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Forsake Your Moneymaker: Defining and Defending the True Value of Music

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Forsake Your Moneymaker:
Defining and Defending the True Value of Music

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Introduction

The Value of Music

What does it mean to say that music has or lacks Value? Music hardly even presents itself to you. It happens in passing, a fleeting sensation inspired by invisible waves. You don't hold it; it is merely heard and felt. One might represent a song with an MP3, CD, or concert ticket, but the music itself lacks the physical, visible presence of a painting or sculpture. It is an artform that relies on reproduction and representation to be seen, in the form of sheet music or as a recorded product that is distributed using disks and bits. Does this lack of visual reference, however, actually enforce the notion that it lacks Value? The obvious answer is a resounding "no!" Some people value nothing higher than music. I spend most of my time thinking, reading, and writing about music. Primarily, I am a music-maker, a songwriter and performer, and started this creative process before I could even play an instrument, employing the help of friends to lay down the instrumentals I needed. Apart from the music I make, I make music happen. I host concerts and run a venue at Bard, curating line-ups and publicizing events. I help bands afford gas and food on tour and give students something to do together. Furthermore, I am a consumer of music, listening to a favorite album, looking for new bands, styles, and scenes. All of this is a testament to the enjoyment music provides for me and indicates that music-making and listening contain something worthwhile. What is this something? How then might I qualify or quantify this worthwhile-ness? In short, how can we define the Value of music?

Let us be clear, since I started writing this project I have stolen hundreds of hours of music. I download music all the time without even thinking about it, instinctive impulse driving me to find the leak of a record regardless of whether I think that I will like it or not. I consume

without remorse and generally won't buy an album unless I have heard it first. I used to get excited when I scraped together twenty dollars to get a new CD. I would tuck myself away, listening on my Discman intently, trying to get my moneys worth. Yet, were those albums any more valuable to me because I had paid for them? In retrospect, I enjoyed many of the albums I bought back then because I would be ashamed to hate something I had saved up to buy. Now that any album is available at my fingertips for free, however, there is a greater opportunity to be critical. There is still excitement as I download the album, but it doesn't force me to enjoy it. It is presented without economic incentives or implications. Thus, one can begin to see how those who might devalue music, in an economic sense, also become those able to freely value it for themselves as an object of contemplative pleasure.

Therefore, this project is aimed at determining how I can live the contradiction of valuing music so highly, while unabashedly treating it as a valueless commodity. This is not meant to justify my rampant theft of music, but instead offer a metaphysical definition of Value that reinvigorates that which is already valueless in an economic sense. There is little consideration as to whether an audio-rip of a song uploaded to Youtube is morally reprehensible, let alone the backwards business models of services like iTunes and Spotify. The artist is rarely receiving substantial financial compensation in any of these situations, so how can the economic value of music ever be thought of as defining Value? As of late, there has been more media attention exposing these issues thanks to A-list music-makers like Taylor Swift who have requested tighter control over the outlets through which their music is made available. Still, I feel as if there is an obligation to examine the Value of music in an academic setting in order to potentially reevaluate that which has been seemingly devalued.

Therefore, the purpose of this project is to present three distinct philosophical viewpoints that contribute to a broader definition of something called *Value*. People use the term value in the context of the arts regularly, but not all of these usages are synonymous and leave room for confusion, elaboration, and collaboration. Primarily using select writings from Karl Marx, Martin Heidegger, and Walter Benjamin, I will address ways in which Value is broken down in terms of each author's usage and viewpoint, ultimately articulating that the Value of music is related to, but not fully defined in terms of economics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and ritual.

Explicitly, the goal of my first chapter is to use select writings by Karl Marx to describe and critique the relationship between economic value and Value. Use-value and exchange-value, as economic terms, are used to calculate supply and demand and provide the price at which goods are sold, while meagerly rewarding the labor and laborers required of its production. At no point, however, does the commodification of Music become definitional of its Value. Marx does not believe that any industry properly values the worker or their work, and the relationship of music to commodity and music-maker to laborer only exemplifies this issue. Marx is relevant to defining Value not only because economic value is merely a common usage of the word value, but because Marx, like myself, finds the reduction of Value to something like economic value problematic. Moreover, Marx's contribution to my definition of Value includes almost a prophetic element, in that his issues with capitalism apply less and less to the contemporary music industry. Thanks to widely available recording equipment and distribution platforms serving to democratize the means of production, there is a sense that the music industry is in crisis and revolution. This crisis is thought to some as the death of the music industry, but the financial instability of former music giants is that the independent artists is more able to produce and

distribute music as ever. Ultimately, Marx will show that music is treated as a commodity, but the Value of music is definitely different from the market value this commodity fetches and one can and should think about what Value means in a non-economic sense. Both the potential producer and consumers of music must reconcile the price tag music is given with the Value they attribute to a work independent of any economic considerations, especially as the financial promise of music-making becomes less sure than ever.

Clearly there is a need to look at Value from a non-economic perspective. In the wake of Marx's contribution to the Value of music, Martin Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* will be brought into consideration as it is concerned with concealing and revealing something like the Value of art. In opposition to economic materialism and in keeping with Marx's post-capitalist predictions, Heidegger distills the being of a work of art to its origin, an origin which I hope to use defining its Value. The origin of the work of art, in brief, is understood as a self-reliant relationship between the artist and the work of the artist. By means of a somewhat circular logic, the work of art is shown to be a product of the artist working, but this work does more than merely produce a commodity. Art presents a conflict between the earth and the world, between the material and the metaphysical, and out of this conflict emerges something called *truth*. For Heidegger, it is truth which a work of art must embody. Value, a term which Heidegger does not use in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, is brought into this conversation on the grounds that truth is something valuable-- so much so that it is of primordial importance and is inextricable from the work of art. Therefore, I hope to use Heidegger to reinforce a definition of Value which shows that music is valuable regardless of the price tag attached to it and this Value transcends the very materiality that has made the defining of Value so difficult.

The third and final chapter of this project attempts to use the arguments made by Marx and Heidegger as a means of reconciling economic materialism and metaphysical abstraction. The guiding force behind this reconciliation is Walter Benjamin's *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin is helpful to defining Value insofar as he offers a modernized perspective on the production and consumption of arts that rely heavily on reproduction. Yet, in opposition to Benjamin, I hope to demonstrate that music retains Value today and that reproduction is not so much a corrosive force as much as it has provoked a paradigm shift in the way that Value is thought of in terms of the arts. Benjamin directly responds to Marx in his discussion of art insofar as he is concerned with the industrialization of art as a commodity and how this mass production affects the way art is consumed and appreciated. Heidegger, unlike Marx, is not directly referenced by Benjamin, yet remains relevant to Benjamin's discussion of 'aura,' and the 'authenticity,' as related to or synonymous to truth, that a work of art is or is not able to preserve when reproduced. *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* not only helps define Value insofar as Benjamin might be reinterpreting valuations previously made by Marx and Heidegger, but also explicitly discusses 'cult' and 'ritual' value. These terms are unique to Benjamin, and will be used to contend with and extend Benjamin's thought process in my final to push to finally define of Value.

Working through and interrelating Marx's economic theories and Heidegger and Benjamin's propositions about art, I hope to show some of the many facets that contribute to a definition of the Value of music. This definition of Value to identifies ways in which one can avoid the passive or active devaluation of music from which music, music-maker, and audience all can suffer. Ultimately, this project is about empowering the artform in the face of the

pessimism and ambivalence about the future of the music industry. Music has Value and it should be treated as such. Music has Value. It is merely a matter of identifying different ways of discussing Value that can be used to articulate what this truth offers. Just as there is knowledge in philosophy if one has the patience and endurance to dig through the writings, music has truth at its core and this truth requires deliberation to access.

I

Wage, Labor, and Capital Records

The aim of this project is to define the Value of the music. The key issue in determining Value, however, relies on identifying exactly the kind of Value which one wants to define. A call on a payphone might cost \$0.35 cents, but the Value of the phone call is situational, not economic. One considers the Value of any good or service, the subsequent valuation because personalized, a willingness based upon interest. For example, one might buy a \$855.00 Arc'teryx insulated winter jacket, but live in a temperate climate and never have occasion to use it. Does the jacket still hold Value if it merely sits in one's closet? Would one save it when rushing to collect prized possessions during a house fire? It is clear, the relative worth of one's world is reflected in one's possessions and preferences, not price tags. Accordingly, one's values might vary over time, generating a personal history of decision-making, time management, and consumption which reflects what one finds worthwhile.

It is difficult enough to objectively determine the Value of a phone call and an over-priced jacket, let alone the artistic output of a musician. Difference in taste, talent, advantage, and even genetics dictate an individual's interests, affecting or enhancing something's Value in the ears and eyes of the beholder. This sort of determination, now defined as subjective value, will be avoided in this chapter and focus on that aspect of Value experienced at its most quotidian, i.e. the *economic value* one confronts on a daily basis. One should already be aware of economic value cannot serve to completely define Value, but what does Marx's consideration of economic value have to say Value more broadly? What exactly does economic value lack?

Economic value is a numerical value. It appears on price tags and is the result of a series of commercial interactions which set this price. Macroeconomic theory, in its broadest terms, looks at the intersection of supply and demand as means of determining the value of a good or service, a theory which originates with Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' (Smith, bk. 4 ch. 2 par. 9). In the economic realities of the music industry, there are certain costs which are incurred during the production of a recording which subsequently justify the price tag. The sunk costs of making music arise from studio, engineering, production, and promotional fees, not to mention the cost of instruments, time and energy training and writing, as well as what every physical album costs to produce in paper and plastic. All of these expenses contribute to an upward supply curve and a certain minimum price tag. The demand for music, on the other hand, is much harder to pinpoint. What makes a price worth paying? On a microeconomic level, this question is answered by the interaction between the supplier's 'willingness to accept' (i.e. sell) and the demander's 'willingness to pay'. For goods in general, the willingness to accept, based on the cost of production as well as the prospects of profit, must match the willingness to pay, or else the supplier will not move his or her merchandise and will go out of business (so it goes.)

With the stakes between buyer and seller set, one is left with a few questions more relevant to my investigation. Using these economic grounds, how is the Value of music determined? How is the economic value of music indicative of or detrimental to its more general Value? Or, at least, how can one use economic value to generate some sense as to what the Value of music might be? Primarily, the aim of this chapter becomes to more accurately and articulately address the network of factors that contribute to the the conventional economic value which music consumers have come to accept. It is nevertheless important to reiterate that

economic value will not and cannot serve as the Value of music for which this chapter ultimately hopes to define. One must inevitably account for the way in which individuals perceive and reflect upon music they make or hear as a subjective aspect of its Value. Economic value is merely a starting point, a given, necessarily raising questions about Value which are often masked by economic valuation. Within this discussion of music as a commodity, the writings of Karl Marx will be brought brought to bear, repurposing his critique of capitalism to explain the common confusion of the economic value of music which stands publicly for a more involved definition of Value.

Music As Commodity

As a means of getting into Marx's involved argument about economic value and how it applies to the Value of music, one must first reckon with his lexicon. To this end, we must ask the question "what is a commodity?" Of course, in the United States as well as much of the world, one can point to almost anything and discuss it as a commodity. There is a global culture of exchange and one is generally brought up knowing that everything comes at a price. Marx, however, tries his best to distance himself from the problem of subjective value, which is the price an individual establishes for a certain item based on his or her tastes alone. Instead, commodity value stands to represent purely the economic considerations that are dictated in the production and sale of goods.

He begins his chapter in *Capital* on the commodity by stating that "the commodity is in the first place, an object outside of us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human needs of some sort or another. The nature of these needs is irrelevant, e.g., whether their origin is in the stomach or in the fancy" (Marx, *Capital* 303). Beginning in this way, Marx has already provided

distance between the commodity and oneself. It is external, outside of us, and necessary “in the stomach or in the fancy,” as a mode of appetite or interest, but the origin of this necessity is not a concern. It is only insofar as the object is produced and consumed that it becomes recognizable as a commodity and establishes an economic value. Music fits into Marx’s model of the commodity since it is external and somehow satisfies a human need. Although the argument can be made that music originates out of interior, creative inspiration, a song always takes a physical form as vibrations of the air, a discrete physical form which cannot be seen, but is nevertheless perceived. These vibrations are objects, external and experienced aurally, but a song which never resonates in a concert hall or in the home is merely an idea and cannot fit the definition of music as commodity. There are, of course, songs which remain private, are never publically heard or sold, but only those that are can have an economic value. The Value of music for the self is independent of economic value, and is an early indication that exchange is not everything.

One might debate that music is a luxury, not necessary in the same sense as food, water or air, but it satisfies a need of another order. A huge number of people have gravitated towards the artform, making different styles of music with different messages, in separate contexts, and for varying audiences. Music is produced and consumed, and this production and consumption cannot be seen as aimless or unnecessary as long as it persists. To quote Marx, “we are also not concerned here with the manner in which the entity satisfies human need; whether in an immediate way as food – that is, as object of enjoyment – or by a detour as means of production” (Marx 303). Marx is not interested in enjoyment or even objects as means to certain ends. Exchange is the end in itself. Value is distilled to economic value, in the context of supply and demand, both of which are motivated by external factors, yet ultimately resolve in the form of a

price tag. One need is not weighed over another, based on its relative importance of the commodity. Economic value is directly dependant upon how it finds its worth through a larger social interaction.

For Marx the nature of the need which brings any commodity into being remains detached from the economic value this commodity holds, yet the fact that there is this need is of primary importance to its Value. As a means of recognizing the relationship between need and economic value, Marx asserts that “It is the utility of a thing for human life that turns it into a use-value... Use-value realizes itself only in use or in consumption; use-values form the *substantial content of wealth*, whatever its *social form may* be. In the form of society which we are going to examine, they form the substantial bearers at the very same time of *exchange-value*” (Marx 303). In this statement, Marx acknowledges that something must be *useful*, perhaps self-definitionally, to become of use and subsequently consumed. This very usefulness lends itself to the *substantial content of wealth* that a commodity possesses in isolation and ultimately yields an *exchange-value*, a term which is more or less analogous with the economic value found in an object’s price tag. Evidently, there is variation between the exchange-value and the content of wealth that is inherent to the commodity. A supplier or producer always wants to sell a good at the highest price possible, while the market drives this price lower, depending on the factors previously outlined as consumer demand and willingness to pay.

To get a better sense of the relationship between use-value and exchange-value, Marx brings into question two commodities, iron and wheat, in order to show how commodities co-develop an economic relationship and, subsequently, a need for monetization. “Whatever their exchange relationship may be, it is always representable in an equation in which a given

quantum of wheat is equated with some particular quantum of iron; e.g., one quarter of wheat = a cwt of iron” (Marx 304). Regardless of the existing price of these two items, there remain relative quantities at which they can be traded for one another. Therefore, “both are equal... to a third entity, which in and for itself is neither the one nor the other. Each of the two, insofar as it is an exchange-value, must therefore be reducible to this third entity, independent of the other” (Marx 304). In mentioning this third entity, Marx is cementing monetary theory as a means of making exchange more manageable. There is a tertiary good, money, which in itself does not have an explicit, practical use, but comes to represent the value of not only the relationship between two goods, such as wheat and iron, but all goods. In this system, use-value is said to answer to exchange-value only as long as the exchange-value, represented monetarily, remains relative to the use-value of all goods. Despite the seemingly lack of use-value money might have on its own, it is, in fact, that which becomes most useful in its ability to be traded for other items. Therein, money becomes that which is able to consolidate the entirety of use-values under one term, ultimately allowing for consistency in exchange and economic value in general. Therefore, an aspect of Value is the money that is needed to acquire the object which is thought to possess Value and this monetary value is the standard by which economic values are most commonly considered.

At this time, I will bring music, as a commodity, back into question. Generally, our culture is not one that relies on bartering, so it is difficult to imagine a music-maker trading a song for an unspecified quantity of iron. Sure, there are street performers who perform for food, relics of bards and religious players seeking the means to survive directly off their trade. Yet, modern music-making more often falls back on its monetary exchange-value to represent the

use-value one might apply to it. Music-makers are used to making money because they are raised within the conditions of capitalism that require financial returns. The problem with music, however, arises when one seeks to use the aforementioned micro and macroeconomic theories to account for or justify its exchange-value. Of course, there are the sunk costs of training as a music-maker and the music this music-maker produces, but the cost of supplying the market with music does not generally yield the sort of income one would expect of another industry. Yes, record labels, for example, must take into consideration the cost of production when they calculate a price tag in order to remain in business, but amateur and semi-professional music-makers do not and cannot rely on this standard price to make a living.

Not only is it difficult to quantify how much one song costs to produce, but a music-maker is always reckoning and compromising with the consumer's willingness to pay. "Successful" popstar and music-makers can make a comfortable living off of the average price the music holds in the free-market. They sell enough songs or concert tickets to gain positive financial returns. Yet, more often than not, music-makers either voluntarily undervalue the music they produce in order to reach a wider audience, or they place an economic value on the music which is equal to their personal expense, but exceeds the consumer's willingness to pay. In either instance, the substantial content of wealth that the music might garner fails to align with its exchange-value, and requires a revaluation of its potential use-value on the part of the music-maker.

Marx recognizes this inequality, even without using music as his example. For instance, Marx states that "The fact that the substance of the exchange-value is something utterly different from and independent of the physical-sensual existence of the commodity or its reality as a

use-value is revealed immediately by its exchange relationship.... As far as the exchange-value is concerned, one commodity is, after all, quite as good as every other, provided it is present in the correct proportion” (Marx 304). To this end, Marx is indirectly accounting for the discrepancies in price that one experiences in the music industry. Although one song cannot be understood as objectively better than any other without a consideration of enjoyment or subjective worth, exchange-value can vary independently because of the market as an independent source of value that can dictate a consumer's willingness to pay or a supplier's willingness to accept. Specifically, Marx suggests that “the common social substance which merely manifests itself differently in different use-values, is – *labor*” (Marx 305). Naturally, Marx brings into question the role of the worker in dictating value because labor is not only accounted for in the cost of production, but also provides the wages that command a consumer's willingness to pay, i.e. the means of consumption. Only insofar as a commodity can be afforded can it be said to possess an exchange-value.

Music-Making As Labor

This chapter does not concern itself with that which is priceless. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche states that “Without music, life would be a mistake,” but for Marx, music and the use-value thereof function by means of the same economic standards as any other commodity (Nietzsche sec. 33). It is not a matter of aesthetic or poetic value, as Nietzsche attributes to the art form. Instead, economic value reveals itself by means of the components that contribute to its being as commodity and the *labor* which justifies said economic value. Therein, one can understand the Value of music, for Marx, in terms of the Value of labor, which contains a normative and moral quality that exchange-value explicitly lacks.

How does Marx directly relate the commodity to labor? Primarily, he states that “commodities as values are nothing but *crystallized labor*” (Marx 305) Insofar as something is given value, Marx explicitly states that there is labor, both on the end of the supplier and the consumer, which accounts for a commodities economic or exchange-value. This crystallization, explicitly, is a conversion of service to goods and “a use-value or good only has a *value* because *labor is objectified or materialized in it*” (Marx 305). Therefore, the commodification of labor is indebted to the labor which contributes to its production and allows for its affordability. Fundamentally, one must recognize that music is only produced as a result of labor, be it on the part of the music-maker and as a result of the various vocations which are required of the music produced (producer, engineer, PR representative, ect.) Music cannot exist outside of this relationship to labor because, without some sort of labor, how could a musical work come about? Heidegger, in my second chapter, will more explicitly relate the labor, the work of the artist, to commodity, the work of art. Yet, Marx makes explicit on his own that labor is the manifestation of creative impulse as a kind of work. Not all labor is creative, but all labor engenders a process of materialization, the result of which is an object which can be given Value.

Calculating the value of labor, which can subsequently be brought into a broader conversation about Value as a whole, is directly equated to the *labor-time* required not only to produce a commodity, but also to afford it. In this way, the monetary equilibrium found between willingness to accept and willingness to pay is directly resolved as a function of the value of producer and consumer’s labor. For both the producer and consumer, the economic value of labor is termed *wages*. Wages are individually determined in terms of their use-value, by means of how proportionally important said labor is to the production of the good. Still, one should

avoid any confusion as to the relationship between the price of a good and the human labor power needed to transform material into a commodity. To quote Marx, “with respect to the use-value, the labor contained in the commodity counts only qualitatively, with respect to the magnitude of exchange-value it counts only quantitatively, after being already reduced to human labor without further quality” (Marx 311). Therefore, it is not the value of labor which dictates the exchange-value of a good, but the exact opposite. Wages are qualitative only insofar as the labor they represent is presumed useful, but the exchange-value of the commodity is ultimately the source of any quantitative economic-value that labor might have.

This understanding of the quality and quantity of labor can be directly applied to our attempted distillation of the economic value of music. The quality of music a music-maker produces does not directly affect the exchange-value of said music in the market. More talented music-makers will be granted more opportunities to sell their labor as music-makers. Yet, the overall economic-value of recorded music has been previously established. The price of a song, CD, LP, is relatively set and the expense of producing music must generally fit within a budget balanced against the limited revenue the music will yield. Certainly, music-makers also make questionable financial decisions all the time, paying more to produce a piece of music than the work will eventually return, but this increased investment nevertheless fails to dictate the price at which the music will be ultimately sold. There is a market value for a song and an album, and the only way to justify a more expensive process of music production is to sell a higher quantity, not quality of music.

Music is, perhaps, unique in its relationship to Marxian labor-value among the arts. The large price which an established painter receives for a work is more so a function of the quality of

the artist's labor invested in it. While the price of a painting by an artist with a limited supply of works will increase the exchange-value of said works, generally the economic value of a painting falls back upon the perceived quality of the painter. Thereby, the price of any given painting vastly fluctuates, ranging anywhere between the \$50.00 one might spend on a work on the walls of a coffee shop or the ~\$106,500,000 Picasso's *Nude* legendarily fetched at auction. By comparison, the music industry fails entirely to take into account this discrepancy in quality. The best musicians sell a song for the same \$.99 that an amateur might. Yes, the better musician might sell more songs to make up the difference, but the labor itself has a set price and often sales are not contingent on talent. Instead, music-makers and their music rely as much on marketing, trying to appeal to a far-reaching audience, as quality because, at the end of the day, the commodity must be sold in huge quantities in order to receive the financial return that a painter might receive for a single work.

Quality in the arts is a matter of aesthetics and is best put aside until later in this project. More integral to the argument put forth in this chapter is how labor and laborer are quantified, commodified, and ultimately exploited. Explicitly, I am able to address both the economic value and overarching Value of labor in terms of how wages arise and relate to Marx's qualms with capitalism as the system in which economic value and Value are commonly conflated. Marx states that "Labor produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity – and this at the same rate at which it produces commodities in general" (Marx, *Economic Manuscripts of 1844* 71). It is not the goods alone which are materialized by means of production, but labor, as a function of production, becomes commodified as a service which is bought and sold. Thereby, said labor becomes detached from the laborer. The laborer is not

producing exchange-value in itself, but the market value of the commodity dictates wages of the laborer. Wages are the exchange value of labor and the laborer becomes merely a component of the commodity sold. This is a processes of alienation and estrangement, whereby the laborer no longer has a self-worth independent of productivity and the abstract financial gain this production might yield. “Labor’s realization is its objectification” as long as any financial gain for labor is sought (Marx 71).

The music-maker who avoids selling his or her music avoids the objectification of their music-making, but also fails to yield any sort of economic value which, at this point, is the only measure by which a greater sense of Value might be understood. Does this mean that music-makers themselves lack Value as long as the product of their labor lacks an economic value? Does Marx provide any means of avoiding this system of devaluation without compromising any argument about the Value of music? It is my understanding of Marx’s writing that he does not. The structure of capitalism has isolated the music-maker from the means to subsistence so that he or she must enter the working world and commodify their creative output, or else seek an alternative mode of income to support music-making as a hobby.

The music industry, as a capitalist enterprise, determines what it means to be a musician vocationally. When one seeks employment as a music-maker, one hopes that the vocation will be both personally and financially rewarding. Yet, the music industry works against this aspiration. Most musicians do not even receive a subsistence wage for their music-making. Artists signed to major labels or working as session musicians for larger studios might receive an hourly wage or salary, but a great number of music-makers act as their own source of income. In this way, the music-maker assumes the responsibility of having to commodify their own labor. The music

itself is completely devalued outside of what the capitalist invests in its production, an investment which has significantly decreased in the digital age because MP3s cost nothing to be reproduced. Subsequently, this devaluation makes the entire music making process alien to the music maker, who is no longer able to focus on making music and instead is concerned with making money. The musician is objectified in this purely financial mindset of music-making, an objectification which is completely in keeping with the obsession with materiality which surrounds the music industry. Therefore, one must wonder how Marx envisions the way in which the musician might reevaluate his or her role in the music industry so that this alienation is avoidable. What does Marx's "communist revolution" offer that is otherwise unaccounted for by the music industry as we know it? Is this "revolution" only attainable by the means of completely overthrowing capitalism as a whole, or is it feasible that the microcosm of the music industry can, will, or is changing on its own to a more ideal economic state for the musician?

To tackle these questions, one must proceed from the perspective that the economic devaluation of music could mean the end of music as private property. The fact that music is made freely available to the public (either pirated or offered by an artist as something free) removes the artist from the systematic alienation of capitalism through the self-realization that their labor is undervalued and objectified. Radiohead allowed their fans to pay what they wanted for their 2007 album *In Rainbows* because they understood that the digital files would find their way onto the web inevitably anyway. The group even monitored the average price at which the album was selling in case this figure might have dropped too low, but instead the marketing strategy was a huge success, selling almost two millions physical CDs despite the digital offer sans expense. Since 2007, websites like Bandcamp have used the pay-what-you-want business

model to help independent artists offer the possibility of payment for their music without necessarily deterring fans with a minimum price point. There is instead a negotiation between artist and fan in which the Value they find in the music is reflected by, but not dependent upon, the exchange value they pay for it. Thereby, music is seen as having Value outside of the equation of supply, demand, and profit. The determination of Value relegated to the producer and consumer alone. The music-maker might seek additional sources of income to supplement the production of music through tangible goods like t-shirts, concerts, and beer cozies, but it is up to the consumer to determine the ways in which they want to support the musician, either by buying their music or their merchandise. To this extent, the music industry has begun to return to a system of patronage, but this time appealing to public patrons rather than seeking a Medici or Habsburg to cover the entirety of subsistence from a single source.

The abolition of music as private property is apparent not only from the perspective of how musicians now market themselves and their music to make a living, but is also related to returning the private means of production to the hands of the musician. During the heyday of the music industry, musicians relied on capital from record labels to afford expensive studio time with producers and engineers, not to mention all of the paid auxiliaries that are involved in the marketing and distribution of music. Therefore, the musicians needed the industry to make an impact in the industry (unless they were able to somehow fund the production themselves). Now, however, one can seemingly circumvent this system. One does not need a studio to record music: all one needs is a microphone, a personal computer, and talent. The bedroom popstar, one who is able to use their own private means and talent to establish a career is a reality. This state of affairs even transcends genre, allowing bands, rappers, and electronic musicians alike to record,

produce, and promote their music without considering the economic viability of their enterprise and without the need for capital for this enterprise to exist. Thereby, the alienation and objectification of capitalism are forsaken for favor of music-makers who can and do produce music themselves, because it matters to them and because they have the means to make it.

With Marx in mind, how might we now define the Value of music? One can no longer point to specific costs which set a price for the supply and demand of music. The supply of music in the digital age is infinite, yet the Value of this infinite supply can still be said to exist. Exchange-value, from the standpoint of a producer, is completely undercut, yet a willingness to pay on the part of the consumer remains. Therefore, a Marxist analysis of the music world is increasingly relevant to a conversation about Value because capitalist valuations prove to superfluous to the valuations informed by musicians and listeners.

Marx's model makes sense of Value because understands economic value fails to accurately Value music or labor. In recognizing this failure, he shows how the music industry can and has developed to a point where we can look at Value outside of economics. One should not think of music strictly in the sense of it being a commodity, but must take the implications of music as a commodity as the starting point for a discussion of Value-- Value which acknowledges subjective opinion and remains fair to the musicians. Music is made by artists, not laborers, and the arts have always been problematic for economists. Thus, the following chapter will consider the Value of music sans economic value, and the final chapter will be dedicated to resolving economic value and non-economic Value as affected by reproduction. Ultimately, the economic viability of being a musician affects the way that Value of music is defined, but be aware that this economic value is not commensurate with Value.

II

Work, Value, and Origin

Who decides to become a music-maker because of the money? Is financial reward the validation that every music-maker seeks? Dreams of being a music-maker might emerge during one's adolescence as a result of a naive fascination with fame. Madonna wears an elegant gown on a red carpet and preteens across the nation envy and aspire to share to the same limelight. Television, radio, print and digital media all reinforce the notion that mainstream financial success is possible, but the legitimacy of music-making as a practical profession often falls short. The idea of popstardom is a myth. The number of unsuccessful music-makers greatly exceeds the number that do succeed famously and financially and an artist with any foresight whatsoever knows the risk. They are aware of the laborious grind required before any potential economic reward, if ever, is received. So, one must ask again: Who decides to be a music-maker because of the money? As outlined in the previous chapter, the Value of music-making is not dependant upon the economic outcome. So, if economic value fails to determine Value one knows it to possess, where and how else might one discover a definition of the Value of music?

In an op-ed published in the *Huffington Post* in 2011 entitled "I Love My Job, But It Made Me Poorer," author JD Samson outlines how their career as a musician has effectively ruined their economic stability. Samson outlines the many parts they have played within the music industry, including primary roles in two critically-acclaimed bands (Le Tigre and MEN), as well as DJing, remixing other artists' works, and even writing material to be performed by the likes of Christina Aguilera. Yet, despite their ability to assume various occupations available within the music industry, Samson still worries about health insurance, dental plans, and having

enough savings to sustain their lifestyle as a music-maker not only now, but by the time they are eighty years old.

Whereas other vocations focus on a salary and 401(k), the music-maker forgoes these concerns in favor of doing what they love. In one anecdote, Samson describes being denied a number of crusty, roach-infested apartments in Brooklyn because they lacked a stable income. In Samson's own words, realtors and landlords don't "give a shit about how kids email me all the time thanking me for keeping them from committing suicide. It's not part of [their] capitalist business practice" (Samson). The music-maker, to this extent, skirts the conventional route of paychecks and vacation days in favor of what? "We live in a society where people equate success with money," but the two are drastically different. It is an equation which misleads children who see a music-maker on TV performing or being interviewed into assuming that they are being reasonably, if not excessively, paid for their artistic labor. It is an equation which deems all of the music-makers who died penniless as being unsuccessful, despite being potentially revered during and after their lifetimes. Most importantly, it is an equation which confuses economic value for Value and truncates any potential for a more profound understanding of the Value of their work.

In the previous chapter, we considered the economic perils of any profession in the capitalist system in which Value is reducible to exchange and use. The aim of this chapter, however, is to reexamine what is meant by Value outside Marx's framework. Where "objectivity" fails the music-maker, one must fill in the gaps with subjective worth, understanding that use-value is not a matter of exchange exclusively. *Use* is a reflection of preference and personal investment; *use* is a function of the supplier's and demander's wants and

needs, including subjective criteria which cannot always be given a price tag. Although the Value of music must take into account the implications of economics, Martin Heidegger, as we will see, discusses the importance of art extensively without addressing the economics at all. He allows the artist and the work of art, representing the music-maker and the music made, to provide an internal justification for their own being, and one must understand that this being itself is valuable. In Heidegger's writing, the Value of art reveals itself. Using *The Origin of the Work of Art*, this chapter will endeavor to elucidate the Value of music and music-making from the perspective that art, and music as a subcategory thereof, is essential to the being of those that seek to produce and consume it.

At first, the choice to juxtapose Heidegger with Marx might appear odd. The opposite of economic value in the arts seems more aptly equated with philosophical writings on aesthetic value. For example, in the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant ostensibly distances himself from any economic valuations of art with the assertion that beautiful art, art that can be said to have some sort of aesthetic value, must possess *beauty* regardless of the audience's "interest" in the work. Kant is obviously not saying that the work isn't interesting in the sense that it bores the viewer, but "interest," as Kant uses it, "always has connection to the faculty of desire" (Kant 38). In this sense, when one is interested in an object, one desires that object because it can fulfill a function that is also desired. One buys a toothbrush or lawnmower because one wants to brush one's teeth or mow one's lawn. Yet, "the judgement of taste can be determined by no representation of an objective purpose... because it is an aesthetical and not a cognitive judgement" (Kant 56). Beautiful art does not fulfill a desire or function that allows the audience to enjoy it. There is no *reasoning* which makes one work beautiful and another not. By contrast, "when the question is if

a thing is beautiful, we do not want to know whether anything depends or can depend upon the existence of the thing, either for myself or for anyone else, but how we judge it by mere observation” (Kant 38). Thus, the work of art does not mow your lawn or clean your teeth fulfilling a practical function. Through observation alone, art gives way to a feeling of beauty which lends aesthetic value to the work. Music is not purchased merely because one needs something to listen to, but because the sensation that the music evokes is positive. In this way, aesthetics prove antithetical to use-value economics in that art is not explicitly useful outside of observation and contemplation.

Nevertheless, the music industry, as well as every other competitive art industry, continues to sell these things these objects of observation and contemplation. In part, these sales can be attributed to the beauty of the objects in question, but visual works of art also prove useful as investments. People make money by buying paintings and sculptures at low prices and selling them when their value soars, like they would with stock shares or real estate. Clearly, these investors are purchasing works because they believe that someone might think of it as beautiful, but aesthetics only remains pertinent as long as this value is correlated to the economic value a potential buyer might pay for it. Moreover, music-makers themselves become ‘investments’ they are picked up by a label or publicist with the prospect of their ability to make music which sells. Aesthetic value, by these means, ends up being reduced to economic value. Beauty is made desirable and the creation, curation, and collection of its material representations becomes goods for money instead of being appreciated for aesthetic value as an end in itself.

Yet, Kant should not be subjected to Marxist theory frivolously. Aesthetic appeal must be accounted for, given its due Value outside of its relationship to an economic purpose. Therefore,

one must seek a method of determining the Value of art which is not only opposed to the problematic, economic valuations of the previous chapter, but also accounts for aesthetic valuations such as Kant's. To this extent Martin Heidegger's phenomenological framework in *The Origin of the Work of Art* not only outlines the grounds upon which any economic or aesthetic demarcation of value can be based, but also advances a way of thinking about the Value of art which has thus far only been proximally defined. How exactly does Heidegger eschew both Marx and Kant in his thinking about art and how does this thinking apply to music specifically? How can Heidegger be said to be discussing Value at all when the concept of 'value' only appears in passing within his work?

In beginning to reveal what *The Origin of the Work of Art* has to say about Value, it is essential to understand how Heidegger defines the word *origin* and how the being of art and the Value thereof is dependent upon, if not inextricable from, an origin. Specifically, Heidegger states that "origin here means that from and by which something is what it is" (Heidegger, *Origin* 17). Within the context of *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger is already presenting the grounds for an examination of Art in terms of its being, how it *is*. A work of art only "is" because it has an origin. The "from" and "by which" represent the origin both in terms of location, i.e., the "from" drawn from a "there," and instrumentation, the "by which" representing the means to its "is." It is only when there is an origin, location and instrumentation, that a work of art can be brought into being. If the Value of music is to be given this Heideggerian treatment, then one must admit that said Value has an origin of its own that is necessarily implied or else this Value *is not*.

Kant might have qualms with the assertion that the value or beauty of a work of art has *to be*, stating that “in saying [a work of art] is beautiful and in showing that I have taste, I am concerned, not with that in which I depend on the existence of the object, but with that which I make out of the representation myself” (Kant 39). One should not take this statement about the existence of an object being removed from aesthetic value as declaring art objects imaginary. Instead, Kant describes the observation, “making out the representation myself,” as that which is independent of the object, not imagined, but felt. Thereby, the origin of the Value of art takes shape out of the interaction between the work of art, as the “by which” or means to the valuation, and the audience as the “from” that gives rise to, experiences, and appreciates the Value. Although external factors can affect how anyone might place value in a work of art, the work of art must be valuable in the first place. If one imagines a song which can be given a price tag, let alone thought of as beautiful, there must first be a song and someone to hear it. Only with both elements in play can a valuation be made - aesthetic, economic, or otherwise.

What is, then, the origin of the work of art? Specifically, Heidegger describes the origin as stemming from an interaction between a work of art and the artist working. In order to understand the Value of the work, these factors must be considered. To this end, Heidegger states that “The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other” (Heidegger 17). Primarily, this assertion stresses the circular relationship that something has with its ‘origin.’ In everyday language, origin commonly refers to a single starting point, a starting line, a place of birth, and a single point on the axis of a graph. For Heidegger, however, origin implies interdependence which gives rise to something new. In this sense, the “from” of the artwork is attributable to the artist insofar as the artist is a “there” from which work

can arise. The artist is the active agent engaged in the working. Although Heidegger does not describe the artist as “Dasein” explicitly, readers of *Being and Time* will relate any Heideggerian individual, such as the artist, to Dasein as defined by “sein” (being) and “da” (there). This “there” of Dasein is the “da” of the artist, accounting for the locational “from” of its origin. Furthermore, *work*, as one of the many activities of Dasein not addressed in *Being and Time*, functions as the “by which” an artist can come into being. The working is the means of artistic expression, the means of creating. To this extent, a work of art, despite being seemingly self-evident in its name, is the culmination of the existence of an *artist working*, and neither the work nor the artist as points of origin can be removed from this equation for the artwork-- “neither is without the other.”

From a Heideggerian perspective, how does Value develop out of the the ‘artist working’ as an aspect of its origin? Even before Value can be addressed as an unspoken aspect of Heidegger’s work, one must understand *art*. Within the discussion of the artist and his or her working, a third component remains that “is prior to both” and is “the origin of both artist and art work” (Heidegger 17). In this respect, art is the fore-structure or basis upon which the being of art and work rely. Art is not merely a mode of interpretation, but in fact makes the world of art possible, for both the work of art and observers thereof. Heidegger briefly concedes that art “is nothing more than a word to which nothing real corresponds” (Heidegger 17). In this aside, much like Kant, Heidegger is not stating that art does not exist since works of art are examples of art. Instead, Heidegger is referencing the fact that one cannot abstract art from works of art just like one cannot understand Value without using objects which hold value. Art cannot escape its

role as a fore-structure since any questions about a work or artist must refer back to something which establishes the possibility for either to exist.

It could be argued that Value joins the trifacta of art, artist, and working, but only because the Value of art could never arise independently of the artworld and the people and practices that contribute to it. Yet, as any discussion of art is advanced, one will have to come to grips with why the artist works and how this work relates back to something which can be considered art. In order to address the function of art more directly within *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger uses the example of the temple to represent the greater function of art and the difficulty of attributing a work of art to any single cause. Initially, the temple is introduced in the context of belonging “uniquely to the realm that is opened up by itself” (Heidegger 40). This remark is in keeping with the reflexive, middle-voiced German which is pervasive across Heidegger’s work. In this passive voicing, the idea of something, such as a work of art, opening up the realm in which it exists for and by itself also speaks to the “circularity” of Being. Heidegger is clarifying that a temple, as a work of art, is conceived and perceived as a work of art because something called ‘art’ has the ability to do something called ‘work.’ The self-evidence of the work of art being defined by the ‘work’ it does as ‘art’ is not merely a linguistic similarity, but is an indication of something internal and necessary to the “opening up” it is said to do “by itself.”

Again, Heidegger’s declarations might seem redundant, but by introducing “opening up” as a function of art, one is led closer to what art *does* and how this ‘doing’ becomes a source of Value. Thereby, a temple in its Being allows for its Being and goes so far as to reveal, through its “opening up by itself,” ways of understanding this Being. Heidegger goes on to say that “the

temple-work standing there opens up a world and at the same time sets the world back again on earth, which thus only emerges as native ground” (Heidegger 41). Earth, in this sense, is thought of as the origin of the temple in that the stability of the temple requires the stability of the earth beneath it in a physical sense. Still, the function of the temple is the opening up of a world and one cannot ignore the opening of the world as an activity “by which” the temple can be thought of as a temple. If the temple merely relied on the earth, it would fail as a temple. A work of art is only manifested through its opening of a world *and* its setting back into earth. Without either the earth or world at play, the temple loses the possibility of being interpreted or understood. The work of art loses its purpose. When a work of art loses its purpose, it loses an element constitutive of art. Can it therefore be said to have a Being at all?

As long as Value relies on the work of art, the work of art must reside on the earth and in the world because the existence of one is inextricable from the other. Instead of focusing on the logical impossibility of a work of art without an origin, one must bring into question the interaction between the *world* and the *earth* as the means of interpreting the temple, understanding the being of art, and how this interpretation and understanding finally leads to defining something called Value. To this end, Heidegger states that “earth juts through the world and world grounds itself on the earth only so far as truth happens as the primal conflict between clearing and concealing” (Heidegger 54). Evidently, the dual function of the temple as an opening and a grounding relates to this conflict of clearing and concealing insofar as the earth is related to concealment and the world to clearing, openness. There is a contradiction in the conceptualization of simultaneous clearing and concealing, but this contradiction is not self-defeating. It is instead defined as the happening of “truth,” admittedly a conflict, but

necessary nonetheless. For example, one might admit that, abstractly, nature and society stand in opposition to each other, but this opposition does not negate the existence of either. Instead, man only understands nature as the ground upon which society is constructed and society is only realized as it distances itself from nature. The two cannot be without the other despite the conflict that arises between them.

What does this conflict say about Value? Conflict is not to disparage Heidegger's methodology of interdependence, but instead acknowledges that circular logic, a cycle of clearing and concealing, is inherently irksome and that this irking serves a purpose to the reader, here defined as "the happening of truth." As truth happens, by means of a work of art existing in conflict with itself, both the artist's and audience's association with the work becomes apparent as contributing to and reflecting upon truth. Heidegger reinforces the importance of truth as a consequence the work of art by indicating that this truth, as a mode of understanding, is the origin of art, the basis of its being. Heidegger directly asserts that in "setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the fighting of the battle in which the unconcealedness of being, as a whole, or truth, is won" (*Origin* 54). A work of art resides in conflict, but the outcome is final, a potential resolution to the overarching problem of Value. Whereas Marx and Kant allow for interpretations of value with selective applications, Heidegger advances 'truth' as the primordial function of art, both as invaluable to and ultimately establishing of that Value to which both economic and aesthetic valuations must refer. This is not to say, however, that the battle ends in acknowledging that truth and Value emerge in this way. This conflict will always remain a function of the artwork and to say that *unconcealedness* is won by the very nature of this conflict occurring indicates that *truth is conflict* for both art and Value.

Truth, outside of its relationship with conflict, still remains amorphous in terms of its connection to something one would refer to as Value. Heidegger states that “Truth is the essence of the true,” and from this association one might conclude that, similarly, Value is the essence of all value, but “what do we have in mind when we are speaking of essence?” (Heidegger 49) There is a connection between truth and Value as concepts pertaining to those works of art which are referred to being true or valuable, but how does Heidegger define truth? How might he define Value? Heidegger clarifies his thinking about truth by declaring that “the essence is discovered in a generic and universal concept, which represents the one feature that holds indifferently for many things” (Heidegger 49). By these means, truth and Value are not merely a linguistic extension of the true or the valuable, but these terms are meant to signify that feature of the work of art which is ubiquitous, binding, and self-definitional. Like beauty for Kant, truth is meant to represent a quality that a work of art possesses regardless of ‘interest’ or practical application.

Truth at its essence is an origin insofar as all works of art can be reducible to something called art, within which there is a conflict and out of which truth and Value emerge. Both the artist working and the audience reflecting thereupon are individually endowed with the power to bestow, dictate, or argue the relative relevance of the Value which can be interpreted with the work. To this extent, disagreements naturally arise out of the discontinuity of the artist’s interpretation of his or her work with that of the audience, or even within the audience itself. Yet, even these subjective fluctuations cannot deny the possibility or being of Value. Without Value, there could be no economic or aesthetic disagreement. Refuting or defending the beauty or price of a work of music only reinforces that the music has some sort of Value to which these arguments refer.

Thus far, Heidegger has provided the means to define Value as that which supports and opens up the world of aesthetic and economic value. The word Value is more commonly associated with the latter two valuations because aesthetic and economic valuations can be seen and understood in everyday application. Value, in isolation however, does not require that the work of art be given a price tag or be considered beautiful. Instead, Value is an origin, rooted in the artist as creator and audience as consumer, upon which all other valuations must rely. In this way, Value reveals itself as a concept closely related to Heidegger's definition of truth, an inalienable quality which all works of art must contain. Both truth and Value can be said to result from a conflict that a work of art must simultaneously clear and conceal. The earth buries both truth and Value beneath the surface of the work while the world and the associations thereof attempt to uncover it. If the work was not in part concealed in the first place, then both truth and Value would be absent. Both truth and Value require an uncovering, a working on the part of both artist and audience to reveal what lies beyond the surface of the work.

Although *The Origin of the Work of Art* does not address authenticity to the extent that *Being and Time* does, there is a palpable relationship between truth and authenticity. Truth is always related to Dasein by means of 'understanding' and 'interpretation.' Understanding always presupposes truth and interpretation serves to articulate this truth into and out of understanding. Dasein, however, does not become or happen truthfully in the way that a work of art does. When I look in the mirror I do not see Dasein, I see me. A painting of oneself is closer to a portrait of Dasein than a reflection because a painting requires inquiry, whereas one can so easily forget oneself in oneself. Dasein, gets caught up in the everyday, in what Heidegger describes as inauthentic Being, and ignores the truth about Being that is revealed the very Being of Dasein.

Art, on the other hand, is anything but the everyday, and “artwork is the substructure into and upon which the other, authentic, element is built” (Heidegger 20). Dasein seeks authentic being, and if artwork is the substructure, the fore-conception, or the origin of an element of authenticity, *The Origin of the Work of Art* reveals a mode of Being through the work of art which Dasein must find valuable. A work of art is valuable in serving as a source of reflection and inquiry that builds an understanding about art and Being. A work of art invites its audience to seek truth within its openness to interpretation and understanding which lies beneath it and arises out of it. The work of art is nothing beyond this attempt at understanding, beyond this conflict, and ultimately frees revelations about the truth of Being from Dasein as concerned with and over involved in its Being.

Therefore, the Value of the work of art is found to be a reflection of the capacity of art to convey authentic Being and truth, offering a viewpoint into the existence of the artist working as it relates, effectively or not, to an audience member’s own experience, the *Being of beings*. In fact, authenticity is a term already used in the art world, although its application somewhat distinct from the authenticity described by Heidegger. Often, musicians are called inauthentic if their work appears to be disingenuous, either arising or reflecting an element of his or her life that is fictitious or embellished. Critics use the word ‘sell-out’ to describe and degrade musicians and works which appear as a result of corporate sponsorship or attempted mainstream success. As the first chapter of the project addresses, it is increasingly difficult to make a living as a musician, potentially encouraging artists to make work from an inauthentic place and forgo Value for economic value. Still, is it not possible to make money off a work without compromise? Should not authenticity appeal to listeners? Are there not examples of artists who

have stayed true to themselves and have been rewarded for it? In conclusively defining the Value of music, one must be wary of how Value is preserved and destroyed by the creative means and mindset behind the work in terms of authenticity as well as marketability.

III

Reproducer

Thus far, the Value of music has been discussed, but not fully defined. There is a sense that Value is different from a price tag and undoubtedly separate once the music is excised from the confines of commodification. Moreover, on a metaphysical level, Value is seen as a part of what makes art work. Value is related to the truth that the work must possess as a result of the artist working. Moreover, on an aesthetic level, the very interaction with an audience able to respond to the work allows for Value to be realized outside of the artist's creative input alone. Value persists as long as it is thought to be valuable by someone. Yet, Heidegger's analysis of art highlights *how* Value *is* rather than *what* it is. Marx removed the conversation because Heidegger remains so focused on origins over the real-world ramifications thereof. One could be a Heideggerian scholar and still remain ill-equipped to make a living as a music-maker in the face of an industry failing to recognize *what* ultimately defines the Value of music. Therefore, one must reconcile Value on a metaphysical level with the way in which a work of music is thought of and invested in as 'valuable' for producer and consumer. In order to best describe the interaction and potential resolution of metaphysical Value and economic value, I will consult Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* as an examination of how Marx and Heidegger align, once given the modern contextual framework of reproduction. Benjamin, unlike Marx or Heidegger, provides an ontology for the work of art that resides in materiality without abandoning the aesthetic power of perception. Thereby, Benjamin will complete the definition of Value that is sought at the onset of this project, an interpretation which reifies why one would want to be a music-maker at all and how music is able to retain Value.

Initially, it should be said that *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* focuses on the worlds of painting, drama, film and photography, not music. Yet, there are clear connections between visual and auditory mediums. Music is not exempt from a greater conversation about music. Instead, one will see that music, like film, is a popular artform that relies on reproducibility. Specifically, for Benjamin, the fact that music has become mechanically reproducible in the 20th century-- and infinitely so in the 21st century-- relates directly to the diminishing authenticity, authority, or *aura* of music in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Yet, Benjamin's pessimism is not irreconcilable with an updated identification of the Value of music. Reproducibility is the fundamental mode by which music is modernly consumed, the recorded music possessing an aura of its own in the face of its dematerialization. Not only does the reproducibility of music meet its audience "halfway" in that the audience can bring a live experience of music home with them, but to experience this music at home, in the car, or on the person through headphones at any time, is not to diminish the experience of the music, but *is* that very experience. Many music-makers are recording artists because the song and the album have a far wider reach than they could physically travel at a fraction of the cost. The recorded product, the reproduction, is integral to how music works and should be given more credit as a creative act in and of itself rather than merely being a means mass production. The point of this chapter is to examine Benjamin's concept of "aura" and consider whether it can still be captured in today state of musical production. Moreover, "aura" will be compared with "exhibition" and "ritual" value, as described by Benjamin, insofar as all three relate to the Value that this entire project attempts to define.

To further this study, one should examine how Benjamin approaches the greater discussion of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In the nascency of Benjamin's argument, he sights the various modes which have culminated in the reproducibility of art today. First, Benjamin cites that, in antiquity, “bronzes, terra cottas, and coins were the only art works which they could produce in quantity. All others were unique and could not be mechanically reproduced” (Benjamin 218). The reproducibility of these objects was dependent on the making of molds. The molds made these products reproducible to the extent that the molds could be repeatedly reused. Therefore, two Roman homes could have the same bronze sculptures or could be adorned with the same clay figurines as long as the mold was preserved. The example of coins which Benjamin raises, however, is the most interesting one. *Money* is not often thought of as a work of art and its reproducibility is the very essence of its Value. If there is a single work on the market, the worth of this work becomes solely based on the valuation of the individual willing to pay the most for the work. Yet, if the work is reproduced, the value of each reproduction begins to settle towards the average consumer's willingness to pay for each subsequent reproduction. Specifically, as more coins are produced, the less each coin is worth. Coinage represents the standardization of Value to the fullest extent, whereby so many of these “works” are produced that the coins themselves establish a standard by which other items are valued. Therefore, the aura, or Value, of the coin is directly degraded by means of its reproduction, and must be considered independent of economic valuation alone.

Leaving behind the reliance of monetary systems on reproducibility, Benjamin goes on to talk about how the reproduction of works of art greatly accelerated with the inventions of the printing press to reproduce text and lithography to reproduce images. Specifically, he states that

“Lithography enabled graphic art to illustrate everyday life, and it began to keep pace with printing. But only a few decades after its invention, lithography was surpassed by photography” (Benjamin 219). In this sense, the reproduction of written and visual arts went hand-in-hand, providing the medium for newspapers and magazines. These mediums are debatably depicting works of art on their own, but the writing and imagery contained within are the sort of artworks which inherently require reproduction and distribution. For Benjamin, there is nothing unique about the works contained within magazines and newspapers. Yet, the value of these works comes with the nature of being mass produced and consumed in a way that singular copies of these works never could have been. Therefore, one is presented with the necessary reconciliation of originality, uniqueness, with the possibility of distribution. Depending on one’s role in the art world, one might be critical of commercial photographers, illustrators, and designers who make work specifically for use in printed media. Although these critiques might generally be concerned with the artist’s willingness to compromise creativity for commercial interests, this is a similar critique to that which is leveled by Benjamin that all works that rely on reproduction change “the reaction of the masses towards the art” (Benjamin 234). If a work is meant to appeal to the masses, as a mode of advertising or documentation, the work is viewed differently then when the artist is making the work for themselves or a small audience, with the onus to view and appreciate the work is put on the masses.

For Benjamin, reproduced art is viewed differently than singular, original works. A painting in a gallery will be more effective than a reproduction in a magazine or book. Photography, by these very terms, is always reproduced, from frame to negative to print, and cannot have the aura of the scene depicted. Unlike lithography and printing-presses,

photography, “for the first time, the process of pictorial reproduction... freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens” (Benjamin 219). Here, Benjamin is starting to criticize the way in which a reproduction affects the Value of the work. The “hand is freed” by the camera and one merely relies on the ability to look through a lense to capture a representation of reality. Thereby, an important artistic function is lost. Visual arts prior to photography required a creative reinterpretation of what the artist sees, the lens of the eye less reliable than that of the camera. The translation from sight to hand must run through the brain as an interpretive element. Yet, photography does this seeing for the artist. Photography in many ways marked the end of painting’s pursuit of realism because the photograph presents an approximate reality, both in terms of proportion and perspective, which cannot be disputed. Photography is evidence, whereas a painting is interpretive, depicting an artistic reaction to reality rather than reality itself.

Benjamin's discussion of photography immediately leads to an idyllic picture of the future of the consumption of art. Quoting French poet and essayist Paul Valery, Benjamin suggests that “Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand” (Benjamin 219). Even though television was fairly primitive when this work was published in 1936, this quote predicts the convenience of home entertainment systems. Cable TV and internet are modern utilities just as water, gas, and electricity, but their function is to provide amusement as compared to these more necessary creature comforts. Moreover, prophetically, control over the distribution of visual and auditory artwork into the home is managed by a simple movement of

the hand over a remote control which has the ability to change the art consumed and as well as controlling its appearance and disappearance by means of a power button. In fact, as of the 21st century, visual and auditory imagery is not only controlled by the hand, but is located in the hand. One is able to watch a film or listen to music from a phone, a tool which has extended the reproduction of art to the point of being able to take reproductions of artwork almost anywhere.

As previously mentioned, the fact that art has reached this stage of reproducibility is idyllic in the sense that a phone allows one to personally choose what artwork one carries at all times, as well as acting as a portal to view or hear almost any work of art at almost any time or place. Yet, there is undoubtedly something lost when one watches a movie on a phone. The screen is squished and the playback stops and starts unless one has access to an extremely high-speed internet connection. Experiencing a movie in a cinema offers so much more in the way of providing an experience that fills the visual and auditory field. The same can be said for viewing a work of visual art on the internet. One is removed from an up-close analysis, seeing the work as it has been originally embodied. This causes a degradation of the work of art through the reproduction and redistribution, a testament to the loss of an aura of which Benjamin attributes to technological advancement. Yet, does this same sort of degradation occur for recorded music when it is made available by means of reproduction?

Benjamin, mostly likely, would have thought that music would suffer the same fate as visual arts like photography and film. To this extent, Benjamin asserts that “even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (Benjamin 220). Although this lack is not defined as an aura just yet, one can see by this definition how the actual occurrence art relates to

the technological distribution and consumption of art. Even if a work is perfectly replicated, it still is a recreation without a time or place, without a unique occurrence of its own. If a work is everywhere, it does not have a presence unto itself, but is omnipresent. Therefore, work, in being reproduced, is removed from “the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership. The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction; changes of ownership are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original” (Benjamin 220). Herein, Benjamin is insisting that a reproduced work of art is without the history that makes a work of art itself. In a Heideggerian sense, the reproduced work of art is without an origin. The production does not have the defining characteristics of the original, in that it is a physical thing over time that changes hands. A picture of the *Mona Lisa* is available to everyone over the internet, on t-shirts, or even stationary, but the painting itself is in the Louvre and only as a visitor to the museum can one see the blemishes which have been sustained in the work’s paint over time, as well as, for example, how surprisingly small the portrait is. Moreover, there is a sense that being in the presence of the ‘real’ *Mona Lisa* affirms the existence of all the reproductions one has encountered. There is a history to the painting and those that view it are able to participate in the history. Everyone has seen the *Mona Lisa*, but only those who have viewed it in person have truly experienced the work and have been in the presence of its aura.

Can musical recordings, by comparison, ever be said to have such a distinct time and place? Some might say that recordings exist outside of time and space by the very fact that recorded music is not visible outside the medium (cd, vinyl, cylinder, or MP3) used to reproduce it and that now, as something digital, it can be accessed or taken anywhere at any time. Benjamin

was not writing at a time when this was the case in terms of the accessibility of music, but still addresses this accessibility explicitly by stating that “technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record... the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room” (Benjamin 220). Clearly, Benjamin is not denying the capabilities of the reproduction to be accessed. He is, however, suggesting that a mitigation of quality takes place between a performance of music and the recording of it. This was especially true at the time Benjamin was writing because there was a literal degradation which took place when the performance was put on wax and recreated in the living room. Thus, it makes sense for Benjamin to claim, even of music, that “the presence of the original--” the performance-- “is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity” (Benjamin 220) A recording was convenient and entertaining but, with recordings of the time, “the whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical – and, of course, not only technical – reproducibility” (Benjamin 220).

Can the same be said of the music that is recorded today? Even in punk parlance, people who record music are not inauthentic by default. There is no direct scrutiny of artists recording in general. Music-making, for many music-makers, is a process of music production and inevitable reproduction. Still, in terms of recorded music, Benjamin’s argument about the aura and authenticity is comprehensible in relation to the era in which he was writing. Recorded music would not have been spatial or temporal in same sense that a concert happens at a time and a place, and the quality of the music was audibly worsened in the reproduction. Yet, the modern album does not necessarily capture a live performance. Recording technology has allowed songs

to be recorded in bits and pieces, at a far higher quality than ever, and with an unlimited amount of overdubs to supplement what is never possible to capture live. Therefore, the recording often sounds better than the live performance-- the levels are mastered and a performer can repeatedly record a section until the take is perfect. In this way, the recording assumes the role of the original and subsequent performances of recorded material try to replicate the recording, actively becoming the reproduction. The Beatles went so far as to choose to never perform live as a group once the recordings became impossible to recreate in the open air of a stadium. Benjamin probably could not have foreseen the paradigm shift of recorded music assuming the role of the original, but, retrospectively, one can examine the way in which music has conquered some of the problems related to art in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Having pieced together that which gives recorded music a time and a place, one is able to address the authority and aura of recorded music can have. Explicitly, one can see that a musical recording has a time and a place insofar as an album is recorded somewhere and over some period of time. Both the time taken and the space in which it was recorded are made present when one listens back to the recording. Every room adds an ambiance, a specific resonance and reflection. Each studio contains a unique combination of equipment (instruments, interfaces, compressors, consoles) that influences how the music turns out. Moreover, the duration of the recording process is generally reflected in the way the music sounds, whether it was rushed, over-produced, or perfectly executed. Recorded music does have an explicit character in time and space; it is not a reproduction of a moment, but is the amalgamation of all the time and space occupied by those people and things that are required to ultimately produce the record. It is this original entity which becomes transmissible through reproduction. Benjamin states that “the

authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced” (Benjamin 221). In this sense, a musical recording is a testament, a transmission of an essence existing from the beginning of the recording process to the end, a fulfillment of an origin. This explicitly differentiates music from traditional arts which contain their history in their physical presence. Instead, music captures and reproduces the history and happening which came before it, amalgamating in what is eventually heard and distributed. This happening is reproduced, yes, but the original is perfectly preserved, in so far as what one hears the unique time and place the music-maker found to record it.

How does the claim that the aura of recorded music can be preserved then relate to a way in which one might ultimately define the Value of music? One must address the way in which Benjamin brings his own uses of ‘value’ into the conversation. Specifically, Benjamin states that “works of art are received and valued on different planes” (Benjamin 224). Although Benjamin is concerned with aura as a source of Value primarily, he is also cognisant of economic, aesthetic, and even metaphysical valuations which lead to the general assumption that Value might ultimately be subjective. Benjamin keeps the conversation around the Value of music alive despite the different ways in which Value, as a term, is used. Particularly, Benjamin is concerned with two predominant and polarized types of value - ‘cult’ and ‘exhibition’ - which come to represent and influence an individual’s valuations. Neither cult nor exhibition value provide a full explanation of the Value my investigation. attempts define. Instead, these terms function as alternative narratives to the sort of Value which has been previously associated with Heidegger and Marx.

Benjamin initially asserts that all art originated in terms of ritual and, thereby, all art is indebted to its 'cult' value. Specifically, he states that "artistic production begins with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult" (Benjamin 224). This position is perhaps drawn from uncited historical evidence that all early works of art are in some way religious, but the power of the statement should not be mitigated because it lacks a specific source. In stating that artistic production is ceremonial is merely an acknowledgement that early artists were not motivated to make art because of a market, or because they knew what 'art' was. Instead, the ceremonial element speaks to Kant's theory of disinterest, in that early instances of works of art began out of the need to produce a representation of their world, not create an object that has a physical or tangible purpose. One might argue that certain crafts like pottery and woven objects have a practical function and maintain aesthetically pleasing elements, but these objects have only become art because they have retrospectively been put on display and denied their natural context. It is only those works that are purely ornamental that can be said to have *cult* value and understood as works of art for the sake of themselves. Benjamin goes on to state that "one may assume that what mattered was their existence, not their being in view" (Benjamin 225). Thereby, the cult value can be understood as having an aspect of faith attached to it. Possessing or even being in the presence of the work of art does not add or subtract from the cult value the object is thought to embody. The cult value is instead closer to the origin of the work, nearly inherent, and even an audience is brought into the evaluation.

The way that Benjamin discusses cult value may seem removed from the secular art world with which one is familiar. The idea that a work of art could ever have a value without being seen seems more like a post-modern conceptual frame for conceiving a new work rather

than a commentary on how art is actually valued. What about the ‘cult classic’? Benjamin is not wrong in stating that “today the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden” (Benjamin 225). There are many individuals who obsess over obscurity. In fact, when an artist exceeds a cult following, individuals are quick to criticize an artist they enjoy for betraying their roots in the underground. The internet has allowed for an increased ability to consume works of art by outsiders and amateurs, but as buzz builds, these artists have opportunities to break into the mainstream and possibly make money off of their artistic labor. Is cult value so unquestionably pure that the term ‘sell-out’ is anything but a backhanded compliment deserved of a successful musical career?

How does cult contribute to the developing definition of the Value of music as a whole? There is Value in the work of art which is believed to have value in the context of a ritual, as something disinterested and purposeless outside of its creation and subsequent ceremonial involvement, but what can be said for a work which is meant for the world to see? How might reproduction assist or affect its exhibition and the value associated therewith? As Benjamin states, “with the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of the products” (Benjamin 225). A work of art must navigate a trade-off between cult value to exhibition value. Once the work is removed from its natural context, it is reevaluated *en masse*, no longer valuable because *it is at all*, but instead the value becomes factored into how it is displayed, perceived, and discussed.

Benjamin might have qualms with exhibition value on the same grounds that I proposed aesthetic value often becomes equated with economic value. Insofar as something is beautiful because it is thought of as beautiful, this beauty begins to become reflected in the price tag

attached to the work or in the gallery displaying the work. In this way, the art world begins to shut itself off from the origin of the work, recontextualization and explaining why the work is on display at all rather than allowing the work to speak for itself. Exhibition value does away with ritual value not only if the artist intends for the work to be exhibited, but if a curator takes the time to exhibit it, regardless of original intention.

Can music-makers possibly escape this paradigm? There are music-makers as hobbyists and music makers who might perform only with a religious, ceremonial purpose, but as long as there is an audience at all, the music is exhibited. Moreover, it is only in the exhibition of music that an individual can form an opinion about it, an opinion which is the starting point for valuation. I cannot find Value in a work of music which I have not heard. This is not to say that music that I have not heard is not valuable, but that declarations of Value can only arise out of perception on the part of the listener. In these terms, the songs that I write and are never heard by anyone else have Value in my hearing them, as a part of the ritual of their creation, but this Value only becomes apparent once I choose to exhibit my work. Therefore, it is clear that the Value of music is dependent on the cult, faith, or ceremony that inspires the making of the music, but also requires exhibition for this Value to resonate on a larger level. The technology surrounding modern reproduction of music, therefore, has only further enabled the transition from cult to exhibition, giving the means of production back to the artist, so that they can create work on their own and this work can enter the world to be appreciated or criticized, developing its Value.

Music making has Value because people become invested in making and consuming it. Cult value is built by means of investment and often leads to wider reproducibility and

exhibition. In order for music to have Value, it needs to resonate on the level of cult appreciation by the artist who makes it for themselves, but the social aspect of value is in its exhibition and reproduction. It is impossible to comment on the devaluation of reproduced music since what is known as music is that which is produced and reproduced. There are those who insist that one cannot appreciate the recorded material of certain artists without seeing them live, without participating in the ritualism of their performance. Yet, recorded music is an artform in itself. It is the only means music-makers have to profit off their work without being present (as in a performance) and this lack of presence does guarantee an inferior experience. There are as many artists who are disappointing in their live performance, relying on the power of the studio to improve their artistic output. Call it inauthentic, but I believe music has value on and off the stage, in and out of the studio, and this Value is ultimately confirmed insofar as people listen and appreciate the music, regardless of context. It would have been impossible for Benjamin to anticipate the extent to which musical reproduction has developed over the course of a century, yet his comments about aura and value still prove useful in defining the greater Value of music.

Conclusion

Music of Value

What can be concluded about the Value of music? This project has thus far offered a way of looking at the production and consumption of the arts as defining something called Value. Moreover, music has been made the subject of a metaphysical examination as a means of connecting value, as an economic and aesthetic term, to Value as the primordial function of art upon which any subsequent valuations can be made. The term “Value,” however, has remained approximate up to this point. I have managed to talk about Value without providing a definition

which satisfies the constraints that have been placed around it. Therefore, the concluding section of this project will attempt to reexamine the constraints put on the perceived and inherent Value of music over the previous three chapters.

In defining the Value of music, this project began by examining the way the term Value is used most casually, i.e. as economic value. The reason for beginning with economic value stems from the fact that the Value of a commodity is most explicit when it is considered in terms of the price tag attached to it. Before the greater importance or function of the commodity is considered, there are certain financial constraints which guide the market value of a commodity towards a standardized price or equilibrium. This is not to say, however, that Value is something that can be standardized, but instead that there is a greater social interaction that sets the price of a commodity that lacks a consideration of the subjective worth. In this way, economic value is made to seem like something objective and hints that there may be an aspect of Value which has an objective quality. The standardized price is arrived at, specifically, by means of an interaction between the producers willingness to accept the given price for the object and the buyers willingness to pay this price. Both willingness to accept and the willingness to pay, however, are independently determined, making the objective nature of this equilibrium subject to the valuations of the independent, and possibly subjective, parties of producer and consumer.

Out of the interaction between producer and consumer, Marx provides two conflicting terms that demonstrate the way in which economic value can be subdivided into use-value and exchange-value. Use-value is equated to the benefit which the commodity offers to the consumer through its purchase, and continues to preserve a subjective facet of value that economic value lacks. Marx's discussion of use-value tends to avoid the complexity that subjective use

introduces, instead letting use-value come to represent that substantial content of wealth that the commodity can possess, a wealth which is inevitably affected by exchange-value. Ultimately, both exchange-value and use-value become subservient to a third factor, i.e. money-- which dictates how much it cost to produce the commodity and how this production cost either is or is not affordable to those who might want to purchase it. To this extent, one must bring labor into the conversation, because ultimately one's labor both produces and provides the opportunity to purchase the commodity.

It, therefore, would seem that any conversation about Value must include a conversation about the labor of the producer. In terms of music, this means one must question whether or not music-makers are being properly compensated for their creative work or if the capitalist system of commodification can ever properly reward the artist. Music is more often than not produced, purchased, and consumed out of some sort of subjective appreciation and the price music is given in the market is a result of undercutting in the face of the seemingly objective nature of capitalism. Unlike other art forms like painting and sculpture which are brought to auction and are sold to the highest bidder at a given price, music, in its digital form, does not have an object which can be bought. One could foresee a famous guitarists ax sold in such a manner, but the music made by that instrument is not embodied in an auctionable object. While music is treated as a commodity, it does not resemble a commodity, both out of its immateriality as sonic wavelengths and as something which has been digitized and made infinitely reproducible in the digital age. Thus, economic value falls short of accounting for the entire Value of music insofar as it avoids dealing with subjectivity as a consideration of Value and that the economic value of music more often than not fails the music-maker as laborer.

As economic value proves itself to be devaluing, the relationship of the music-maker to music-made reveals itself as an important starting point for looking at why there is still music-making despite the grim financial outlook. How is Value preserved while economic value fails? In my reading of Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Value is described as an attribute inherently found within any work of art. Just as there can be no work of art without an artist working, there can be no discussion of value, economic, aesthetic, or otherwise, without Value bracketing these terms. Art, artist, and the work of art are all interdependently connected to the origin of the work. No work of art could be a work of art without something called art and an artist to do the working, establishing the 'from' and 'by which' Value is subsequently developed. The work of art is thought to be valuable from the perspective of consumers and artists who find the work done to be valuable, giving credence to the Value inherent in it. Only in the relationship between artist and observer are differing valuations (see: economic, aesthetic) developed. Value must, prior to these distinction, exist for there to be any subsequent valuations to be considered.

Heidegger is establishing the grounds for the need for a term like Value rather than attempting to define it. The closest that Heidegger gets to talking about the Value of art, however, is in his statement that a work of art comes to represent a "happening of truth". Specifically, Heidegger describes how a temple, as an example of a work of art, serves the dual function of being "grounded in the earth" and "jutting through the world" (Heidegger 54). Although earth and world are only proximally defined in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, these terms address both the immaterial and the material. Earth, in this context, is the basis upon which the temple can stand. It is the solid basis which makes the construction of the temple possible.

Moreover, the earth represents the time and place in which the art *is*-- a physical foundation. Yet, the work of art also must “jut through the world” for truth to happen. Thus, the world comes to represent something immaterial or fabricated. It is common to say that society is a construct, but Heidegger goes so far as to say that the entire world with which one interacts and reacts is similarly constructed. Being *is*, at least on an everyday basis, a matter of being in the world and knowing what to expect from it. Thus, a work of art gets at something called truth by proposing something material that comments or causes observers to consider that which is immaterial, metaphysical, and primordial. In letting truth stand for value, one is offered a proximal approach to defining the Value of art and, therefore, the Value of music is in its profound capacity to access and comment upon *being* in general. One *is*, but one can *be* a lot of different ways. Art, for myself and Heidegger, provides a basis for being which is existentially resolute rather than misleading or inauthentic.

Heidegger, in my reading of his work, asserts that the Value of music is “the happening of truth,” revealing an authentic mode of being that acknowledges both the material and immaterial aspects of existence. Yet, with this definition arrives a constellation of questions surrounding music, among other art forms, as the optimal mode for relaying or embodying this Value. As Walter Benjamin demonstrates over the course of *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, there is potentially a loss of truth, authenticity, and Value under the current standards by which music is produced and consumed. Under Benjamin’s consideration, the reproduction of works of art specifically causes a degradation of the Value of the work. This assertion makes the most sense in relation to visual works of art, reproductions of which became widely distributed with the introduction of photography at the end of the 20th century. There are

few that would contest that photographs of paintings are themselves as potent as those works which they attempt to reproduce. A picture of a Picasso in a magazine, postcard, or website lacks the physical presence that original work alone embodies. In terms of Heidegger, reproductions are merely products of the world, in the world, and their relationship to the earth is abstract if not entirely absent.

Music, however, relates to Benjamin's claims in an interesting way. If reproductions are thought to lack the Value that the original work might establish, then music-making in the modern age would be considered entirely valueless. There are certain music-makers who do not record their works, either embracing the performative aspect of the medium exclusively or unperturbed over the idea that no one will ever hear the music they make. Yet, most music-makers write and record songs. These recordings of songs are then put onto the internet and some physical medium like CD, tape, or vinyl. In this way, the very recording of a song is the means to the reproduction thereof. Because of the economic complications that music faces being mostly removed from a physical commodity, the music-maker must rely on selling a great number of these reproductions in order to potentially recoup the costs of making it, if not sustain a living by means of selling these reproductions. Therefore, Benjamin might be critical of music-makers for relying so heavily on reproduction as the *modus operandi* by which subsistence can be maintained, but there is no way around it. Music-makers must be conscious as to how reproductions of their work can affect the perceived Value, but there is nothing about reproduction in itself which strips music of its Value. In fact, music may very well be the best example of how Value is accumulated by means of reproduction as a fan-base is built far and wide only because reproductions provide disembodied access to the work.

Ultimately, perhaps the best way of distilling my definition of the Value of music is to apply this value to an artistic medium that shares a number of key similarities with music-making-- writing. Writing has been a business for a long time and the price of books has fluctuated greatly since the first manuscripts were penned. This does not, however, mean that writing itself has suffered or increased in Value as a creative act. At the end of the day, writing is about the proposed knowledge that the book might contain. It is not a matter of whether or not the book sells, but if the content of the book is worth reading in the first place. By these means, reproductions of written works cannot be said to contain any less knowledge than the first manuscript the author submitted to their publisher. The publishing and distribution of the work is, perhaps, the only way that this knowledge could ever have been disseminated. Much like the music industry, publishing companies are worried about the misplaced powers of reproduction. While these companies historically profited from writing, self-publishing and eBook piracy are now blamed for the decreasing margin of profit possible. Again, these concerns are economically driven . There is not a question as to whether or not people will continue to write for the sake of imparting knowledge. The question is if the industry which traditionally supported writers will continue to exist and if this industry has ever really supported writers at all.

Thus, neither the Value of writing nor the Value music is not measured by a number on a sales sheet. The Value of music is something like knowledge, from which one learns learned. The Value of music is in its ability to say something true about the world and this truth might be affected by reproduction or misrepresentation, but cannot be destroyed. The Value of music is in the doing, the playing, the hearing, the recording, the production, and the performance. When I think about a post-capitalist society, a post-industrial society, a post-internet-society, people will

continue to make music for the sake of the music being made because the artist finds Value in it and because someone else might hear it and find Value in it too. Music is a means of communication, and it is only once one understands Value, distinct from economics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and ritual, that one can fully focus on what the music communicates.

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