept. We say that 'time flies when you're having fun,' or we find that when we are bored, minutes can feel like hours. However, these sentiments only prove true in the moment. When we look back on the past, the opposite seems to be the case - time moved slower when we were enjoying ourselves and sped up when we were bored. Ainissa Ramirez explains that when it comes to exciting events in our lives, "what neuroscientists have found is that we don't perceive time slowing down in the moment, *but* our recall of the event makes us believe that time has slowed down."[179] When we recall an event in which we were taking-in a lot of information, we remember the experience as if time had been moving slowly. It works in the reverse too - when we recall events in our life in which we were not processing a lot of information, our perception of the time during those events was that it moved quickly.

BQF points specifically to Robert E. Ornstein's *On the Experience of Time* (1969), which examines the process by which humans recall auditory events.[180] His book outlines the "mechanisms which underlie time experience" in order to provide a basis for analyzing the kinds of information humans are capable of retaining. Ornstein uses the metaphor of a computer's memory space to explain how it happens that we perceive time as moving slower during exciting events. Ornstein's experiments show several ways that one's storage size can increase and

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[179] Ramirez, 23.

[180] Rasheedah Phillips, "Constructing a Theory," 14. Phillips lists Larry Dossey as the author of the four modes of subjective temporal experience in his *Space, Time & Medicine* (1982). However, Dossey's book cites Robert E. Ornstein's *On the Experience of Time* (1969) as the origin of the different "modes." Robert E. Ornstein, *On the Experience of Time* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 18, 19. BQF Creatives manipulate time according to Ornstein's book, a response to the post-1950 "rebirth of concern with consciousness" in psychology and the lack of a synthesized account of what was known about temporal experience as it relates to "information processing, attention and memory" in perception and cognition.

therefore lengthen duration: an increase in the "number of stimuli perceived (and presumably stored)" and an increase in the newness or disorganization of the information. Conversely, when there is a decrease in input or less attention is needed to perform a task (perhaps the information is redundant or very organized), the perceived duration of the event is shortened.[181] Ornstein concludes that humans "*create* our own duration experience from our memories."[182]

Musicians can also affect the way the audience experiences time. If the listeners are enticed by the music, time will have seemed to move slower; if listeners are not moved by it, they will recall that time seemed to pass quickly. As an example, Ramirez again describes Louis Armstrong's wielding of time: "Armstrong stretches not just the notes, but also the listener's sense of time. While the songs on a 78 rpm disc are three short minutes, they are so rich with information it causes our brains to believe the recording is longer."[183] Likewise, when Garner told Arthur Taylor about how the big bands that passed through Pittsburgh influenced him, memories that took up more "storage space" in his brain, time probably seemed to have been moving slower during those impressionable events.

In the following transcript, the elders recount events in their lives in which they were processing a lot of musical information. Time is remembered as having moved slower during those events, as evidenced by their detailed description of the music. On one occasion, they were talking about Pittsburgh jazz organist, Wendell Byrd, "the premier jazz Hammond organ player of Pittsburgh."[184]

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[181] Ornstein, 43, 88.
[182] Ibid., 110.
[183] Ramirez, 22.
[184] Harrison, email. Wendell's younger brother, guitarist Jerry Byrd, was more known outside of Pittsburgh than Wendell, as Jerry toured with the likes of Jack McDuff, Jimmy Smith, Don Patterson, and Sam Rivers.

Dr. Harrison: Did you ever go to the seashore? You hear the gulls, and you hear the foghorns?

Mr. Murphy: He put all that on the organ.

Dr. Harrison: That's the way Wendell played "Ebbtide." He started on the pedal. [Hums.] The foghorn.

Judge Watson: Really. Son of a gun [smiling].

Dr. Harrison: Yeah. It'd sound just like a foghorn.

Judge Watson: Go 'head!

Dr. Harrison: then you'd hear the gulls. [motions his right hand at the top of the register.] He'd be up here "doo doo"… then you'd hear the shore [makes whooshing sound]…you'd hear the surf coming in and out [blows wind-like sounds out of his mouth]. He's doing all three at once, you know. Now, watch this Reni, watch this Reni.[185] He's doing that for a good five minutes. And then his hand would go up here [stretches right hand high above his head]. Am I lying? Am I telling the truth?

Mr. Murphy: That's right.

Dr. Harrison: His hand would go up like this, and he's doing all this stuff and then [drops right hand down as if to land on the organ]. "Shaaaaaa…. yaaaaa… yaaaaa." Oh my god, the whole place would fall out.

Mr. Murphy: [laughing] It was really something.

Judge Watson: [smiling] He would build it up.

Mr. Murphy: We were playing the Night Cap East, and Wendell looks at me and says, "man, we're gonna do…" what's that Gershwin thing?

Dr. Harrison: Oh, "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." …

Mr. Murphy: Yeah, and let me tell you something. I never thought I could do that thing with him. But we did that at the Night Cap, and like, it just engulfed me altogether…I had to play some stuff that I hadn't played since me and the Judge played [laughs]…like "Strike up the Band." Wendell looked at me [laughing] and he said, "Wow." [everyone laughs] Everything was going just the way it was supposed to be. People were standing up. Just me and Wendell Byrd.

Dr. Harrison: you couldn't help it, yes!

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[185] The elders call the author by her nickname, "Reni."

> Judge Watson: when you get into one of them grooves…you can go. It's hard to get out too!

BQF proposes that one's "activity is what determines how quickly or slowly time moves."[186] When Mr. Murphy said he was "engulfed" on stage with Wendell Byrd, BQF might look at this moment as one in which Mr. Murphy was "exploit[ing] time to slow it down, speed it up, or break it into variable increments to allow greater degrees of access to the past and future than a linear mode of time would allow."[187] The duration of the event did not change in the moment of playing. Looking back, it seems that there was an energy between him and Byrd which allowed them the ability to wield time in their favor, to slow it down, to control the movement of his sticks and the notes that Byrd chose on the organ. Taking control of their own power over time consciousness elongated the time over which good and exciting memories seemed to occur.

There were also negative and traumatic memories they faced inside and outside of Pittsburgh, which also would have affected how they experienced time. They recall a time when they were not allowed to sit at the counter at the Sun drugstore, Isaly's deli, Murphy's 5 and 10 store, and other white-owned establishments in Pittsburgh. Judge Watson remembered that during the Second World War, as he and his fellow Navy members in uniform were in San Francisco, a man did not want to serve them in the "white" section of the bar. "I made up my mind, I was sitting there with a Navy uniform on, I was not going to tolerate that." Judge Watson told the man they were going to "drink all the whiskey" to change the man's mind about treating them with the same respect as white patrons. Mr. Murphy had similar stories about white soldiers who "tried to carry

[186] Phillips, "Constructing," 22, 24.
[187] Ibid., 22.

that stuff overseas with them" during Vietnam.[188] These are the memories that are essential to get into the object and write truthfully about Garner's Pittsburgh:

> Dr. Harrison: That's what we lived every day, as they [white society] were excluding us from buildings. You're telling us we can't go here, and we can't go there.
>
> Judge Watson: [laughing] We didn't even care.
>
> Mr. Murphy: [laughing] No!
>
> Dr. Harrison: [sings melody to "Girl Talk" adding embellished organ sounds with his mouth.] Waaahhh. [Byrd] came in ahead of where it's supposed to go… (everyone laughs) just little stuff like that… (at 9 min) shoot, Reni, it might put you in a time tunnel. That's what we were doing! (Judge laughs)[189]

BQF's notion of retrocurrences explains "how memory waves spread across time and space, reaching backward in time and forward in time…reminiscent of quantum matter, where time is reversible and information can flow in both directions."[190] To support their concept of retrocurrences, BQF cites the principle of quantum entanglement, wherein two entangle particles can communicate even if they become separated: one particle "send[s] a wave backward in time to the moment when the entangled pair was created."[191] How this applies to the elders asks us to think about what happens to the sound particles after they have been heard and recorded by

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[188] Judge Warren Watson, Carl Murphy, and Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview by author, 6 August 2018, Pittsburgh, video recording. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 would make it illegal for public spaces to be segregated, which by no means ended other forms of racial oppression and discrimination that the elders endured.
[189] Judge Warren Watson, Carl Murphy, and Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview by author, 9 December 2019, Pittsburgh, video recording.
[190] Black Quantum Futurism, "Activating Retrocurrences & Reverse Time-Bindings in the Quantum Now(s)," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol. II*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (Middletown, DE: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2022), 78-79. BQF cites "the flow of information within Octavia's Butler's novel *Kindred* (1979), and the layered and entangled temporalities etched upon Dana's movement on the timeline as she travels back and forth between her home in 1976 and a pre-Civil War Maryland plantation."
[191] Phillips, "Constructing," 17.

memory?[192] Time tunnels act as a sort of temporal barrier, protective vehicle, or insulated portal for movement away from external threats and towards a desired future. In this sense, it takes a past action to create the potential time tunnel and future recollection to realize it. Their current perceptions that past events seemed to move in slow-motion show that the elders are now realizing the futures that they helped create in the past. The elders insert themselves into time tunnels which retroactively slow down the past when the events are accessed from their present recall.

BQF seeks to understand how memory affects the direct and continual experience of time and how oral histories can help unlock solutions to real-life problems. By telling their stories, the Pittsburgh elders are mediating time of events that define the object. *How* they choose to elaborate on their memories influences the temporal speed and direction from which these event maps extend.[193] In effect, the elders are redefining the object's past from their 'now' moment.

2.5.2 The Arrow of Time

In a 1966 interview, Black newsman, television/radio journalist, and ardent jazz fan, Gil Noble, encouraged Garner to expound on the difficulties he had faced as a musician:

> Noble: You weren't always making the big money that you are now. Tell us a little bit about the hard times, I think everybody would like to hear about it.
>
> Garner: Well, the hard times, let's face it, I started out playing solo, working in, like they call "cocktail lounges." Definitely, and that's all I could do. In fact, when I got one of my first breaks, I couldn't even join the union. The union didn't even let me get in, for the simple reason because I couldn't read music…

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[192] Black Quantum Futurism, "Sounds as Causes and Events," *Non Locality Zine* (1), 3. https://www.blackquantumfuturism.com/product-page/nonlocality-zine-001. Accessed 9 September 2022.
[193] Black Quantum Futurism, "BQF Theory & Practice Terms," in *Black Quantum Futurism: Theory & Practice, Vol. II*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips (Middletown, DE: The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2022), 83.

[after a few exchanges]

Noble: Tell me more about the hard times.

Garner: Well, I mean, I've scrambled around for quite some time. I mean, I scrambled around in Los Angeles, California, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a place in upstate New York, geez I can't think of the name of the place.

[Garner dodges the issue of racism, so Noble inquires more directly a few minutes later.]

Noble: Do you think your career could have been more lucrative if you did not happen to be Brown?

Garner: No, I wouldn't say that, sincerely because I think this is all up to the audience and the people in the world as far as my talent is concerned. Because everywhere I've played, it has never been any harm to me whatsoever.

Noble: You've never felt the pressure of being a Negro?

Garner: No, sincerely. I can even now say that I remember my time in Pittsburgh, when I was a kid. In fact, one time, other than me and another friend of mine, which I know was a great drummer named "Honey Boy," [James "Honey Boy" Minor]. I don't know if you've ever heard of him or not; fantastic drummer, he was with Duke Ellington for a little while too, but we used to be the only two Colored people, Negroes, that worked in certain sections of the heart of downtown Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania. As it didn't mean a thing because I was still allowed to roam through the room and sit with customers and drink with them and everything, and it didn't mean a thing. And at this time, I remember then, I could leave that room and go next door to the theater, but I had to sit up in "peanut heaven." In the theater, what we used to call the "peanut heaven" which was the highest balcony in the theater, not the lower balcony. I remember that and I could come back from the theater to this little joint, and it was like I owned it, but from the people and from the boss, too, do you follow what I'm trying to say?[194]

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[194] Erroll Garner, radio interview with Gil Noble, *WLIB Radio 107.5*, circa 1966, audio CD. Alfred Edmond, Jr. "A Tribute to Broadcasting Legend Gil Noble," *Black Enterprise Magazine*, 6 April 2012, https://www.blackenterprise.com/a-tribute-to-broadcasting-legend-gil-noble/. Accessed 6 February 2024. Gil Noble would go on to become the host and producer of WABC-TV New York's *Like It Is*, a public affairs show that was broadcast from 1968 to 2011. Covering stories and interviewing Black people that were disregarded by mainstream media, *Like It Is* was one of few television shows "that African Americans could trust to tell the stories and cover issues of importance." Angelika Beener, "Gil Noble: Jazz, Journalism, Lessons and Legacy," *Alternate Takes*, blog, 6 April 2011, https://alternate-takes.org/2011/04/06/gil-noble-jazz-journalism-lessons-and-legacy/. Accessed 6 February 2024. A jazz enthusiast, Noble dedicated episodes spending time with and interviewing jazz musicians including Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie, Abbey Lincoln, Billy Taylor, Lena Horne, Max Roach, Carmen McRae, Wynton Marsalis, as well as Erroll Garner.

Garner then immediately countered the reality of negotiating through the spaces of segregated society with the anecdote that the white union (Local 60) granted him a union card while the Black union (Local 471) refused him one on the account of his not reading music. Garner laughed about how, years later, the Black union sent a secretary to give him an honorary card only after he became famous. However, James Doran's biography has furnished a contrary story with proof that Garner's name was on the Black union's roster in 1941 as well as a statement with Local 471 board member Leroy Brown. Although most musicians were put through a skills-based test to receive their union card, Brown admits that, "in Erroll's case, we made allowances. A man with that much talent, it didn't matter if he could read because he could play anything."[195] Nevertheless, Noble was trying to get Garner to talk openly about his struggles as a Black artist, but Garner appeared reluctant to do so. Why did Garner not feel compelled to open up to a trusted Black journalist, if not about his own experiences, then at least about his community, more generally? BQF theory provides a way of thinking about Garner in the political realm and how present conversations with the elders can add to what was not said.

The Western linear concept the time, which moves from past to future, has been reified and conceptually linked to "progress." However, the direction of that arrow has failed to produce its promised results time and time again for marginalized communities. The practice of "reverse time-binding" offers ways of seeing how BQF practitioners can reach into the future and reorder the past. Specifically, this strategy investigates how memories can reach forward in time to affect change, and likewise, transmit future experiences to the past. In her 2017 graphic novelette, *The Telescoping Effect Pt. 1*, Joy KMT, who is also a BQF contributor, illustrates how reverse time-

[195] Doran, 44, 45, 47.

binding operates. Joy KMT points to two contrasting events in 1919 - the confirmation of Einstein's general theory of relativity made possible by the solar eclipse on May 29 and the brutal murder of Black Americans by white supremacists in multiple states during the "Red Summer." The former was celebrated in the West as a great discovery in the way humans understand the cosmos. The latter attests to the fact that Black people in America had yet to receive the same status as "human" under the hegemonic structures, let alone to share in the "progress" that the Western (white) world was commemorating. Reverse time-binding offers "a small concession to the timeline which we find ourselves on, hitched to the arrow of progress, speeding one second by one second forward."[196] Instead of accepting the linearity of time or a duty to serve a "white" notion of progress, BQF practitioners work to "disrupt the master's clock," accessing memories of the future *and* the past and reordering the notion of progress.[197]

During our rehearsals, the elders share their memories, which includes events in which they were attacked or shunned (physically or otherwise) for being Black in America. And although Garner never outright talked about his own experiences of living in a racist society, the Pittsburgh elders can contribute their feelings so that that important aspect is not left out. The elders were always concerned with how my graduate work was going and how I was progressing on the dissertation. During one rehearsal, someone in the group asked what books I had been reading recently. I was in the process of writing the chapter on Garner's titles, which have to do with the doubling or folding of time. I was trying to grasp Nagel and Wood's substitution model of creation (*Anachronic Renaissance*) and how, if at all, it could apply to what I was trying to say about Garner. My short answer to their question was, "I'm incorporating [*Anachronic Renaissance*] into

[196] Black Quantum Futurism, "BQF Theory & Practice Terms," 84.
[197] Phillips, "Conversations."

my dissertation…how [Garner's] titles folded time on itself…I don't know…I'm not trying to Europeanize Garner. I hope it doesn't come out like that."

Mr. Murphy immediately responded to me: "Don't ever do that to a Black jazz musician. I know I don't like it. What you're doing is you're diluting it; you don't want to dilute it. Keep it right where it's at. Once they do it, it's done." After a few minutes of the group discussing this topic, Judge Watson interjected, lightheartedly: "All we are are some old Pittsburghers. We cannot be improved upon." Everyone chuckled before Mr. Murphy brought us all back to the seriousness of the conversation and succinctly stated: "What you're doing to the music…they're trying to make it world music. 'This is world music, this is American music.' What happened to the Black music? After everything we did?" Judge Watson, without saying a word, started playing "There Is No Greater Love," and everyone joined in.[198]

The conversation bears reflection on two statements that were said by Mr. Murphy and Judge Watson which, on the surface, seem to handle the past as unchangeable. In Mr. Murphy's comment, "once they do it, it's done", he uses the pronoun "they," which could have been in reference to Garner and all the African American jazz musicians (and Black ancestors) that these elders hold in high esteem. He could have meant that it is pointless to write about what Garner did because any attempt to summarize or convey relative knowledge of Garner's work can never measure up to the absolute knowledge of someone who experienced it firsthand. Yet, considering his later comment about the whitewashing of Black music in favor of academia's subsumption of it under the broader scope of "world music," specifically, and, more generally, the historical negligence of white historiographers to credit jazz's Black creators and innovators ("after

[198] Judge Warren Watson, Carl Murphy, and Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview by author, 7 July 2022, Pittsburgh, video recording.

everything [African Americans] did"), "they" could also be interpreted to encompass the white world, "the powers that be," which is never "us." In other words, once the music has been "diluted," there is no going back.

The second statement which seems to be an example of temporal immobility came from Judge Watson: "All we are are some old Pittsburghers. We cannot be improved upon." The sentiment relays a fixity in time, that humans live in the present and can neither go back and change the past nor can they improve faster than what human capacity allows. While Mr. Murphy's stance could be read as though past events are immutable, Judge Watson shifts the focus to people as immutable entities. Both elders appear to suggest the unchangeability of past events and their inability to go 'back' in time to change anything. Under the Western notion of progress that privileges the future, community elders may feel left behind and that their opinions and experiences are no longer valued. Some scholars see the "cultural practice and memory-based reconstruction" inherent in jazz as oriented toward the future, in the sense that younger generations want to "internalize something of the older musicians' spirit and wisdom in order to become not only better performers, but also better people."[199] Although that may be true, BQF theory asks one to consider the temporal order in-reverse. What if jazz is oriented toward the past so that, congruent with African traditional philosophy, time is produced for the purpose of coming to terms with the past?[200] Could the arrow of time be moving toward what has already taken place?

Through the lens of BQF, both Mr. Murphy's and Judge Watson's statements can be read to suggest the contrary - that the past is *not* fixed and that they are able to access it through memory. In BQF, which promotes the traditional African understanding of the past as malleable, one can

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[199] Jackson, 48, 154.
[200] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1969), 17, 19, 23.

create new meanings about the past. Mr. Murphy's statement ("Once they do it, it's done") is not so much meant to fix Garner's position in history, as if to say 'we cannot change the past.' It is to say that Garner planted seeds in a purposeful way, and that the people who currently celebrate him are no coincidence. Those who are present are meant to come to terms with what Garner left, in action and speech, to address what was and was not said. The strategy of reverse time-binding allows for current memories to bring to light the injustices that were done and that have not yet been addressed.

Judge Watson's statement ("All we are are some old Pittsburghers. We cannot be improved upon.") can also be realigned in terms of BQF. Although there is a humorous twist, as the group is well-aware that not only are the elders musically accomplished but also strive to continue to improve, the comment speaks to something deeper that involves their identity as Black. In BQF, "Black" refers not only to "skin pigmentation, race, lineage, and cultural identity," but to the part of space known as "dark matter."[201] What, exactly, dark matter is made of remains a mystery to the reigning scientific community. Current literature understands it as "matter that does not clump together in stars and hence does not give off light, and that thus exerts a gravitational pull without revealing itself visibly."[202] In BQF, dark matter not only exists in deep space, but in one's inner mind and body. Dark matter "refers to the light absorbing darkness of melanin, and the speed of darkness which surpasses that of light by not needing to move at all."[203] Judge Watson's words reflect a permanence, an unapologetic nonconformity, allowing other [white] bodies and matter to move around it.

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[201] Phillips, "Constructing," 13.
[202] Brian Greene, *Fabric of Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 295.
[203] Phillips, "Constructing," 13.

In her novel, *The Parable of the Talents* (1998), Octavia Butler - the first science-fiction writer to receive the MacArthur Fellowship 'Genius Grant' - writes about a future existence in the United States wherein, under a tyrannical government and civil unrest, small factions of people (of all races and cultural backgrounds) build their own communities in order to survive and look after each other. The narrator's village, called Earthseed, does not believe in a "promised afterlife. Earthseed's heaven is literal, physical…it promises its people immortality only through their children, their work, and their memories."[204] In this statement, Butler privileges the present and simultaneously recognizes the layering of the past and future onto the present. Writing about Garner in community with the elders is a "literal" and "physical" reminder of the current state of the object. The elders take it upon themselves to tend to the seeds properly and guide those writing about the object so that Garner's true legacy can thrive. They are the descendants of the Pittsburgh ancestors who have taken up the task of protecting the meaning of the object, including Garner's political being in it. Their willingness to share memories is an example of them directing speech so that it reflects the interior of the object, on which Garner may have been inclined to leave for the current elders to comment.

2.6 Pittsburgh in Time

How real is Pittsburgh as a space? It is only a space because our memory relies on space to account for time's passing. What if Pittsburgh is more like an idea of belonging? Could space simply be the brain's reference point for memories of music "from Pittsburgh", a reference for

[204] Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Talents* (London: Headline, 2019), 45.

time? This chapter embraces an ontology in which the object's temporal conditions are at least equal in weight to its spatial conditions. The object is mobile on both fronts – in time and space.

Pittsburgh's temporal conditions are constantly being reordered by its "indigenous progenitors," the jazz elders whose memories are rich in details about how the object has transformed and endured. Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) is a theory that champions oral histories of marginalized communities as a method for realizing how their memories and consciousnesses can take back the power or reorder the temporal structure that has, for much of history, worked against them. Similar to the BQF strategy of "event-building," the elders stretch time during music performance to illustrate the infinite number of temporal access points into the object. Temporal elasticity demonstrates the inadequacy of spatial images in music, which also addresses the hollow notion that Garner "did not read" music. Through the lens of BQF's "retroccurences," the elders change the speed of time's passing by creating time tunnels that connect the past and the present. Recalling experiences, they are able retrieve the past and mark its tempo in the present. Using BQF's reverse time-binding strategy, the elders' speech is analyzed as a tool for redirecting time's arrow. Under the aegis of their current action and speech, Garner's political being is still retrievable.

Garner lives on in the memories and stories about him. His childhood home bonded him to the object for eternity. BQF asks us to reconsider the direction of eternity. Where and when is time headed, and in service of what? Likewise, when knowledge is gained about the object, who benefits? Acknowledging the power of the elders to reorder time, the fabric of which is "layered in the present," is a way of realizing that Garner's history is still being made.[205] What Garner means to Pittsburgh and what Pittsburgh meant to Garner is for the elders to decide. In time.

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[205] Phillips, "Conversations."

2.7 Postscript: Condensed Biographies of the Pittsburgh Jazz Elders

2.7.1 Judge Warren Watson

Judge Warren Watson was born on February 20, 1923 on Bennett street in the Brushton-Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh. He sat first chair trumpet in the orchestra club at Westinghouse High School at the same time that Garner was enrolled there. Pittsburgh schools did not open the door for Black teachers until 1946, so music classes within academia were instructed by white teachers like Carl McVicker (orchestra club director at Westinghouse High School) and Matty Shiner (brass instructor at Duquesne University).[206] Although Watson was two years behind Garner, he can recall how the young Garner navigated playing in the orchestra club without reading notated music:

> We'd be playing and Garner would come in. The director, Carl McVicker, knew him and knew that he could play. And he would sit-in during the piano parts. Light classics is what we were doing in this club…and operatic-type stuff…and Erroll would sit-in, he apparently didn't have the ability to just look at the paper and say what's happening. McVicker would say 'G!' [the key of G] and Erroll would run like crazy from there on. You didn't have to tell him anything but the main key and he was gone because he knew everything. All the progressions and everything. You can imagine, very nice…we were playing operatic tunes, the same thing that the Pittsburgh Symphony was playing. [Jazz repertoire] may have been allowed, but we weren't playing any of them…I didn't get into jazz for a long time, when I was a leader of a band in the Navy. I heard Dizzy and Parker, and that's when I became interested.[207]

Judge Watson attended Oberlin College for one year, 1940-41, as America was getting ready to join World War II. He was drafted to the Navy, even though he would have volunteered to serve anyway. Judge Watson signed up to play in the Drum and Bugle Corps, auditioning on

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[206] Warren Watson, interview with author, 16 November 2019.
[207] Ibid.

trumpet by sight reading "On the Mall" in the key of G-flat. The Chief Petty Officer in charge of the bands on the base was so impressed by Judge Watson's rendition, he was selected to lead a band, which also featured the famed bassist, Major Holley. They were sent to San Diego to play concerts on destroyer ships for the sailors who were being deployed. In the evenings, they played jazz at the United Service Office and became "the San Diego band."

Judge Watson left the service in 1945 and returned to Pittsburgh where he formed his own jazz ensemble while completing undergraduate and law degrees at Duquesne University. Playing in the high register of the trumpet had given him a hernia, so he decided to take up the tenor saxophone which he would play for the next 35-40 years. His profession as a Judge meant that he did not have to compete for musical work, although his band was made up of serious and talented musicians. His current instrument is the Electronic Wind Instrument (EWI), which not only takes no wind pressure to produce a sound like a saxophone but offers him the opportunity to sample sounds from a variety of instruments.

Judge Watson became a role model and mentor for many young Pittsburghers. This included the then twelve-year old Nelson Harrison and his twelve friends who called themselves the Beethoven Bebops because they "played everything from Beethoven to Bebop." Judge Watson met with them every Friday, teaching them "how to speak the jazz language."[208] When Watson's friends were in town from being on the road, like trombonists Sam Hurt and Jerry Elliott, he would invite them to rehearsals to perform and interact with the youngsters.[209] Judge Watson's current residence, the site of our rehearsals, is on "Sugar Top," part of the upper Hill District of Pittsburgh.[210]

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[208] Nelson Harrison on NeighborhoodVoices.org 15 January 2022.
[209] Nelson Harrison, interview with author, 28 July 2022.

2.7.2 Mr. Carl Murphy

Mr. Carrell "Carl" Murphy was born on June 13, 1936 in Smithdale, Pennsylvania, a small coal mining town Southeast of Pittsburgh. The youngest of eleven children, seven boys and four girls, he was the only one born in Pittsburgh. The rest of his siblings were born in Alabama and migrated to Pittsburgh when his maternal grandfather, Smith Scales, brought the family north. Mr. Murphy never got a chance to meet his paternal grandfather, who was enslaved in the South. Mr. Murphy's father, who was part Native American, was born in 1875, ten years after the Civil War ended, and had twelve or thirteen siblings. Mr. Murphy's parents raised him in the Baptist church. He attended Langley High School and remembers that "Pittsburgh city schools were great back then."

Mr. Murphy learn a lot about drumming from listening to records and from his older brother, Robert Smith Murphy. When Robert was double-booked for a gig, he would send the young Carl as his substitute. Mr. Murphy never learned to read music - he "listened, watched, and tried to apply how [he would like to do it." He also plays piano, mostly by ear, but has taken some lessons from a teacher in his adulthood to try to get better at reading music. He never had music instruction in a high school band or other organized academic setting. He "just started playing."

Mr. Murphy worked in the post office before being drafted to serve in the U.S. Army in 1959 during the Vietnam War. Stationed in France would prove to be impressionable for a few reasons. In terms of racial politics, he notice that his white comrades, especially those from the South, had no desire to integrate into French culture. He, on the other hand, learned the language and took trips to "go hang with the brothers and sisters in Paris's Harlem." He remembers one African friend saying, "you know why we come to Paris? We follow the money. They take all our resources so we come here to see if we can take some of it back."

In terms of the music scene abroad, he got a chance to explore some of the jazz clubs in Paris, including the Blue Note, Le Mars Club, and Le Chat Qui Pêche. Between 1960 and 1961, even on a modest Army salary, he was able to make about a dozen trips to these venues, where he would a chance encounter with another Pittsburgh native. Drummer Kenny Clarke (né Kenneth Spearman) had been living there since 1956 and was playing in a trio with pianist Bud Powell and French bassist Pierre Michelot. (The French, he remembered, demanded that American ex-patriates use European musicians.) Clarke invited Murphy to sit-in on drums four or five times on these occasions. He recalls having dropped the drum sticks during "Billie's Bounce," recalling, "something in me said, 'I gotta get it together.' They made me feel welcome." He would return home before getting the chance to meet Nathan Davis, a saxophonist from Kansas City, Kansas, who would move to Paris in 1962. Upon returning to the states in 1969, Davis would go on to found and direct the Jazz Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh in 1969 until 2013.

Mr. Murphy returned home to Pittsburgh with "some credentials to play." He started working with Judge Watson, who he remembered as a trumpet player, but who had since taken up the saxophone. Mr. Murphy enjoyed working with Judge Watson's band, which included Joe Westray on guitar or organ, "because they were serious and excellent musicians." They wore tuxedos and "were always dress[ed] better than the audience." He felt they had a message "to relay…to the young people, if they want to hear it." Westray was a Black businessman, who at one time, owned an entire block on Lincoln Avenue - called Westray Plaza - on which he built a skating rink and included cabarets and a supper club. He also bought property at 16th Avenue and Penn Ave, the only Black-owned area below the 40th Street marker leading into downtown Pittsburgh. Westray's first organized band was in 1935 with drummer Kenny Clarke and bassist

Frank Clarke. In the 1940s, Westray was the guitarist in saxophonist Leroy Brown's NBC Orchestra that held Garner at the piano post.

When it came time to vote on whether to merge the Black and white musicians' unions in 1966, Joe Westray, who was Local 471's President at the time, warned against it; Mr. Murphy followed his lead. The white musicians already had a monopoly of the gigs downtown, and Black musicians sensed that even a merged union would not change that. "We always welcomed the whites. They didn't even let you come in and get a beer. Might as well be living down south. The national guard had to take kids to school while I was overseas… I had to know you were a sincere white person."

Years later, Mr. Murphy would join a band led by Jamaican-American percussionist Kwasi Jayourba, who relocated to Pittsburgh by way of California in the 1980s. Jayourba is noted for his work with organists Jimmy McGriff and Richard "Groove" Holmes, Pittsburgh-born, Westinghouse High School graduate, and singer Dakota Staton, and Pittsburgh organist Gene Ludwig. The band with Murphy also featured pianist and Detroit native, Geri Allen. Allen would become the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Pittsburgh after Nathan Davis retired, leading the program from 2014 until her untimely passing in 2017. Allen publicly acknowledged both Mr. Murphy and Judge Watson for their contributions to Pittsburgh jazz and for mentoring young musicians. Mr. Murphy insists that he is "not a star, and I never will be. I can be a musician's best friend; if I can't get with your personality, I'll leave you alone."

2.7.3 Dr. Nelson Harrison

Dr. Nelson Harrison was born on December 12, 1940 in the Brushton neighborhood, in the eastern part of Homewood, about two miles east of East Liberty (where Garner grew up). All of

his family on his mother's side lived within walking distance, and the neighborhood was full of youngsters like him who shared a sentiment about music as the "highlight of your life." Harrison's friend, Wendell Byrd (b. 1936), who lived two streets over, would regularly come into the Harrison household and play on their piano. The Harrisons, like most Black households in those days, had an upright piano with ivory keys. Byrd later picked up the organ and, along with Gene Ludwig (who was a sideman for Sonny Stitt and Arthur Prysock), became the best in Pittsburgh on the instrument. Guitarist Jerry Byrd, Wendell's younger brother and Harrison's classmate, would go on to play with Freddie Cole, Dizzy Gillespie, and Sam Rivers. Jerry Byrd was also mentored by Judge Warren Watson.

Much like Garner's experience with his first piano teacher, Madge Bowman, Harrison did not take to the method of reading music during his early childhood lessons with his aunt Fannetta.[211] In fact, music did not start to make sense to him until he was ten years old, although he memorized every piece of music he heard from his infancy. (He later realized he had perfect pitch.) By that time, his older brother, Richard, was taking trumpet lessons from Carl McVicker. Richard would come home from lessons and pass-on what he had learned to the young Nelson. By the seventh grade, Nelson had learned enough to make the ninth-grade band where he picked up baritone sax, then trombone. In high school, he studied briefly with McVicker, who eventually sent him to trombonist Matty Shiner. Shiner, a faculty member of Duquesne University's Mary Pappert School of Music, also taught Sammy Nestico, another Pittsburgh trombonist best known for his arrangements performed by Count Basie's orchestra.

In tenth grade, Harrison's Westinghouse orchestra, led by McVicker, won the state championship. Their repertoire consisted of the same arrangements of Broadway tunes,

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[211] Doran, 3.

symphonies, and John Phillip Sousa pieces that the professional musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony were playing. His dedication to improving expanded beyond school hours. Harrison was the principle trombonist for the Pittsburgh Symphony Junior, a group started by Marie "Momma" Maazel in 1956. (Her son, Lauren Maazel, was the conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony from 1988 through 1996, successor to Andre Previn.) The group rehearsed every Sunday at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Oakland near the University of Pittsburgh. Some other members in the Pittsburgh Symphony Junior were classmates of Harrison at Westinghouse High School, including oboist Grayson Howard, bassoonist Carl Hampton Porter (who later joined the Baltimore Symphony and recorded jazz with flautist Hubert Laws), violinist Paul Ross, and pianist Patricia Prattis Jennings (who were the first African American male and female to attain contracts with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra or any national symphony).

After high school, Harrison enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh as a pre-med major getting as far as completing one year at Pitt Medical School before switching his goal to psychology. He attained a PhD in clinical psychology, only the third Black student to do so at that time. All the while, he remained active in Pittsburgh's music scene. He joined Joe Westray's house band at the club that Westray owned called Ebony Lounge. From 1967-1970, Harrison played twelve times per week with pianist Walt Harper who opened a club called Harper's Attic in downtown Pittsburgh in 1968. In 1970, Harper's group opened for Erroll Garner at Carnegie Music Hall, a historic event in which Garner was symbolically given the keys to the city. At the time, Harrison was also working as Music Director for Black Horizons on WQED, "the nation's longest running television series designed to address the concerns of African American audiences."[212] On the evening of the concert, as they were speaking backstage, Garner agreed to be interviewed by

[212] "Black Horizons," *WQED*, 2024, https://www.wqed.org/blackhorizons. Accessed 1 March 2024.

Harrison on the following day on Black Horizons. One of Harrison's questions to Garner concerned the issue of "not reading music," which struck Harrison as unnerving in that this descriptor seemed to always drive any conversation about Garner's talent. Garner's response was simple and direct: "I know how to read music, but whose music would I read? Anything written is less than I'm playing…no one can hear you read." Tragically, there is no record of the interview between Garner and Harrison, as WQED apparently did not retain the masters for the Black programs (like it did for the white ones). Garner also mentioned during their interview that he had studied for a period at the prestigious Juilliard School of Music in New York City, which Harrison thinks was a way for the professors there to study Garner.

In 1992, Harrison was interviewed on 1550 AM radio show in Homewood. The host, Dave Scott, conducted a blindfold test on him, and when Garner's recording came on, Harrison was disheartened that Scott brought up the proverbial "did not read music" qualifier. Harrison was quick to point out that Garner had told him the contrary in 1970. After Harrison and Scott's back-and-forth on-air about Garner's music literacy, a woman called-in to the show to confirm that Garner did, in fact, know how to read music. As Harrison recalls, the woman stated, "my name is Johanna Harris, you might know my son Alan Harris, the jazz singer. I just want to say that Dr. Harrison is telling the truth because I was in class with Erroll Garner at Juilliard and he blew everyone away." Harrison's interview with Garner and the later confirmation by Johanna Harris should put to rest any question as to Garner's ability to read music.

Among the Pittsburgh musicians that Harrison considers his mentors are multi-instrumentalist Judge Watson, trombonist Harold Betters, bassist Bobby Boswell, drummer Cecil Brooks Jr., and pianist Bobby Jones, who invited a young Harrison and his comrade, saxophonist George Greene, to sit-in with them at a club near Clairton, Pennsylvania, called Ross' Inn in 1953.

Although Harrison has mentored many musicians, he still relishes the opportunity to play with "the old school guys." One of his prized recordings is from a performance at the Crawford Grille in 1987 with Carl Murphy on drums, Jeptha Spencer Bey on piano, and Ron Garrett on bass, "just the most wonderful people." Harrison's eclectic musical career took place entirely in the Pittsburgh market except for two tours between 1978 and 1980 playing second trombone with Count Basie and his orchestra.

Dr. Nelson Harrison operates the Pittsburgh Jazz Network, a website he founded in 2008, "dedicated to celebrating and showcasing the places, artists, and fans that carry on the legacy of Pittsburgh's jazz heritage." The network has over 3,400 members worldwide who can connect and share their experiences and stories about the city and its musical culture.[213] Harrison's project allows members - fans and musicians alike - to contribute to the meaning of the object in the context of jazz. Harrison's efforts contribute to ensuring that the documentation of jazz history is filtered through the people who lived it and that the names that comprise its ledgers are not limited to the dozen or so prominent ones found in condensed accounts. Dr. Harrison has made available a public forum of self-directed recollections to expand on the limitless details about Pittsburgh's jazz legacy.

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[213] Dr. Nelson Harrison, *The Pittsburgh Jazz Network*, 2016. https://jazzburgher.ning.com/profiles/members/. Accessed 9 February 2024.

3.0 Absence Made Present

3.1 The Image in Jazz

Every discipline has its own discourse surrounding the image. Art history and physics, for example, examine images of pictures, statues, and projections. Psychology and literature tend to study the image of dreams, memories, ideas, and descriptions.[214] The image of Western classical music (and art music) is made manifest in the score.[215] On this front, Nicholas Cook states that while the *performance* of a work is temporally fluid, the *score* anchors the work in time:

> You don't just perform, you perform *something*, or you give a performance *of* something, … something that endures, … Scores represent pieces of music as spatial configurations (you can flip the pages forwards or backwards)…[216]

However, in jazz music, wherein a score can supplement the object of study but can in no way supplant it, the image is more abstract. The score in jazz often refers to the descriptive image ('transcription') of a previously recorded or performed work.[217] And although a score cannot stand-in for a complete analysis of the work, it "gives an image of the work" which allows one to report on certain aspects of how the work might be performed.[218] Such a transcription, for all its shortcomings in capturing the jazz performance, comes the closest to fixing or anchoring the performance in time, even more so than a recording which still must be heard in time. In the case

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[214] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 10.
[215] Laurent Cugny, *Analysis of Jazz: A Comprehensive Approach,* translated by Bérengère Mauduit (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019), 14.
[216] Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23.
[217] Cugny, 241-243. Etic is "the most detailed transcription," while emic necessitates "cultural appraisal…to decide which deviation is significant or not."
[218] Ibid., 239, 14, 12.

of Garner, where his reliance on, need for, or conception of a physical score never makes an appearance in his entire career, the hope that the score will provide an accurate image is even more remote. To amend this dilemma, Laurent Cugny offers that, "in the case of jazz, the sounds caught and organized through the recording process make up the object to be analyzed and so attention needs to be paid to how we perceive it."[219]

Words are images too, albeit in a more literal way than the mental, psychological, and emotional images produced by listening to music. Nevertheless, the textual image of a title can influence, supplement, and comment on our subjective aural image of the music. Graham Lock interprets a title as a complement to the musical score - both provide different structures that refer to the "same things or forces."[220] "Song titles," Brent Hayes Edwards adds, "are the most prominent arena where words and music are conjoined in jazz."[221] Garner's more than 200 compositions span the years of 1944 to 1975.[222] (His first, "Gaslight," is probably one of his more popular originals, along with later titles like "Gemini," "Afinidad," and "That's My Kick.") There is evidence to suggest that Garner took a hands-off approach to titling all his compositions, relinquishing that

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[219] Cugny, 14, 40, 41, 45. Cugny defines a composition for jazz as "the features that are found most of the time and in some form or another in a majority of versions." He proffers that the composition - generally understood as a premeditated concept of musical elements - is usually the "first step" to producing a work in jazz.

[220] Graham Lock, *Blutopia: Visions of the Future and Revisions of the Past in the Work of Sun Ra, Duke Ellington, and Anthony Braxton* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 164, 167. Lock addresses the work of Anthony Braxton whose diagrammatic and figurative titles admittedly sometimes take longer to create than the compositions they represent. Braxton intuitively, rather than analytically, names his compositions "as a way to *not know* what I'm doing." In fact, Braxton has refused to talk about what his titles meant because of language's inability to capture the "ineffable" quality of his creativity. Since his titles are messages which Braxton receives mystically, he chooses not to surmise or try to articulate the meanings behind them.

[221] Brent Hayes Edwards, *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 181.

[222] These are only Garner's known compositions and does not include songs by other composers that he recorded and made popular like David Raksin's theme song from the Hollywood film *Laura* (1945) or his rendition of Juan Tizol and Duke Ellington's "Caravan" from his Grammy-winning album, *Concert By the Sea* (1956). These are strictly inventions with Garner as associated composer. This also includes the two compositions that he wrote during the session with Charlie Parker: "Bird's Nest" and "Cool Blues." It does not include, however, "Pastel," which was written by George "Red" Callender.

responsibility to his manager and other individuals who published his recordings.[223] Not only that, but he rarely referred to them by the titles that were ultimately given, preferring instead, to list them by number, whether in the studio or on stage. He is absent in the text, and that is curious.

We are faced with the possibility that the Garner's compositions have been doubly warped by the supplemental images of the texts - first, by the fact that language always inevitably fails us, and secondly, by the absence of Garner in the creation or dissemination of their words. Using the theory of interpretation expounded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in *Figures in Black* (1987), I analyze Garner's titles as literary images, or "combination[s] of words," with particular focus on Gates's notion of *absence* as a way of Signifying on the text. Specifically, Gates has highlighted a few themes in Ishmael Reed's mystery novel, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), that parallels how this chapter interprets Garner's titles. Re-reading Reed, I suggest that Garner's noticeable absence in the images that represent his "work," song titles, makes us doubt their legitimacy and continuity with his compositions.

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[223] Ross Russell, "Erroll Garner: Play Piano Play, Part One," *Ross Russell Papers* (Austin: Harry Random Center, 2005), 5, 9, 41. Accounts of Garner's participation in the titling process are rare. For example, there is a hand-written session log and transcript of Ross Russell, founder of Dial Records, wherein he talks about a specific studio date with Garner on solo piano in 1947. Russell notes that "Talk No Holes (In My Clothes)" is the original title of "Sloe Gin Fizz," the former being a "reference to jive and con artists operating along Fifty-Second Street." Although the session log alludes to two takes of the same composition, with two different names, it is more likely that there was only one take with two title options. The author has heard both "Talk No Holes" and "Sloe Gin Fizz" and finds no difference between the two takes. One sounds like a higher-pitched and sped up version of the other, signaling two mixes of the same iteration. Russell is not clear on who initiated the titles, so scholars are left guessing to what extent Garner was involved in the process. James M. Doran, *Erroll Garner: The Most Happy Piano, The Centennial Edition (1921-2021)* (USA: James M. Doran, 2021), 192. Although "Sloe Gin Fizz" was released on Dial, Blue Star released it under the title "Barclay Bounce" for the French label's owner, Eddie Barclay.

3.2 Jes Grew and the Practicality of Titles

Pragmatically, titles are reference markers, pointing out the difference between one musical performance from another. Such indexes can be useful for those who want to familiarize themselves with the language of jazz.[224] While the older, American Songbook jazz repertoire comes from the re-working of show tunes from the Tin Pan Alley era, "when music industry profits were mainly a function of the sale of sheet music," the newer repertoire, increasingly comprising jazz originals, was learned through the medium of sound recordings where there was seldom an accompanying score.[225] Once a performance of a jazz recording becomes recognizable by a large number of people, the composition and associated title become part of the most familiar jazz repertoire, known as the "standards."[226] The number of titles an artist amasses can sway the perception of them as a composer and lead to fame and money in the form of royalties or platforms to perform.

Ragtime was one of the earliest forms of African American music to spread across the world in the form of sheet music. Originating in the South around 1910, ragtime was a rhythmically complex piano music, often accompanied by "crude" lyrics, written and played by African American men.[227] As James Weldon Johnson explained in his 1922 anthology, *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, "some of these earlier songs were taken down by white men, the words

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[224] Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 183.
[225] Lee B. Brown, David Goldblatt, and Theodore Gracyk, *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 105.
[226] Cugny, 109, 57, 31. Recognizable modes (harmonic, melodic, or thematic) become standards once they become recognizable by a large number of people. "History then decides how prolific a composition has been based on the number of versions of it that have been recorded, especially by musicians other than the composer."
[227] James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2008), 9. "These men did not know any more about the theory of music than they did about the theory of the universe."

slightly altered or changed, and published under the names of the [white] arrangers," earning them "small fortunes."[228] Writing down the music expands the awareness of it and augments the feelings of who should and should not appropriate it; however, the printed image does not make the music any more or less containable.[229] Johnson, himself, "appropriated" one of the "old songs" that "had been sung for years all throughout the South," a song he titled "Oh, Didn't He Ramble!"[230] He changed the lyrics (as the original ones were "unprintable," probably too crude) and title, and his copy became a success, "especially at football games."[231] There were certain old songs, in Johnson's estimation, that drove a person to want to write it down and claim it as their own because they were "irresistible, and belonged to nobody."[232] As long as the song did not become "adulterated so much" that it "lost [its] pristine hue," its popularity just grows and expands.[233] Or, in Johnson's now widely known verbiage, it "jes' grew."[234] The "jes' grew" songs' ability to entice never stops accumulating - "they are growing all the time."[235] In other words, the "jes' grew" songs continue to spread as long as they remain true to the original "elusive thing."[236] Johnson's neologism has since become a way of describing "something whose origins are not easily reduced to human intentions and actions, but more the result of an organic, natural, complex process."[237]

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[228] Ibid., 10.
[229] Matthew D. Morrison, *Blacksound: Making Race and Popular Music in the United States* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2024). Morrison explains some of the history of white publishers and arrangers profiting from transcribing and selling the compositions of African Americans.
[230] Johnson, 11.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid., 10, 11.
[235] Ibid., 11.
[236] Ibid., 13.
[237] DJ Onestep, "Jes' Grew," *Remix Culture: Understanding Appropriation as a Creative Practice*, 2016, https://remixculture.ca/jes-grew/. Accessed 22 March 2024. DJ OneStep highlights how hip hop "jes' grew" in a non-contentious, collaborative, anonymous way - an 'urban folk music' - and then how quickly it then became monetized and its appropriations became the focus of legal contention."

For Garner, certain aspects of the "jes' grew" allegory can be traced in his most famous composition, "Misty." Originally recorded at Mercury Records by Garner on July 27, 1954, he apparently conceived it only a day earlier while admiring a rainbow outside the window of his airplane seat. Upon further investigation, musical components of "Misty" can be traced back even further. Some have drawn connections between "Misty" and Billy Eckstine's "I Want to Talk About You," which Eckstine recorded in 1944, ten years before "Misty."[238] Beyond the strong correlation of the opening three-note sequence in both songs, for some listeners the harmonic forms are "too similar for it to be a coincidence," implying that Garner had to have been influenced by Eckstine's composition.[239] There is even a live recording of Rahsaan Roland Kirk playing both compositions in the same performance, "Misty" followed by "I Want to Talk About You," separated by his improvising over the shared harmonic structure.[240]

Even closer to "Misty" than Eckstine's "I Want to Talk About You" is a composition by another band leader from the 1940s, Buddy Johnson. "If You Never Return," recorded live in 1945 on *The Savoy Ballroom New York Presents Buddy Johnson*, is so melodically close, it could almost be considered another version of "Misty." Or, rather, "Misty" could be another version of Johnson's original. (Buddy Johnson is not the same Budd Johnson who played with Earl Hines from 1934 until 1942 and later with Billy Eckstine.[241]) Woodrow Wilson "Buddy" Johnson (1915-

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[238] Mark Stryker, "Considering Erroll Garner the Composer, with An Exclusive Premiere From 'Nightconcert,'" *WBGO.org*, 13 June 2018, https://www.wbgo.org/music/2018-06-13/considering-erroll-garner-the-composer-with-an-exclusive-premiere-from-nightconcert. Accessed 22 March 2024.

[239] Peter Spitzer, "'Misty,' 'I Want to Talk About You,' and Tadd Dameron," *Peter Spitzer Music Blog*, 27 May 2014, www.peterspitzer.blogspot.com/2014/05/misty-i-want-to-talk-about-you-and-tadd.html?m=1. Accessed 22 March 2024.

[240] Rahsaan Roland Kirk, YouTube video, "Rahsaan Roland Kirk 'Misty & I Want Talk' Live Montreux 1972," posted by PleasantVoyage, 14 October 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Liy6TQ8FLR4. Accessed 29 March 2024. The recording is from the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland on June 24, 1972. "Misty" was performed sixth in the setlist. Kirk was accompanied by Rahn Burton (piano), Henry Pearson (bass), Robert Shy (drums), and Joe Texidor (percussion).

[241] Karlton E. Hester, *From Africa to Afrocentric Innovations Some Call "Jazz," Vol. 4* (Santa Cruz: Hesteria Record & Publishing Company, 2001), 150.

1977) was a pianist and bandleader, from Darlington, South Carolina. He was part of the Cotton Club Revue that toured Europe in 1939 before returning to the U.S. to record for Decca and later Mercury. In the early 40s, his orchestra was on the top of the Rhythm and Blues charts, fronting vocalists like Warren Evans, Arthur Prysock, and Johnson's own sister, Ella. He wrote a Blues Concerto, which he performed at Carnegie Hall in 1948, and his band remained relevant through the early 1950s. Referred to as a "jump blues style," Johnson admitted that his sound, with its "southern tinge," was something that southern listeners could especially "understand."[242]

Garner not only may have borrowed from Johnson and Eckstine for "Misty," but may have even used ideas from another one of his own compositions. On February 29, 1952, two years before the Mercury date, Garner recorded twelve selections for a solo piano session at Columbia Records in New York. James Doran has noted that "Fancy," one of those selections, "contains excerpts of what later became 'Misty.'"[243] "Fancy" follows the same 32-bar harmonic progression in AABA form as "Misty," and the most similar melodic phrase is in the fourth and fifth measures of the A sections. To what extent, if any, did Garner's "Fancy" influence his later "Misty?" Did they remain two disparate compositions, or did "Fancy" morph into "Misty" over time? Like "jes' grew" songs, the musical origins of "Misty" are unclear.

Garner did not name "Misty." Martha Glaser, Garner's manager from 1950 until his death in 1977, had wanted to name the composition "Hesitation," referring to several sudden breaks in the bridge and last A-section.[244] The original recording of "Misty" is quite slow, with no introduction or solos, played only once, straight through the 32-bar (AABA) form. The

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[242] "Buddy Johnson," *WBSS Media: The Soul Purpose*, 2024, https://wbssmedia.com/artists/detail/3406. Accessed 22 March 2024.
[243] Doran, *Most Happy Piano*, 230.
[244] James M. Doran, "Erroll Garner: A Discography Update," *Journal of Jazz Studies*, Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, Vol. 6(1) Fall/Winter (1979), 66.

"hesitations" occur on measures five and six of the B-section and on measures one and three of the last A-section. Glaser's ear acutely noticed these synchronous pauses between the trio (with Pittsburgh-born bassist Wyatt "Bull" Ruther and Cleveland-born drummer Eugene "Fats" Heard) and probably thought that the "hesitation" between them was impressionable enough for the title. However, it was co-founder of Mercury Records, Art Talmadge, who named "Misty," and Glaser may have agreed that his title was more suitable. Although, her note in the archive, which reads "Art Talmadge titled MISTY. More about that later," suggests there may have been some disagreement.[245] Nevertheless, the title was established on behalf of Garner, not by him.

The Glaser-Garner marketing machine put "all [its] eggs in the 'Misty' basket," even signing over the rights of the song to Vernon Music to run a marketing campaign in 1955.[246] "Misty" became a hit soon enough, even though the relationship with Vernon probably did more harm than good in the short-run.[247] The deal ended in a lengthy ten-year legal battle (separate from Garner's more publicized case against Columbia Records that began in 1961[248]), with "Misty"

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[245] "Some notes re new Garner album - Vol. III - PolyGram release," 1 December 1989, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh, AIS.2015.09, Box 10, Folder 10, Biographies/Testimonials.

[246] Martha Glaser to Noel Selig, "Documentation on 'Misty' Matter," 29 May 1964, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh, AIS.2015.09, Box 10, Folder 4, Misty, 1960-1990.

[247] Martha Glaser to Erroll Garner, 4 March 1956, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh Library, AIS.2015.09, Box 3, Folder 3, Correspondence 1957-1993. On March 14, 1956, Glaser wrote, "I wish I had the know-how to help you get a 'hit' - I can only hope that I can help you produce your best - for I feel that that is your true 'hit' and 'star' quality - what you have to say, musically, the whole world will catch up to soon, and that is how you will hit." According to her, Garner was being "approached by" labels Columbia, Victor, and Capitol only a few months after the release of "Misty." Doran, *Most Happy Piano*, 85-87. He eventually signed with Columbia Records in June 1956, the label that released *Concert by the Sea* in September of that year, which would become "the largest-selling jazz album in history to that time." Reprinted article by George Hoefer, "The Case of Garner Vs. Columbia," *Downbeat*, 13 October 1960, 17-18. Garner's relationship with Columbia essentially ended in November 1958 when Garner sued the company for breach of contract, a case which he ultimately won, marking the first time a recording artist forced a record label to remove already-distributed albums from the market. Hoefer makes two points: (1) the case envisions rights for musicians that include "approval rights, return of unused tapes, and guaranteed releases," and (2) it questions the future for small, independent labels that count on backlogged recordings for future release. "No longer will they be able to store up sides recorded by jazz artists, when they are little known, with the hope the artist will make it big in future years, even if on another label. This has kept some of the jazz independents alive."

[248] Erroll Garner Archive, Box 10, Folder 4, Misty, 1960-1990. Garner's victory over Columbia did not occur without financial consequences; he "was effectively 'white-listed' in the industry from 1958 to 1961 when the case was settled - and before that, ABC-Paramount had the guts to sign him… How Mercury got a contract on EG in 1954 when he

being returned to Garner's portfolio of copyrights.[249] In February 1956, possibly triggered by the Vernon case, Garner establish his own publishing firm called Octave Music. This meant that any of his compositions that he had previously recorded and wanted to record again would most likely have to be re-titled unless the previous publisher would be willing to sign over the publishing assignment to Octave.[250]

Released in January 1955 by Mercury on *Contrasts*, "Misty" was arguably the catalyst that drove Garner to worldwide stardom.[251] After lyrics were added to Garner's melody by Johnny Burke in 1957, "Misty" was recorded by a number of chart-topping singers.[252] In 1971, long-time Garner fan and movie star, Clint Eastwood, starred-in and directed the thriller film *Play Misty for Me*, pointing to the longevity and breadth of the composition's appeal. Glaser recounted other successes of his hit tune:

> MISTY was the theme music of the TODAY SHOW on NBC-TV for almost a decade…In the year 2000 ASCAP designated MISTY as one of the 25 most performed standards of the 20th Century…the only song by a jazz composer on the ASCAP list of 25, and was 15th on the list.[253]

Glaser marketed Garner as an artist whose compositions were being recorded by some of the most sought-after vocalists in the industry. Around 1960, publicity materials boasted, in her

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was due to re-sign with Columbia Records another story. [Columbia] did sign him again in June 1956 - and that ended badly in 1958 in the courts - though most people didn't know about it because Garner's lawyers advised him not to say anything about the litigation when it was ongoing. Thus, Erroll was effectively 'white-listed' in the industry from 1958 to 1961 when the case was settled - and before that, ABC-Paramount had the guts to sign him."

[249] "Garner's Former Lawyer Named New Defendant in Battle Over 'Misty,'" Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh, AIS.2015.09, Box 10, Folder 4, Misty, 1960-1990.

[250] Martha Glaser to Erroll Garner, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh, AIS.2015.09, 7 February 1956, Box 3, Folder 3, Correspondence 1957-1993.

[251] Steve Sullivan, *Encyclopedia of Great Popular Song Recordings, Volumes 3 & 4* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 259.

[252] Vocalists and band-leaders who recorded "Misty": Dakota Staton (1957), Sarah Vaughan (1959), Johnny Mathis (1959), Count Basie (1959), Hank Crawford (1960), Ella Fitzgerald (1960), Frank Sinatra (1962), Lloyd Price (1963), and Ray Stevens (1975).

[253] Erroll Garner Archive, Box 10, Folder 4, Misty, 1960-1990.

words, that "more than 20 artists have recorded 'Misty' which is becoming a standard. Garner also has in the works lyric versions of 'Solitaire,' 'Passing Through,' and 'Dreamy,' which will be introduced by top recording artists."[254] Maybe because of the commercial success of its lyrical interpretations, "Misty" reached the number five spot on the list of the top fifteen sheet music scores sold in the U.S. in October 1960. It remained there for a total of thirty-four weeks, only second in popularity at the time to Rogers and Hammerstein's "Climb Ev'ry Mountain."[255]

"Misty" serves as a point of entry to understanding, on the one hand, the extent to which a title can get caught up in the world, like the "jes' grew" songs. In stark contrast, it serves to present the notion that Garner was ambivalent toward the titles of his compositions. One way to trace this assertion is through the numerous name changes that his compositions endured, each providing a different practical use or aesthetic appearance for the underlying composition. Some of the titles were re-worked when lyrics were added after he had already composed and recorded an instrumental version. The instrumental version of "Crème de Menthe" was re-titled "Dreamy" when lyrics by Sydney Shaw we added; Edward Heyman's lyrics transformed "Shadows" into "No More Shadows;" "Like It Is" was changed to "Shake It But Don't Break It" after Johnny Mercer added his text; and "Feeling Is Believing," was renamed "Something Happens" with words by Sammy Cahn.[256] Titles, like the lyrics that accompany them, are unstable texts, albeit texts that would eventually make Garner a good living. Another reason his titles changed was due to their being recorded for multiple record companies. For example, one of Garner's compositions has three separate titles ("Perpetual Emotion," "Erroll at the Philharmonic," and "Garnerology,") that

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[254] Erroll Garner Archive, Box 10, Folder 4, Misty, 1960-1990.
[255] "Best Selling Sheet Music in the U.S.," *The Billboard*, 10 October 1960, 23 January 1961, 6 February 1961. Erroll Garner Archive, Box 10, Folder 4, Misty, 1960-1990.
[256] Changing titles due to the addition of lyrics is very common: Duke Ellington's "Concerto for Cootie" became "Do Nothing till You Hear From Me" and his (and Barney Bigard's) "C Jam Blues" became" Duke's Place."

point to his 1950 recording for Atlantic Records (and its subsidiary, Blue Star), while the same composition was given three entirely different titles under the version recorded for Columbia Records (and its subsidiary, Philips) the following year ("Margin for Erroll," "I Didn't Know," and "I Don't Know"). The same composition has six different titles! This chapter will include a few other examples of title changes that support the claim that Garner's titles were meaningless to him. Illustrating the trajectory of "Misty" - its origins, the title, the lyrics, the campaign, the notoriety - is meant to highlight the "jes' grew" force and the dilemma wrapped up in the textual image of it.

Johnson's notion of "jes' grew" was borrowed by novelist, poet, playwright, songwriter, and composer, Ishmael Reed, for his third book, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972). Reed was born in 1938 and spent years living in New York City where he developed friendships with other experimental musician-writers like Sun Ra, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, and Amiri Baraka. The majority of *Mumbo Jumbo*'s plot takes place during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, called such because of the central role that New York played in cultivating a flourishing atmosphere of Black art, poetry, and philosophy. The main character, Jes Grew, is not a person; it is many spirits ("loas"), a force, and the "X Factor" that eventually "led Charlie Parker to scale the Everests of the Chord" and "touched John Coltrane's Tenor."[257] Jes Grew is as old as time and its limits for who it affects "knows no class no race no consciousness."[258] But the problem is that people mistake it for a disease that must be stopped every time it flairs up.[259] The last time Jes Grew had appeared, in 1890, was in the form of Scott Joplin's contagious, yet geographically contained, ragtime music. This time, the cases of those infected by Jes Grew were more widespread, and people reported

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[257] Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1972), 211.
[258] Ibid., 5.
[259] Ibid.

feeling like "the gut heart and lungs of Africa's interior," like "'deserting [their] master,'" like they "could dance on a dime."[260] (Jes Grew's path is an analogy for the way jazz music spread across the United States, starting in New Orleans, spreading to Kansas City and Chicago before landing in New York City.) The reason people mistake its power as something evil and why the dominant society is trying to expel it is because there was no Text to legitimized it. All religions had a liturgy that their followers could hold up as 'truth.' Jes Grew was on a mission to find its own liturgy, and it could sense that there were people in New York who were in the process of translating its ancient Text: "If it could not find its Text then it would be mistaken for entertainment" and would again be a passing fad.[261] As the character Black Herman explains to Papa LaBas, both practitioners of the Work of Jes Grew:

> That's our genius here in America. We were dumped here on our own without the Book to tell us who the loas are, what we call spirits were. We made up our own…The Blues, Ragtime, The Work that we do is just as good…What it boils down to, LaBas, is intent. If your heart's there, man that's 1/2 the thing about The Work.[262]

The premise of the mystery novel is that the ancient knowledge of Jes Grew was stolen, written down, and vulgarized by powerful and ruthless leaders in Europe (like the Knights Templar, the Atonists, and the Catholic Church). As long as the elites can keep Jes Grew from obtaining the ability to produce its own Text and keep detractors (like Black Herman and Papa LaBas) on the fringes of society and content with simply practicing the Work, they can keep revising their vulgarized text enough to stave-off the masses from succumbing to Jes Grew's symptom of "getting happy."[263] The irony is that Jes Grew could never be learned from or

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[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid., 211.
[262] Ibid., 130.
[263] Ibid., 34.

contained in a book. Its knowledge and practice is fluid and cultivated wherever people from the oral tradition come together with good intentions; it is all about doing the Work.

The Work that Black Herman and Papa LaBas do in Reed's book should not be confused with the work that Garner's song titles represent. The Work of Jes Grew consists of the daily rituals and rites that are practiced. The Work, which has no end, stands-in for the absence and impossibility of the Word. Conversely, in Hannah Arendt's *Human Condition*, work ensures "worldly permanence." Producing fabricated objects which have "a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end," work distinguishes itself from any of the other human conditions.[264] The work/word (in the form of song titles) supplant Garner and take-up the impossible task of materializing his compositions. Garner's absence in the titles and his compositions' illusion of textual determinacy asks us to reconsider where one finds his permanency in the world.

3.3 The Aesthetic Function of Titles

The title is not only a label we put on things to distinguish them from other things. What we call something is significant to how the object is received. Consider the name Reed assigned to the group trying to squash the power of Jes Grew, The Wallflower Order. As the name suggests, those loyal to the Wallflower Order resist the urge to dance: "the aesthetic is thin flat turgid dull grey bland like a yawn."[265] Conversely, Jes Grew cannot be tied to a single name: "once we call it 1 thing it forms into something else."[266]

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[264] Arendt, 143.
[265] Reed, 62.
[266] Ibid., 4.

Musically speaking, Brent Hayes Edwards positions titles as "points of entry" which offer linguistic clues about how listeners should interpret the work.[267] Providing the mechanism through which the reality of the work comes forth, titles can also be problematic if they are wrongly assigned. Such is the case with two tracks on the best-selling jazz record of all time, Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue,* "All Blues" and "Flamenco Sketches"[268] Possibly due to Davis being "cavalier about titles" during the recording and documenting process, the titles were thought to have been flipped before the album was first released in 1959. The album was recalled and reissued with their supposed corrected titles. However, Jeremy Yudkin, who researched the recording session notes, claims that the original issue (which was thought to have been incorrect) was correct. Yudkin argues that the styles of the music in "All Blues" and "Flamenco Sketches" were more reflective of the first titles given to them. "We all can be persuaded to hear things in music," and titles are an important influence in that process.[269] If something is wrongly titled, the listener's interpretation can be "clouded by" the label of the object.[270]

When it does follow the artist's intent, the title offers a window into the artist's style.[271] Some theorists consider the title an essential component of the music composition, as important as the number of measures, the sequencing of notes, and the harmonic progression because of the

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[267] Edwards, 187, 189, 190-191. The syntax used by Henry Threadgill in "Look" or "Calm Down," for example, urge a certain state of being for digesting his music. Henry Threadgill's "titles are not meant to explain or to contextualize, but instead to shift the burden of interpretation to the listener."

[268] Jeremy Yudkin, "The Naming of Names: "Flamenco Sketches" or "All Blues"? Identifying the Last Two Tracks on Miles Davis's Classic Album Kind of Blue," *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 95(1) Spring 2012, 18. "Flamenco Sketches" was co-written by Bill Evans and Miles Davis; "All Blues" was written by Davis. Miles Davis "did not think very much about titles until after the tunes were recorded."

[269] Ibid., 24.

[270] Mitchell, 41. Pictures (as in words or labels) carry such an "expressive charge" that we become "clouded by" the words, so much so, "that the image becomes totally abstract and ornamental, representing neither figures nor space, but simply presenting its own material and formal elements."

[271] Harry Levin, "The Title as a Literary Genre," *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 72(4) October 1977, xxxvi. Titles can provide a method of discovering an artist's style or intent. Levin posits that "a style means, among other things, a name; one clue to a writer's style is how he names his writings."

"semantic weight" it holds.[272] According to Jerrold Levinson, the title fulfills "a *special part* of its artistic structure, one out of the totality of structural elements which a creator assembles in making a work and projecting an aesthetic content."[273] Importantly, however, Levinson claims that the only titles which carry any meaning - what he calls "true titles" - are those that are determined by the artist. Titles that are, instead, given by others "have no claim to determining artistic meaning."[274] What do titles say about an artist's aesthetic if they are not "true," as is the case with Garner?

Garner remained passive on administrative duties and relinquished those responsibilities to Glaser at her request. She thought Garner's "loose" and "casual" approach would not be as efficient for their operations, reminding him once to "quit creating new problems…YOU TAKE CARE OF THE MUSIC."[275] Fred Burkhardt, a Philips manager and record producer who acted as Garner's liaison during the tours in Europe between 1956 and 1966, stated that Garner "functioned on instructions" from Glaser.[276] "Everything that was planned to come out needed her permission…Before he went on tour his program was extensively discussed in New York and he was instructed to play a set number of pieces for promotion and/or publicity."[277] Speaking about the Amsterdam Concert, a record which Garner recorded live at the Concertgebouw in 1964,

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[272] Jerrold Levinson, "Titles," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol 44(1) Autumn 1985, 29-30, 38. To avoid confusing two musical works with the same structure, Levinson says that "musical works…must…be thought of as indicated structures-so-titled (or structures-as-indicated-and-titled)." Titles to works are different than the name given to a person. If someone changes their name, it doesn't change who that person is. But if a title is changed, "such changes result strictly in new artworks, however slight the aesthetic difference may be."

[273] Ibid., 30.

[274] Ibid., 33, 34, 38. Levinson also argues that "artist-initiated changes of title," new titles that an artist gives to a work that has been previously named, are *true* because they usher in completely "new artworks, however slight the aesthetic difference may be." Art Blakey's "In case you missed it" is the same as his "Fuller Love" (credit to Kenan Foley for this example); Orrin Evans's "Edge" is another example which he shared with the author at the University of Pittsburgh Jazz Seminar in 2022.

[275] Martha Glaser to Erroll Garner, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh Library, 24 February 1958, Box 3, Folder 3, Correspondence 1957-1993.

[276] Jan Van Diepenbeek, "Memories of Erroll Louis Garner," *Erroll Garner Gems: The Journal of the Erroll Garner Club*, Number 16, 1997/98, 1, 2.

[277] Ibid, 5.

Burkhardt said, "We were allowed to do anything we wanted, but she [Glaser] had the final vote, even in regard to the choice of repertoire and the layout of the record cover." And as far as a program of songs, it was not written down on paper; "[Garner] had his program in his head."[278] Burkhardt's recollection confirms the idea that Garner concerned himself more with the performance side and left the production side, including title selection, to Glaser.

Other evidence that Glaser named Garner's compositions comes from the production of *Paris Impressions*, an album he began working on soon after returning from Europe in January 1958. He had spent most of the time playing concerts at Paris's famed Olympia Theatre, accompanied by Eddie Calhoun on bass and Kelly Martin on drums. Wanting to capitalize on the media attention from his first international tour as bandleader, Glaser nudged him to choose a variety of repertoire for "the French album," six "standards" and four originals, preferably "new ones." Glaser's note on February 22, 1958 asked Garner to compose in the following four styles: "a blues, a ballad (suggesting Paris), a can can dance, and an apache dance (it's really a tango)."[279] She may have been insisting on new compositions at the behest of Columbia; record companies have been known to push this emphatic desire for novelty onto the musicians.[280] Assisted by Calhoun and Martin, Garner recorded twelve "new" tracks to be released by Columbia Records, well above the four Glaser had requested. In May that year, she asked for his input on naming his original compositions which had been selected for the album. She wrote, "Dear Erroll, Enclosed, the French dubs, and my suggested routining. If you don't like the titles, call me for changes."[281]

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[278] Ibid, 7.
[279] Martha Glaser to Erroll Garner, 9 January 1958, Box 3, Folder 3, Correspondence 1957-1993, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh Library.
[280] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Thelonious Monk: Storia di un genio americano*, translated by Marco Bertoli (Rome: minimum fax, 2012), 506, 507.
[281] Martha Glaser to Erroll Garner, 18 May 1958, Box 3, Folder 3, Correspondence 1957-1993, Erroll Garner Archive, University of Pittsburgh Library.

It is unknown what titles she presented to Garner or how, if at all, he replied to Glaser's question about title selection. Nevertheless, a new title referencing the south side of the Seine River in Paris surfaced on Side 2 of *Paris Impressions, Volume 1* (the project is a two-volume set), released in 1959, called "Left Bank Swing." But, the composition, a medium-tempo swing tune in AABA form, had a melody that was not as original as its title let on.

Five years before the production of "Left Bank Swing," in 1953, Garner had recorded "Groovy-Day," also for Columbia Records. Garner took it at a slightly slower in tempo and was flanked by Wyatt Ruther on bass and Eugene "Fats" Heard on drums, but everything else indicates that it is a copy of "Left Bank Swing." "Groovy-Day" was the same composition as one of the supposed 'new ones' on *Paris Impressions*. What is curious is that they were both released for Columbia Records in 1958; "Groovy-Day" came out on *Erroll Garner Encores in Hi Fi* and "Left Bank Swing" on *Paris Impressions*. Was the label unaware that they were releasing the same composition under two different titles? Unless "Groovy-Day" was not yet held under Octave Music publishing and re-titling it to "Left Bank Swing" was done to regain the rights to his melody, this may have been an oversight which reveals that whoever named it may not have totally absorbed his repertoire.[282]

By allowing Glaser and the record producers to associate titles with his compositions, Garner was resigning himself from the work aspect which entailed the mass production of his recorded performances. In not carrying the weight of "true" titles, the text becomes arbitrary to the aesthetic of his music. Although some artists may value the aesthetic supplement that a title provides, Garner doubles-down on the failure of the text to communicate the meaning of his music.

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[282] Doran, 236, 257. Although lyrics were later added by George David Weiss, it does not concern the duplication stated here.

If what Brent Hayes Edwards suggests is true, that song titles are the "keyholes" which allow "all the singularity of the work to emerge precisely as a product of its unnameability," then Garner's titles offer little benefit of peering at his compositions from the outside.[283]

3.4 The Suspicion of the Text

Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood pinpoint the suspicious origins of the work of art to medieval Europe when images were supposed to deliver truths about and direct connections to the past. People began to mistrust images when too much was learned about how the work of art was made. In response, between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, "thousands of documents were fabricated and planted in archives by…scholars, both monastic and courtly."[284] These texts were then used to "[attest] to origins" and legitimize other sacred artifacts.[285] Thinking "doubly" about images was implanted in the psyche of common folk of the medieval and early modern period: that although material artifacts could not live-on forever (they require restoration to survive through centuries, if they survive at all), any "material evidence was the best sort of evidence" that the artifact carried the force it claimed, a connection to a point of origin.[286] Artifacts that could stand-in for an absent authority were created under what Nagel and Wood call the substitution model. Contrary to the authorial model which tied the object to a particular person and time of its creation, understanding a work in substitutional terms meant that it could belong "to more than

[283] Edwards, 187.
[284] Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 31.
[285] Nagel, 31.
[286] Ibid., 30, 31.

one historical moment simultaneously."[287] In the West, words have long mistrusted images to tell the real story.[288]

Yet, that equation gets flipped around once we consider the historical erasure and co-optation of Black texts by the West. Dating back to the eighteenth century, the work/word of Black writers and Black literary critics was silenced by the dominant Western (white) tradition. The "canon" of the West propagated itself by dehumanizing Black people and reaffirming its own authority and influence by claiming its writers and theorists were somehow more "civilized" and, therefore, more justified in gatekeeping philosophical discourse. In some cases, Black writers were weaponized by "Western men of letters to justify various forms of enslavement and servitude of black people."[289] Gates asks, "Aren't we justified in being suspicious of a discourse in which blacks are signs of absence?"[290] In this sense, words could not be trusted by the image. Furthermore, Black images were hard to come by. Or, as semiotician Samuel R. Delany put it, "our [Black American] people" need "images of tomorrow" more than most. "The historical reason that we've been so impoverished in terms of future images is because, until fairly recently, as a people we were systematically forbidden any images of our past."[291]

Reed's book plays on the suspicion of text in several ways. The title itself, *Mumbo Jumbo,* "signifies upon Western etymology, abusive Western practices of deflation through misnaming."[292] Gates relays that a loose translation of the Swahili phrase (*mambo*, *jambo*) is

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[287] Ibid., 30. When the work does not decide from which model it originates, the work is "anachronic."
[288] Mitchell, 92. Even if we chose the correct words to supplement images, we are never going to have absolute knowledge of something. And yet, we cannot know anything without the representations that words and images offer.
[289] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the 'Racial' Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 27.
[290] Ibid., xviii.
[291] Mark Dery, "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose," *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture,* edited by Mark Dery (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 190-191.
[292] Gates, 253.

"What's happening?," which Western definitions "vulgarized" into an adverb meaning "gibberish."[293] In terms of the plot, the mission of the characters is to help Jes Grew find its ancient Text, the Book of Thoth. At the climax of the story, the "most humorous anticlimax in the whole of Afro-American fiction," Papa LaBas opens the box in which the Text is believed to have been hidden. But the box is empty. Unbeknownst to all, "the noted magazine editor" Abdul Hamid, who had translated the Text and supposedly hid it in the box, had burned the only copy of it.[294] At first, Abdul had decided to send it to a publisher for the masses to read, even though he thought the "lewd, nasty, decadent thing" had to have been a fabrication by the Europeans who had had it in their possession for centuries.[295] The publisher sent it back to him, citing there was no "market for this work."[296] Left with "no texts to contain it, define it, interpret it, and thereby will it to subsequent black cultures," Jes Grew's power cannot endure and, once again, fades out.[297]

At first glance, Garner's absence in the word/work creates a fear that his titles do not correspond with his compositions. Without his authority over the text, how can multiple texts point to the same composition without the composition losing any of its aura? But, if *Mumbo Jumbo* says anything about music, it is that words are superfluous. Meditating on Charles Lloyd's comment about his own music, that "words don't go there," Fred Moten describes what happens when we try to explain music using language: "Words are somehow constrained by their implicit reduction to the meanings they carry - meaning inadequate to or detached from the objects or states of affairs they would envelop."[298] Words, we might conclude, are not capable of dealing with

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[293] Ibid., 252, 253.
[294] Reed, 32.
[295] Ibid., 202.
[296] Ibid., 200.
[297] Gates, 257.
[298] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 42.

music's meaning. So, Moten asks, "where do words go? A blur, like the typescript on the cover of the album, meaning lifted by design, slurred by packaging, the rhythmic architecture of text, texture, textile…"[299] Garner's titles serve little purpose other than the text we see on discographic and press documents. Rather than in the text, Garner's presence is found in the music.

Had Garner insisted that "Left Bank Swing" was a version of "Groovy-Day," for example, we would have considered "Left Bank Swing" a copy, a reworking of something that already existed. Garner's allowing the renaming of his compositions was a way for them to assume new texts, therefore making it more difficult to say whether they are copies of the original or are originals themselves. Objects that "circulate and disseminate in various forms" blur temporal lines and confound the process of naming them as copy or original.[300] Mari Lending argues that because the copy does not merely cite, but *re*cites, there is an element of performance in the replica which does more than simply nod to the past. The facsimile points to the past in its ability to document and transcribe as well as to the future "by repeating, reviving, and recovering what is lost or what might be lost."[301] The absence of Garner in the text necessitates our involvement, as listeners and viewers, who, by recognizing associations, are led to believe that there is a force greater than the text which connects all things. It is our job, as listeners and archivists of the music, to find these resemblances between his compositions and link them to the past and future. The game that Garner planted for us requires that we *listen* to his music, the sound, the real image; we cannot simply look at the work/word and expect to grasp what is behind it.

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[299] Ibid., 42-43.
[300] Mari Lending, "Lost Continents, Projective Objects," in *Museums as Cultures of Copies: The Crafting of Artifacts and Authenticity,* edited by Brita Brenna, Hans Dam Christensen, Olav Hamran, (London: Routledge, 2018), 71.
[301] Ibid.

Garner was allowing the historicity of his compositions to be masked. The compositions *hesitate* to align themselves with an exact moment in time.[302] Their apprehension to be moored in linear existence allows us, instead, to associate them by their likenesses and stitch them together in a temporal fabric as we see fit (or, rather, as we hear them), not as the fabricated titles dictate. Jonathan Sterne has argued that "recording is a form of exteriority: it does not preserve a preexisting sonic event as it happens so much as it creates and organizes sonic events for the possibility of preservation and repetition."[303] Although Sterne was specifically referring to anthropological sound recordings of the late nineteenth century, he sees the early recording paradigm as having a triple manipulation on temporality: linear, cyclical, and geological. David F. Garcia has echoed Sterne's interpretation, concluding that preserving sound in this manner was a way to "control…time writ large."[304] Jacques Attali adds that the machine of the recording industry has always been a way of controlling the "noise" that gets out into the public. Beginning in the 1930s, the white market stole the labor of Black musicians, a music that "was once background noise and a form of life, hesitation and stammering," etched it onto albums, and sold it back to listeners for a profit.[305] By 1955, jazz was fully secured as a commodity and a product of "the colonization of black music by the American industrial apparatus," but with effect of limiting and restricting the representation of Black people.[306] In the repetition of the recording, distribution, and commercialization process, a "mutation of the aesthetic criteria" took place, "freezing the work"

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[302] Nagel, 18.
[303] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 332.
[304] David F. Garcia, *Listening for Africa: Freedom, Modernity, and the Logic of Black Music's African Origins* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 95.
[305] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 106.
[306] Attali, 103.

out of the time and space from which it was intended.[307] Garner's absence is a way of disturbing the time established by the recording industry, even if that meant that his work would not be permanent.

Unmooring the work out of the grips of diachronic history is about the impermanence of the artist. Common folk in medieval Europe were duped into thinking doubly about objects, that each one substituted for or acted as a conduit to a higher power. But Gates reminds us that in thinking doubly, those too are "only tropes, figures of speech, rhetorical constructs like 'double-consciousness,' and not some preordained reality or thing. To read these figures literally, Reed tells us, is to be duped by figuration, just like the Signified Lion."[308] W. E. B. DuBois's notion of *double consciousness* complicated how being Black might have mediated the identities of African Americans. In DuBois's inescapable internal conflict of "twoness," the ideals of a national identity are constantly undermined by normalized racial subjugations. Rather than thinking doubly about Garner's compositions, *Mumbo Jumbo* invites us to think in terms of a multiplicity of higher powers and question the finitude of connections we might try to assign to them. Garner's compositions position him not simply in a two-folded process of co-determinacy, but something much more complex - indeterminacy.[309]

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[307] Ibid., 106.
[308] Gates, 276, 241. "The monkey rarely acts in these narrative poems; he simply speaks. As the Signifier, he determines the actions of the Signified, the hapless Lion and the puzzled Elephant."
[309] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1904), 3.

3.5 Indeterminacy

Mumbo Jumbo does something that Gates refers to as "aesthetic play: the play of the tradition, the play on the tradition, the sheer play of indeterminacy itself."[310] Reed goes after the ideal "unity" or the number one, that one entity could hold all the answers. While the Atonists "seek to interpret the world through one interpretation," Jes Grew is a spirit that can only be understood through its multiplicity.[311] Reed's clearest elaboration of the concept of indeterminacy over singularity is the passage wherein Papa LaBas explains how the Book of Thoth came to be "1000s of years ago." Osiris, an Egyptian "young prince who was allergic to thrones," was coaxed by Thoth into explaining the dances he had learned from the "far-out education" he received studying with the "long-feared Black men in the university at Nysa" (in Yemen). The written anthology of what Osiris knew, the Book of Thoth, became a coveted text, thought to hold the secrets of playing the "heaviest sound." Years later, the Egyptian pharaoh, Moses, goes looking for the Book. Because he has selfish intentions, he is given an evil version of it. Nevertheless, possessing the Book inflates his ego, and Moses exclaims, "I'm the 1." LaBas explained Moses's plan: "for once music wouldn't just be used as a background to dancing but he would be a soloist and no 1 in the audience would be allowed to play a whistle or beat a drum or rattle a tambourine."[312] Needless to say, Moses's attempt to become the singular authority was a disaster, and the Osirian musicians (in their multiplicity) had to remind him of that.

Exploring Garner's aesthetic play he exacted on titles, specifically his use of numbering songs, highlights his own suspicion of words and the indeterminacy of musical meaning. Long-

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[310] Gates, 260.
[311] Ibid., 270.
[312] Reed, 182.

time record producer at Columbia, George Avakian, recalled how Garner referred to his selections in the recording studio numerically and how his albums were later assembled in piecemeal fashion by the company:

> One curious thing about Erroll is that, unlike virtually all the other artists I ever worked with, the albums were not conceived as albums. We simply had Erroll in the studio and I let him play everything that he wanted. There was no announcement of tunes because he simply identified them by numbers, so that we could pick them up later on the tapes, and I assembled the albums based on what would make good programming.[313]

Many musicians have used seemingly categorical language or names that appear unspecific to the work. Brent Hayes Edwards cites Ornette Coleman's "Little Symphony," Cecil Taylor's "Unit Structure," or Charles Mingus's "Folk Form No. 1" as titles of jazz compositions which use "allusions to or appropriations of musical genre or normative form."[314] There is also John Coltrane's titles "Untitled 90314" and "Untitled 90320" from *Feelin' Good* (1965), which resemble the thematic number system that scholars have used to catalogue works of eighteenth-century composers.[315] Garner identified his songs in the studio by number, but not in the way that could catalogue them or could resemble a title. As stated earlier in the chapter, Jerrold Levinson claims that for a title to be "true," it must be determined by the artist. In addition, Levinson declares that numerical or cataloging identifiers, ways that artists "keep track of and enable discourse about a work without actually titling it," are likewise not "true" because these names would not have been "part of the aesthetic package assembled and proffered by the artist."[316] By Levinson's standards, then, most of Garner's titles are not true.

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[313] "George Avakian Interview BBC Radio 3," transcribed by Tim Clausen, *Erroll Garner Gems: The Journal of the Erroll Garner Club*, Volume 3(3), July, 1993, 9.
[314] Edwards, 187-188.
[315] Jan LaRue, *A Catalogue of 18th-Century Symphonies, Volume I, Thematic Identifier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
[316] Levinson, 34.

Garner chose to refer to his compositions by number, his preferred system of differentiating them.[317] However, this could lead to problems for accompanying musicians who, accustomed to associating a title with a particular musical structure and chord progressions, might have been confused by Garner's numbering system at first. Ernest McCarty Jr., bassist on Garner's *That's My Kick* album, recorded on November 17, 1966, remembered:

> I recorded an album with Erroll. You know, because he didn't read music, when he composed a piece in his mind, he just wrote on a piece of paper the numbers - Number 1; the first piece I'm gonna' record, Number 2, Number 3, Number 4…Just the numbers. So when I walked into the studio, I said to him, 'you got some music for me?' And he said, 'Well, you'll get it. Here, this is Number 1.' And he started playin'. And he played a chorus of it, and then I was supposed to go on and play it. He wanted to record it. And I said, 'Wait a minute. Play it again, and I'll get a piece of paper and write the chords down.'…And I wrote some chords down, so I could follow him, and we went on and recorded it. And the next tune was Number 2, that's all he had on his paper. Number 1, Number 2, Number 3, Number 4! I've never run into another musician like him. I've run into some strange ones and some great ones, but never of THAT genius. He was fantastic.[318]

To make matters more confusing, Garner's songs were not tied to a specific number. For example, if his setlist was organized by numbers one through seven on one night, the setlist on the next night could include different selections but still be referenced with the numbers one through seven. So, not only were his titles 'not true' in the sense that the numbers evaded title descriptions, but the number that corresponded to a song one night could change in the next performance. In this way, Garner was urging his audience and fellow musicians to listen deeply to the music and not to rely solely on the title (or number) of a composition.

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[317] Levin, xxiv. The earliest books were numerically indicated, notably those of the Babylonians and the Assyrians.
[318] Tim Clausen, "Interview with Milt Hinton," *Erroll Garner Gems: The Journal of the Erroll Garner Club*, Volume 1, Number 4, October 1991, 9.

In March 1957, Garner played a live radio broadcast at Basin Street East, which was then the Shelton Towers Hotel in Midtown Manhattan, accompanied by Eddie Calhoun and Kelly Martin.[319] After excusing himself for his hoarse voice due to a cold, Garner announced to the audience and the master of ceremonies, NBC's Fred Collins, the band's next song. "We've got a little thing that we're going to play. It's a little thing that I wrote. It don't have no name right now. We just call it 'Number 18.'" As some of the audience chuckled at Garner's title, Collins added, "That's a pretty crazy number, I'll say that." Garner began with a ten second solo before Calhoun and Martin (on brushes) entered. What followed was a slow, 32-bar ballad in B-flat minor in AABA form. When the band finished and the audience's applause subsided, Collins interjected, "I'd like to title that 'Number 18,' 'Moondog's Mother.' I think that might make it."[320] (It is unclear to what "Moondog's Mother" refers.)

The signifier, "Number 18," is neither hermeneutical nor descriptive.[321] Furthermore, the way Garner introduced "Number 18" was rather cavalier. Twice, he referred to it as a "little thing" and the inflection in his voice sounded as if he had named it right before he walked onto the stage. The reason for the audience's laughter and Collins's comfortability with suggesting a new title was probably due to how "Number 18" was presented by Garner - as a random signifier, a literary image that did not mean anything. Garner's title is not inherently funny, but it speaks to Garner's casual attitude toward words that might be connected to the image of his music. The unconvincing tone in his voice gives us a clue that Garner knew the instability in naming musical works. Like Garner, Osiris in *Mumbo Jumbo* was not feared, he was liked: "People of all the many ports of the

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[319] Doran, *Most Happy Piano*, 292.
[320] Erroll Garner Trio, radio interview with live audience, emcee Fred Collins, Basin Street East, New York, March 1957. Audio recording courtesy of James M. Doran.
[321] Edwards, 182. Hermeneutically, Edwards credits Umberto Eco's 'key 'analogy as in a tool for understanding, "a keyhole, perhaps, or some way of getting into the poem."

world where he traveled would say 'Hey Seedman, what's going down?'"[322] And, like Osiris, Garner made people feel relaxed; he was not delivering a concrete text, he was inviting people into the process of interpreting his music. "Just as fast as Osiris would teach these dances the people would mimic him and add their variations to fit their country and their clime."[323]

Garner would have already been familiar with his composition he dubbed "Number 18," as he had recorded it for Columbia four years earlier with bassist Wyatt Ruther and drummer Eugene Heard. At the time of the radio broadcast, Garner still did not know what title it would be issued under, which did not seem to matter to him. His manner of introducing "Number 18" cannot make us confident that he had been referring to it as "Number 18" for long; he may have referred to it by multiple different numbers over the course of his career. The song was eventually released in 1961 as "Blue Ecstasy" on *The Provocative Erroll Garner*.[324] Garner would go on to record it again under Octave licensing (distributed by Mercury), with bassist George Duvivier, drummer Joe Cocuzzo, and conguero José Mangual, in 1969. When the product was finished and distributed by Mercury Records in 1970 on *Feeling Is Believing*, it was given a new title, "The Loving Touch." The title change may reflect Octave's way of reclaiming publishing rights, as "Blue Ecstasy" had been published with Criterion Music Corporation and the lawsuit with Columbia may have hampered Octave's ability to buy back the rights to the composition.[325] Either way, Garner's

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[322] Reed, 165.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Dan Ouellette, "The True Story of Erroll Garner, the First Artist to Sue a Major Label and Win," *Variety*, 22 November 2019, https://variety.com/2019/music/news/the-true-story-of-erroll-garner-the-first-artist-to-sue-a-major-label-and-win-1203413083/. Accessed 22 March 2024. *The Provocative Erroll Garner* was one of three albums that Columbia was obligated to recall after Garner won his lawsuit against them in 1961. The other albums in dispute were *Swinging Solos* and *The One and Only Erroll Garner.*
[325] Doran, 233. This example involves the original and two copies appearing under three different titles: "Blue Ecstasy" (recorded in 1953 and released in 1961 under Columbia), "Number 18" (Garner's own title, recorded on live radio in 1957), and "The Loving Touch" (recorded in 1969 and released in 1970 under Garner's label, Octave, with the distribution assistance of Mercury). The composition was given a fourth name after Bob Russell's lyrics were added, "The I'm Not Supposed to Be Blue Blues," but Garner never recorded it under this title. (Teddi King and Anita O'Day both recorded lyrical versions of "The I'm Not Supposed to Be Blue Blues.")

indeterminacy about titles parallels the "open-ended" structure of Jes Grew's force and the play on the literary tradition that Gates read in Reed.[326] Garner was inviting listeners to produce an infinite number of meanings and connections in the music similar to the novel's "demand that we, as critics, in the act of reading, produce a text's signifying structure."[327]

3.6 Garner's Presence

Garner's 'work' is troubling because his absence means that the apertures his titles have created are disjointed from the compositions they are meant to represent. Metaphor, a literary devices that "invites interpretation," tries to fill-in the gaps of history by telling us what something is.[328] Metaphors seek meaning by asking what something represents, which creates continuity "in art, consciousness, and life."[329] But if the notion of "jes' grew" and the structure of *Mumbo Jumbo* - a "composite narrative composed of subtexts, pretexts, post-texts, and narratives within narratives" - models the way in which we are to interpret Garner's compositions, continuity is not the goal.[330] To illustrate metaphor's inadequacy, consider the way the title "Misty" has tried to serve as a metaphor for other aspects of Garner. For example, in 1972, eighteen years after it was recorded, radio personality, Jim Orbey, tried earnestly to find continuity stemming from the word:

> The Misty Erroll Garner is our guest as we record for the jazz museum in New Orleans. This man is of course remembered for so many things, and

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[326] Gates, 275.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Eelco Runia, *Moved by the Past: Discontinuity and Historical Mutation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 96.
[329] Ibid., 52, 54.
[330] Gates, 252.

> we like to think of Erroll Garner as the phenomena of music today. The man that plays the piano without a lead sheet.[331]

The metaphor searches for meaning by pointing to something else, Garner's performing without a "lead sheet," for example.[332] Metaphor "gives" meaning by suggesting continuity between the word and what it is thought to represent.[333] Garner did not name his musical images, indicating that there is no continuity between Garner's "work" and his compositions. In our best efforts to understand "Misty" or any Garner title through metaphor, there would always be a reality, a story, a *presence* that remains hidden from us.[334]

Eelco Runia believes that metonymy illuminates gaps through which the reality of the work becomes present to us. Metonymy, which literally translates to "change of name," is defined as "a figure in which the name of an attribute or adjunct is substituted from that of the thing meant, e.g. *sceptre* for *authority*."[335] As Runia points out, historical texts are metonymical in nature, but we often do not take notice because these type of texts "invite us to read faster" without pause to reflect on how words and phrases are pasted together to fit a narrative.[336] We hold an album cover, for example, and quickly read the titles without questioning what lies behind (who is lying about) the word. Unlike metaphor which connotes meaning by providing historical context and representing the past, metonymy "presents the past in the here and now" and confronts us with our own discomfort of discontinuity.

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[331] Erroll Garner, radio interview with Jim Orbey, from the Jazz Museum in Hawaii, 15 June 1972. Courtesy of James Doran.
[332] Mitchell, 21.
[333] Ellen Handler Spitz, *Museums of the Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). Spitz analyzed René Magritte's titles of his paintings as metaphors, which may have worked because Magritte named his own paintings.
[334] Eelco Runia, "Presence," *History and Theory*, Vol. 45, February 2006, 27.
[335] Ibid., 15.
[336] Ibid., 25.

Objects in a museum are metonymic by default in that they have been ripped away from their original context. When they are given a new context by textual explanation, "they establish metaphorical connections between objects and the public and between life as it was back then and as it is lived right now."[337] Museums tear objects away from their context, making them metonymically "strange," and then put them into a fabricated, new context and made metaphorically "familiar."[338] In *Mumbo Jumbo*, the *Mu'tafikah* are an underground group of bohemians in Manhattan that organize heists of private art collections and museums around America and Europe so that stolen art objects can be rightfully returned to their Chinese, South American, and African origins. The elites who fetishize and illegally possess the relics are worried that if the art objects are returned to their origins, "there would be renewed enthusiasm for the Ikons of the aesthetically victimized civilizations."[339] The art is out of its original context, requiring a metaphorical connotation to make them familiar in the hands of the elites. Like these stolen art objects, Garner's titles have no right to insist on metaphorical connotation; they can only metonymically denote what they stand for, which is a strange feeling of Garner's absence.[340] Interpreted as metonyms, Garner's titles are supposed to make us uncomfortable because they feign authority over something that originated by eluding contextualization.

The re-naming of Garner's compositions again comes to the fore with the dubious circumstances under which Timme Rosenkrantz, proclaimed impresario and the first to record Garner in New York, acquired and profited from Garner's recordings. Although some in the business referred to Rosenkrantz as the "Jazz Baron," others preferred the nickname "Robber

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[337] Runia, *Moved by the Past*, 90.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Reed, 15.
[340] Runia, *Moved by the Past*, 90. Runia, "Presence," 17.

Baron," as he had a habit of secretly obtaining or outright stealing musicians' recordings.[341] On December 20, 1944, Garner played a few selections during a concert at Times Hall in New York, four as a soloist and one with an unknown guitar player. He shared the bill with Stuff Smith, Jimmy Jones, the Jon Levy trio, the Don Byas and Slam Stewart duo, Red Norvo Sextet with Pearl Bailey, and Barney Bigard's orchestra. Rosenkrantz, who supervised the concert, remarked that although it was a success, musically and in the number of attendees (it was sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art's *View* magazine with the likes of Salvador Dali in the audience), he "did not get a plugged nickel out of it…for this was a benefit affair, with all profits going to underdeveloped mothers or some such worthy cause."[342] Rosenkrantz, however, may have found other ways to make a profit. The concert was taped, and individual tracks somehow ended up in the hands of record labels. Garner's "Opus 1," "Gaslight," and "Fast Company" appeared in Blue Note's *Overture to Dawn* volumes, released in 1953; "Fast Company" was retitled to "Twisting' the Cat's Tail" before it was released by Selmer on a 78rpm. Selmer did not give composer credit to Garner on the disc. To make matters more confusing, "Opus 1" was originally given the title "In the Beginning" on Rosenkrantz's transcription log for the concert.[343]

Rosenkrantz was also known for recording the rehearsals that he hosted at his home and subsequently selling those tapes to record labels.[344] Garner played a version of "In the Beginning" for Rosenkrantz at his apartment in late December 1944 which was later issued under three labels with that title: Dial (1949), Jazztone (1957), and 77 Records (1961). And when Garner re-visited

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[341] Linda Dahl, *Morning Glory: A Biography of Mary Lou Williams* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 168-175. Rosenkrantz stole the recordings of Mary Lou Williams twice: once after her *Zodiac Suite* debut on December 30, 1945 at Town Hall, and again only six months later during her Carnegie Hall performance when she was accompanied by 70 instrumentalists from the New York Pops Orchestra.
[342] Timme Rosenkrantz, *Harlem Jazz Adventures: A European Baron's Memoir, 1934-1969*, adapted and edited by Bradley Hamilton Garner (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 177.
[343] Doran, Most Happy Piano, 166.
[344] Rosenkrantz, 177, 256.

Rosenkrantz's apartment on January 10, 1945, this time with bassist Eddie Brown and drummer Harold "Doc" West, the four tracks that Rosenkrantz's procured for his personal collection ended up on the Black & White label. Although Rosenkrantz would log one of them as "Erroll's Boogie," Black & White would release the selection as "Twistin' the Cat's Tail," which is arguably not the same composition that Selmer had released from the Times Hall performance. Both compositions are upbeat twelve-bar blues. But the trio version from Rosenkrantz's apartment is an improvised blues without a defined melody. So, in this scenario, Blue Note's "Fast Company" and Selmer's "Twistin' the Cat's Tail" refer to the same composition, a solo blues with what appears to be a defined melody. Black & White's "Twistin' the Cat's Tail" is probably not the same composition as the one released by Selmer, but it is unclear as the Black & White selection does not have a clearly defined melody. The confusion in title changes bears witness to the infinite discontinuities that metonymy allows us to deal with that metaphor does not. Metaphor connects people and places; metonymy "disturbs" them, "questions" them, "awakens us from what we take for granted, and draws attention to what we don't like to be reminded of: that the implicit rules of the place are far from natural and self-evident, are indeed a system of habits and conventions."[345]

Rosenkrantz did leave us some anecdotal evidence that Garner participated in naming his compositions early in his career, but only in the moment of their creation. Recalling the gaslight fixtures on the walls during one of the apartment sessions, Garner "improvised an especially beautiful tune on the grand piano," and announced it would be called "Gaslight."[346] For another composition, Garner looked at an "old French clock. A showpiece with both hands missing."

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[345] Runia, "Presence," 19.
[346] Rosenkrantz, 176, 177. In a phone conversation with Jim Doran, 14 March 2024, Doran stated that Garner may have instead been referring to the 1944 film, *Gaslight*.

Garner supposedly named it "No Time at All."[347] When "No Time at All" was released on Blue Note, however, the title would be changed to "The Clock Stood Still."[348] This suggests that Garner may have, at times, been inspired to name his compositions in the moment of performance, but he did not pursue their permanence in the world.

Disrupting the temporal permanence of the song title, Garner was signifying on the notion that compositions had any durational impact beyond the time of their performance. Unlike Western European classical music (otherwise known as art music), having different versions of the same composition are ubiquitous in jazz. As Laurent Cugny explains, "a composition for jazz can never be heard in itself. A jazz performance is an object that conceals a composition as it creates a new version of it, whereas a performance of art music reveals the written work."[349] Garner was creating new versions of his compositions all the time. Shouldn't his titles reflect that? Furthermore, what this implies is that Garner could not be caught or pinned down in his previous compositions, even if they were recorded. There was no "Garner essence" that he left in their wake for people to steal. There is no text (or Book of Thoth) that can be transcribed, translated, or copied that contains Garner's compositions. ("Once the signs of its presence have been read, the text disappears.")[350] Likewise, any text that chases after Garner's composition will find that the sound disappears after it has been heard.

Analyzed as metonymies, then, Garner's titles could never hold down and capture the underlying compositions. In a quest to find the relevance of language, metonymy - a substitute word or phrase that stands-in for what a Garner composition really means - reveals alternative

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[347] Ibid., 177.
[348] Doran, 162.
[349] Cugny, 36.
[350] Reed, 270.

purposes for the titles. First, Garner was trying to tell us that the name of a musical work is not its title, but the sound of the notes. Again, to quote Moten: "really listening…*is* seeing; it's the sense that it excludes; it's the ensemble of the senses."[351] What we *see* in music should not be the title, but what we gather through listening. Written language has no bearing on our seeing music's reality. In a way, Garner is addressing music literacy. We could say that title is ineffective just as a written score is ineffective. What he is performing and referencing when he makes a sound is not a written word or anything textual, but the absence of text. Analyzing his titles as metonymies works because they are all standing in for something which is absent - Garner, himself.

Secondly, metonymy does something which concerns temporality that expands *how* Garner's titles mean. Runia posits that metonymy works in both temporal directions, "upward *to* the present, and downward *from* the present."[352] Metonymy allow us to think of history, not as "*gone*," but "*as ongoing process*."[353] In order to release Garner's titles from their fixed location in time, we have to take each title (as metonymy) and "tear it away from the context in which it is at home and implant it in a context in which it is inappropriate."[354] One of the realities that appears through the fistula of "Misty," for example, is that it bears resemblances to other works. If we tear "Misty" away from the context of the narrative that has been immortalized - that it was composed by divine intervention on an airplane - we can start to create new meanings about what "Misty" stands for. Analyzed as metonym, "Misty" takes on an upward evolution that disturbs the accepted view of its origins. Through "Misty," the presence of Eckstine, Johnson, and a pre-1954 Garner shine through, for example. In the opposite direction, "Misty" works backwards from present to

[351] Moten, 67, 71, 72.
[352] Runia, "Presence," 20.
[353] Runia, "Presence," 8.
[354] Runia, *Moved by the Past*, 72.

past. In analyzing the titles, we can revisit the instances that his "work" appeared with a new appreciation that "Misty" does not represent what it was supposed to. It does, though, in a round-about way, reveal the presence of Garner.

3.7 The Work

In jazz, where a score or text could never take the place of the musical object, there is no "spatial configuration" upon which to anchor the music in time.[355] This is especially true in the case of Garner, where neither the score nor text makes an appearance. This chapter has focused on the evidence that suggests Garner completely resigned himself from the textual side of the equation - he did not title his own compositions, choosing indeterminate numbers instead. Using Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s theory of interpretation to analyze Garner's titles as literary images shows that there are ways to interpret Garner's compositions in their disjointed reality among the objects (titles) that claim to represent them. Following Gates's lead, I used Ishmael Reed's mystery novel, *Mumbo Jumbo*, to address the two-folded deficiency of his titles - that language fails to communicate the meaning of music and the absence of Garner in the texts.

As this chapter uncovers, about a dozen of his compositions were recorded under two or more different titles. Instead of writing this off as a practical choice (for regaining publishing rights, etc.) or an indifference to their aesthetic function, my stance is that Garner was alluding to how little a text can really tell us about music. Texts are "embedded in specific historical time"

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[355] Cook, 23.

and are, therefore, at odds with the temporal instability of Garner's compositions.[356] Treating his titles as metonymies "opens a reality outside the text. It gives rise to presence."[357] Metonymy lifts the titles out of their historical context and allow us to appreciate the discontinuity with which Garner's compositions move about the world. While Garner's work plays itself out in objects that claim to represent him, the real Work is to listen for his presence.

[356] Gates, 191.
[357] Runia, "Presence," 20.

4.0 Communion of Labor

4.1 The Truth of Garner

In 1950, the *Pittsburgh Courier* reprinted an op-ed written by Ross Russell, founder of Dial Records, a label that had already recorded Garner both solo and in an ensemble format.[358] In the essay, Russell posits that Garner's personhood is somehow safeguarded from the often-brutal realities of life. And, from that quiet place, he offers his music to cure humanity.

> Erroll is one of those well-adjusted and self-contained people who seem to move among the disturbing realities of their times with an unshakable detachment, like dream-walkers. Garner is not a great musical thinker and even less an artist at grips with the conflicts of his day.[359] He lives in a small peaceful ivory tower and it is this private world that he shares with his listener. Musicians like Art Tatum and Charlie Parker are manifestations of the turbulence of our contemporary life - E[rroll] Garner is the antidote for it.[360]

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[358] James M. Doran, *Erroll Garner: The Most Happy Piano, The Centennial Edition (1921-2021),* (USA: James M. Doran, 2021), 187. The 1947 Dial recording included alto saxophonist Charlie, bassist George "Red" Callender, drummer Harold "Doc" West, and vocalist Earl Coleman.

[359] It is curious that the Black-owned and run *Pittsburgh Courier* would have reprinted a statement that dismissed Garner's intellectual prowess. They may have been willing to look past Russell's judgement of Garner as "not a great musical thinker" because they agreed with the rest of the article. Russell's presumption could have also reflected the widely accepted opinion of the time that "great musical thinker[s]" of the "modern" era had to participate in the European classical tradition of reading Western music notation. Russell's draft of the liner notes he wrote for Garner's *Play, Piano, Play* album, first released in 1950, contains a pertinent anecdote left out of the final liner notes that speaks to this possibility. Ross Russell, "Erroll Garner: Play Piano Play, Part One," *Ross Russell Papers* (Austin: Harry Random Center, 2005), 2. "I was proprietor of Tempo Music Shop in Hollywood. In 1945 the store had become a rallying ground for West Coast collectors and musicians of modern persuasion, and as such the scene of some lively discussions. One evening the subject at hand was Erroll Garner and a customer named Lou Gottlieb, a tall, wildly articulate fellow, took exception to hasty judgements on the pianist from Pittsburgh. Lou was then a pianist himself, but besides that about to complete a degree in music at UCLA and currently a disciple of twelve-tone music in the master composing class under Arnold Schoenberg. His twin gods were Schoenberg and Charlie Parker, and his opinions were much respected in our little salon. Gottlieb conceded that a great deal of Erroll Garner's record output could be written off as cocktail bar piano, but, he submitted, only a jazz artist of the first caliber could conceive and execute sixteen bar solo on a record titled Play, Fiddle, Play."

[360] Ross Russell, "A Great Piece on a Great Performer," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Sept 16, 1950, 22.

By the time the article was printed, Parker (1920-1955) had become a household name, responsible for co-founding jazz's modernist turn, the bebop movement, and Art Tatum (1909-1956) was widely accepted as the pinnacle of talent among the modern pianist ilk.[361] Russell reflects an image of Garner that is non-threatening, other-worldly, beyond the physical, and apart from the canon. Tatum and Parker, on the other hand, are responsive, accessible, canonized, and of the world. Where is the location of this difference?

The musical inception of a Garner performance, a product of labor, provides an opportunity to talk about the repetition inherent in that condition and what the reception of it means against the backdrop of Black cultural production in mid-twentieth century America. In each song, one hears Garner experimenting in-the-moment, specifically in the introductions ("intros") he played without accompaniment. Pianist and scholar Vijay Iyer, noted the power dynamic wrapped up in a Garner intro, a moment of "gangster vulnerability" wherein Garner takes the reigns and says, "trust me," even if he was not sure what the result would be. Iyer continues:

> We've all been there; you get up in front of an audience and you have to say something. You know where you have to get to, but you're not sure how you're going to get there. And that's what's going on in that moment. That's when the truth emerges.[362]

The truth of Garner, what differentiates him from Tatum, Parker, and the rest, emerges when Garner is on-stage and creating, in real time, a sonic experience for the listeners, including his bandmates. Playing an improvised element ahead of the song's theme became part of his performance routine. But, although it was expected, there was no way to anticipate the route it would take or the eventual theme that it would lead into. The intros kept listeners alert: the band

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[361] Martin Williams, "Art Tatum: Not for the Left Hand Alone," *American Music*, Spring 1983, Vol 1(1), 38. "Tatum's maturity came in the late 1940s…after the modernists of Charlie Parker's generation had established themselves."
[362] Vijay Iyer, "Ep. 05, A Night at the Movies," *Erroll Garner Uncovered*, hosted by Robin D. G. Kelley, podcast, https://www.errollgarner.com/podcast#all-episodes. Accessed 28 March 2024.

had to be ready to enter with Garner at the moment that the intro ended and the theme began, and the audience would be trying to guess the title of the forthcoming song and waiting to see how it would all come together. Concert promoter and owner of the Storyville Club in Boston where Garner played in the 1940s, George Wein, recalled that Garner "would play these grandiose interludes and introductions before stating a melody" that left the audience guessing what song he was about to play. "Then, when he finally launched into a melody…people applauded almost as a matter of course." The applause was even more boisterous when he would go into one of his hits, like "Misty" or "Laura."[363] The temporal effect of playing this game with Garner, this chapter suggests, is the suspension of or freedom from time.

Scholars have recently suggested that the study of jazz audiences ought to be repositioned as a driving element in the discourse. What Ken Prouty calls the *recording-listening continuum* is part of what creates and bonds jazz communities.[364] Prouty calls us to analyze recordings on an emotional level, especially through the act of listening. In this way, the meaning of jazz community can be understood as a shared experience and as a connection between artist and audience.[365] Unfortunately, jazz fans have, for the most part, been relegated to the roles of either "consumers of the music" or "unnamed actors in the social play that intersects with jazz at various points."[366] Furthermore, Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. asks us to consider the impact of "black jazz audiences on black musicians' careers," as it has been the African American base that has consistently pushed musicians to attain new frontiers when dealing with "*traditional* musical materials."[367] Black and

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[363] George Wein and Nate Chinen, *Myself Among Others* (Da Capo Press: Cambridge, 2003), 89.
[364] Ken Prouty, *Knowing Jazz: Community, Pedagogy, and Canon in the Information Age* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 43.
[365] Ibid., 44.
[366] Ibid., 8.
[367] Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 35, 36.

white audiences do not always align in their responses, particularly if the dominant narrative pushed by the entertainment industry (or media, in general) does not reflect that individual's life experience. In what Manthia Diawara refers to as the "black/resisting spectator," there is a refusal to go along with the message behind the representation on stage/screen because it portrays the character(s) differently than how the spectator identifies themself.[368] A portion of this study will be dedicated to addressing the importance of Garner's audiences and how they might have influenced Garner's artistic choices and public persona.

There are three current voices whose critical reflections will provide various entry points for discussing Garner's labor. Fred Moten contributes ways of thinking about Garner's intros as use objects in the context of "aesthetics of the black radical tradition."[369] Moten uses commodities to show how the "repressive temporal regimes of labor" inscribed by Western culture for centuries have been "both echoed and disrupted" by Black cultural production, particularly through recording technology and Black popular music. Like Moten's commodities, Garner's use objects created a new space from which he could reclaim the status of his labor with inherent value. Next, applying Alexander Weheliye's concept of "sonic Afro-modernity" reveals the unique space that Garner carved out for himself in the music world. His intros were the site where listeners were both conjured (in the physical way that the music moved them) and encouraged to step inside the music with Garner. He used the tools of his body and the piano to create an ephemeral experience that was meant to be listened to in its live rendition. At the point of tension where the materiality

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[368] Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance," in *Film Theory & Criticism*, edited by Leo Brandy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 771.

[369] Arendt, 162. "It is only at this point that Marx's famous self-alienation, the degradation of men into commodities, sets in, and this degradation is characteristic of labor's situation in a manufacturing society which judges men not as persons but as producers, according to the quality of their products. A laboring society, on the contrary, judges men according to the functions they perform in the labor process; while labor power in the eyes of *homo faber* is only the means to produce the necessarily higher end, that is, either a use object or an object for exchange, laboring society bestows upon labor power the same higher value it reserves for the machine."

of the body/piano meet the ephemerality of the sound, listeners were urged to be engaged in the process of creation. Weheliye provides the framework for discussing how Garner's intros were able to free the listener from modernity's repressive temporal order and from a consumerist mentality. Lastly, Fumi Okiji supplies a way of thinking about how the presence of others was central to Garner's laboring process. Countering Adorno's assessment in the essay "On Jazz,"[370] she argues that Adorno misunderstood the meaning of subjectivity from the Black American experience. Adorno uses the verse-chorus musical form as an analogy for individual-societal relationships to express that jazz only feigns as a product that promotes individualism but cannot escape the authority of social dominance. Okiji sees the African American blues form as a better option for explaining that jazz does, indeed, reflect how it "devia[tes] from mainstream ideals and imaginings."[371] I extend Okiji, analyzing Garner's intros as the verse from where he reclaims the activity of labor as something communal. Even though he was the only person making music at these sonic inceptions, he created them in such a way that shatters Adorno's argument that there is a site of authority inherent in the verse-chorus form.

4.2 Suspending the Listener in Uncertain Times

The organization of most Garner performances as they are heard on record (or as they were heard in front of live audiences) are structured by the following series of events: introduction - exposition of the composed theme - piano solo - return of the theme - coda. Along with the coda,

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[370] Theodor W. Adorno and Jamie Owen Daniel, "On Jazz," *Discourse*, Vol. 12(1), Fall/Winter (1989-90).
[371] Fumi Okiji, *Jazz As Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 27.

the intro is traditionally thought of as a "supplement" to the performance - it is an extra rhetorical device serving to setup the theme. Nearly all of Garner's song selections begin with him playing an intro on the piano without accompaniment from his band. Following these sometimes-lengthy beginnings, Garner would play the theme, or what jazz musicians call "the head." The head/theme is "the main element of a composition," the melodic (as well as rhythmic and harmonic) statement that is preconceived before the performance takes place.[372] It is also the part of the performance that is most recognizable and is responsible for tying the composition to its exchange-value and representation for copyright.[373] Finally, the solo is "an improvised utterance based on a chord changes background."[374] After his solo on piano, Garner would usually return to the head before ending with an improvised coda, all of which were played with the accompaniment from his band. Improvisation, Laurence Cugny explains, "consists of the successive choices made at each moment of the performance among the multiple options offered by the determining factors."[375] A lot of jazz music hangs out in the gray area between totally spontaneous music (improvisation) and reproductions of composed musical works. In fact, scholars have recently admitted that "an ontology for improvised jazz performances remains unfinished business."[376] In the case of Garner, the intro was the most improvised element of a performance, and, according to George Avakian, Garner's secret for keeping listeners engaged in the music:

> Erroll was a master at capturing the attention of his audiences. And I think that part of it was the tricky business of not announcing anything and not

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[372] Laurent Cugny, *Analysis of Jazz: A Comprehensive Approach*, translated by Bérengère Mauduit. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019), 42, 74.
[373] Jacques Attali, Noise: *The Political Economy of Music*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 77.
[374] Cugny 75.
[375] Ibid., 66.
[376] Lee B. Brown, David Goldblatt, Theodore Gracyk, *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art* (Routledge: New York, 2018), 193.

> letting people in the concerts know what he was about to play until he went into the chorus.[377]

The following musical analysis of Garner's intro is from a 6 minute and 16 second performance which has never been released in its entirety.[378] On November 7, 1964, Garner and his trio - with bassist Eddie Calhoun and drummer Kelly Martin - performed at Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw to an audience of 2,000 Dutch listeners. Garner's fourth selection in the program was "Moon River," a melody written by Pittsburgh composer Henry Mancini for the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.[379] There was a 5 minute, 38 section version of the performance that was issued by Philips, the European arm of Columbia records, in 1965.[380] Philips shortened the original by cutting out the first thirty seconds of Garner's introduction. Examining Garner's full rendition of the "Moon River" intro keeps the integrity of Garner's object, a recorded account of his labor on the night of the concert. The import of this decision by the producer to discard a portion of Garner's unique voice can be analyzed in terms of what Attali regards as the loss of representation in mid-twentieth century Western culture. Representation, which champions difference, was/is being overrun by repetition.[381] Garner's object was changed to fit closer to the model (Mancini's) so that its mass production could be more easily consumed.[382] Of course, the defacement of one

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[377] *Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read*, Produced and directed by Atticus Brady, First Run Features, 2012, DVD.
[378] "Moon River," courtesy of James M. Doran, emailed Nov 16, 2023.
[379] Steve Sullivan, "Moon River (1961) - Henry Mancini (music by Henry Mancini, lyrics by Johnny Mercer)," *Encyclopedia of Great Popular Song Recordings, Volume 1*, (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013), 475-476. Mancini tapped Johnny Mercer for lyrics as a backdrop for Audrey Hepburn's character. The composition became an instant hit and won Song of the Year and garnered the film an Oscar for Best Song.
[380] James M. Doran, *Erroll: The Essential LPs* (USA: James M. Doran, 2020), 161. "Eng. Columbia Execs Slated to Join Philips," The Billboard, 6 September 1952, 42. Philips Phonographische Industries (also known as Philips Electrical) was founded in the Netherlands in 1950 and began distributing records in Europe for Columbia in 1953. The Erroll Garner Project released an album of the concert, *Nightconcert* (2018), but it did not include "Moon River."
[381] Attali, 88.
[382] Ibid., 122. "Repetitive distribution" of the commodity is "a means of isolating, of preventing direct, localized, anecdotal, non-repeatable communication."

musical intro of Garner's cannot being held responsible for the entirety of society's loss of the engaged spectator, but it does speak to what element of the musical object had become valued.

Garner begins with an ascending line of four notes followed by four chords, the clusters acting as a sort of response to the call of the four single notes. Then, he plays three single notes, followed by two harmonically-tense chords, reminiscent of the clusters of notes heard in the opening phrase. He repeats this three-note line in the bass register followed by a two-chord gesture in the upper register four more times, the last time finally resolving to a major chord. This final chord signals a break from uniformity of the first 18 seconds, developing the motif (single note followed by cluster) for another ten seconds, all the while outlining what could be considered a harmonic progression of tonalities that are in intervals of fourths. (This is where the Philips recording starts.) What follows is twenty seconds of a rhythmically regular pattern, wherein two-note intervals in the lower half of the piano are played simultaneously with higher clusters of notes, although it sounds somewhat harmonically random. Played in quarter note beats, with staccato feel, his hands access the full range of the keys and move in parallel, similar, or contrapuntal motion at different times. This playful lilt amuses the audience, and once their clapping has begun, signaling their enjoyment of Garner's humor, which no doubt was reassured by a visibly joyous look on Garner's face, he finally lands on the tonal center. At around the 50-second mark, having captured the listeners' attention, there is nothing left to do but bring in the rest of the trio, Calhoun and Martin. There is a short pause between the quarter note pulse and the driving swing rhythm that Garner is about to retrieve. But not before a four-measure break that is reminiscent of a saxophone big band riff in the right hand with syncopated rhythms and dynamics that start forte and quickly melt into his own bass line onto which Calhoun latches, seamlessly. Martin anticipated when Garner's introduction was going to end, as we hear a lone brush hit on the ride cymbal two

bars before the head begins. The band takes off in a medium swing tempo and the audience enthusiastically applauds Garner's ability to give them something extra to accompany the performance of what turns out to be "Moon River."

The singularly of a Garner intro disrupted what was inherently a repetitive process in the activity of labor. One way to read them is from what Fred Moten extends as "the aesthetics of the black radical tradition," a continuation of the "aesthetic genealogy" that includes Cedric Robinson's response to Karl Marx.[383] Robinson writes that between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, while European workers were groomed to mimic the "rhythms and turbulences" of factory machines for the production of material capital, Black Africans were brutally and systematically enslaved *as* "*constant* capital." The machine of the Atlantic slave trade ran non-stop, incessantly relocating human bodies to "minimize[d] the disruption of the production of labor" for their captors. In the oppressive, violent, and racial world order, Black laborers saw no fruits of their labor; they were the exchanged product on the slave market. Their bodies were used to bear the network more laborers. They were consumed by the process of labor itself; the objects of the world (which they had produced) had been systematically removed from their experience. The system of slavery allowed/allows for the labor of some to provide sustenance for the many.[384] After centuries of being identified only for their labor, not as producers of work or material, Black people would have to reorient themselves in terms of their relation between labor and work under the dominant structures they were forced into.

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[383] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 18.
[384] Arendt, 88.

But Marx's claim was that the goal of mankind is to sustain itself - to become a society of laborers - nothing more.[385] In this case, work, which for Arendt is the only human activity that can add "new objects to the human artifice," becomes unnecessary because, according to Marx, we should not be concerned with leaving anything behind.[386] Under Marx, we are still meant to produce objects, of course. But the value of those objects should be measured by the "surplus" produced by the labor, not the "quality or character" of the object.[387] In a modern society, where machines only quicken the rate of production (hence, mass production), the abundance of use objects is so large that it "transforms them into consumer goods."[388] In this scenario, we are expected to consume what is current (music, for example) overnight so that we can consume the new (in constant production) tomorrow.[389]

What Marx's assumption meant for Black people was that they were expected to produce something out of nothing.[390] They had been conditioned to be laborers and had not yet been fully admitted by society as workers, which meant that the tools they were left to work with were of a less durable nature. Robinson writes that "the raw material of the Black radical tradition" became

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[385] Arendt, 89. "Within a completely 'socialized mankind,' whose sole purpose would be the entertaining of the life process - and this is the unfortunately quite unutopian ideal that guides Marx's theories - the distinction between labor and work would have completely disappeared; all work would have become labor because all things would be understood, not in their worldly, objective quality, but as results of living labor power and functions of the life process."

[386] Ibid., 88, 89. "All work would have become labor because all things would be understood, not in their worldly, objective quality, but as results of living labor power and functions of the life process."

[387] Ibid., 93, 86. "The reason for the elevation of labor in the modern age was its 'productivity'."

[388] Ibid., 125. "The endlessness of the laboring process is guaranteed by the ever-recurrent needs of consumption; the endlessness of production can be assured only if its products lose their use character and become more and more objects of consumption, or if, to put it in another way, the rate of use is so tremendously accelerated that the objective difference between use and consumption, between the relative durability of use objects and the swift coming and going of consumer goods, dwindles to insignificance."

[389] Attali, 107. Attali talks about the "hit parade" being a place where the "use-value of a song" is not only "reflected," but "created." "It is therefore essential that the consumer believe in the legitimacy of this hierarchy, which reflects and creates value."

[390] Arendt, 122. "From the standpoint of labor, tools strengthen and multiply human strength to the point of almost replacing it, as in all cases where natural forces, such as tame animals or water power or electricity, and not mere material things, are brought under a human master."

"the values, ideas, conceptions, and constructions of reality from which resistance was manufactured."[391] In the early twentieth century, a broad market had been readied to consume one such product. Jazz music was created by the raw material of Black Americans, but commodified by white America who already had the tools to represent it.[392] The appropriation of Black music was made possible by repetition, copying, and distributing what once was an product of "revolt" and had, under the white-owned recording industry, become a "neuter[ed]" product to consume.[393] Garner's intros are a power play against that "mass production" and a consumer-driven society.[394] Labor is an inherently repetitive process. And, since Garner's means of sustenance was music, he figured out a way to make labor less repetitive - by letting the intro inspire infinitely new products of labor.[395] Importantly, he would use it to bring the audience with him, out of the silenced and consumerist mentality for which they had been groomed, and engage them to the point where they could free themselves from the temporal order to which they had been conditioned.[396] Garner would make sure that these use objects produced by his labor were judged less by their quantity, than by their quality.[397] That is to say, Garner did not submit to the notion that the repetition of labor (creating beautiful music) had to conform to a standardized model. What Moten's strategy is particularly capable of handling is the "transference" between creator and material, between Garner and the trace of his intros.[398]

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[391] Cedric J. Robinson*, Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 309.
[392] Attali, 103.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Arendt, 125.
[395] Ibid. Labor is only a means to an end, thereby necessitating our consumption to arrive at some end goal; it is "repetitive" by nature. "And this specifically modern acceleration is only too apt to make us disregard the repetitive character of all laboring - the repetition and the endlessness of the process itself put the unmistakable mark of laboring upon it."
[396] Attali, 105.
[397] Arendt, 88.
[398] Moten, 16-18. Moten is interested in how commodities resist "containment" / "enslavement" and what their "maternal" traces ("a palpable hit or touch, a bodily and visible phonographic inscription") say or do not say about

To interpret Garner's labor from the perspective of the Black radical tradition, I turn to the way in which Moten exhibits Marvin Gaye's production of "Since I Had You" from the album *I Want You* (1976). The song, Moten argues, disturbs and reflects the "repressive temporal regimes" inflicted both in the recording studio and upon the consciousnesses of Black labor workers in Detroit's industrial landscape.[399] He notes that Gaye's overdubbing of voices disrupts the convention of how love songs had previously been narrated.[400] Gaye's "multitracking" method that became his signature sound in the 1970s dates back to his experimentation with ballads in the recording studio in 1965.[401] In those earlier sessions, Gaye flipped the process of production, so that instead of recording a prescribed ("written") arrangement, he was using what had already been recorded as inspiration to compose overtop of the track. For over a decade, and without the goal of issuing them, Gaye reimagined what it meant to compose music by "layering over a dozen interpretations" with his vocals.[402] In doing so, he was able to created "bridges" to different "scene[s]" for the listener; the "bridge" in "Since I Had You" happens when the overdubbed voices stop in the middle of the song, prompting the listener to wonder what is going to happen next. Gaye is imploring the creation of new modes of production "by holding - which is to say suspending, embracing - time."[403] Gaye's suspension of time happens at the point where overdubbing subsides - when the direction of the lyrical and musical narrative is not clear; likewise, Garner's suspension of time happens during the intros - when the listener cannot be sure where he is taking us.

"transference" between creator and material. His project "is an attempt to describe the material reproductivity of black performance and to claim for this reproductivity the status of an ontological condition."

[399] Moten, 225.

[400] Ibid.

[401] Andrew Flory, "The Ballads of Marvin Gaye," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Summer 2019, Vol. 72(2), 334, 335.

[402] Moten, 335.

[403] Ibid., 225.

While Gaye and Garner both hold the listener in temporal suspensions during moments of uncertainty, it is interesting to think about their respective objects as they relate to opposing modes of production - work versus labor. Moten reflects upon Gaye's recording as a document that holds a "reservoir" of knowledge possessed by the Black industrial worker in Detroit. In the same way that Moten ascribes Detroit workers as either subordinate to or controllers of the machine, Gaye's voice (and hands) can submit to or dominate the recording industry.[404] In the Arendtian sense, Gaye's performance in the recording studio is a product of his "work," as he was the one with his hands on the machine which resulted in a fabricated product.[405] Where Gaye suspends the listener in his work product, Garner suspends in his labor product. Garner was hands-off in the studio, letting others handle the work aspect; he was not as invested in the recording process as Gaye. The suspensions Garner created were in front of live audiences, where he could really stretch out the length (in time and space) of his intros and in any fabricated by-product that might come from them.[406]

Garner's intros take up significantly more space in live performance recordings than studio session recordings. Consider, first, the following albums and the percentage of the album wherein Garner is playing an intro in front of live audiences: 17% on *Campus Concert* (1964); 17% on *Nightconcert* (1964); 14% on *Symphony Hall Concert* (1959). Comparatively, those numbers outweigh the time spent in intros on the studio-produced albums: 6% on *Magician* (1973), 6% on *Gemini* (1971), 9% on *Closeup in Swing* (1961). All these numbers represent the portion of the

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[404] Ibid., 225-226. Moten says that the goal of the music industry was to subdue and control its products. In its focus "toward the domestication of radical sound," Gaye creates a "new space" in the sonic realm.
[405] Arendt, 137, 139. In the sense that the recorded product is a "durable" object and "fabricated" by Gaye.
[406] Ibid., 118. "Labor's products, the products of man's metabolism with nature, do not stay in the world long enough to become a part of it, and the laboring activity itself, concentrated exclusively on life and its maintenance, is oblivious of the world to the point of worldlessness."

performance where Garner is laboring alone, without the assistance of his bandmates.[407] But the live-produced albums had significantly more time and space covered by Garner's intros. Conversely, the studio-produced albums, products of work in that they were fabricated, take up significantly less time and space.[408] There are several reasons why Garner may have chosen to keep the intros shorter on the products that were only meant to be listened to in solitude (not at a concert). The record executives may not have wanted long intros on the albums, as a society made for consumption did not have that much time to spend on any one song. Even Garner knew that his first priority had to be the fans buying his records, as radio disc jockeys only pushed products that already had momentum: "if [deejays] see that a record is catching on, then they'll get behind it…they go for what is hot as far as the trend."[409] Maybe he did not want to waste his time and energy on laboring in the recording studio, trying to capture an audience that he knew he was only going to reach in the live settings. His music was meant to be a communal experience. By the same token, he may not have wanted to spend too much time laboring on something that was going to bring the recording company more money than it would bring him. He made considerably more money playing live concerts than he did under his recording contracts. In addition, Garner valued the experience of playing for a large audience. His ability to capture the attention of his audience, exemplified in his exchange with Gil Noble, made him "proud":

> Noble: You are a one-man attraction when you appear in concerts, it's very rare that I see you appear with anyone else. Is this a tremendous drain on you? Do you feel spent at the end of a concert?

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[407] The only instance in which this was not the case occurred was when Jimmy Smith (drums), Ernest McCarty Jr. (bass), and Jose Manual Jr. (congas) initiated the introduction in "Tea for Two" on *Gemini*. Garner plays both harpsichord and piano on this recording.

[408] Gary Marmorstein, *The Label: The Story of Columbia Records* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007), 164-165. This is in consideration of the fact that, before 1948, you could not buy a record that had more than four minutes of music per side. Only when Columbia Records released the 33 1/3-inch-long play record were consumers able to hear twenty-two minutes per side.

[409] Erroll Garner, Interviewed by Bob Smith, "Hot Air," *CBC Radio*, Vancouver, Canada, June 1969, courtesy of James M. Doran.

> Garner: I feel happy, because when you know you can go out there and have yourself three or four thousand people, and hold their attention for two hours, it really gives you a proud, proud feeling. In fact, you don't think about being tired.[410]

Experiencing Garner live meant that one was hearing him unbroken and unconfined by the technology that rendered the by-product 'consumable' by industry standards. Audiences were captivated by him, and their enthusiasm is perhaps more responsible for selling his records than any campaigns done by the recording studios. Record labels truncated his live intros on more than one occasion - "Moon River" was not the only one. The version of the object from "The Way You Look Tonight" that one encounters on the *One World Concert* album only reveals a 30-second version of the full 80-second version that was experienced by the live audience in Seattle, Washington in August of 1962. However, it is beyond the scope of this project to dive deep into the different versions of Garner's intros that circulated for any number of reasons (technological limitations, marketing decisions, etc.) and to try to build a case as to what degree the differences had on audience perception. Such a study might consider whether, as they took on new forms, the reproduced intros would be considered copies of the original or originals themselves.[411] I am more interested on how Garner's live intros captured the audience and, like Moten, the transference between Garner and the listener by way of the intro.

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[410] Erroll Garner, radio interview with Gil Noble, *WLIB Radio 107.5*, circa 1966, courtesy of James M. Doran.
[411] Brita Brenna, Hans Dam Christensen, and Olav Hamran, *Museums as Cultures of Copies: The Crafting of Artifacts and Authenticity* (Routledge: London, 2018), 71. Brenna noticed that objects which "circulate and disseminate in various forms" blur temporal lines and confound the process of naming them as copy or original. Mari Lending, "Lost Continents, Projective Objects," in *Museums as Cultures of Copies: The Crafting of Artifacts and Authenticity* (Routledge: London, 2018), 73-84, 80. Lending argues that because the copy does not merely cite, but *re*cites, there is an element of performance in the replica which does more than simply nod to the past. Facsimiles point to the past in their ability to document and transcribe as well as to the future "by repeating, reviving, and recovering what is lost or what might be lost."

The first time Garner played the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam was in 1958.[412] The audience, with many young adults donning leather jackets and black shirts and smoking cigarettes (which were allowed in the concert hall), only knew of Garner from his records. So, they did not know what to expect as far as Garner's visual presence, including the large telephone book he sat on to give his body more height so that his hands could have more leverage on the piano. Jan van Diepenbeek, eighteen years old at the time and sitting front row, remembered:

> The audience became even noisier and the laughs increased; especially when this little man laid the phone book down on the piano stool, sat down on it, and started to play absolutely unrecognizable things on the piano until suddenly, there was a melody…suddenly there was a melody and, believe it or not, from one moment to another the audience was still and remained still for the rest of the concert. There was no coughing, no laughing, and no noises whatsoever…It was as if we were hypnotized. From one moment to the next I was completely under the spell of this little man and his music.[413]

There is an unfortunate history of the imagery of African Americans being manipulated so that the dominant ideology could maintain its supremacy.[414] The racial and cultural stereotypes were characterized in minstrel shows and later, film, in order to justify slavery and absolve white people from feeling guilty about the dehumanization of and violence against African Americans.[415] Some jazz musicians used their platforms to overturn minstrel stereotypes of Black entertainers in overt and courageous ways. Bassist Charles Mingus (1922-1979) sought to reverse stereotypes with his "habit of lecturing and hectoring his audiences," inverting the notion of Black musician

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[412] "Concertgebouw, Erroll Garner," Concert poster, 4 January 1958, courtesy of James M. Doran.
[413] Jan van Diepenbeek, "Radio Program Around and About Erroll Garner April 8, 1996: Broadcasted by Dutch National Radio V.P.R.O. on channel 4," *Erroll Garner Gems: The Journal of the Erroll Garner Club*, Number 15, 1996, 30.
[414] Marian Meyers, *African American Women in the News: Gender, Race, and Class in Journalism* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 142, 144.
[415] Ibid., 143.

as mere entertainer.[416] On more than one occasion, Louis Armstrong (1901-1971), himself perceived as a non-threatening Black man, dedicated his performance of "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You" to white authority figures, as a way of "cloaking insult with flattery." It was a daring move for Armstrong, considering one such instance that took place in the South in 1931 after he had been released from jail four days prior because police found his band to be riding in a chartered bus that was thought "'too nice' for a black band."[417] For as much as Black musicians admired Armstrong's musicianship, however, some frowned upon the way his jovial nature could have played into reaffirming stereotypes. Miles Davis's "vulnerability with attitude" persona was a far cry from what he perceived was Armstrong "acting the clown" in front of white audiences.[418] The difference in the on-stage personalities between Davis and Garner, similarly, could not have been more apparent than their back-to-back performances in Paris in 1957. Davis was hailed by the French press for his "casual" mystique while Garner's "enthusiasm" and smiling was less favorably received.[419]

Discussing Garner's reception asks us to ponder the audience's expectations of Garner as a Black jazzman versus how his *jazzmasculinity* may have countered those assumptions.[420] What the Dutch audience saw at the Royal Concertgebouw was a Black man in concert attire, probably with a smile on his face. They had (more than likely) never seen him in-person. They may have heard

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[416] Krin Gabbard, *Better Git It in Your Soul: An Interpretive Biography of Charles Mingus* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 227, 229. When Mingus performed his 1957 composition, "The Clown," he had the only white member of his group, trombonist Jimmy Knepper, act out the role of the clown as a form of "reverse minstrelsy."
[417] Bruce Boyd Raeburn, "'I'll Be Glad When You're Dead': Louis Armstrong's Smack Down with White Authority and his First Films, 1930-1932," *Southern Quarterly,* Vol 51(1/2), Fall 2013/Winter 2014, 63-65. The song was written by New Orleans composer Sam Theard.
[418] Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 73.
[419] André Hodeir, "Davis et Garner à Olympia," *Jazz Hot*, January 1958, 31-32, translation by Nathalie Minetti.
[420] Nichole Rustin-Paschal, *The Kind of Man I Am: Jazzmasculinity and the World of Charles Mingus Jr.* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2017), xii, xiii. "Black jazzmen were allowed, even expected to be both 'emotional' and masculine as long as their emotionality conformed to stereotypes of racialized masculinity. Anger was defensible if it gave the music force and energy; humor was permissible as long as the performer was not a sexual threat."

his records and seen a few images of him on album covers, but they had not been in the presence of Garner. Sitting atop a telephone book may have seemed absurd to some, a gimmick to others, or they may not have expected such an ordinary book to accompany Garner on-stage. Yet, he did not say a word; he let his labor represent what words could not.[421] And from the time he surprised them with the first melody (after the first intro) until the end of the concert, he had them completely engaged and attentive. *Jazzmasculinity*, for Garner, meant being accepted for his living character (his presence), not the one that represented him on records. It meant that the audience was open to receiving new, live versions of his intros. It meant that he did not have to reproduce the commercialized versions of himself (albums), which were made by the work of others. He wanted each performance to be fresh to him. Understandably, it would have made the repetition of labor more tolerable. He implied this in the same interview with Gil Noble:

> Noble: You've made your reputation as not playing the same thing twice. No matter how successful one arrangement is, you won't play it the same way again.
>
> Garner: That's true. I always tell them I get it as close as I can. But other than that, they have begun to accept me for this, the audience. People from here in America and in Europe have begun to accept me for that, because now they know that whenever they hear me, they may hear the same song. But it'll never be the same.

The audiences in Pittsburgh, especially the Black audience, remained some of his most fervent fans. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the premier Black newspapers of the twentieth century, filled their pages over the years with positive images of him. He joined the cadre of philosophers (W.E.B. DuBois) and jazzmen (Dizzy Gillespie) who adorned facial beards deemed

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[421] Arendt, 94. "Language, which does not permit the laboring activity to form anything so solid and non-verbal as a noun, hints at the strong probability that we would not even know what a thing is without having before us 'the work of our hands.'"

in-fashion.[422] He was voted one of the "10 Best Dressed Men in Show Business," as the *Courier* noted Garner was seen not only impeccably dressed on-stage, but "dressed appropriately and in good taste" off the bandstand as well.[423] They also featured Garner's comical side in the "Sunnyside Up" joke column, twice (unlike most other Black personalities who were only featured once).[424] He was lauded as the recipient of the "Keys to the City" of Pittsburgh.[425] They shared in his success when he battled Columbia Records in an historical win for recording artists.[426] Articles covered his television appearances, his sold-out concert halls, and his signing with impresario Sul Hurok's booking agency.[427] As for the telephone book "which he plops on the piano seat before each concert," the *Courier* played into its lighthearted gesture explaining that other solutions had been offered to Garner by his friends, but "all have been unsatisfactory."[428]

What Garner was transferring as he traveled around the world to perform can be found in the character of his intros. Moten's "aesthetics of the black radical tradition" locates transference between the creator and the material. For Garner, this means between the laboring process and the traces they left. Not all the intros left a physical trace (i.e. were recorded), but we get a glimpse of their affective qualities from the people who left testimonies of having experienced them live.

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[422] Whitelaw MacBride, "Are Beards Coming Back in Style?," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 June 1961, 43.
[423] George E. Pitts, "10 Best Dressed Men in Show Business," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 July 1956, 18.
[424] Gladys Greene, "Sunnyside Up," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 October 1959, B1. Gladys Greene, "Sunnyside Up," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 June 1961, 18. The "Sunnyside Up" column was printed between November 1958 and March 1964. Each installment spotlighted a Black celebrity who was the supposed teller or receiver of a joke. The personalities included musicians like Count Basie and Duke Ellington, athletes such as Hank Aaron and Willie Mays, and political and literary figures like Booker T. Washington and James Weldon Johnson. Of the forty-six total installments, there were only two celebrities whose names appeared more than once - they were singer Clara Ward and Garner, who each appeared twice. Horace Clarence Boyer, *Grove Music Online*, "Clara Ward." Accessed 6 December 2017. Clara Ward was an expressive performer who sang in both the gospel and jazz genres; she developed her own "shrieking" and "growling" techniques and was one of the premier gospel artists that secured commercial success.
[425] George E. Pitts, "Garner Piano Genius at Work," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 June 1959, B2.
[426] "Izzy Rowe's Notebook…:News Breakthrough," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 October 1960, A21.
[427] "Errol Garner Stars," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 21 August 1948, 22. "Garner Scores on Steve's Show," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 November 1954, 18. "Hurok Lists Garner Tour," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 May 1958, 20.
[428] "Jazz Star Can't Read Music; Just Plays in the Garner Manner," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 July 1958, A16.

During his intros, Garner is holding the listener, which is to say suspending them, in a time of uncertainty.

4.3 Conjuring Out of 'Modernity'

'Modernity' is a word that creeps into accounts of jazz that seek to provide answers for the music's innovations and transformations. However, it is unclear exactly what accounts for someone being a 'modern' musician or how far back it stretches in jazz. Duke Ellington (1899-1974)[429] and Earl Hines (1903-1983)[430] were both considered modern at some point. Garner has been thought of as staunchly "modern" by some,[431] and less so by others.[432] In the same *Pittsburgh Courier* article by Ross Russell that was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Russell situates Garner's music as "modern jazz," and yet, somehow also standing apart from it:

> Garner's music is everything that the modern piano of Tatum, Nat Cole, Dodo Marmarosa, Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell is not. As a historical phenomenon Erroll Garner is a throwback to the free-swinging, two-handed style of Jelly Roll Morton and Fats Waller. He might be called a modernized version of these great pianists.[433]

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[429] David Schiff, *The Ellington Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 35. "This disruption of the habitual sensory pathways makes Ellington…a quintessential modernist like Debussy and Schoenberg, who similarly sought to transform the experience of music by fusing sound and sight."
[430] John Birks Gillespie with Wilmot Alfred Fraser, *To Be, or Not...To Bop: Memoirs* (New York: Da Capo Paperback, 1979), 486. Gillespie writes, "there were individual variations, but the style of the piano - actually, the modern piano - developed from Earl Hines."
[431] Karlton E. Hester, *From Africa to Afrocentric Innovations Some Call "Jazz," Vol. 4* (Santa Cruz: Hesteria Records & Publishing Company, 2001), 193. Garner was an "imaginative composer and modern pianist."
[432] André Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, translated by David Noakes (New York: Grove Press, 1956), 142. Compared to "the [be]boppers…Erroll Garner has stuck to more closely [to the blues] by not going too far toward modernization."
[433] Ross Russell, "A Great Piece on a Great Performer."

For Russell, Garner represented a different brand of modernism than his contemporaries, one that stemmed from the "two-fisted" playing styles of ragtime composer Jelly Roll Morton (1890-1941) and Harlem stride pianist Fats Waller (1904-1943).[434] The "two-handed style," also known as "two-fisted" piano playing was one that, for Geri Allen, indicated one's connection to the "roots" of jazz.[435] The two-fisted approach utilizes the full rhythmic and harmonic possibilities of the piano in both hands, not only the right hand; it is a gendered term that strongly implies masculinity and virility.[436] Writers use "modern" as an attempt to explain the jazz canon in terms of these kinds of styles while also trying to promote the "flowing, streaming quality of [the music's] development."[437] But, it is well-documented that jazz musicians, especially rank and file musicians, shifted their playing styles depending on the circumstances - a musician could play in the "progressive" style for one performance and "Dixieland" for the next.[438] Garner was no exception to that fluidity of styles, as George Wein once remarked:

> Nobody could sound like Erroll, despite the hordes of pianists who tried. Erroll was like an entire orchestra; his piano filled the room. Erroll knew the jazz piano so well that he could render impressions of other players, and still keep that unmistakable Garner touch. We would say: 'play some Fatha Hines,' and he would go into the Hines style. 'Do a little Teddy Wilson,' and he would play some Teddy. He would do the same with Fats

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[434] Alyn Shipton, *Fats Waller: The Cheerful Little Earful* (New York: Continuum, 2002). Rick Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy: Gennett Records and the Rise of America's Musical Grassroots* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

[435] *Concert by the Sea*, liner notes. According to Aaron Johnson, who worked closely with Geri Allen, Allen "felt Powell was maybe a false indication that right-hand playing was dominant." Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 201-202. Thought of as "representing the spirit of the bebop movement," Powell played with more sparseness in his left hand while the right hand played fast single-note lines.

[436] Leo F. Schnore, "The Legacy of Tatum's Art," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol 2(1), 1968, 101. The style came from the Harlem stride pianists - like James P. Johnson and Willie "the Lion" Smith - who played without the accompaniment of other instruments. The venues included rent parties and breakfast dances and required a level of vibrancy and fullness from the music. Russell's citation of the two-fisted style does not capture the fact that Art Tatum (as well as Oscar Peterson) had been associated with the two-fisted sound, which they would produce with a "pumping left hand" and "scintillating right."

[437] Joachim-Ernst Berendt and Gunther Huesmann, *The Jazz Book: From Ragtime to the 21st Century* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009), xii.

[438] Dicky Wells and Stanley Dance, *The Night People: Reminiscences of a Jazzman* (Boston: Crescendo Publishing Company, 1971), 84.

> Waller. But when we called out 'Tatum,' Erroll would just turn around and shoot us a comical look.[439]

Even though history tells us that pigeonholing a musician to one style is unfair, writers feel compelled to used terms like 'modern' to explain versatility. As it pertains to Garner's intros, Ted Gioia asked why "so few pianists these days seem aware of Garner" with his "esoteric and almost mystical introductions that disguise the song," which "somehow comes across as so much happier and lighthearted than what normally passes for modern jazz."[440] Gioia's statement expresses the value that some tend to place on being accepted as 'modern,' which can be equated to being well-known and serious.

But it is futile to try to argue whether Garner was modern or not, because, as Alexander Weheliye explains, the descriptor was framed to purposely exclude Black cultural production. Whether in reference to the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, or the period of technological advancement since the early 19th century, the term 'modern' has been used to connote "the ascent and proliferation of reason, secularization, progress, humanism, individualism, rationalization, industrialization, and so on."[441] These connotations, however, are only valid from a Western perspective; Black cultural production operates somewhat against this rigid and racial formation of modernity. Salim Washington has also noted the problem of modernity's origins, especially as it relates to Black music. "Afro-modernity," as he saw it, was a more honest indicator of "the practice of blacks who live in a racialized world as subalterns, as oppressed and politically controlled groups, devised in resistance to the reductive identities and compromised subjectivities

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[439] Wein, 89.
[440] Ted Gioia, *The Jazz Standards: A Guide to the Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 188.
[441] Alexander G. Weheliye, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 4.

imposed upon them."[442] These writers give credence to thinking Garner's intros against the normative definitions of modernity, specifically how his subjectivity is understood as a tension between the human source of a sound and the technology that reproduced it.

Weheliye's theory of "Afro-sonic modernity" looks at the way Black sound production has wielded technologies to solidify the "centrality of both sonic blackness...and black culture…to Western modernity."[443] Weheliye is interested in the tension between music's ephemerality and the materiality of technology. He considers a broad definition of technology's source that may appear in the form of "a phonograph, a musical score, or a human body."[444] In Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), for example, Weheliye points to the way in which the phonograph permits the main character of the novel access to not only the sound of Louis Armstrong, but to the materiality of the main character's own being. In response to his optical non-subjectivity, Ellison's character reconstructs his own "intersubjective workings" between the visual and the sonic through the use of the phonograph.[445] The tension that lies between invisibility and the machine of sound is what gives the protagonist access to his own subjectivity, accessible in the "aware[ness] of…those points where time stands still…and you slip into the breaks and look around."[446] In the case of Garner, the tension between the sound of his intros and the materiality of his body and the piano is what allows the audience to slide into the sonic experience with Garner where time is suspended and one is encouraged to 'look around.'

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[442] Salim Washington, "Fingering the Jagged Grain: The Jazz/Blues/Mbaqanga Impulse of Mandla Langa," *The World of Music*, Vol 5 (2), 2016, 93.
[443] Weheliye, 5.
[444] Ibid., 7.
[445] Ibid., 49.
[446] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1947), 7.

Arendt tells us that "tools and instruments…only serve to hide [the necessity of labor] from our senses."[447] Garner was laboring during his intros, and his body and the piano were the tools that hid that labor process. He was not creating the intro as an ends, something that would be fabricated into a record, for example, although a recording of it may have resulted. But even if a recording resulted, it only would have become an end "incidentally."[448] By Arendt's definition of the labor process, objects only come into existence by accident. In other words, Garner's intros are not an ends (like a product of work would be). They are a means to an end (or to another means). He used tools to create the means for embedding something of the intro's character onto the experience of the listener.

Vijay Iyer admires the way Garner was able to find an "alternate path" away from the notion that one must read music in order to make music, an "inventive way of dealing with the instrument to express something that hadn't really been expressed on it before."[449] Garner was disguising the traditional way of handling the tools (body/piano) and creating a new way to make sound. And there was an "opacit[y]" in the sound that hit differently than (and independently of) the tools.[450] Iyers continues, "when you feel something in music, when it reaches you, when it takes hold of you, assumes control of your senses and your actions, that's not magic, well, maybe

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[447] Arendt, 125.
[448] Ibid., 88, 125. The purpose of labor, according to Arendt, is to reproduce for the continuation of human life; labor only produces objects "incidentally." Labor is only a means to an end, thereby necessitating our consumption in order to arrive at some end goal; it is "repetitive" by nature.
[449] Iyer, *Uncovered*. Iyer is a proponent of embodied cognition, which claims that "the body has its own intelligence." Iyer is referring to one of the normative sources of ideas – the musical score – which is completely absent. Chester Higgins, "Nobody Knows Where This Cat Is Going," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 5 January 1957, A16. For drummer Kelly Martin, the missing score signaled Garner's uncanny ability to lead musicians into the unknown: "Garner doesn't read a lick of music and when he begins the introduction, we just sit and hold our breaths until he gives the signal and then we take [off] after him like mad hoping to stay with him. We usually do, too. But we're never quite certain where we'll end."
[450] Weheliye, 50, 51.

it is…*conjuring* movement, affecting your movement."[451] The Black American usage of "conjure" fuses the supernatural with the natural; it is not only an imagined or magical means - it is tangible.[452] Scholars have also noted that in the Black literary tradition, "conjure resists modernity."[453] For example, in Zora Neale Hurston's *Mules and Men* (1935), the written text is the source of conjuring; in Charles Waddell Chesnutt's *The Conjure Woman* (1899), the orality of the message conjures.[454] So, at the point of tension between the tools and the ephemerality (and subtle opacity) of his intro, Garner conjures the listeners as a means of resisting modernity.

Another way to interpret Garner within sonic Afro-modernity is between the ephemerality of the intro and the sonic materiality of the ensuing head. While the head that followed the intro would remain the same head as the one before the coda, the intro only happens one time within the performance. In other words, each intro is a unique happening, while the head (which is tied to the materiality of the title's text and as a prescribed idea or composition) happens at the exposition of the head and again at the return of the head. Weheliye talks about the "allurements that lurk in the crevices of sonic beginnings."[455] Whatever does not repeat has the effect of haunting the listener and beckoning them to want to hear it again and again. He takes up this notion in the

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[451] Iyers, *Uncovered*. Iyer continues, "When I really zero-in on what he's doing, I hear this very intricate mastery and very inventive way of dealing with the instrument to express something that hadn't really been expressed on it before."
[452] Theophus H. Smith, *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.
[453] James Manigault-Bryant and Lerhonda S. Manigault-Bryant, "Conjuring Pasts and Ethnographic Presents in Zora Neale Hurston's Modernity," *Journal of Africana Religions*, Vol. 4 (2), 2016, 227.
[454] Marjorie Pryse, "Introduction: Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, and the 'Ancient Power' of Black Women," in *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*, edited by Marjorie Pryse and Hortense J. Spillers (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 10, 11. Hurston "used the power of the written text itself as a form of magic…Not until the novels and short stories of Charles Waddell Chesnutt in the late nineteenth century do we find a black writer capable of locating some other potential source than the Christian god for his own creativity. In stories in the Atlantic Monthly later collected and published as The Conjure Woman (1899), Chestnut writes out of the 'magic' of black folk life, thereby finding a form for black authority that can avoid challenging prevailing white assumptions about literary power (since it emerges, unlike Christianity itself, from an oral rather than a written tradition) yet at the same time allows him to portray black life on the plantation in realistic terms."
[455] Weheliye, 1.

song “Wake Up Everybody” by Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. Specifically, there is a bass grooved between the first fifteen and thirty seconds of the 7:33-minute track. Because the motif does not happen again in any part of the song, it has the effect of “haunt[ing] and shadow[ing] the remainder of the track, compelling [the listener] to return the needle to the first grooves of the record, rewind the tape.”[456] The listener has to use technological tools in order to reproduce it.[457] Garner’s intro only happens one time in a performance versus the two times that the listener hears the head. The effect is that the listener is haunted by what will not return in the performance. Of course, those who listened to Garner on record were able to listen to the intro again. But, if it haunted them enough to want to return to the beginning, the intro was, in a sense, resisting being consumed at the same hurried pace as consumer goods. Returning the needle would have signaled that the intro had a “relative durability,” a staying power, which meant it was being used (a use object) by the listener as a means of pursuing the quality that was haunting them.[458]

In addition to being singular within the performance, Garner’s intros were also ephemeral in that each was uniquely crafted in and for that performance. He famously never told the band what the ensuing head would be; and, sometimes, he himself did not know what head his intro would inspire. He would simply start playing an intro, developing it as it unfolded, using his audience for inspiration and feedback (another topic that could be explored in future research), and eventually he would decide to musically cue the rest of the band when it was time for them to join him. He would give the listeners subtle hints about the song he was about to play. His band was expected to recognize those musical indicators that would let them know exactly the right the moment to join in (at the beginning of the head). Garner was known to hide clues so deep in the

[456] Ibid., 2.
[457] Ibid.
[458] Arendt, 125.

music that his bandmates, according to Ahmad Jamal, often "didn't know where he was going, as far as key signature, as far as compositions… [his intros] dictated that you stay alert. Otherwise, you couldn't work with [him]. He was constantly composing."[459] Garner corroborated Jamal's interpretation as his music being a site of required alertness and explained why he purposefully kept his bandmates in a state of limbo: "to see how alert they are. Not only that, it's a lot of fun and it keeps the group happy, and it keeps them thinking all the time. And number one, I can't remember what I played last night anyway, so there-forth, it's good for all of us (laughs)."[460] This helps to explain why Garner's intros were different every time as well as reveals his humble and understated persona regarding his mastery of stagecraft and musicianship.

A crucial piece of information for jazz musicians to know before they start playing is the title or musical image of the head. Especially for bass players, the head dictates what the first chord (and bass note) will be and how the chord changes will progress from there. For example, some heads (like "Misty") start on the tonal center, while others (like "Just One of Those Things" which begins on the sixth degree) start on any of the other eleven possible tonalities. But how could the band be prepared if Garner had not told them what the head would be? If the bassist still did not know what the head would be as Garner was getting ready to end his intro and arrive at the first beat of the head, the bassist may be forced to make a split decision to present themself and the band as unified, polished, and competent. The band may only have had a few seconds (or less) to figure it out before they were expected to enter with Garner. Bassist Ernest McCarty Jr., who worked with Garner for five years in the 1970s, explained the difficulty in remaining focused on the task of figuring out what the head would be while he was, at the same time, caught up in the

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[459] Ahmad Jamal, interview in "Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read," prod. and dir. Atticus Brady, First Run Features DVD, 2012.
[460] Erroll Garner, radio interview with Gil Noble, *WLIB Radio 107.5*, circa 1966, audio CD.

beauty of what Garner was creating in the moment. McCarty admitted that he was sometimes so absorbed in the intro's "magnificen[ce], that [he] couldn't even zoom in on what tune he ha[d] disguised within the intro."[461] The pressure to recognize the head that was being disguised by Garner proved to be not only an engaging experience but an enjoyable one.

Many musicians play songs consistently from performance to performance, with only slight variations. Details such as key signature, tempo, and rhythmic feel are usually worked out ahead of time between the musicians, which might even require some level of rehearsal. The way Garner developed the intro not only determined the head but most of the musical features of the performance to follow. Even if the band had deciphered the correct head based on his intro, it was another thing to know what the rest of the performance would be *like*. Bassist Bob Cranshaw, who played on *Magician*, Garner's last recorded album, explained the changeability of the intro and how that forced a constant alertness amongst the ensemble:

> He starts out, of course, his intro for everything, and all of a sudden he was in another key…You had to be on your toes, the intro would lead you into whatever he was going to do, but you never really had any idea. I just know the guys in his band, from one time to the other, they knew the tunes, but they didn't have any idea what the tune was going to be like, 'cause he set everything up. We had a big laugh about that.[462]

Cranshaw acknowledges that musicians who played with Garner could sometime figure out which head he was moving toward. Knowing what the performance would be *like* was another issue. Other unknown variables include the length of the intro, the tempo, and, of course, the key signature. Pianist Billy Taylor, who first met Garner in New York in 1944, noted the extraordinary

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[461] Ernest McCarty Jr., television interview with Gil Noble, "Like It Is: Remembering Erroll Garner" *ABC-TV*, 1983.
[462] Tim Clausen, "Interview with Bob Cranshaw," *Erroll Garner Gems*, Vol. 1(2), April 1991, 10.

fluidity with which Garner could play in all key signatures. Probing Garner on his process for acquiring that skill, Taylor recalled:

> I asked him one time, 'you know, most people who can't read music are confined to one or two keys. They play in F# or E flat or they play in some key that feels natural to them but you play in all twelve keys. How did you learn to do that?' He said, 'I was curious. When I was playing by myself I could do that a lot, and I found that by putting something in another key I'd get another idea about the song itself.' Which was very perceptive because for anyone who was as tonally oriented as he was, obviously if you play something in B it's going to sound one way and if you play it in F it's going to sound a totally different way.[463]

Learning to play in all keys was a way for Garner to discover new ways of approaching old melodies. His intros were not only extensions of his fluency to play heads in a variety of ways but provided a seemingly infinite number of new ways to present a familiar theme.

This section has been heavily weighted toward the musician-listener rather than the listener who was not going to contribute to the music that followed. But the point is that Garner was free to make changes during the process of creating the intro. This caused the listeners and musicians to try to stay with him as he made twists and turns. Keeping every listener, no matter their musical background, engaged and alert was his specialty. The result was a collective concentration on an in-the-moment creative process. Garner suspended or freed a listener's relationship with time, if only for the length of an intro, as well as their relationship with the 'modern' world and its incessant modes of consumption. In the next section, Fumi Okiji will help develop this idea of freedom and individuality.

[463] Billy Taylor, interview by Tim Clausen, 24 April 2001, courtesy of James M. Doran.

4.4 The Verse

Fumi Okiji has taken up what Theodore Adorno wrote ("On Jazz," 1936) regarding the contradiction of the jazz subject - the false appearance of freedom.[464] One of Okiji's main arguments against Adorno's analysis of jazz in the interwar period is that he insisted a jazz musician's autonomy within the structure of the ensemble was illusory.[465] For Okiji, Adorno saw jazz as a commodity, and its unwitting participants were "puppet[s]" fronting as "autonomous, atomized, private individuals" in the name of democracy and liberty.[466] But, she argues, we cannot read individualism through Adorno's lens of freedom and autonomy since it does not account for the critical stance of the Black American experience. Instead, she encourages readers to think about individualism in the way that Muhal Richard Abrams, cofounder of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), inspired her to - as occurring in community, not "in isolation."[467] It is from this stance, that individuality emerges only when we are surrounded by others, that she critiques Adorno and from which this current chapter seeks to represent Garner's subjectivity through the intros.

Okiji holds up Adorno's affront on jazz's musical form as an opportunity to critically reflect on how Black subjectivity was negated by the dominant circles of music discourse and its forms. Much of jazz music during that period borrowed from songs written for American films and musicals in the 1930s and 1940s which often followed the verse-chorus format.[468] For Adorno, the purpose of the uncomplicated verse was to allow a vocal soloist the space to emote ones

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[464] Okiji, 20.
[465] Ibid., 13, 28.
[466] Ibid., 27, 28.
[467] Ibid., 8.
[468] Ibid., 5, 26.

personality and artistic autonomy: "In the verse, the individual speaks as if in isolation."[469] The purposes of the chorus was for the individual to be "confirmed" under the "authority" of the collective, to "feel[s] himself transformed (*aufgehoben*) in the refrain."[470] In his estimation, the verse (individual) could never fulfill its potential of unabashed freedom for, from the outset, it was scorned to always be second in importance to the chorus (society).[471] Okiji contends that the African American blues form, rather than the verse-chorus form, showcases the "communal" and "self-regulating" aesthetics that Adorno was after, as the blues solo retains the multiplicity of previous voices that contributes to the current one.[472] And while Okiji's evocation of the blues form upends Adorno's claim, there is another solution that positions Garner's intros as objects that resist Adorno's argument about the verse's isolating experience.

Garner, like many of his contemporaries, reworked popular melodies, often excluding the verse and only playing over the choruses, which were more recognizable to audiences. The choruses, of which many have become standardized jazz repertoire, are what musicians refer to as (and what chapter has been calling) the head. Garner recorded many of the choruses that are still widely accepted as standards today, including" Somewhere, Over the Rainbow," "Oh, Lady, Be Good!," "A Foggy Day," and "Where Or When." (These standards all have verses that were originally sung by solo vocalists as a primer for the chorus, but those verses are rarely performed anymore.) However, if we could consider Garner's intro as a substitute for the absent verse, we can contend Adorno with his original formula. Garner's intros were a kind of verse in the sense

[469] Adorno, 63.
[470] Ibid., 63.
[471] Okiji, 27. Adorno, 63.
[472] Okiji, 29, 71.

that they were produced by a single voice - his. Or were they? The sounds were only coming from his body/tools, but they were not produced in isolation. Far from it.

Eric Porter reminds us that we should concern ourselves with how musicians "theorized *their own* practices" (emphasis added).[473] Doing so enhances the importance of the audience to the discourse, for it is the public who receives and interprets the artist's work behind the theory, either directly or indirectly, verbally, visually, or aurally. I respectfully give the stage to Garner, then, who said that his practice was "to start as a kind of stranger to my audience and end up a very familiar friend. That is the way I like to play jazz."[474]

Garner demonstrated the process of creating an intro to a live audience on Dick Cavett's network television program in 1972. Accompanied by Bobby Rosengarden on drums and George Duvivier on bass, Garner first confesses that sometimes he did not have a head picked out before he started the intro:

> Cavett: Your introductions that you do to a song sometimes don't have anything to do with the song, and the introduction becomes a song in itself.
>
> Garner: I just create that way, more or less. I never really think about what song I'm going to play. I just let the introduction lead me into it.
>
> Cavett: And how do the guys know what song you're going into. Don't they have to know?
>
> Garner: Well, they kind of get a semi-idea. Let's say if I play like this….[475]

Garner then proceeds to play a 15-second introduction to "The Look of Love," which, judging by the when the applause became audible, nobody in the audience recognized until Garner

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[473] Eric Porter, "'Born Out of Jazz...Yet Embracing All Music': Race, Gender, and Technology in George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept," in *Big Ears: Listening For Gender in Jazz Studies*, edited by Nichole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker (Duke University Press: Durham, 2008), 222.
[474] Henry Kahn, "Erroll Garner Says - Every Pianist Needs a Gimmick," *Melody Maker*, 21 December 1957, 3.
[475] Erroll Garner, Dick Cavett Show, television, 26 January 1971, audio recording courtesy of James M. Doran.

was already three seconds into the melody. At that point, a lone listener chuckles humorously, which some tend to do when they hear a familiar reference.[476] (Dan Morgenstern noticed that Garner "didn't have to say or do anything, his humor came from these musical teasers within the introductions."[477]) And, as was customary whenever the audience finally realized what tune Garner had landed on, the audience claps at the 6-second mark. Besides the opening two notes of the intro, which are the same two notes of the head's melody, there are too few clues to tell exactly what head Garner had selected. He established the key and mode (minor) right away, but neither the harmonic progression nor the melodic motifs he played were distinct enough to forecast "The Look of Love."[478] He was demonstrating his process of disguising the head, and the audience took delight in trying to guess the head's title and was pleasantly surprised when Garner began playing it.

"Jazz," critic Whitney Balliett wrote, "like poetry, is an art of surprise."[479] Garner's intro sets up a challenge, a puzzle that the listener must figure out. It is in a constant state of flux because it is improvised material and because the audience would naturally be comprised of a range of listeners, from experienced to novice. At what moment the melody becomes apparent - when a person retrospectively makes sense of the introduction - the surprise is given. It is not about the instant gratification with Garner; the surprise unfolds over a suspended period for the listener. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi might consider it a "flow activity," which has "built-in goals, feedback, rules, and challenges, all of which encourage one to become involved in one's work, to concentrate

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[476] Charles Hiroshi Garrett, "The Humor of Jazz," in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, edited by David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
[477] Dan Morgenstern, "Erroll Garner: Dan Morgenstern and Christian Sands discuss his legacy," jazzmusician.com, posted 1 October 2020, retrieved from Classic Rock Review, https://classicrockreview.wordpress.com/category/erroll-garner-article/. Accessed 29 March 2024.
[478] The band (Rosengarden on drums and Duvivier on bass) did not enter with Garner right away, possibly for a comedic effect to imply that Garner disguised the head exceptionally well or to give the audience extra time to figure out that the Garner had begun to play the head.
[479] Whitney Balliett, *The Sound of Surprise* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1961), ix.

and lose oneself in it."[480] The goal is to guess which song Garner is going to play; the feedback is in the eventual melody that follows; and the rules and challenges have less consequences for the audience, but are evinced in the bandmates' commitment to knowing where Garner is headed. Losing oneself in an activity does not necessarily mean that we lose track of time or, conversely, become acutely aware of the passage of time. The temporal effect, which is similar in other practices that absorb our attention, is that "the clock no longer measures the passage of time."[481] A Garner intro, like a "flow activity," instigates a break from time's tyrannical control over us.[482] Consider Garner's explanation to Gil Noble regarding how his intros link a series of performances with "flow"-like qualities:

> Noble: Do you ever feel…do you ever wonder about what your next tune is going to be?
>
> Garner: No, we just go from one to another, that's the way we play, and we just let things flow as they flow, and just try and make it one big happy living-room. That's a fact.
>
> Noble: Yeah. I know you get so much obvious pleasure out of your introductions. Some of them get to be performances in themselves.
>
> Garner: Well that's fun. That's for sure. That's the fun and the gimmick of like people say, 'Well, I wonder what this is going to be?' And what they're guessing at, it'll probably be the opposite, but it'll still be something that they like and that they know very, very well.[483]

The 'fun' in listening to Garner happens at a more comfortable and inclusive pace than the velocity at which one hears Art Tatum's humor, for example. Tatum brought fun to his listeners,

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[480] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991) 4, 162.
[481] Soetsu Yanagi, *The Beauty of Everyday Things*, translated by Michael Brase (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018), 130. Philosopher and founding father of the Japanese folk crafts (*mingei*) movement, Soetsu Yanagi, concludes that certain objects have the power to rescue us from time. During the cold winter months in Tsugaru, Japan, women who stitch textile in the tradition of kogin become so absorbed in the art that they forget time: "once this work begins, the clock no longer measures the passage of time." Kogin is one such "product that has forgotten time."
[482] Csikszentmihalyi, 67.
[483] Noble interview with Garner, WLIV radio.

but there wasn't much time in-between the joke and the punch line.[484] Garner captured the listener in a temporally effective way, and the result was fun, humor, surprise, and happiness. In fact, Garner became known as "The Most Happy Piano" after Columbia issued a record with the same title in 1957. Kelly Martin, who was Garner's steady drummer from 1956 to 1966,[485] echoed the designation years later: "The most happy piano, that's what you get when you hear Erroll Garner. You get a happy sound, no matter what tune he plays."[486]

To respond to Adorno then, Garner's verse (intro), although solely the product of his labor, does not come to fruition by his isolated subjectivity.[487] He brings the audience into the verse so that it can be a communal activity of challenges and surprises. Everyone is listening, focused, and losing track of time together. It also challenges Adorno's notion that the chorus is the site of authority. Garner was choosing what the chorus would be while he was playing the verse (intro). No one knew what the chorus would be or what it would be *like*. If any part of a Garner performance held the authority, it might be his intro. But this could not be the case either, because sometimes Garner did not even know where he would land. In the beginning of the chapter, I noted Vijay Iyer's statement about the intro being a point of "gangster vulnerability." Garner's

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[484] Martin Williams, "Not for the Left Hand Alone," *American Music*, Vol. 1(1), Spring 1983, 38, 39. "Willow Weep for Me" and "Aunt Hagar's Blues" "both offer in abundance the Tatum paradox that all surprises quickly assume an inevitability as one absorbs them…so perfect in its overall pattern and pacing, with eerie short runs and every ornament appropriate and in place, that it may be the masterpiece of all his recorded work." Tatum is "inviting us to share the joke and heartily kidding himself as well as the concert hall traditions to which he alludes."

[485] James M. Doran, *Erroll Garner: The Most Happy Piano, The Centennial Edition (1921-2021),* (USA: James M. Doran, 2021), 93.

[486] Tim Clausen, "Interview with Kelly Martin," *Erroll Garner Gems: The Journal of the Erroll Garner Club*, Vol. 2(3), July 1992, 15.

[487] Arendt, 123. Arendt was against Marx's "division of labor [which] is based on the fact that two men can put their labor power together and 'behave toward each other as though they are one.' This one-ness is the exact opposite of co-operation, it indicates the unity of the species with regard to which every single member is the same and exchangeable. (The formation of a labor collective where the laborers are socially organized in accordance with this principle of common and divisible labor power is the very opposite of the various workmen's organizations, from the old guilds and corporations to certain types of modern trade unions, whose members are bound together by the skills and specializations that distinguish them from others.)"

vulnerability, located at the site of his labor and heard through the object of his intro, orients us toward what Okiji articulates about finding truth in a collective experience: "an individual cannot reach truth alone."[488] The "truth emerges" when Garner got up on stage in front of an audience and asked them to "trust him," without any preconceived ideas about where they would go, together.[489]

4.5 Happiness

"Happiness," Arendt reminds us, "is concomitant of the [labor] process itself."[490] Labor is never-ending and, therefore, a cycle of "effort and gratification."[491] Figuring Garner's intro as the use object of labor is reinforced by the fact that labor is repetitive.[492] Garner produced a lot of them, and in good company. These objects of labor were produced using the tools of his body and the piano. The reproduced versions of his intros heard on records, on the other hand, are products of work, specifically products of others' work (not Garner's) because they were fabricated by the hands of others. The measure of Garner's productivity, which is to say, the value of his labor products, is not found in their surplus (as Marx believed), but in the quality by which they were

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[488] Okiji, 8.
[489] Iyer, *Uncovered*.
[490] Arendt 107-108. "The blessing of life as a whole, inherent in labor, can never be found in work and should not be mistaken for the inevitably brief spell of relief and joy which follows accomplishment and extends achievement. The blessing of labor is that effort and gratification follow each other as closely as producing and consuming the means of subsistence, so that happiness is concomitant of the process itself, just as pleasure is a concomitant of the functioning of a healthy body."
[491] Arendt, 105. "Of all human activities, only labor, and neither action nor work, is unending."
[492] Arendt, 142. "Repetition…is the mark of labor."

executed.[493] Or, as Attali succinctly stated, "the standard" for determining the "autonomous value" of music "can only be the labor of the musicians" who perform it.[494]

From the perspective of "the aesthetics of the black radical tradition" expounded by Fred Moten, Garner's intros created a new space from which he held the listener. That which could be written-off as "nonvalue," because it does not come in any surplus quantity (each intro was unique) and can be cut without losing any of the work product (the album), contains the power to resist.[495] Together with Moten's insistence that the object can hold the listener, Weheliye's theory appreciates how Garner is then able to make the listener think. "Sonic Afro-modernity" helps us locate the point where Garner conjures the listener - between the ephemeral (yet somewhat opaque) sound and the materiality of the body/piano. The ephemerality of his intros pushes against the notion that the goal is progress, surplus, and quantity. Each one was unique in the performance as well as singular in that it could never happen again (even if Garner wanted it to). In addition to holding the listener and making them think, Okiji's critique of Adorno lends itself to discussing how the intros made listeners feel happy in communion with Garner. If we analyze them from the perspective of the verse-chorus (intro-head) format, Garner's intros upend Adorno's argument about the impossibility of individual freedom in jazz. Congruent to what Okiji argued, that jazz does work as an analogy for a free society in that individuals (soloists) are embraced by society (ensemble), a Garner intro is a site of mutual and non-hierarchical dependence between him and

[493] Arendt, 118. "Labor's products, the products of man's metabolism with nature, do not stay in the world long enough to become a part of it, and the laboring activity itself, concentrated exclusively on life and its maintenance, is oblivious of the world to the point of worldlessness."
[494] Attali, 58.
[495] Moten, 17.

each listener. The intro is the object that confers a collective laboring process, a communion of labor, which has no end.[496]

[496] Arendt, 124. "The inexhaustibility of this labor force corresponds exactly to the deathlessness of the species, whose life process as a whole is also not interrupted by the individual births and deaths of its members," as opposed to the division of labor.

5.0 Anarchy of a "Sketch"

5.1 "Sketches by Garner"

It was the Spring Semester of my third year of graduate school, and I was getting reacquainted with the Erroll Garner archive after having been away from it for a year since writing my Master's Thesis. To find a topic for this dissertation, I wanted to get a feel for the archive in its entirety. I set out determined to read the thousands of documents - correspondence, publicity, sheet music,[497] business and legal contracts, photographs, audio and video recordings, and memorabilia - in all 81 boxes of the collection. I started with the boxes that were the densest, figuring that they would contain the most amount of potential research material. But with the contents in Box 2 exceeding 2,000 entries, and another 2,000 entries distributed in Boxes 24 and 9, I quickly realized that, not only was it an impossible task for one person to complete in one semester, but it was monotonous. All the information started to blend. There were hundreds of contracts with the same verbiage page after page; even the letters from Glaser to record executives fell flat after a while.

Frustrated with my lack of a clear purpose and overwhelmed by the amount of material I still was hoping to get through, music faculty and committee member, Michael Heller, suggested that I read Arlette Farge's *Allure of the Archives*. The book resonated with me, especially the author's impatience with being confined to the archive's walls as she read silently to herself. Farge

[497] Series III: Sheet Music, Erroll Garner Archive, AIS.2015.09, University of Pittsburgh Library. The music scores were not written by Garner.

urged readers to "remain aware of all the other themes that surround the one you have chosen."[498] And, therein, lie my problem: I had not chosen a theme, let alone multiple, supporting themes. I thought I could simply muscle my way through the boxes and come out on the other side understanding every aspect of Garner's career. Farge's process of "sifting" and "gathering" seemed like a much better tactic than the directionless road I was on.[499] I decided to make a turn, searching only in the boxes (and folders within those boxes) that interested me until I found my theme. After scanning the collection guide, my first choice was Box 56. One of its folders (Folder 9) was labeled "Sketches By Garner." I was intrigued.

The contents of Box 56, Folder 9 that Media Curator at University of Pittsburgh Garner archive, Miriam Meislik, delivered to my workspace were fascinating. I cannot remember another time during that semester that I felt so enthralled in the research process. Part of my astonishment was the fact that I was holding actual "sketches" that Erroll Garner, himself, had made! I had constructed a larger-than-life image of Garner in my head, and holding something that he once held somehow felt like I was being afforded a private conversation with him. I inferred these "sketches" to be intimate pieces of Garner's world.

The "sketches," which document Garner's only scripts in the archive, are relegated to a single cardboard container. Box 56, Folder 9 is both the place where they currently reside and, in a nomological sense, the name by which we are meant to refer to their organization set by individuals and institutions that were authorized to by the inherent laws of the archive *qua* archive. However, they seemed out-of-place under their current provision. The designated title, "Sketches

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[498] Arlette Farge, *Allure of the Archives*, translated by Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 64.
[499] Ibid.

by Garner," felt insufficient. Maybe it was due to my "concern" for the objects or my disbelief that they existed at all, but I wanted somehow to elevate them beyond their enlisted verbiage.[500]

The archive has gathered about eight "sketches" that were made by Garner's hands which are now housed in Box 56, Folder 9. (I emphasize the fact that there are approximately eight because at least one of them has deteriorated so much that its contents are now kept in a plastic Ziplock bag, and I cannot tell if that counts as only one "sketch." Another, on a postcard, has been torn into three pieces and taped back together.) This chapter focuses on three of those (see Appendix A) which have two characteristics in common. First, they share the same mediums: either pen, pencil, marker, and/or crayon on paper. Second, they each contain coexistent text within the images: Figure 1 contains text whose meaning is dependent on the surrounding images; Figure 2 features both explicit and abstracted alphabetic letters; and Figure 3 employs textual fragments that could be interpreted as being in dialogue with the accompanying illustration.

This chapter uses Garner's "sketches" to think anarchically about their relationships with the viewing subject, the archive, and language. There is a tension between these connections which call to mind the barriers, structures, and order designed to both silence and provide synchrony.[501] Consistent with anarchist thought, this chapter does not use any unified theory, but instead relies on a number of philosophers in the humanities to point to contradictions wrapped up in each "sketch:" that they are at once dominated and liberated, presentative and representative, autonomous and dependent. Garner's "sketches" signal the moment in which he had to "stop thinking" to remember an idea and materialize it and the moment of uncertainty that the viewer

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[500] Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Free Press, 1961), 226.

[501] David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism* (New York: Phaidon Press, Inc., 2003), 72. In art history, "synchrony" means to "coexist," a "contemporaneous" happening. It is opposed to "diachronic," which accounts for both "continuity and change" over time.

experiences upon meeting it.[502] The anarchy of the "sketch" is that it forces us to attend to its worldliness, no matter how incidental it may seem to understanding Garner.

5.2 Garner the Visual Artist

Some of jazz's most influential artists are known to have explored other creative avenues besides music. The art of pianist, composer, and bandleader, Sun Ra, extended to the album covers of his own record label, Saturn, which served as handmade canvases for expressing his unique views on mysticism and space.[503] He also wrote hundreds of poems and prose documents that he would personally handout or distribute in the form of pamphlets to accompany his vinyl.[504] Bassist Milt Hilton (1910-2000) was a photographer who was featured in exhibits all over the United States. His photos lines the pages of his autobiography, *Bass Line* (1988), as well as *Over Time* (1991), a book in pictures of the people who shaped his life.[505] Miles Davis's lawyers would not let him give away his paintings, so some of his musician friends - including Prince, Quincy Jones, and Lionel Hampton - purchased them from Davis, directly.[506] Meeting Garner, the visual artist, then, is not too surprising. In an interview, contemporary pianist and friend of Garner, Billy Taylor, recalled that "Erroll [Garner] could draw. It's funny that so many jazz musicians or musicians in

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[502] Arendt, 90. "Whenever the intellectual worker wishes to manifest his thoughts, he must use his hands and acquire manual skills just like any other worker. In other words, thinking and working are two different activities which never quite coincide; the thinker who wants the world to know the 'content' of his thoughts must first of all stop thinking and remember his thoughts."
[503] Sun Ra, *Sun Ra, Art on Saturn: The Album Cover Art of Sun Ra's Saturn Label*, edited by Irwin Chusid and Chris Reisman (Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2022).
[504] Sun Ra, *Sun Ra Extensions Out, Plus: Four Poetry Books (1959-1972)* (Chicago: Corbett vs. Dempsey, 2021).
[505] Milt Hinton and David G. Berger, *Bass Line: The Stories and Photographs of Milt Hinton* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991). Milt Hinton, David G. Berger, and Holly Maxson, *Overtime: The Jazz Photographs of Milt Hinton* (Richmond: Pomegranate, 1992).
[506] Scott Gutterman, *Miles Davis: The Collected Artwork* (San Rafael: Insight Editions, 2013), 162.

general are attracted to the line and motion of visual art. Not everybody uses it, but most of us are attracted to it to one extent or another."[507]

Witnessed by some who knew him, Garner appeared to have been somewhat reserved about presenting his visual art objects. Columbia producer, Mitch Miller, said that Garner "loved art…He would do things that would always amaze me. When he'd go to a city, he'd end up…he'd go to Paris and spend half a day in the Louvre. Things like that. He never 'sported' his love for the various arts."[508] In late 1972, Garner's manager, Martha Glaser, wrote that "The Park South Gallery in New York has offered Garner a one man show, but he has demurred, avowing that he paints strictly for relaxation, and not for any public display."[509] Glaser's note is one of those hidden thoughts in the archive with no proof that it ever surfaced in the public. Columbia executive who had a close working relationship with Garner for several years, George Avakian, remembered him "doodling" a "sketch" in the recording studio:

> I believe that Erroll had done a lot of artwork while he was young, mainly *drawing*. I remember him *doodling* and my admiring what he did. He made a kind of a cartoon *sketch* on the corner of a recording sheet that I had in the studio one day. We were listening to a playback, and he was doodling. I said, 'that's pretty nice. What is it?' And he said, 'just an *idea*; it doesn't mean anything.'[510] (emphasis added)

How Garner perceived his "sketch" - as an idea that did not meaning anything - is the only known evidence we have of him talking about his visual objects. It might have been ideal if Garner, their creator, would have given signifiers to the objects that now belong to Box 56, Folder 9. Drummer Max Roach said that "when you name something, you claim it;" he was referring to the

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[507] Billy Taylor, interview by Tim Clausen, 24 April 2001, transcription courtesy of James M. Doran, email 7 October 2019, 7-8.
[508] Tim Clausen, "Interview with Mitch Miller," *Erroll Garner Gems*, Vol 1(3), July 1991, 6.
[509] Martha Glaser, Box 10, Folder 11, Biographies/Testimonials, Erroll Garner Archive, AIS.2015.09, University of Pittsburgh Library.
[510] Tim Clausen, "Interview with George Avakian," *Erroll Garner Gems*, (13), 1994, 3.

people who coopted "African-American music" who claimed it by renaming it "jazz."[511] Maybe "sketches," that which the archive has dubbed them in Garner's absence, is the proper signifier to use. Our ability to hold them in their physical form tells us, at least, that they have become something more than 'just an idea,' as Garner called them.

Anarchist thought is grounded in two notions pertinent to this chapter: first, that things are defined by their movement ("the thing is its exercise"); and secondly, that order must be "constantly justified" and congruent to the original intent.[512] In regard to the first, although it is impossible to trace Garner exercising his ideas in real-time, the "critical relation" in the objects permits viewers to infer an "analytical construct" about the exchanges that might have affected him during their making.[513] We can also follow Garner's ideas through to today, witnessed in how his "sketches" continue to exercise and negotiate their movement in the world. Congruent with anarchist thought, we are justified in following his "idea as it is exercised," trying to pinpoint how his ideas were made manifest in the objects and beyond them.[514] Regarding the second, it is unclear whether Garner meant for these objects to be conserved, and that leaves a researcher in a conundrum. He obviously did not mind if others peered at his "ideas" out in the world, as he would not have been 'doodling' at the recording studio otherwise. But how would Garner feel about his "sketches" being studied or archived? These objects arguably fall within the bounds of what literary scholar Brent Hayes Edwards refers to as the "ends of jazz writing," the literary material (interviews, liner notes, articles, poetry, etc.) produced by jazz artists that is "ancillary," but not necessarily "subordinate,"

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[511] Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 110.
[512] Mohammed A. Bamyeh, *Anarchy as Order: The History and Future of Civic Humanity* (New York: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), 9. "Thinking anarchically means in one sense that existing order, along with the institutions that sustain it, must be constantly justified. Anarchically thinking here means attention to the original intention and continuing usefulness of collective institutions, rather than holding them sacred due to the force of habit."
[513] Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 72, 109.
[514] Bamyeh, 12.

to their musical recordings.[515] Garner was not the self-archivist that Edwards associates with Louis Armstrong, who "carried a typewriter, a dictionary, and a thesaurus with him on the road."[516] But, like Armstrong's archive, Garner's archive holds parts of him that he may not have intended to be "immortal[ized]."[517] In thinking anarchically, this chapter posits that while it is justifiable to try to understand how his objects continue to exercise themselves, it is imperative that we question how they have been ordered.

5.3 Image and Text

On a bright blue greeting card to Glaser, possibly sent while he was on tour, Garner covers the inside in blue pen. Underneath the card's printed message on the right side which reads, "Congratulations to the whole crew," he underlines certain words in his own handwritten message:

> I thought this would be the best way to send the money back to you, and the [illegible word] crew. will be looking to see you real soon. take care of yourself. Thank you for the cat.[518]

The right side has a functional purpose of transferring money to Glaser, presumably, to her office in New York City. The fold of the card is long enough that either cash or a check would have fit easily inside. On the left side of the card, Garner embellishes the following text by drawing

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[515] Brent Hayes Edwards, *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017) 13, 14.
[516] Edwards, 44.
[517] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 20, 21, 52, 168. "It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by mortal hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and to be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read."
[518] Erroll Garner, Series VII: Memorabilia, Box 56, Folder 9, 1921-1977, Erroll Garner Archive, AIS.2015.09, University of Pittsburgh Library. The author is uncertain whether the illegible word says "bild" (German: picture), "bold," or "hole." Credit to Michael Heller for pointing out multiple possibilities.

a piano and bench, a treble clef staff, and a few eighth-note symbols, some which sit precisely on the staff's lines while others are placed indeterminately on the page:

> Good night last night. Lots of people like me very much. Me and you and our [image of a piano and accompanying bench]. (signed) Erroll Garner. petty good.[519]

The left side contains Garner's iconotext, a mixture of words and musical images, which compels us to read lyrically.[520] Edwards proffers that the lyric (or lyricism) possesses an ability to "hold" or "catch" that which cannot be expressed in music notation or visual art alone.[521] If the entire left side of the greeting card could be read with musical shape and a performative affect, one might find that the musical notation aids in a conceivable arrangement of lyrics. It is possible to consider Garner's message, "Good night last night. Lots of people like me very much," as a demurer recitation without musical accompaniment. With the entrance of Garner's musical staff (the diagonal bar-lines) and oversized treble clef symbol, a celebration: "Me and you and our [image of piano/bench]. Erroll Garner. Petty good." The image of the piano and bench contain the ineffability of what he might want to express in words but cannot: the nine-foot Baldwin grand pianos stipulated in his contracts or the telephone book upon which he was known to sit when performing. "Petty good," as in petty cash, may have been a jovial way of denoting money. Or, maybe in writing quickly, he accidentally left out the 'r' in 'pretty.' The images of music notion - the treble clef, the staff, and the stemmed notes - cannot be translated into a particular rhythmic or

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[519] Ibid. The author is unsure if Garner wrote "our" or "oui" (French: yes), a pun on "we" as in 'me and you and we.' Credit to Michael Heller for pointing out that possibility.

[520] Peter Wagner, *Texts - Icons - Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality* (New York: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1996), 16. Wagner's "iconotext" applies to "pictures showing words or writing, but also to texts that work with image."

[521] Edwards, 58-85. The lyric, Edwards suggests, offered a poetic "*form"* in which "African American" writers of the early 20th Century, such as James Weldon Johnson, engaged in the "question of authorship" and the "politics of transcription" through written word as well as spoken or performed sound.

melodic motif. Instead, Garner plays *with* music notation. In this way, the figures are not a descriptive set of symbols bound to a page that can be performed like a votive score that memorializes Garner's successful trip.[522] Instead, he twists, exaggerates, swirls, embeds, colors, and animates symbols around his autograph, around himself. It is a musical *pseudo-script* conjuring a visual formula that alludes to the act of reading or translating music. It is not musically legible or possible to audiate; it only implies an audio-visual experience.[523] Garner's "lyrics" produce the stable ground for which his musical imagery can dance around; his written words "hold" what music notation cannot.

But images are not inferior to text. Translating the images in the imagination onto paper allows an artist to convey non-visual spatial relations, either between literal objects or metaphorical ideas.[524] Images are not only about the perceiving eye; they can also offer a functional engagement, a means to think through, speculate, plan, and improve upon one's ideas - to have "a conversation with one's self."[525] In his comic book, *Unflattening*, Nick Sousanis illustrates how fusing image with text widens our perception of the thing. Text is linear, hierarchical, and one-

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[522] Fredrika Jacobs, "Memory and Narrative: Materializing Past and Future in the Present," in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*, edited by Ittai Weinryb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 96, 97. Regarding the *Madonna of Loreto*, artist unknown, oil painting on wood, commissioned by composer Orlando di Lasso in remembrance of his 1585 pilgrimage to the Marian sanctuary at Loreto. The top panel portrays Lasso in the sanctuary underneath the Madonna, while the bottom includes a music transcription of his five-voice canon commemorating the pilgrimage. "Amplifying the imagery above it, the score, when performed and remembered, conveys the omnipresence of God, who according to Augustine (354-430), is 'outside' physical space (transcendent) yet simultaneously 'within' it (immanent), at once present in the past and in the future."

[523] Vera-Simone Schulz, "Intricate Letters and the Reification of Light. Prolegomena on the Pseudo-Inscribed Haloes in Giotto's *Madonna di San Giorgio all Costa* and Masaccio's San Giovenale triptych," in *Mitteilungen Des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, Heft I, edited by Alessandro Nova, Gerhard Wolf, and Samuel Vitali (Firenze: Centro Di Edizioni, 2016), 62. Schulz deals with "the problem of pseudo-script in late medieval Italian painting," particularly those alluding to Arabic writing. Pseudo-scripts are by definition "illegible," but have nonetheless "both fascinated and frustrated art historians for centuries and led to a high number of studies."

[524] Barbara Tversky and Masaki Suwa, "Thinking with Sketches," in *Tools for Innovation*, edited by Arthur Markman and Kristin Wood (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 75-84.

[525] Masaki Suwa and Barbara Tversky, "What Architects See in Their Sketches: Implications for Design Tools," *CHI '96: Conference Companion on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, April 1996, 191-192. Research conducted on design students and professional architects regarding the process of drawing, a cycle of sketching, examining, and editing.

dimensional. On the other hand, images are relational, rhizomatic, two-dimensional, and supply further expression when words fall short. Images can metaphorically be peeled off the page to represent a three-dimensional world; or vice versa, the three-dimensional can be reduced on paper as a static and singular perspective of reality. As our three-dimensional bodies makes sense of the textual (what the thing is *about*) and the image (what the thing *is*), our imaginations take over, exploring other possible dimensions that exist inside and through and beyond the thing.[526] The musical imagery disrupts the capacity of the text to hold all of the meaning, highlighting the gaps between two worlds - one textual and known, and the other abstract and unknowable. The co-presence of text and images may allow a deeper understanding of the conversation Garner was having with himself in materializing his 'idea' on paper.

How did Garner's 'idea' exercise its way into ultimately becoming a "sketch?"[527] According to Hannah Arendt, a "thought or idea" becomes manifest in the physical world when it is "remembered and then transformed" by "the work of human hands."[528] Thought must "stop" so that the mind can look back on the past and remember it; work is the product of this remembered past and of a person "want[ing] the world to know the 'content' of his thoughts."[529] The gap wherein thought meets work, wherein the two activities of the human condition "never quite

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[526] Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 88.
[527] Arendt, 303, 20, 142, 143. "Ideas" were of a higher nature and altogether different from the activity of "thought, which goes on within one's self by means of words." Thought "is obviously not only inadequate to render [contemplation, the experience of the eternal] but would interrupt and ruin the experience itself." She contends that Plato could sense that it would be impossible for humans to give up making things, even if those things would inevitably fall short of translating the eternal idea, because of "man's desire for permanence and immortality." "Idea" came to mean an image in the mind that anyone could produce, not only philosophers. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 43. Likewise, words have never trusted images to tell the real story. As the history of linguistics shows, "since the rise of empiricism, the suspicion that beneath words, beneath ideas, the ultimate reference in the mind is the image, the impression of outward experience printed, painted, or reflected in the surface of consciousness."
[528] Arendt, 95. "In order to become worldly things…thoughts or ideas…must first be seen, heard, and remembered and then transformed, reified as it were, into things."
[529] Arendt, 90. Bill Brown, *Other Things* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 162. Brown has interpreted Arendt in that the work of art symbolizes the "interruption of thought."

coincide" but aid each other, illustrates the point in time that Garner stopped thinking and decided he would let the world (but not necessarily other people) know what he had been thinking.[530] The interstice between thought and work represents an important point of negotiation between Garner and the would-be "sketch." Had Garner not embellished his text, the card might have been nothing more than a way to transfer money, relay information, and relate to Glaser on a personal level.[531] Glaser may have even decided to discard it once it was no longer useful to her, once she no longer needed it to serve her memory of the exchange. Or maybe she would have kept it, but it might have been labeled and filed apart from the contents of "Sketches by Garner." If expressing himself in imaginative ways had been useful at that moment for Garner to 'get his thoughts out,' he could have retrieved another piece of paper which he kept private. But the moment that Garner added (musical) images to accompany his text and put the greeting card out into the world by sending it to Glaser would, probably unbeknownst to him, seal the fate of the object as a "sketch" within the archive.

5.4 The Archive

Continuities and discontinuities between objects surface based on how a culture orders things and events, a theme developed by Michel Foucault (1926-1984) in *Archaeology of*

[530] Arendt, 90, 169. The work is in interpreting the thought up until that point in time, no further. "What actually makes the thought a reality and fabricates things of thought is the same workmanship which, through the primordial instrument of human hands, build the other durable things of the human artifice."
[531] Ibid., 164-165. "Value is the quality a thing can never possess in privacy but acquires automatically the moment it appears in public."

Knowledge (1972).[532] If order exists between documents, if "one can define a regularity" across "objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices," it does so because of the *discursive formation* which is laden with discontinuities in a cultural system. Foucault called the system by which to speak and write about history the *archive*, which provides the language for questioning what has already been said about objects.[533] The archive's "threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity" between the current discursive formations on the inside and reason on the outside.[534] Thinking about history as a metaphorical archive in these terms, Foucault captures the inability of the human subject to see all or to know all. One cannot use reason, alone, to make sense of or justify the past. In addition to reason, history should be ordered by mining for discontinuities in the language of the archive.

Some twenty years later, Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995) inferred an opposing view about the term 'archive.' Although he does not address Foucault directly, Derrida was also concerned with how an archive (either real or metaphorical) shapes historical discourse and puts things "into order."[535] He explains two principles that guide the

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[532] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), xxi. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), xxii. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault attempted to define what he calls the *episteme* of knowledge, that is, the "*space* of knowledge" from which humans gather ideas, theories, and experiences. Rather than thinking about history of Western knowledge as teleological and periodized, he proposes that the history ought to be examined as a sort of "archeology" riddled with both continuities and discontinuities. We may believe that knowledge flows with continuity and progress within the episteme of the Renaissance, Classical period, or the technology age, but this is "only a surface appearance."

[533] Foucault, *Archaeology*, 4, 6, 9, 12, 128, 129, 131. By archive, he does not mean "the sum of all the texts that a culture has kept," nor the institutions that preserve them, nor a hideaway for "future memories" or the "resurrection" of statements, nor "that which unifies everything," nor "that which ensures that we exist in the midst of preserved discourse." Rather, the archive "is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements." From the teleological perspective that was prominent from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, "time is conceived in terms of totalization;" history makes sense for the rational, sovereign human consciousness. In trying to assert a "new type of rationality," a new method of historical analysis that is sensitive to cultural differences, a "new history" that began with Karl Marx's endeavor a century earlier, Foucault's historical project would be an "archaeology," mining for the discontinuities "that determines its object and validates its analysis."

[534] Foucault, 130.

[535] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, translated by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4, 5. Derrida asks, "what comes under system? under biography or autobiography? under

purpose of an *archive*: where the contents *commence* (their "physical, historical, or ontological" location) and from where the contents *command* (establishing order and categorization).[536] Derrida calls this contradiction "archive fever" - the exterior structure forces us to remember by abusing the spatial and temporal conditions regarding the finitude of conservation, and the interior is a substrate of silent, repressed, and censored domicile.[537] So, while Foucault encourages us to explore the archive of language and assemble an order that embraces discontinuity, Derrida tells us that the archive's goal is continuity by submission, which augurs a challenge in making sense of the "sketches" using the language that already exists in the archive.[538]

Thinking anarchically proposes that Garner's objects should be permitted to question their status and act according to Garner's intent. Or, as Mohammed Bamyeh defines anarchy, the archive should exact upon the "sketches" an "unimposed order."[539] Bamyeh has traced the tradition of anarchist thought to 1793 with William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* who put forth the idea that human reason, rather than external regulations, should be the ultimate directive of how we are to act in the world.[540] Political dissident and linguist, Noam Chomsky,

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personal or intellectual anamnesis?" Frederick C. Crews, *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1995). Derrida's study is a comment on Freud's psychoanalysis and legacy, a possible response to the uproar caused by scathing essays written by Frederick Crews in 1993 and 1994 after documents exposed Freud as having manipulated his data and his patients.

[536] Derrida, 1-3. Derrida's archive derives from *arkheion* (Greek) meaning "a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded." The archive is a sort of "privileged topology" under "house arrest," an organized deposit of material according to laws that the archive establishes for itself. On some level, he attests, every archive is "patriarchic," providing, at once, the shelter and the authority to conceal or reveal the substrate within it. (Derrida seems to treat the adjective "patriarchic" in an ontological sense and "patriarchal" as its ontic equivalent; "patriarchic" is used to describe the broader "principle" or "function" that characterizes the hierarchical social order, while "patriarchal" refers to *this* or *that* particular "logic," "filiation," or "right" within the patriarchy of the archive.)

[537] Derrida, 7, 9, 10. "*Every* archive…keeps, it puts in reserve, it saves, but in an unnatural fashion, that is to say in making the law (*nomos*) or in making people respect the law."

[538] Derrida, 1-5. The archive exudes a "power of *consignation*," the ability to "*gather together signs,*" driven by a relentless anxiety over maintaining "unity of an ideal configuration."

[539] Mohammed A. Bamyeh, *Anarchy as Order* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 23, 4.

[540] Bamyeh, 14, 15, 3-4, 18, 20-22. *Anarchy* comes from Greek origins, meaning the "absence of domination." The term anarchy was coined in the mid-1800s by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) and has since been aligned with socialism. Russian anarchists Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), who became the face of anarchist thought after it split

notes that arriving at a clear conception of anarchy is complex; but he concedes a definition as a "kind of tendency in human thought and action which tries to detect and discover structures of authority, domination, and hierarchy and challenge them."[541] An anarchic approach, then, uses reason to challenge the authority and language vested in the archive to ensure the "sketches" have an unimpeded platform from which to exercise and "talk."[542]

An object can possess a "vitality" that shines forth from their materiality to the viewer. It is what Bill Brown calls *thingness* - a physical or metaphysical "potentiality within any object," which provokes human emotion and behaviors and reveals the "worlds and lives…*within*" it.[543] Garner's "sketches" may be trying to tell us something, but our ability to detect it may be hindered by the provisions under which the "sketches" are domiciled. Some objects are kept "very alive, displayed on walls or available in library stacks, while others are in storage, where only scholars and others who know they are there and request special access can get at them."[544] Howard Becker defines an object as "inactive" or "active" based on how an archive is "giving or withholding participation" to an audience.[545] Garner's "sketches" are part of the "inactive collection" of the archive, as viewers not only must request access to the archive (by making an appointment through an on-line

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with Marxism (which was thought to be too authoritarian) in 1872, and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), who established anarchy as a science and method that repudiated means of force and competition in favor of spontaneous organizing and cooperation, emerged as leaders of the communist anarchists. Its popularity as a form of political and economic directive declined after the Spanish Civil War (1939) but saw a resurgence after the Cold War and the globalization that followed, exemplified in the case of the Zapatistas in Mexico.

[541] Noah Chomsky, "Chomsky Explaining Real Anarchism," YouTube, posted by Arif Kasim, 21 November 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkvPDx2qNjM. Accessed 27 March 2024.

[542] Lorraine Daston, "Introduction: Speechless," in *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, edited by Lorraine Daston (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 21, 23. "Things that talk are often chimeras, composites of different species…art and nature, persons and things, objective and subjective are somehow brought together in these things, and the fusions result in considerable blurring of outlines." Specifically, Daston considers how material and meaning come together. The composite referenced herein includes the "sketches," the archive, and the viewing subject.

[543] Brown, *Other Things*, 5, 9, 19. Brown is the leading voice of thing theory a model for how the subject-object-thing dynamic mediates our world, the language it imposes or exposes, and how it plays out in material culture.

[544] Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 220.

[545] Ibid.

application), but also be made aware that they exist and seek them out. Conversely, what is displayed on a more public platform (yet still in the domain of the archive), like the Erroll Garner exhibit unveiled in 2016 in the University of Pittsburgh's International Academy of Jazz Hall of Fame, is part of the "active collection."[546] It is more likely that someone will stumble upon the exhibit in the heavily-trafficked lobby of the William Pitt Union on the University of Pittsburgh's campus than it is that someone will go through the process of finding out about Garner's "sketches," being curious enough to seek them out, make an appointment with the archive, and drive to the facility (two miles outside of campus) in order to hold and experience them. If an archived object's vitality relies on the interactions it has with observers, then, under Becker's assumption, Garner's "sketches" lack vitality under their current provision. Tucked away into Box 56, Folder 9, they have little opportunity for human participation. As a researcher who was fortunate to view them, I wonder how many interactions the "sketches" have had since. Unless Garner never intended for his objects to retain their vitality or provoke a response, the fact that the "sketches" appear to be trapped is concerning. Our ability to sense the vitality of the objects, products of Garner's thought and work, relies on an "unimposed order," which is why it is important for us to question how they are kept.[547]

Some semblance of order is necessary. The archive keeps the "sketches" from being "physically destroyed" and makes them "easily accessible to potential audiences," two objectives that must be achieved for them to "persist in the life of an art world."[548] But, persistency does not necessarily fulfill their original intent. Garner was private about this aspect of himself, and it is unknown whether he meant for his work to

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[546] Ibid.
[547] Bamyeh, 4, 23.
[548] Becker, 220, 35. He wants us to think of an art world as a "network of cooperative links," and works of art as "joint products of all the people who cooperate via an art world's characteristic conventions to bring works like that into existence." Art is defined here as an expansive network that makes the work persist.

become catalogued and studied decades after he was gone. Maybe he wanted his footprint in the world to remain somewhat of a myth, only hearsay. It is questionable whether they are existing in the way Garner intended. Thinking anarchically promotes a continuous, "collective," and "voluntary" reevaluation of the status of his objects to ensure that they are not being held "sacred due to the force of habit."[549] By allowing them to reveal something of his presence, they may be inclined to exercise new identities or say something about how (or if) they are currently being used.

"Utility," Arendt explains, is what differentiates an ordinary "use product" and the "useless" work of art.[550] Use products are used; they are not meant to last. Works of art are specifically not meant for use, but rather, stored so that they "can attain permanence throughout the ages."[551] But the use product and the work of art have something in common - they originate from thought and are materialized by the work of human hands. Trying to distinguish whether Garner conceived of them as use products or works of art is important for thinking anarchically about their intent. If Garner considered them use products, then they must have been useful to "the life of the mind" (Garner's mind, and perhaps Glaser's, but probably few others').[552] In that case, anarchic thinking would challenge the archive to maintain their useful property. If, however, Garner thought of them as "works of art," then he would have considered them "useless things," objects that were not meant to be used.[553] In that case, anarchic thinking might question whether scholars or unqualified art handlers should be touching them at all.

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[549] Bamyeh, 9-10.
[550] Arendt, 167.
[551] Ibid.
[552] Ibid., 164.
[553] Ibid., 170-171. "Thought, on the contrary [to cognition which "is a process with a beginning and end"], has neither an end nor an aim outside itself, and it does not even produce results…thought is - as useless, indeed, as the works of art it inspires…Thought, therefore, although it inspires the highest worldly productivity of *homo faber*, is by no means his prerogative, it begins to assert itself as his source of inspiration only where he overreaches himself, as it were, and begins to produce useless things, objects which are unrelated to material or intellectual wants, to man's physical needs no less than to his thirst for knowledge."

5.5 Factured Art

Consider another object that resides in Box 56, Folder 2 and whose identity as a "sketch" is open for debate (Figure 2). The paper, which holds Garner's pencil markings, is about the size of a standard index card. It portrays curved shapes adjacent to straight-lined shapes, penciled-in blocks, blocks that are left bare, and parts with horizontal and vertical lines that are completely graphed-in. Its defining text is the letter "G" on the left side. If the "G" is a reference to his own last name, why did he not finish with the rest of the letters - A, R, N, E, R? There is at least an outline of an "A" on the far-right side, and if the image were viewed upside-down, another "A" almost emerges. Although it appears to bear no message of significant consequence, the "G" stands out in relief. Coincidently, "Mr. G." was what Glaser affectionately called him in some of their correspondences. The "G," which is apart from the rest of the abstract image that is suggestive of text, might say something about how Garner viewed his objects - away from the chaos or clashes of mass culture. Interpreted as another pseudo-script that alludes to his name but does not spell it out or look like his usual signature, it invites viewers into step into his inner circle.[554] It has a less commercial feel than his autograph (shown in Figures 1 and 3) does. Could it be considered a work of art, or even more broadly, art?

David Summers casts a wide net for what "art" does, stating "art records the many ways in which the world at hand has been acknowledged in being shaped by us human beings."[555] The object (Figure 2) is art in the sense that it is a record of Garner making a worldly thing, an

[554] Schulz, 62.
[555] Summers, 19.

"artifact."[556] Considered in terms of its "facture" would appreciate the amount of care and attention Garner paid to it, the resources that were assembled, and his skill in making it.[557] Facture is not about how valuable the material is that underlies the work. It is about the collective circumstances under which the artifact is brought into existence and what is accomplished with the material given.[558] Arendt pointed out that, within every object, lies not only an "objective and intrinsic worth," but also the potential of a "subjective and socially determined value."[559] Facture speaks more to the objective worth side of this equation.

Garner was on the road a lot; in 1967, for example, he performed in major American cities (including New York, Seattle, Las Vegas, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Washington D.C., Milwaukee, and Baltimore), made a dozen or so television or radio appearances, and completed two European tours. That meant he also had a lot of time in-between events - on trains, airplanes, in hotel rooms, etc. - where he may have wanted to work out some 'ideas.' Post cards, the back sides of itineraries, travel brochures, hotel notepads, and even paper napkins could all have offered readily available canvases to him at some point, even if they came with inscriptions or logos already printed on them. In Figure 2, however, Garner uses a weathered-looking piece of paper. Misshapen and smudged, it seems to have been used before or after this sketch for other purposes, witnessed in the illegible writing on the right side. The first few letters appear to read "W.F. L," but the viewer cannot be sure because the message has been erased. Had Garner used this material

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[556] Summers, 61, 74, 75. The word "artifact" merges art and the act of making, "factured" art (from Latin: *facio*, *facere*), meaning "to make or do," insinuating a "fact…something evidently done." The word that merges art and the act of making, then, is "artifact," by which Summers submits "make human purposes present to us…in the sense that they make these purposes realizable by themselves and others." And it would still be acceptable to call a sketch an artifact even though the purpose is "no longer evident together with it." Facture accounts for everything that had to happen prior to our being able to marvel at the artwork.
[557] Summers, 74.
[558] Ibid., 75, 88.
[559] Arendt, 165.

previously to jot down a note to himself, possibly the initials of a business contact that he wanted to remember? Or did Garner find the paper in its already-used format when he decided that he would erase the letters (leaving the imprint and some residue of the original handler) and re-purpose it to share his "sketch" with the remnants of the old message? Canvases that are effaced and re-worked are known as palimpsests. They hold the integrity of the past while creating space for fresh ideas. The past and present are both acknowledged, thereby holding an open dialogue between temporalities. Daniel Belgrad considers the palimpsest as a cultural metaphor for indifference to either capitalist or Communist ideals.[560] Beyond its lack of enthusiasm to align with a political motive, the palimpsest is an artistic response to existentialism's overemphasis of subjectivity and the solipsistic tendencies that develop when too much regard is placed on individual spontaneity and independence. Instead, the palimpsest highlights the fact that intersubjectivity shapes the whole of our experience.[561] The facture of Garner's artifact offers a way to appreciate the collective effort and lives involved in its making.

There is also a degree of "superfluous facture," elevated by the shapes, shading, and embellishments that "refine" it, which not only makes it more open and exposed to investigating *how* it was made but also helps us interpret *what* it is.[562] As a "drawing," we recognize that our eyes can retrace Garner's hand movements and ponder the "impulse of the draftsman. Interpretation involves a connecting act of *re*-creation, the self-projection of the viewer *re*imagining the process of drawing."[563] David Rosand explains that a drawing allows the viewer

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[560] Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 112-113.
[561] Ibid.
[562] Summers, 88.
[563] David Rosand, *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression and Representation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17.

to follow the exact path of the draftsman's markings through imagined corporeal projection. Viewers can see the difference in lines that are drawn with more weight behind the hand versus those that were made with a lighter touch. A drawing makes us aware of the speed Garner's hands were moving because we can notice his precision with shading or certain qualities in the lines themselves. When we pay special attention to the physical remnants, re-tracing his lines in our imaginations, the process of observing becomes our own disruption of the dualistic mind/body subjectivity. A firmer contour or a continuous line suggests confidence or an ability to project far into the future. Smaller, broken marks seem more unsure, skeptical, liminal, and reaching for something.[564] Realizing the continuity of mental and physical capacities and, therefore, the awareness of Garner's linkage to external social and environmental factors, challenges structural binaries that have grossly reduced the "mind" with certain social groups and the "body" with others ("White/Negro; Christian/heathen; male/female; and white collar/blue collar"[565]). A drawing cannot deceive the viewer as to what is beyond the graphic incisions; it assumes a "semiotic ambivalence."[566] Painting, on the other hand, offers a mimetic function in which the brush strokes can hide the underlying surface, thereby implicating semiotics.[567] But, in the act of drawing, a simple mark or line on any surface (paper, canvas, parchment) retains the nature of that surface, the "autonomy" of the base.[568] Recognizing these factured qualities puts us up close to the object

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[564] Ibid., 13-14.
[565] Belgrad, 115.
[566] Rosand, 2.
[567] Christopher J. Nygren, "Titian's Ecce Homo on Slate: Stone, Oil, and the Transubstantiation of Painting," *The Art Bulletin*, March 2017, Vol 99(1), 62. Titian's *Ecce Homo* (1547), which completely masks the stone substrate, is a picture that "complicates the semiotic process" because it "transcend[s] its materiality." If viewers do not recognize that *Ecce Homo* is painted on stone, Christ appears to be born out of or "emerge from the stone." Nature cannot be separated from the illusion brought forth by the artist. If, however, the material is only somewhat hidden, as in Cavaliere d'Arpino's *Perseus Rescuing Andromeda* (1593-94) on lapis lazuli, the viewer can "dwell in the rift" between the non-semiotic and the semiotic; that is, between the natural color and texture of the lapis and the unnatural representation of the image.
[568] Rosand, 2, 13. "In the assertion of its autonomy, its innate resistance to the purpose of representation, the line recalls the process of its becoming through the act of drawing, the gesture of the draftsman."

and, although historically distant from us, up close to Garner. The object is prodding at us about something, perhaps relating to its possible identity as a "drawing" rather than a "sketch."

5.6 Aesthetics

While facture seems to hold more weight for interpreting the artifact's objective worth, the "complementary" side is based on the subjective and social value engendered by aesthetics.[569] All objects, whether useful or not, cannot escape from being judged in the world. Whether we find Garner's objects to be "beautiful," "ugly," or "somewhere in-between" is less important than their value as a social experience.[570] Tracey Nicholls has argued that bell hooks offers a critical voice to the role that the social plays in aesthetics.[571] In Nicholls's estimation, hook's *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (1995) sees the need to "restore the sense that visual art really matters."[572] Visual art, being closely tied to one's self-image, is essential for the decolonization of peoples whose histories, much less their access to art materials, have been violently and systematically taken away. Democratizing art, hooks believes, is one way to restore one's self-image, which can be achieved by encouraging the idea, through public art programs, for example, that "anyone can be a maker of art."[573] Nicholls reads hooks as an art critic who is committed to the art objects "of the

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[569] Summers, 75. Aesthetics are a consequence of the work being made, factured, even if aesthetics and its making "may finally be complementary in our understanding of the work."
[570] Arendt, 172, 173. "Whatever has a shape at all and is seen cannot help being either beautiful, ugly, or something in-between." These judgements are based on the object's "durability" and other "objective standards."
[571] Tracey Nicholls, "What's Love Got to Do with It?: Creating Art, Creating Community, Creating a Better World," in *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics*, edited by Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, and Will Straw (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 213. Pierre Bourdieu is credited for conjoining the social with aesthetics and was committed to the idea that one's aesthetic judgement ought to be attributed to "one's class position," not universal as Kant thought.
[572] Ibid., 216.
[573] Ibid.

everyday."[574] To someone else, Garner's canvas might be viewed as 'scratch' paper, a remnant that should be discarded or only used to jot down a telephone number or some other fleeting thought. However, it shows that Garner did not elevate his own materials above the ordinary and that Glaser did not need an evenly scaled document to deem appropriate to file in the archive. By seeking out the social potential in ordinary objects, hooks is ultimately calling for "an improvisatory culture" when it comes to making and appreciating visual art, as improvisation signals a resistance to power.[575] Regardless of the form it takes (music, writing, etc.), Fred Moten expresses that improvisation is, one the one hand, "anarchic" and "the very essence of the visionary;" and on the other hand, it is codified and "ground[ed]" in the "material."[576]

Anarchist thinkers believe that art is a social statement; art is not autonomous.[577] The sociality of art applies to anarchic thinking as well, which holds that aesthetics is necessary, political, and inclusive in terms of the objects it considers.[578] Although closely tied to the work itself and the artist's agency, the aesthetic remains independent of both.[579] Anarchists have a way of apprehending not only the objects of immediate "desire and affect," but also the objects that

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[574] Ibid., 220, 225. Quilts, for example, allow for the sharing of stories about the people and materials that made them, an aesthetic which is reliant on the social.
[575] Nicholls, 219.
[576] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 64.
[577] Todd May, "Theory: Anarchism from Foucault to Rancière" in *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, edited by Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, II, and Deric Shannon (London: Routledge, 2009), 3. This is not to be confused with one of hallmarks of anarchist thought, which is "a commitment to freedom and autonomy," along with "decentralization," "opposition to hierarchy," and "an opposition to vanguardism as it was expressed in authoritarian socialist traditions." Pushing toward *social* autonomy should not be confused with autonomous *art*, or 'art for art's sake.'
[578] Allan Antliff, "Aesthetics of Tension," in *The Anarchist Imagination: Anarchism Encounters the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, edited by Carl Levy and Saul Newman (New York: Routledge, 2019), 229. He explains that Kant's *The Critique of Judgement* (1790) informed interpretations of aesthetics to favor an "unbounded," subjective experience above any socio-historical aspect of an artwork. So much so, that well into the twentieth century, aesthetics (alternately "esthetics") and autonomy were synchronous terms in modernist accounts of art.
[579] Ibid., 238.

exist in the "*places* inside and between instituted territories."[580] Consider the false frame in Figure 2. It is not drawn with exact precision, yet it says something concrete about the delineation between work and world. Garner is using his outlines to make a statement about the ephemeral and constrictive qualities of paper. If the eye moves from the interior of the "sketch" to the outer perimeter (the world), or vice versa, the eye easily passes his false frame that is situated at an imperfect distance from the actual edges of the paper. His border markings do little to interrupt or question the object's materiality. Rather, his self-constructed frame acknowledges a distance from the world and, simultaneously, converses with the contents of his sketch within it. The confines of the paper serve to define alternative spatial boundaries of his creative gestures. The object does not require the utility of a manufactured frame; Garner preferred the false frame to celebrate the materiality of the medium.[581]

5.7 The Unfinished?

Refinement suggests the "finish[ing]" of an artifact. To what degree Figure 3 is finished or not stems from the unknown relationship between the image and the text. In what appears to be an image of a mouthless face with a bulging forehead and two unevenly spaced eyes, Garner shaded the face area with light pink crayon, which seems purposeful against the white backdrop. The head is bodiless, severed, and sitting atop an oval disk. Garner chose to leave the disk and area

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[580] Alejandro de Acosta, "Two Undecidable Questions for Thinking in Which Anything Goes," in *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, edited by Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, II, and Deric Shannon (London: Routledge, 2009), 28, 32.
[581] Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 105-106.

surrounding the pupils void of color. Underneath the illustration, Garner writes: "This is for all of then after a talk to you," underlining "then" and "you." Did Garner write 'all of them' and my eyes are seeing the word 'then?' If so, who are they? Or did Garner purposely use 'then' to encapsulate all of time, 'back then' and any future 'thens?' The inspiration for the bulge-headed figure may have been a particular record executive or club owner that Garner and Glaser thought slighted them in some way. Or it could represent an imagined personification of the collective barriers that they had to fight through to assert Garner's visibility in the industry. Glaser may have made Garner privy to her more difficult phone calls in which she was standing up for her client, and perhaps this was Garner's light-hearted way of saying 'thank you' for her part in trying to disrupt the status quo. If the image and text have nothing to do with each other, if it is not refined enough, we might consider this object unfinished - a 'doodle,' perhaps.

In order for a drawing to be considered a "doodle," at least where figure and word are co-present, there cannot be a clear relationship between the image and the text.[582] The doodle is the site where "profoundly incongruent" images appear to intermingle.[583] Viewing Garner's Figure 3 as a "doodle" would presuppose that the bodiless figure has no relation to Garner's neighboring inscription: *This is for all of then after a talk to you.* Garner may have been doodling on various canvases during his life, as in the studio session wherein he and George Avakian "were listening to a playback, and [Garner] was doodling."[584] Bassist and visual artist, Ernest McCarty Jr., who played with Garner in the 1970s, insists that "a lot of artists do that, draw on napkins…doodle."[585]

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[582] Leonard Barkan, *Michelangelo: A Life on Paper* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 16, 13, 14, 18. About 600 sheets of drawings have been attributed to the Renaissance painter and sculptor, Michelangelo Buonarroti, of which 200 have images cohabitating with text. Unlike Leonardo da Vinci's drawings where "image and text have been conceived as purposefully interrelated," Barkan argues that Michelangelo's conjoining image and text were not done with "rational purposiveness."
[583] Barkan, x.
[584] Tim Clausen, "Interview with George Avakian," 3.
[585] Ernest McCarty, Jr., interview by the author, 20 March 2019.

However, one important detail about the work that suggests the text and image are co-dependent, therefore the object might not be a doodle, is Garner's signature. In red crayon, a bold choice considering the drab color-scheme otherwise, he documents his signature on the bottom right side. It is about the same size and is placed close to the rest of the text, suggesting that his signature represents a salutation rather a mark of authenticity or a random inscription. Garner's signature allows us to read the object as another personalized message (like the greeting card, Figure 1). It might not be the "aimless exercise" that doodles entail.[586] It seems to have served a purpose (a use product), and his signature seals or finishes the work. Its finished quality points away from a possible identity as a doodle.

Like doodles, sketches are notably unfinished, open-ended. Sketches have the "potential" to be publicly viewed, but they are not quite ready.[587] To illustrate the difference between a drawing and a sketch, bassist Eddie Calhoun remembered that Garner produced both: "[Garner] could draw. He was a very good artist. I had a few things of his, but I don't have them now. But he could really draw, and he could sketch real quick. He was very good at it, and I wished I'd saved some of the things he did."[588] Calhoun's reasoning behind whether the object constitutes a drawing or a sketch seems to implicate time (drawings take longer to make) and whether Garner gave it away to someone (Garner gave Calhoun drawings, but not sketches). Garner may have wanted to keep his sketches for himself. Leonard Barkan tells us that "sketches (and the sketchier the better) represent the artist's interior life."[589] By calling these objects in the archive "sketches," we are assuming they

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[586] Rosand, 86.
[587] Ibid., 58. "If the maintenance of an ongoing journal detailing the critical events in the art business is a private act with possible public consequences, it has more than a little in common with the sketching of potential art works (not to mention the writing of letters and the composition of lyric poetry)."
[588] Tim Clausen, "Interview with Eddie Calhoun," *Erroll Garner Gems: The Journal of the Erroll Garner Club*, Vol. 2(4) October 1992, 11.
[589] Barkan, 2.

reveal personal and private aspects of his world. Garner intended for his creativity on-stage and his output in the recording studio to represent his public life; his "sketches" (if that is what these objects should be called) would represent something of his inner "character."[590] Sketches are, by definition, "casual," a site where Garner would have allowed the viewer (a friend or bandmate, maybe) to know his personal thoughts.[591] If these are "sketches," did Garner want to reveal his private thoughts to people he did not know? Language is important here.[592] Calling them "sketches" tells us we are peering into his private life without his consent. If we call them "drawings," it would at least give some indication that he intended them for public viewing.[593]

However, maybe the language that the "sketches" have assumed is not indicative of what they *represent* (an unfinished work that gives us unwitting insight into his character) so much as they reveal something of Garner's unfinished *presence*.[594] In other words, if there is a unfinished character about the objects - in which case "sketches" would be an appropriate name for them - it might have more to do with the dialogical process that is happening between them and the entities in communication with them. "Sketch" may be an indication that they are pursuing an anarchic mission, pushing against anyone or anything that tries to contain them - the viewer, the archive,

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[590] Rosand, 22.
[591] Barkan, 180.
[592] Arendt, 94. "It is language, and the fundamental human experiences underlying it, rather than theory, that teaches us that the things of the world, among which the *vita activa* spends itself, are of a very different nature and produced by quite different kinds of activities. Viewed as part of the world, the products of work – and not the products of labor – guarantee the permanence and durability without which a world would not be possible at all. It is within this world of durable things that we find the consumer goods through which life assures the means of its own survival…these things for incessant consumption appear and disappear in an environment of things that are not consumed but used, and to which, as we use them, we become used and accustomed…and language, which does not permit the laboring activity to form anything so solid and non-verbal as a noun, hints at the strong probability that we would not even know what a thing is without having before us 'the work of our hands.'"
[593] Barkan, 51. "Connoisseur-based modern scholarship on Michelangelo's drawings…by focusing so sharply on the end product that is supposed to have been generated by these sketches, has in its own way turned them into more public objects. Most recently, though, the best work in the field has reminded us that these works are born out of a special relation to the interiority of their makers, whatever happens to them subsequently."
[594] Rosand, xxi, xxii, 16.

and language. They are unfinished in the sense that there is a "social force" still working within them.[595] They may, in fact, be finished on the outside, but something is stirring them on the inside. Maybe Garner meant to *present* himself through these works so that, with the help of the viewer, he could carry-out unfinished business. The gap between what they represent and their presence could help determine what, if anything, needs to be done with them.[596]

In their status as representations, it is the viewer who guides the agenda. In the extreme, this approach can fall prey to "objectivism," a case in which we take unjustified liberties about the meaning, intent, purpose, and importance of Garner's objects. We point to ourselves, to the phenomenology of experience, to give meaning; what is right for me is reality. The language results from our sureness of the of who the agent of change is (either the object or us) and a pompous, all-knowing inclination to represent 'truths' about them even if they are unfamiliar to us. Or we may be tempted by imperialistic tendencies to give complete reign over to the archive, an "empire" or regime that would exact "total domination" over objects outside of its jurisdiction. We think we know his character and private thoughts from the perspective of what the "sketches" represent.

On the opposite end, as presentations, the objects pull out the language from the viewer. If we look at Garner's "sketches" in their objectivity, there are only certain universals that everyone can agree upon: where they are housed, their material make-up, their facture. Beyond that, their significance is going to be different for everyone, depending on how the object moves someone in any given moment. In an overzealous appeal to relativity, we submit to the object's ontological presence, where what is right

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[595] Antliff, 230. "This tension aspires to extend the freedom it embodies into the world as a social force."
[596] Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 55. He sees historical writing that addresses the object from both directions - the internal ("its aesthetic and poetic appeal, its status as a presentation") and the external ("its protean interventions in the life of culture, its vitality as a representation") - as adding a broader sense of awareness about the visual.

for the object is the reality.[597] Our obsession with "objecthood, and along with it a discourse of objectivity"[598] would grant limitless power to the "sketches."

Somewhere in the middle is a temporal break. The "moment of uncertainty" that occurs when we meet objects, when they really make themselves present to us because we are unsure of what to make of them, which happens "between objectivity and objectivism."[599] Objects have realities that withdraw from us; and although we may gather some information if the object is willing to share it, they are always going to hide certain aspects of themselves.[600] Yet, even if they withdraw, Garner's objects still need us; they are not autonomous. In this break, the "sketches" take on a recursive form. Garner's objects disrupt the thoughts of the viewer; they present themselves and perform for us, momentarily allowing our "focusing eye go blind" so that we might experience the "inexpressible."[601] While pointing to certain, maybe strange, qualities about themselves, they open themselves up to us to revisit the moment of their creation.[602] They allow the viewer to participate

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[597] Ibid., 161, 164. A phenomenological account of my encounter with and aesthetic response to the "sketches" emphasizes the presence of them and the ontological questions of their being; writing about them from this perspective highlights the status of the "sketches" as a presentation and brackets my specific identity (and Garner's specific identity as their maker) as a less important aspect. A writing that captures a cultural and social awareness, as a representation about their meaning and the positions of the people who interpret them and the ideologies under which they were created, approaches the objects from a materialist perspective. This chapter assumes the position that Moxey advocates, attempting to write in both modes (the aesthetic and the material/social), even though some would argue that the aesthetic and material are not two different sides of the coin. In accordance with Moxey, the meaning I give to a representation ("in order to analyze its historical cultural and social function, putting aside issues of aesthetic response in the interests of 'objectivity'") uses a phenomenological approach to bring out the power of the image as a presentation ("as an artifact with a continuing life in the present").

[598] W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 154, 155.

[599] Ibid., 157.

[600] The idea that objects withdraw has roots in Kant's 'thing-in-itself' and Heidegger's *Being and Time* but has also been explored more recently by Object Oriented Ontology and thing theory.

[601] Gottfried Boehm, "Representation, Presentation, Presence: Tracing the Homo Pictor," in *Iconic Power: Materiality and Meaning in Social Life*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Dominik Bartmanski, and Bernhard Giesen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 20-21.

[602] Bill Brown, 24. This is the ontical thingness, that which can "interrupt your concentration" about the thing. "…the ontic study of history slips into the ontological study of the historicity of Being. The slippage between the two – between the ontic and the ontological – might be said to participate in a variety of oscillations, including the overarching ambiguity that animates thing theory."

in the exact moment in which Garner created them and, thus, altered for eternity (time) the material (space) on which he drew.[603]

This is the anarchy of the "sketch," the site of liberation where time is put "on hold."[604] It happens in-between what we know to be true and where we are overstepping our bounds. By escaping our ability to enclose it, to contain it, to put an aesthetic stamp of judgement upon it, and because we are unable to escape its allure, the work takes over our imagination. It is here that we meet the "aesthetic of tension," that exists within the "'inner life' of an artwork."[605] The tension lies between a continuous push toward a future utopian goal and a resignation that the goal can never be reached, that there will never be a final or "privileged" perspective of interpretation.[606] Anarchic art indicates that "there are no next steps…it says 'I'm here,'" which "starts time all over again."[607] Interpreting Garner's "sketches" will always remain unfinished business.

On its own accord, the archive can also be seen as perpetually unfinished and only partially published wherein fragments of sentences and incomplete ideas are strung together in an incomplete compilation of *working thoughts*. One of Glaser's five-page thoughts, from 1951, in the form of a draft promotional letter of Garner's musical achievements, includes a seemingly arbitrary footnote that stands in relief to the rest of the usual biographical information and career

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[603] Rosand, 3.
[604] Josh MacPhee and Erik Reuland, *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority* (Oakland: AK Press, 2007), 5. "Because art is understood as a realm of the qualitative, where our assumptions about how the 'real' world works can be temporarily put on hold, it is the very place where exciting experiments in social reorganization can take place."
[605] Antliff, 238.
[606] Ibid., 238, 230, 235. Borrowed from Alfred M. Bonanno's idea that "anarchism is a tension, not a realisation, not a concrete attempt to bring about anarchy tomorrow morning," Antliff's aesthetic of tension "contributes to anarchism's allure" in the artwork that "refuses closure."
[607] Christopher S. Wood, "Gombrich on Raphael: The Enigma of Perfection," Lecture, Humanities Center, University of Pittsburgh, Cathedral of Learning, 10 October 2019. For Christopher Wood, a work of art (as long as it is not a picture) is always anarchic, an open construction site. Autonomous art "implies secure frontiers" and "has all it needs inside itself." The work "can't sense its own destiny. It doesn't predict its future."

milestones. The last line of the last page reads, "Erroll, incidentally, also paints and sketches."[608] But one might want to reconsider their auxiliary function in conditioning Garner's human experience once we consider how few objects we have left of his worldliness. The "sketches" in the archive signal a specific moment in time in which Garner stopped his thoughts to remember his past, when his 'idea' was materialized on paper. They also point to his work in the world, the only known durable material that was made solely by his hands. Arendt warns against the subjugation of objects as merely "incidental" to the tools that help create them.[609] The human artifice depends on the making of things as end-products; the making of tools is only the means.[610] There is an incongruence between what Glaser said (that the "sketches" are 'incidental') and what she did (archive them). From Garner's hand, the objects passed to Glaser for safekeeping; she archived the "sketches," which means she did not consider them totally incidental or only a means to an end. They were an end to her, a finished work. But, in anarchic terms, we must ask ourselves, to what end? Their current identity as "sketches" means that they are unfinished. The archive is the spillage site, a domicile, where Garner's visual art works exercise themselves to the degree that they can. The discontinuity of language coexisting within the continuity of their order heightens our awareness to Garner's objects. Recognizing the tension between the anarchic push

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[608] Erroll Garner archive, University of Pittsburgh, AIS.2015.09, Box 10, Folder 11, Biographies/Testimonials, Series II: Publicity, Subseries 3, Garner and Record Company Material. Glaser may have added the sentence to make Garner more relatable to the audience who was preparing for his arrival to their city. Garner "got the painting bug" around the late 1960s or early 1970s; however, no paintings reside in the archive.

[609] Arendt, 308. "If this relationship between man and world is no longer secure, if worldly things are no longer primarily considered in their usefulness but as more or less incidental results of the production process which brought them into being, so that the end product of the production process is no longer a true end and the produced thing is valued not for the sake of its predetermined usage but 'for its production of something else,' then, obviously, the objection can be 'raised that…its value is secondary only, and a world that contains no primary values can contain no secondary ones either.'"

[610] Ibid., 309. "This radical loss of values" occurs "as soon as [*homo faber*] defines himself not as the maker of objects and builder of the human artifice who incidentally invents tools, but considers himself primarily a toolmaker and 'particularly [a maker] of tools to make tools' who only incidentally also produces things."

for liberation and material grounding of the "sketch" allows us to get closer to discovering what they are and what they do.

5.8 Stopping Time

The difference between his two modes of creativity - music and drawing - is the audience for which they were intended. To a certain degree, Garner was obliged to respond to questions through interviews on radio, television, and in trade publications relating to his music. His "sketches," on the other hand, were part of his private life that kept his real character mysterious to the public. They communicate what Garner had thought privately but did not say publicly. Their lines guide a sort of psychological exchange that happens between him and the viewer. Witnessed in them is the co-presence of image and text. In Figure 1, his music notation dances around words that try to contain (but can never fully capture) the meaning of the images. Figure 2 has an unstable border, witnessed in the loosely drawn false frame that wraps around Garner's abstract pseudo-script. His salutation in Figure 3 helps establish the relationship between the bodiless figure and the cryptic message.

On one hand, Garner's "sketches" possess an autonomy of their own. They do not depend on anyone or anything to fulfill some vow made by Garner, as it does not appear that he was invested in his "sketches" being preserved. The paper canvases serve as autonomous bases to his markings in pencil, crayon, and pen from which we can retrace his movements. They each stand alone in the sense that none of them belong to a series of other "sketches" from which they derive their meaning. Conversely, like all anarchic art, they are not autonomous. They depend on the language of the viewer to find their meaning while relying on the archive to bring them order and

keep them safe. They are unsettled. They question their own identity as "sketches." They withdraw from us while forcing us to converse with them and ask why they reveal his lines, but not his character. Why do they allude to his thoughts but cover them with his work? They present themselves as aesthetically open to comment but represent themselves as inactive and repressed.

In addition, the "sketches" stop time on two fronts. As works of Garner's agency and invention, they indicate the moment that he ceased his thoughts and looked back on the past.[611] Highlighting their origins, they break the continuity of the linear timescale into before and after their creation. Each work is a unique performance that represents a break in time, delineating everything that happened before Garner generated the work and everything that has happened since it was made. In their "resistance to duplication" and with the impossibility of replicating them by mechanical means, they "dominate time."[612] They belong neither to the side of time that expands into the past nor to the side that reaches into the future. On another front, they arrest the temporal experience of the viewer. We feel concern for them and marvel at the fact that they exist at all. By allowing these drawings to occupy space within our imagination, the beholder can revisit the arrested event when Garner manifested them. We ponder the possibility of sensing Garner's presence. Following the trace of his hands, we wonder what he might have been remembering in those moments. We question their status as "Sketches by Garner" and consider what liberation means to them. Finally, we contemplate what would happen to their worth if there was a possibility that we could change their condition, the relationship they have with the world.[613]

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[611] Ibid., 170.
[612] Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 15.
[613] Arendt, 164. "This intrinsic worth of a thing can be changed only through the change of the thing itself," not in relation to some other thing.

6.0 Conclusion

Can we ever know the *real* Erroll Garner? The real Erroll Garner would consist of more than any physical attributes that we might ascribe to him - more than a detailed account of his moment-by-moment whereabouts, more than his bodily composition, more than transcriptions of every piece he ever played, and more than his social interactions. And yet, the real Erroll Garner would also be somewhat less than the politics, social movements, and global shifts that he lived through, less than the emotional consequences of all the people whose lives he touched, and less than the tangible reverberations that he set into motion. The real Erroll Garner exists somewhere in the middle of the micro-level events that occurred in his day-to-day life and the macro-level world that engulfed him. But where, exactly? This dissertation is an attempt to locate Garner in the objects attributed to or shaped by him.

Chapters 2-5 are each devoted to a different object: his hometown of Pittsburgh, his song titles, his musical introductions, and his visual art "sketches." The objects are paired with one of four activities of the human condition expounded by Hannah Arendt in The Human Condition, which are, respectively, speech/action, work, labor, and thought. Another driving thread of this dissertation is that each of the objects inform a unique temporal experience. So, in addition to representing the activities of his human condition, Garner's objects are analyzed by their ability to manipulate our perception of time - by layering, doubling, suspending, or stopping it. The driving questions are: what is the object, what does it do, and how does our interaction with it affect our perception of time?

Why Arendt? I wanted to try understanding Garner through objects that condition the human experience - his, ours, Pittsburghers, and everyone that is moved by his objects in some

way. I share Arendt's concern about how we have been conditioned to search beyond the world and beyond the human for answers. She saw the risk in technological advances having to do with our ability to think and speak about the science behind them.[614] Arendt helped me locate Garner in the activities that we all share - action/speech, work, labor, thought - and that we all have the capacity to understand from our own perspectives. The 'science' or condensed 'truths' about Garner (e.g. he is a beloved Pittsburgh cultural figure, he composed over 200 songs including "Misty," he played introductions that captivated the listener, and he created visual art works which are held in the archive) did not help me express who he was/is on a deeper level. Arendt gave me the tools to unpack the 'science' behind Garner.

Contemporary materials scientist, Ainissa Ramirez, expresses an urgency to smooth relations between the sciences and humanities – "our relationship with information is under attack" – a warning she addresses in The Alchemy of Us.[615] Ramirez credits Black American novelist Toni Morrison for inspiring her to write the book, as Ramirez often found that her "reflection in textbooks," her "experience as a black woman scientist[,]… was hidden, missing, overshadowed, or cast in a poor light."[616] Technologies, in the forms of cellphones, the internet, and the like, have become extensions of our human minds, allowing us to forgo absorption of worldly details that, twenty years ago, we were made to remember. Although this sort of extension has happened in human history on a smaller scale - in the "accessible, trustworthy, and available" forms such as carvings, books, and grocery lists - it has never been as convenient as it is now.[617] Today's

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[614] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 3. "The trouble concerns the fact that the 'truths' of the modern scientific world view, though they can be demonstrated in mathematical formulas and proved technologically, will no longer lend themselves to normal expression in speech and thought."
[615] Ainissa Ramirez, "Ainissa Ramirez: The Alchemy of Us," posted by GBH Forum Network, 15 May 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eVRj3OQ1yU. Accessed 30 March 2024.
[616] Anissa Ramirez, *The Alchemy of Us: How Humans and Matter Transformed One Another* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020), 219.
[617] Ibid., 213.

technology allows us to forgo absorption, and instead, conditions humans to seek short-term knowledge or to put-off retaining information.[618] Creation necessitates that "we actually absorb the world, we let it simmer, and then we do something with it."[619] The four objects of this study provoked my questions regarding how Garner absorbed the world.

Garner was born in the East Liberty neighborhood of Pittsburgh and is buried not far away in the Homewood cemetery. The methodology of Chapter 2 relies on the oral histories of the elders in the Pittsburgh jazz community who knew him and/or lived through the object during the decades that he was alive. Space takes a backseat, and memories take the helm of constructing a conception of Pittsburgh in time. The theory and practices of Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) promotes the idea of a layered present that can stretch, change speed, or flow in multiple directions. Through strategies such as event-building, retrocurrences, and reverse time-binding, a BQF Creative can wield time to work in one's favor; the order of time can shift based on who is speaking or directing the music. In speech and action, the elders recall how they have manipulated time to work for them in music and within the societal structure of the object. Although their voices cannot fully substitute for Garner's own experience of Pittsburgh, their memories illuminate the polyrhythm from which to approach the object, wherein many overlapping stories that move in various directions and at multiple speeds can shape the history of the object in time. It is not a complete story, but it is community-driven and comes directly from the remaining sources of the music in Pittsburgh. As I felt time's passing during this project, I could not help but wonder who later scholars will talk to when they want to know about Pittsburgh or Garner's relationship to it. Traditional African philosophy proposes that when the last person who speaks Garner's name dies,

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[618] Ainissa Ramirez, video posted by GBH Forum Network.
[619] Ibid.

only then does Garner die. So long as we speak Garner's name he is not dead, he is part of the "living-dead."[620] And as long as someone keeps Garner's name alive, he has "personal immortality," which implies that he is still speaking through those who speak about him.[621] Analyzing Pittsburgh in these terms gave me a chance to process Garner in the political realm, that is, in the current action and speech in which our group, led by the elders, comes together in musical practice to speak about their memories of him and the object, Pittsburgh.

Chapter 3 encourages us to deemphasize language, specifically the titles given to Garner's compositions. In fact, Garner had no need for titles - they played no part in his internal referencing of his pieces and there is evidence to suggest that he let others name them. I start the chapter by asking what the image of Garner's music is in hopes of finding some way to materialize his music into an object created by his fabrication, that is, his work. But since he never referenced a score and the titles do not practically or aesthetically supplement the music for him, there is no 'true' way to capture what he played in written or linguistic form. This sort of "aesthetic play" by Garner is what Henry Louis Gates, Jr. observed in Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972). With Garner, we are always waiting for the absence to be made present, for the revelation of a text, a clue that Garner could be understood in language. But, as the characters in Reed's book come to realize, the text never arrives. The methodology of the chapter are his compositions, specifically the ones that have two or more titles attached to them. If we were to plot each title on a linear timescale and suture together the ones with the same underlying image (sound), it would yield the effect of doubling time with each fold. But we realize that, with Garner and Reed, thinking 'doubly' will not be enough - we must think indeterminately. Put another way, there are infinite ways to talk or

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[620] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Portsmouth: Heinemanm, 1990), 25. "While the departed person is remembered by name, he is not really dead: he is alive, and such a person I would call the living-dead."
[621] Ibid.

write about Garner's music. This chapter initially assumed that his titles could stand-in for his work, as fabricated objects that ground him in the world. However, it ends with the disappointing possibility that because there is no connection between Garner (his compositions) and the object (titles), he has left us with nothing tangible by which to remember him. Scott Deveaux tries to mitigate our loss in the sense that it is the *recordings* that become 'the work' after a jazz artist has died; while the artist is still living, recordings are mere "advertisements."[622] And while I agree that we should celebrate musicians for what they *do* while they are alive and refer to recordings as their 'work' only after they have gone, we are still left empty-handed as far as the *work* (in the Arendtian, fabricated by the work of his hands, sense) Garner did while he was alive.

"Objects can and do resist," according to Fred Moten.[623] Chapter 4 is an exploration of how Garner's object of his labor, his musical introductions, resisted notions of commercialization, modernity, and authority. While Moten's extension of the "aesthetics of the black radical tradition" follows the commodity's path against Marx's theory, I find Garner's object produced by labor in-line with Arendt's interpretation of labor as a "co-operation," which is contrary to Marx's theory of the division of labor.[624] Considering Garner's intros as use objects in the labor process under Arendt assumes a few conditions: they are a means to an end, not ends in themselves; they are part of the labor process which is repetitive by nature; and they are valued by their character and quality, not by their surplus. Using Moten's notion of transference, I suggest that there is a something ("a palpable hit or touch") detectable in his intros that speaks to how Garner was able to make his

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[622] Scott Deveaux, "This Is What I Do," in *Art from Start to Finish: Jazz, Painting, Writing, and Other Improvisations*, edited by Howard S. Becker, Robert R. Faulkner, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 124.
[623] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1.
[624] Arendt, 123. "Division of labor is based on the fact that two men can put their labor power together and 'behave toward each other as though they were one.' This one-ness is the exact opposite of co-operation, it indicates the unity of the species with regard to which every single member is the same and exchangeable."

music resist being consumed and quickly forgotten.[625] Alexander Weheliye's concept of "Afro-sonic modernity," a notion that invites us to think about how Black cultural production is situated against and within what has been historically been considered 'modern,' permits the exploration of the conjuring property of Garner's intros to shine through the tension between the ephemerality of the sound and the technology of his body and the piano. Each intro was a unique happening within a performance and throughout his entire laboring existence on earth. Its singularity as a product, evidenced in the way each intro held the attention of the listeners, cannot be reduced to a value in terms of a surplus. The value in Garner's labor can be evaluated based on the character of his sonic inceptions. Garner makes listening to an intro a 'fun' and 'happy' experience because he sets it up as an inclusive process, a game of prediction followed by surprise and/or confirmation. In this sense, its aesthetic goes against what 'society' might deem enjoyable as each listener comes from their own background of musical experience. Fumi Okiji's critique of Adorno's assessment of jazz, in which he thought that the individual musician was incapable of catering to its own desires because they were confined to acting in accordance with what the ensemble deemed acceptable, provides the basis for assessing Garner's labor process as wholly integrative of the group (i.e. listeners). While Okiji considers the African American blues form as a more appropriate way to showcase how jazz is not about succumbing to an authoritative voice, I revert to the verse-chorus form to express what Okiji sees as inherently both effective and difficult for jazz musicians to accomplish: "to retell (often) established stories in one's deviance and with sensitivity to that of others."[626] Garner's intros are a testament to his uncanny ability to 'tell his story' over and over again in new ways, thereby keeping the listener engaged and attentive. Neither the verse (intro)

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[625] Moten, 18.
[626] Fumi Okiji, *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 73.

nor the chorus (theme) was the authority of his laboring process, and neither he nor the audience could take full responsibility for its production. The intro, like Arendt's vision of the products of labor, had a shelf life that was not meant to be long. They sustained Garner and the listener, collectively, and proved to be an integral component of what kept listeners coming back for more.

Chapter 5 re-emphasizes language and delves into the archive where one can hold the work of Garner, that is, objects made by his hands. Interpreting the three "sketches" as the fusion of Garner's thoughts with his work satisfies the apparent absence of Garner in his titles (Chapter 3) that were initially tapped to represent his work activity. Unlike the 'incidental' musical introductions that were issued in recorded documents (Chapter 4), these products of his work are not incidental.[627] He meant for these 'ideas' to be made permanent in a worldly form. In this sense, the "sketches" hold a particular sense of worth in their being factured by Garner; yet they also question that worth when we consider that they were probably not originally intended to become objects of study. Anarchic thinking, which would entail a constant justification for the order under which the "sketches" are maintained, addresses this contradiction. On the one hand, the archive keeps them in a state of repose. This is reasonable considering they are the only publicly held documents made solely by Garner that endure without him, which makes them "irreplaceable."[628] Keeping them safe means that an audience (of mostly scholars) can retrace his movements that materialized on paper or participate in the negotiating process of the "sketches" as they exercise themselves under their current provision. On the other hand, Garner's original intent for them is unknown. The people who were privy to other art works by Garner while he was alive recall that he did not concern himself with where they ended up. Were they useful to him? If so, how are they

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[627] Arendt, 88, 308-309. Labor only produces objects "incidentally." Objects produced by work are not incidental.
[628] Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 8. A relic is a "kind of object who historicity, its link to a point in time, is the entire basis of its value…The relic is irreplaceable."

currently upholding their usefulness? Anarchy is about human action; it is not enough to think about anarchist ideas.[629] The reason people subscribe to anarchic thought at all is because humans inherently seek to imagine how the "soul of this world" could be better rather than accept the "power edifice[s]" under which we live.[630] Could his "sketches" be exercised for a better use? Maybe they could spark interest for a community art program, a way to democratize his art and help spread the notion that Nicholls credited to bell hooks, that "anyone can be a maker of art."[631] If, instead, they are not meant to be used, in which case, they should be upheld as art works, then we need to establish them as such. To display each one for the purpose of "reflect[ing] the cult of the sanctified artist and the veneration of his relics," would be excessive.[632] But in their current provision, they are not elevated among any of the other archival documents. And maybe that is the point. As sites of anarchy, the "sketches" do not want to be the authority. They do not want to be held higher than the mundane legal documents or the pages and pages of repetitive statements about the highlights of Garner's career. However, they have made themselves known and demand our attention. Anarchism does not expect things to change overnight.[633] I suppose that gives us time to, first, figure out what to call them.

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[629] Mohammed A. Bamyeh, *Anarchy as Order: The History and Future of Civic Humanity* (New York: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), 5.
[630] Bamyeh, 4, 5, 12. "These exercises, then, are encapsulated in an ever-expanding repertoire of stories and parables - *not* unified theories - that catalogue the vast range of motion of humanity." By and large, anarchy expresses a way of living. In particular, the "libertarian or individualist" strain of anarchism speaks to how one lives their day-to-day life.
[631] Tracey Nicholls, "What's Love Got to Do with It?: Creating Art, Creating Community, Creating a Better World," in *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics*, edited by Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, and Will Straw (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 216.
[632] Larry Gross, "The Fragment Itself," in *Art From Start To Finish: Jazz, Painting, Writing, and Other Improvisations*, edited by Howard S. Becker, Robert R. Faulkner, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 155.
[633] Allan Antliff, "Aesthetics of Tension," in *The Anarchist Imagination: Anarchism Encounters the Humanities and Social Sciences*, edited by Carl Levy and Saul Newman (New York: Routledge, 2019), 238, 230. Borrowed from Alfred Bonanno's idea that "anarchism is a tension, not a realisation, not a concrete attempt to bring about anarchy tomorrow morning," Antliff's aesthetic of tension "contributes to anarchism's allure" in the artwork that "refuses closure."

I should close by suggesting ways to approach each object in time because, as has been my argument, attuning ourselves to their temporal structure (polyrhythm, double-time, free-time, and stop-time) can reveal Garner's presence to us. Pittsburgh (Chapter 2) is the only object considered herein that does not produce time on its own. It requires the constant influx of action and speech to provide the temporal fabric, which Black Quantum Futurism helps us understand is polyrhythmic and "layered in the present."[634] It is also the only object without specific parameters. (Song titles, musical introductions, and art works are all relatively contained objects. We can understand when Garner's musical introduction begins and when it ends, for example, but we cannot tell where Pittsburgh, in the context of jazz, begins and ends or who is considered inside/outside of the object.) Pittsburgh unveils Garner through the multi-temporal lens of the memories about him. Garner's titles (Chapter 3) require us to think doubly about the need for language, that the image needs but can never be fully satisfied by language. There is a time (a temporal dimension, perhaps) in which language is necessary and a dimension in which language cannot help us. This second occasion, which requires us to step away from language's tight grip, is where thinking about his titles as metonymies is useful. Unlike metaphor that highlights continuity and represents the past, metonymy unveils the discontinuity that the present has with the past. Garner reveals himself in the present by denoting what they stand for, which is his past absence. Regarding the way we could listen to his introductions (Chapter 4), I suggest that we free ourselves from time's constant demand on us. We are consumers of his music by the very nature of their being produced by labor, a collective labor. But that does not mean that we should consume them quickly so that we can 'get on with our busy lives.' They are meant to hold us in a suspended

[634] Rasheedah Phillips, "Conversations / Rewriting the Future: Science Fiction and Contemporary Art," *Art Basel*, 24 September 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCC5kO18YoQ. Accessed 9 February 2024.

temporal experience, which is going to be different for every listener. It is within that suspension that we can hear the truth about Garner. Finally, in viewing his "sketches," I suggest that we stop thinking and reflect on the past, just as Garner did in the moment he created them. We can retrace his movements and consider that he might not have had an intended purpose for them beyond that moment. But we can also stop to marvel at the fact that these objects exist at all. Stop-time is about letting the individual shine forth in the presence of others. Through the "sketches," Garner shines forth and signals to us his enduring presence.

Appendix Garner's "Sketches"

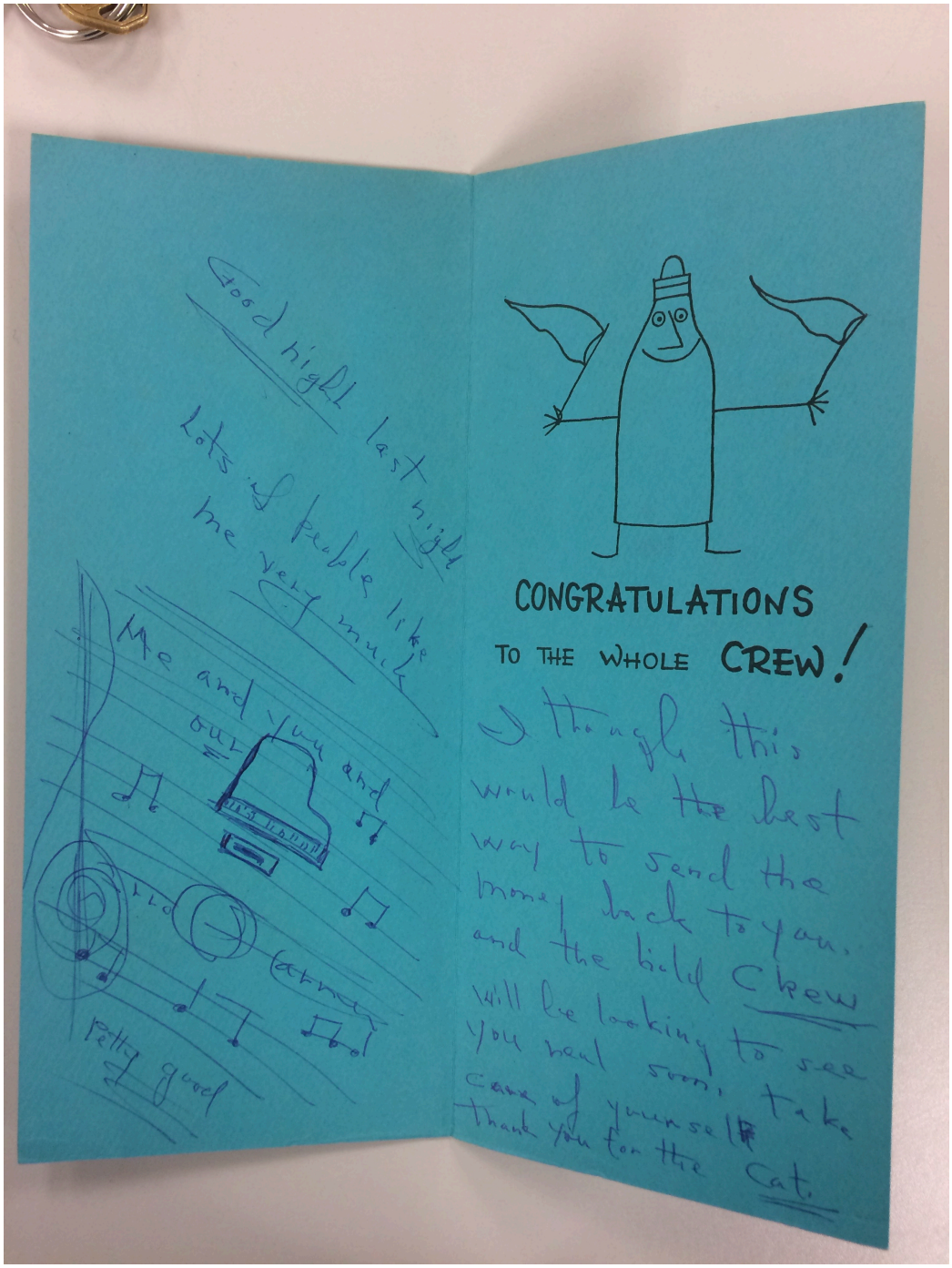

Figure 1

Figure 2

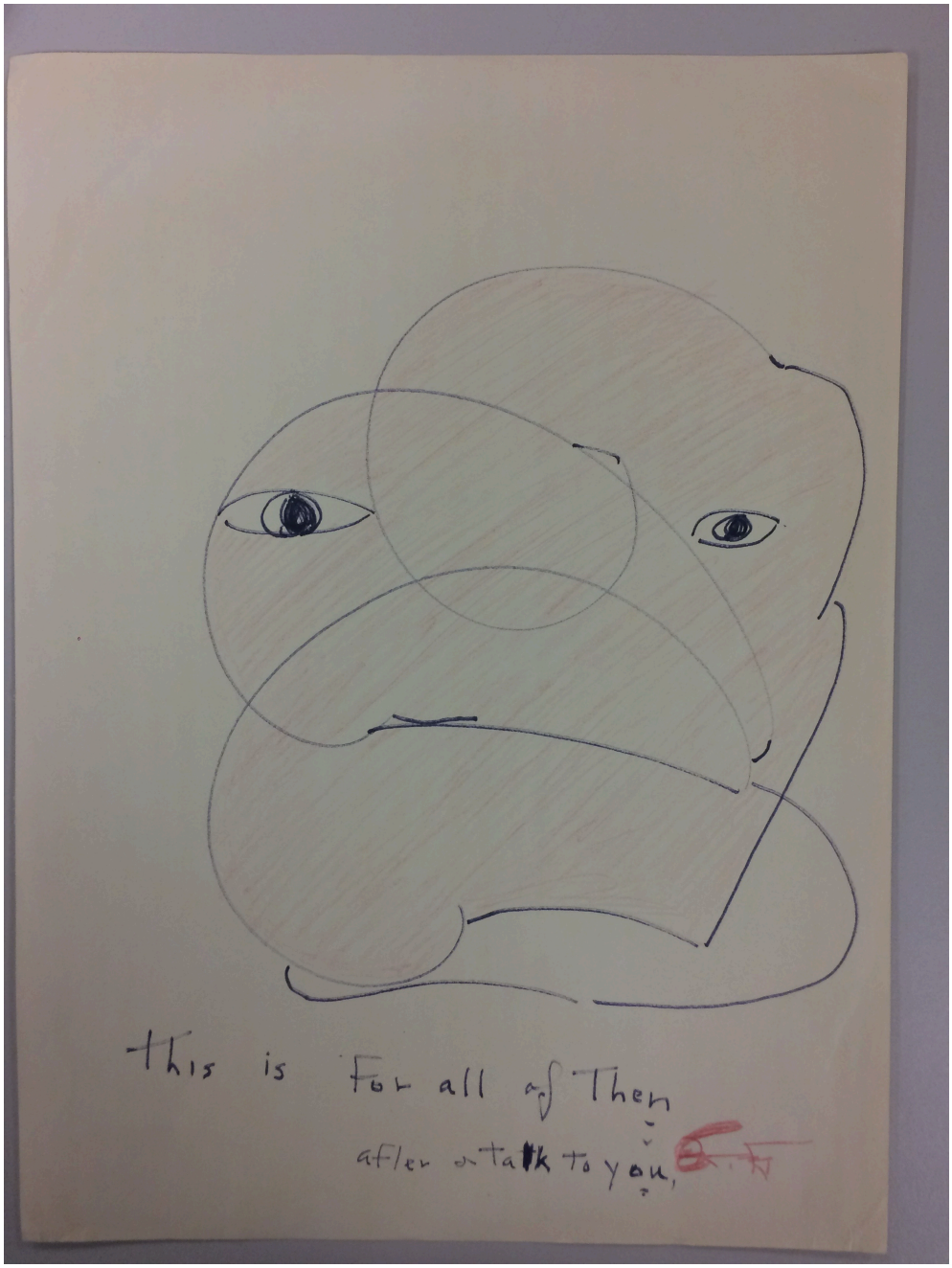

Figure 3

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