

This double process of the rupture of codes (by internal and external noise) has destroyed, network by network, the socializing function of music. Music has not remained an “archipelago of the human” in the ocean of artifice that commercial society has become. The sound object itself has become artifice, independent of the listener and composer, represented, then repeated. Music used to cadence birth, labor, life, and death; it used to organize the social order. Today, it is too often nothing more than the consumption of past culture or a structure of universal mathematical invariants, a reflection of the general crisis of meaning. Communication has disappeared. We have gone from the rich priest’s clothing of the musician in ritual to the somber uniform of the orchestra musician and the tawdry costume of the star, from the ever-recomposed work to the rapidly obsolescent object.

The ritual status of music has been modified by the network it subtends. It has become a simulacrum of the solitary spectacle of the sacrifice. The spectator has become an accomplice to individualized murder. Violence is no longer limited to the battlefield or the concert hall, but pervades all of society. The repetition of violence is no longer a promise of reconciliation. Once it has suppressed the mechanism of the collectively performed sacrifice, music does not “break the symmetry of reprisal . . . halt [this] recurrence by introducing something different. . . . Modern man has long lost the fear of reciprocal violence.”³⁹

After the process of identical repetition has extended to the whole of production, the end of differences unbridles violence and shatters all codes. Composition can then emerge. Composition, nourished on the death of codes.

Thus, there exist in the nature of codes mechanisms that entail their rupture and the emergence of new networks. But this destruction of codes is reinforced by the dynamic of the link between music and money. Each code or network entertains specific relations with money. Money creates, reinforces, and destroys certain of its structures.

Music and Money

When money first appeared, music was inscribed in usage; afterwards, the commodity entraps, produces, exchanges, circulates, and censors it. *Music is then no longer an affirmation of existence, it becomes valorized.* Its usage did not prevent its entering into exchange: since the time that societies’ regulatory codes, prohibitions, and sacrificial rituals broke down, music has been unmoored, like a language whose speakers have forgotten the meaning of its words but not its syntax. However, no society can survive without order, in other words, the stable maintenance of differences, control over violence, and the channelization of unproductive expenditures. So either something has taken the place of music, despite its new status, or it has remained a tool of regulatory power, a fundamental form of the code of power functioning through new channels.

Music has become a commodity, a means of producing money. It is sold and consumed. It is analyzed: What market does it have? How much profit does it generate? What business strategy is best for it? The music industry, with all of its derivatives (publishing, entertainment, records, musical instruments, record players, etc.), is a major element in and precursor of the economy of leisure and the economy of signs.

At what stage in the production of a musical work is money produced? Does that stage vary according to the network and can the rupture of networks be explained by it? This economic problem is a complex one, because a musical work is an abstract form produced in several steps, which are structured differently depending on the the network within which the work is inscribed:

First, the composer produces a program, a mold, an abstract algorithm. The score he writes is an order described for an operator-interpreter.

Then, the interpreter creates an order in sound space with his instrument, which is a score-translating machine, a machine to decipher the coded thought of the composer. The form of the music is always influenced by the transmitter and the medium.

Finally, the object is produced, sold, consumed, destroyed, worn out. This involves a whole gamut of commodity production, from the score to the record. We will see that demand begins to require labor and has to be socially produced.

This production process treats commodities differently according to the network within which it takes place. The mode of production of exchange-value, the mode of accumulation of commodity-value, and the disequilibriums that lead to the rupture of the network are different for each one.

Every economic theory situates the production of money differently according to the form of its conceptualization.

This question, however, is of capital importance: the site of the creation of money in music explains the mode of growth, the power relations between the various actors, and the crisis affecting the entire network.

According to classical economics, a musical production creates wealth if it increases the real wages of the person who profits from it and makes him more efficient. In this sense, a singer creates monetary wealth if he increases the efficiency of his listeners, or if his performances lead to improved record sales. How productive he is is thus independent of his economic status. Similarly, a composer is considered productive if his work is marketed, regardless of his mode of remuneration.

Marxist political economy, on the other hand, locates the production of money solely in the manufacture of a material object by wage earners; as a result, a strange status is assigned to the composer in the process of the creation of commercial wealth.

In Marxist political economy, the question "How does music create wealth?" becomes "What kind of musical labor produces surplus-value?" This amounts

to trying to determine what “productive” labor in music is, in other words, what kind of labor leads to the creation of value and the accumulation of capital.

Briefly, labor that contributes to the accumulation of capital, which creates surplus-value, is said to be *productive*, and labor is *unproductive* if it is only of interest to the purchaser for the use-value of its product. In the capitalist mode of production, only a wage earner who creates capital can be a producer. Therefore, by definition, and in contradistinction to classical economics, neither an unsalaried worker (as in the case of composers who are paid in the form of royalties), nor even a salaried worker who only implicitly creates capital by way of the consumption his activity presupposes or the inducement to produce he provides, can be considered productive. They create wealth in the capitalist mode of production while remaining outside it. Marx himself denied the productive nature of these two kinds of labor in the following words:

[One cannot] present the labor of the pianist as indirectly productive, either because it stimulates the material production of pianos, for example, or because it gives the worker who hears the piano recital more spirit and vitality. Only the labor of someone who creates capital is productive, so any other labor, however useful or harmful it may be, is not productive from the point of view of capitalization; it is therefore unproductive. The producer of tobacco is productive, even though the consumption of tobacco is unproductive.⁴⁰

Even in the case of a musician, value is produced if and only if he is a wage earner. Therefore, an activity that induces consumption or production does not in itself produce wealth. Similarly, handicrafts workers are never productive, because, Marx writes,

They confront me as sellers of commodities, not as sellers of labor, and this relation therefore has nothing to do with the exchange of capital for labor; therefore also it has nothing to do with the distinction between *productive and unproductive labor*, which depends entirely on whether the labor is exchanged for money as money or money as capital. They therefore belong neither to the category of *productive* nor of *unproductive laborers*, although they are producers of commodities. But this production does not fall under the capitalist mode of production.⁴¹

Only the economic aspect of the distinction is significant: if the labor-power on the market is exchanged for capital, the labor creates value; if it is exchanged for money (revenue), the labor does not create value. Thus a musician who is paid a wage by someone who employs him for his personal pleasure is not a productive worker. His labor is exchanged for a wage or paid in kind: it is a simple exchange of two use-values. But if, for example, he plays a concert as the employee of someone in the entertainment business, he produces capital and creates

wealth. In both cases, the composer of the score is unproductive. This distinction is uncharacteristic of capitalism.

Money Produced Outside Music: The Molder

The reader will have gleaned from the preceding classification discussion that the basic distinction to be made in understanding the production of money by music has to do not with the legal status of the musicians, but with the production network: the network of music is by no means exhausted by a definition of music's mode of distribution. The network also determines its mode of production and, beyond that, the mode of production of society as a whole. Thus we will see that the *economic laws of representation bear no relation to the laws of repetition* that are currently taking hold.

Let us first see how the economy of music functions in each economic network and where the creation of money takes place.

Music's mode of insertion into economic activity is different in each network. And this difference plays a major role in the transition from one network to another.

In the sacrificial network, music does not create wealth. The distinction between the productive and the unproductive is not even relevant to the shaman, nor to the jongleur later on. The minstrel, for his part, was unproductive, as has been most of the work of musicians like Wagner and Boulez up to the present day.

The accumulation of wealth through music appears only with representation, which both creates value and is the mode of functioning of the decline of the religious. In this network, value is created and accumulated outside the control of the composing musician. Marx himself provides a good analysis of the site of the creation of value in this network:

A singer who sings like a bird is an unproductive worker. When she sells her song, she is a wage earner or merchant. But the same singer, employed by someone else to give concerts and bring in money, is a productive worker because she directly produces capital.⁴²

Therefore, the productive workers who create money are the performers, and the people who produce the instruments and the scores. But when the composer receives royalties on a work of his that is sold and represented, he remains curiously estranged from the wealth associated with him, since as an independent craftsman he is outside the capitalist mode of production. Good sense, however, requires that we recognize that he indirectly participates in the production of wealth in at least two ways: first, when productive workers (workers in music publishing) manufacture, using this stockpile of information and capital (in other words, using their past labor, another's past labor that has been appropriated by the entrepreneur, and their present labor), a commercial object (the score)

whose sale to a musician (professional or amateur) realizes surplus-value; second, when the wage-earning musician, having acquired the score, represents the work.⁴³

Nevertheless, the labor of the composer is not in itself productive labor, labor that is productive of commercial wealth. He is thus outside capitalism, at the origin of its expansion, except when even he is a wage earner selling his labor to capitalists (as is sometimes the case with film musicians). Generally remunerated with a percentage of the surplus-value obtained from the sale of the commercial object (the score) and its use (the performance), he is reproduced in every copy of the score and in each performance, by virtue of the royalty laws. His remuneration is therefore a kind of *rent*. A strange situation: a category of workers has thus succeeded in preserving ownership of their labor, in avoiding the position of wage earner, in being remunerated as a rentier who dips into the surplus-value produced by wage earners who valorize their labor in the commodity cycle. As the creator of the program that all of the capitalist production plugs into, he belongs to a more general category of people, whom I shall call *molders*. Entertainment entrepreneurs are capitalists; workers in publishing and performers are productive workers. Composers are rentiers. This situation is not without significance. It is even essential in understanding both the uniqueness of music and its prophetic nature in economic imitations.

If we go by the preceding analysis, a person whose creation originates an extensive process of material production is remunerated as a rentier: his income is independent of the quantity of labor he provides. Instead, it depends on the quantity of demand for that labor. He produces the mold from which an industry is built.

The musician is not an isolated case. There exist in the economy a considerable number of program producers, *molders*. In representation (handicrafts or archaic capitalism) each object is unique, and the mold is only used once. By contrast, in the economy of repetition a mold is used a great many times. If the remuneration of the molder is proportional to the number of sales, and not to the duration of his labor, then he can collect a rent and reduce the capitalist's profit. That is why it is in the interests of the capitalist process to incorporate molders as wage earners. Almost all of them have been integrated into large-scale research concerns; they have lost ownership of their creations and receive no income from their use by others. In this connection, the study of music is essential: if the molders of industry can in the future win the same rights as musical composers, and if the monopoly on the ownership of innovations can be replaced by remuneration based on their use by others, then it will be possible for the results of the economy of music to be generalized. These results, as we shall see, are quite clear: *the specific remuneration of the composer has largely blocked the control of music by capital*; it has protected creativity and even today allows the relations of power between musicians and financiers to be reversed.

This becomes the essential question: is music an exception, or is it the herald of the reappropriation by all creators of their valorized labor? The spoils is capital. The outcome is uncertain.

We can now refine the analysis, distinguishing more precisely between the activities of representation and those of repetition. This distinction is not the same as the traditional distinction between industry and service, and it is far more important. Stated very simply, representation in the system of commerce is that which arises from a singular act; repetition is that which is mass-produced. Thus, a concert is representation, but also a meal à la carte in a restaurant; a phonograph record or a can of food is repetition. Other examples of representation are a custom-made piece of furniture or a tailored dress; and of repetition, ready-made clothing and mass-produced furniture. One provides a use-value tied to the human quality of the production; the other allows for stockpiling, easy accessibility, and repetition. In representation, a work is generally heard only once—it is a unique moment; in repetition, potential hearings are stockpiled.

Each of these modes of organization correspond to a very different logic, which we will study in detail in subsequent chapters. They are preceded by the sacrificial, noncommercial economy and are succeeded by the economy of composition.

These four kinds of modes of production interpenetrate in time and space, but it still seems possible to discern a certain economic logic of succession: *In music, as in the rest of the economy, the logic of the succession of musical codes parallels the logic of the creation of value.*

Representation emerged with capitalism, in opposition to the feudal world. It directed all new surplus-value toward the entertainment entrepreneur and the music publisher—few musicians made fortunes, and the royal courts lost their power. However, it was practically impossible to increase productivity. As the economy as a whole developed, the profit rate necessarily fell in this sector, due to increases in the cost of reproducing the labor force, which is determined on an economy-wide basis, and in the remuneration of authors of music.⁴⁴

Capitalism then began to lose interest in the economy of representation. In addition, pricing problems arose. With radio and television, representation became available for free; it became impossible to charge for it as such. It is now hardly a capitalist activity anymore, except to the extent that it is used in record promotion.

Productive labor was able to concentrate its efforts in records, a new source of accumulation and a much broader one, and to produce a significant amount of value. At the same time, the new technology prolonged the process of the transformation of the author's labor into use-value. For this new process of production destroyed the conditions of earlier usage and required that a growing portion of surplus-value be used in the process of production itself—to pay the

author's rent and to give meaning to the object being sold, to make the consumer believe that there was use-value in it, to promote demand. *In other words, in repetition a significant portion of the surplus-value created in the production of supply must be spent to create demand; and repetition produces less and less use-value.*

The economy of repetition can survive only if it is discovered each time how to recreate a use-value for the objects produced. Otherwise, meaning degenerates, like a mold worn out from overuse. Labor, then, serves to produce demand, and the essence of production becomes reproduction and the remuneration of rents. This creation of meaning is carried out by the industrial apparatus itself, and by the State apparatus: a portion of the collective machinery fulfills the function of producing demand, and, more radically, of producing the consumer. Accordingly, the extramarket production of demand becomes one of the market's conditions of existence. The need to spend surplus-value on circulation in order to preserve use-value can be interpreted as an inevitable loss of order inherent to any process of replication using a mold. We will see that the increasing difficulty of producing demand makes the production of supply more and more difficult. Thus repetition, like representation before it, is shattered by a crisis of usage and a decline in the creation of value.

In this crush of networks, the capitalist apparatus functions—more than as a machine for the accumulation of capital—as a machine of destruction reaching down to its own foundations, a machine to reroute the use of profit toward unproductive functions, to spend surplus-value on the payment of rents, to search out a meaning for its products. We have here a logic of the mutation of value-producing networks that is compatible with the logic of the movement of networks toward abstraction and the liquidation of all codes.

Capitalism thus realizes Marx's predictions so completely as to reduce the scope of Marxist analysis; it destroys its concepts, crushing them in capitalism's internal dynamic.

For this analysis also applies outside the framework of music. In the most modern sectors of our societies, exchange has destroyed usage, and surplus-value is spent to remunerate the producers of molds and to create a semblance of use-value for the objects that are mass-produced.

The process of this mutation in the location of value production, which we will describe in more detail in the three following chapters, makes music a herald of things to come. For after developing in music, it spreads throughout the entire economy, provoking a crisis the seriousness of which depends on the status of the mold and the efficiency of value creation.

The Advent of Simultaneity

Can it then be said that the way music makes money determines the evolution of the aesthetic code? That music depends on the economic status of musicians?