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Of Discourse On *World Music*

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SURPLUS VALUE
MUSICOLOGY AND ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN THE FIELD
OF DISCOURSE ON *WORLD MUSIC*

Abstract: In short discussion that will follow, I will perform two characteristic interpretative steps. The first one will focuss on the comparative research of the status and function of musicology and ethnomusicology in relation to the music as social practice. The second one I will interprete the specific musical practice, as *World Music*, in relation to the schemes that I came upon in the first part of my discussion. Term *World Music* has, frekwently, three uses: (1) *World Music* is collective term for different kind of music that include into the collective field of musical creativity by different people in the world, the term is analoguous to the term *world painting*, or *world literature*: (2) *World Music* is a term for 'world of music', which means the contextual frame of meaning, knowledge, understanding, and identifications through which the musical work of art appears in its complexity, the term is analogouos to Arthur C. Danto's term *artworld*; and (3) *World Music* denotes genre or transgenre or polygenre of popular music, which is based on Western interpretation of *folk* (authentic, neo or post-folk) non-European or non-high artistic and non-popular-urban-mass (rock and pop) musical models and Western *tradicions*. Term *World Music* is most frequently used in the third sence as genre, transgenre or polygenre of popular music.

In the following brief treatise I shall take two characteristic interpretative steps. The first step will be aimed at a parallel re-examination of the status and functions of musicology and ethnomusicology with regard to music as a social practice. In the second step I shall interpret a specific music practice, such as *World Music*, in terms of the schemes I have arrived at in the first part of the text.

FOUR ISSUES FOR APPROACHING MUSIC

Every kind of music is political in that it is the social practice of producing, exchanging and consuming *surplus value* in specific and global socially synchronous and diachronic structures. Hence one of the defining questions about music is what kind of *social surplus value* is music. In a quite simplified form, the following issues can be raised:

1. Is music a re-*flection* of society?
2. Is music an *expression* of society?
3. Is music a *construct* of society?
4. Is music a *symptom* of society?

1. Proceeding from the answer that music is a re-*flection* of society gives rise to an interpretative model according to which society already exists and music reflects (describes, represents or identifies) society for an individual or another society. It has been pointed out that music is "from" society and "for" society. If this

is the case, then we are focused on the concept of society as a *source* or initial pattern for developing the representative or identifying potentialities of music. Music is seen as an *auditory image* or *auditory representative* of an already existing society or of characteristic social *apparatuses* of society (ideology, identity, religion, customs, everyday life, etc.). The truth of music is the truth of society; hence, if music truthfully (whatever that might mean) represents society or its apparatuses, it is the authentic music of that society or those social apparatuses.

Referring to musicology and ethnomusicology as sciences or theories by means of which music from the West is interpreted, we will notice that they assume an asymmetrical attitude towards music as a re-*flection* of society. Ethnomusicology is constituted and developed around the idea of music as the authentic representative of micro- or macro-society, that is, social apparatuses – searching for music as the truth of society and through societies of the real or ideal or individual and collective subject of everyday life. Ethnomusicology formulates the truth of music as the truth of society, thus defining truth from the context of ethnology, sociology, theory of culture or culture studies. On the other hand, musicology as a science or theory about Western artistic music (for example, from Adler to phenomenological musicology to musicology based on New Criticism) shifts scientific and theoretical attention from the re-*flection* of society and social apparatuses towards the re-*flection* of an exceptional subject (author, artist, musician or even *genius*) who by his creative composing, conducting or performing act transcends concrete social conditions and circumstances, creating a theoretical analytic-synthetic image of the *universal* as *transcultural*, albeit Eurocentric, *aesthetic object*. The truth of music as a work of art is the truth of an authentic Western subject which transcends a concrete historical moment and geographical space, establishing itself as creative excess or as a shift of the collective into the individual act for which the historical-social context represents merely a needed, though not necessarily an important narrative setting of sorts. Here truth is quite explicitly defined in accordance with Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology: "Truth is the conspicuousness of the being as a being. Truth is the truth of the entity. Beauty does not appear beside this truth. If truth is incorporated into the work, it appears. Appearance is like this entity of truth in the work and like the work – beauty. Hence beauty belongs to the occurrence of truth."[1]

The cultural collective *artefact* is indexed and specified in ethnomusicology as the truth of society. This *artefact* is then judged or verified, which means interpreted, as a valuable work of art according to criteria established by musicology and music aesthetics. This means the *artefact of culture* is interpreted and thereby valued according to the universalizing criteria of aesthetic judgment in Western art. This metaphysically shows that the artist (the idealized individual in musicology or the hypothetical collective represented as individual text in ethnomusicology) is the source of the work, and that the work is the source of the artist.[2] In that sense musicology is indeed metaphysical-aesthetical in its starting points and results,

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[1] Martin Heidegger, "Izvor umjetničkog djela", from: Danilo Pejović (ed.), *Nova filozofija umjetnosti – Antologija tekstova*, Nakladni zavod MH, Zagreb, 1972, p. 487.
[2] Martin Heidegger, p. 448.

while ethnomusicology transforms ethnological, sociological or culture-oriented criteria into metaphysical-aesthetical judgements and interpretations of the work.

2. Proceeding from the response that music is a *reflection* of society gives rise to an interpretative model according to which society already exists and music *expresses* and becomes an auditory *vestige* of social events. Namely, music as the *vestige* of society can represent society. The concept of *vestige* is contrary to the concept of *image* (*vestigium* as opposed to *imago*). A *vestige* is a trace – that which bears witness to the absent, past, postponed: to that which occurred. The aim is to demonstrate that music is in some kind of direct or indirect cause-and-effect relationship with society. Society is inscribed in music *through* a historical individual author or a hypothetical collective author, and music is the concrete material *vestige* of social practice and its technologies of deriving music. Music is not the image of society, but rather an expression of society: that means performing the music of leaving the *vestige* of society in the acoustic field of individual and social potential. For example, Theodor W. Adorno in the *Philosophy of Modern Music* advances a relevant thesis: "While works of art almost never imitate society and moreover, their authors do not need to know anything about it, the gestures of works of art are objective answers to objective social constellations, sometimes adjusted to the needs of the consumer, more frequently in constant contradiction with them, but never sufficiently modified for their taste… A work of art does not reflect society in that it will solve its questions, not even in that it will choose the questions themselves. However, it is astounded at the horror of history. It now insists, now forgets. It now softens, now hardens. It perseveres or renounces itself in order to outwit destiny. The objectivity of a work of art is the fixing of those moments. Works of art are like a child's grimacing that prolongs as the clock ticks away."[3] The *vestige* is an inverse potentiality. It is as if the *vestige* leads backwards in time to a society that inscribed itself and then passed by or went on leaving further *vestiges* on the already present – elusive – vestiges of inscribing social apparatuses in music.

Being sociologically[4] oriented, musicology and ethnomusicology proceed from the idea of a causal relationship between society and music. One might say, colloquially: *like society, like music.*[5] Ethnomusicology is directed at synchronically oriented societies, most often micro-social systems, in which the *social function of music* is primary or directly visible in everyday life – from everyday behaviour, ritual and ceremony to entertainment. Models are established demonstrating direct correlation between the social and musical chains of real or hypothetical causality. Musicology is analytically-synthetically directed at

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[3] Theodor W. Adorno, *Filozofija nove nauke*, Nolit, Belgrade, 1968, p. 154.
[4] Kurt Blaukopf, "Glasbe kot tipi družbene dejavnosti", in: "Cilj sociologije glasbe", from *Glasba v družbenih spremembah – Temeljne poteze sociologije glasbe*, Škuc – Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete (Studio humanitatis), Ljubljana, 1993, pp. 13-14.
[5] Numerous studies on music during the Weimar Republic or Nazi Germany are trying to locate the causal chain between music and society precisely on the drastic examples of social processes and music practices: Bryan Gilliam, *Music and Performance During the Weimar Republic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994 and Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.

Western rational diachronically stretching societies and uncertain, *irrational institutions*[6] within them. That is, societies creating specific *territories* are studied. These *territories* seem or are represented, interpreted, valued, even made into a personal experience, as autonomous regions freed from social functions. Adorno's idea about the function of Western, bourgeois, absolute music being functionless[7] actually identifies a specific historically and geographically located society within which the *autonomy of music creation* is formed in relation to productive work and life-giving demands. Such a society is a Western bourgeois society which establishes a rational system of division of labour and social institutions, and then sets up relevant apparatuses of regulation and deregulation, that is, control[8] of leisure[9] through institutions of *irrationality*, that is to say, institutions of shaping leisure as a space that compensates for working time with enjoyment, relaxation, liberation – incited, albeit controlled, through irrationality. Hence musicology deals with secondary or second-degree functions. The functions of a music work or music are moved, they are indirect: shifted from the executive function of a music work as in musicology to the hidden functions of music as a social practice.

3. Proceeding from the answer that music is a *construct* of society gives rise to an interpretative model according to which society does not precede music, but rather music and society are in a complex inter-constitutive relationship. Music is represented not as a re-*flection* or expression of society, but as one of the *apparatuses* of micro- or macro-society that are used to perform social reality, more precisely the complex ideas of social reality with which society and the subject in society are identified. Music is, therefore, identified as the *apparatus* or instrument of ideology.[10] If music is an *ideological apparatus*, then it is not a secondary (superstructural, passive) social practice, but a practice that represents *productive forces* and *existential relations of social production*.[11] For example, the difference between Bach's[12] and Glass's[13] music is the difference between representing the *productive forces* of late feudal Baroque society and the *productive forces* of late capitalist multicultural society. It is a difference between ideologies in the sense in which Louis Althusser states that (1) there is no other practice save the one 'from' and 'in' ideology, and that (2) there is no other ideology save the one from the subject and for the subject.[14] In that sense music is

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[6] Mladen Dolar, "Strel sredi koncerta", from: Theodor W. Adorno, *Uvod v sociologijo glasbe*, DZS, Ljubljana, 1985, p. 303.

[7] Theodor W. Adorno, "Funkcija", from: *Uvod v sociologijo glasbe*, DZS, Ljubljana, 1985, p. 303.

[8] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", from: Rosalind Krauss, Annette Michelson, etc. (eds.), *October – The Second Decade, 1986-1996*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Mass, 1997, pp. 443-447.

[9] Guy Debord, *Društvo spektakla & Komentari društva spektakla*, Arkzin, Zagreb, 1999; and Džon Fisk, *Popularna kultura*, Clio, Belgrade, 2001.

[10] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)", from: Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *Mapping Ideology*, Verso, London, 1995, pp. 100-140.

[11] Louis Althusser, p. 101.

[12] Boris de Šlezer, *Uvod u J. S. Baha – Ogled iz muzičke estetike*, IK Zorana Stanojevića, Sremski Karlovci, 1996.

[13] Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *Writings on Glass – Essays Interviewing Criticism*, Schirmer Books, New York, 1997.

[14] Louis Althusser, p. 128.

indeed one of the *technologies of performing subjects*[15], human bodies even. The body of Bach's culture is a Christian ceasing-feudal and arising-urban body, derived from a project of a transcendental order. The body of Glass's epoch is an urban nomadic body determined by the media instabilities of representation and by relatively open multicultural policies of (racial, ethnic, gender, class) identity. Music as the technology of performing subjects/bodies is simultaneously (a) an ambience full of meanings and senses in the body's becoming a subject[16], (b) *discursive practice*[17] that participates in the positioning of the relationships between music, body, subject and society as systems of articulation of knowledge and powers, and (c) a classification of the potentialities of the effects of music *apparatuses* of representation (ideas, expressions, constructions) that determine or realize the ideology[18] of an epoch or cultural space. From the positions thus represented, musicology and ethnomusicology are growing very close to each other, seeing as they no longer contemplate and study different incomparable music systems, but perform culture-centred models of interpretation of the heterogeneous field of multiplicity of musical as social practices. Artistic, ritually religious, ceremonially political, mass media or everyday popular music are different systems for heterogeneously instrumenting the articulation of a body/subject in a field of multiple social identifications (from racial and ethnic to class and gender, generational and professional).

4. Proceeding from the answer that music is a *symptom* of society, a model is placed close to theoretical psychoanalysis according to which music is interpreted as a defect of symbolization in the social processes of producing, exchanging and consuming cultural surplus value, that is, existential or esthetical identity. Music, and chiefly absolute music, is the interruption[19] or discontinuity in the symbolic – primarily verbal – region of social representation. Music emerges as the centre of opacity in the technologies of culturally redesigning reality, that is, ideological screens by which reality is established as the surrounding human world. For example, we can understand or appraise a fiction film, mimetic painting or realistic novel based on analogies of the meaning of the narrative to everyday experience[20]; on the other hand, music *itself* is a slipping out of a phantasmic structure which is reconstructed on the basis of an experience from everyday life. Music, yet again, starts to seem like a *senseless vestige*[21] that can be reconstructed only retroactively, by attributing meaning or directive sense, whereby this attributing of meaning cancels *it* (music), transforming it

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[15] Michel Foucault, "The Birth of Biopolitics" and "On the Government of the Living", from: Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Michel Foucault – Ethics – Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, Penguin, London, 1997, pp. 73-79, 81-85.
[16] Richard Leppert, "Desire, Power and the Sonoric Landscape", from: *The Sight of Sound – Music, Representation and the History of the Body*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 15-41.
[17] Lawrence Kramer, "Tropes and Windows: An Outline of Musical Hermeneutics", from: *Music as Cultural Practice 1800–1900*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990, pp. 1-20.
[18] Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Developing Variations – Style and Ideology in Western Music*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1990 or Adam Krims, "Introduction: Postmodern Musical Poetics and the Problem of *Close Reading*", from: *Music/Ideology – Resisting the Aesthetic*, G+B ArtS International, Amsterdam, 1998, pp. 1-14.
[19] On the unspeakable-ness of music, see: Vladimir Jankelevič, *Muzika i neizrecivo*, Književna zajednica Novog Sada, Novi Sad, 1987.
[20] David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, Routledge, London, 1997.
[21] Slavoj Žižek, "Od simptoma do sinthoma – Dijalektika simptoma", from: *Sublimni objekt ideologije*, Arkzin, Zagreb, 2002, pp. 84-85 and 106-107.

into an approximate undetermined and most often quite arbitrary verbal statement that music eludes in its technical-sensory and corporeal-behavioural multiplicity of potentialities.

However, on the other hand, music is not a disinterested or abstract event in an ideal world of formal-technical demonstrations of skill, but precisely an everyday surrounding instrument determining the space of nonverbal interpellation and identification in the individual, micro-and macro-social sense. Music does not speak nor prove, but it does instrumentally participate in the performance of the *life space* that is indeed a constitutive ambience of production, exchange and consumption of cultural surplus value. If that is so, then the division between the unspeakable-ness of music and speakable justifications on behalf of music determines a critical place. It is a place where *the imaginary* (the acoustic imaginary) catches us in a trap by eluding the symbolic, which seems omnipresent. It is as if the symbolic is letting the possibility of interpreting music *slip*. Music is imbued by enjoyment that seems to promise sense (enjoying sense /*jouis-senseal*/). But that sense escapes us, although with each moment of its wrapping around our body it is promised and offered as the very nature of that body (which dances, marches, kisses, fantasizes, vows, serves, governs, licks, prays, arouses, threatens, leads, seduces, offers, punishes, chooses, votes, shows, accepts and, most of all, consumes[22]).

WORLD MUSIC as SURPLUS VALUE

The term *World Music* most commonly has three uses: (1) *World Music* is a collective name for different kinds of music that are incorporated into a collective field of the music production of humankind; the term is used analogously with the term *world painting* or *world literature*, (2) *World Music* is a name for the 'world of music', meaning the contextual framework of meaning, knowledge, understanding and identification through which a music work appears in all its complexity; the term is used analogously with Arthur C. Danto's term 'artworld'[23], and (3) *World Music* is a name for a genre or transgenre or polygenre[24] of popular music which is based on Western interpretation of *folk* (authentic, neo- or post-folk) extra-European or extra-high artistic and extra-popular-urban-mass (rock and pop) music models and *traditions* of the West. The term *World Music* is most frequently used in this third sense as a genre, transgenre or polygenre of popular music.

We speak of *World Music* as a genre when it is interpreted as a *branch* of contemporary Western or pro-Western popular music and when the hegemony of contemporary Western popular music is emphasized

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[22] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror – The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1988; and David Schwarz, "Music as Sonorous Envelope and Acoustic Mirror", from: *Listening Subjects – Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1997, pp. 7-22.

[23] Arthur C. Danto, "Artworld", from: Joseph Margolis (ed.), *Philosophy Looks at the Arts*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1987, pp. 141-167.

[24] David Byrne, "Zašto mrzim *World Music*", Đorđe Tomić, "*World Music*: formiranje transžanrovskog kanona", John Hutnyk, "Adorno na Womadu-u: južnoazijski crossover i granice govora hibridnosti", Steven Feld, "Od šizofrenije do šizmogeneze: *World Music* i *World Beat* kao diskursi i prakse komodifikacije", Mirjana Laušević, "Biranje nasleđa: zašto Amerikanci pevaju pesme sa Balkana", *Reč*, no. 65, Belgrade, 2002, pp. 309-402.

as opposed to traditional or post-traditional non-Western music. We speak of *World Music* as a transgenre when it is interpreted as a discipline of transition from traditional popular music of extra-European or marginal European cultures to Western mass media music. We speak of it as a polygenre when pointing out the many directions of moving from extra-Western musics to Western music, as well as from Western to extra-Western musics.

I would not be inclined to regard *World Music* as a re-*flection* or expression of society, but rather as an instrument of constructing society, seeing as *this* music originates not in the cultural atmosphere of the autonomies of music production, but in the obvious practice of performing politically determined globalizing reality. It might, perhaps, be in historic retrospect that we shall regard *World Music* as a re-*flection* or expression of today's society.

World Music can be interpreted as a music-construct of social reality at the point of transition from post-modern pluralism and its corresponding multiculturalism to a post-bloc period of establishing an empire.[25] We are referring to two great empires at the beginning of the 21st century: the USA and the EU. The empires are transforming the autonomous constituents of plural multicultural post-modernism of late capitalism and late socialism into filtered multiculturalism, meaning the presentation of autonomous (authentic /whatever that might mean/) identities by means of the discourse and media of Western mass culture. In that sense, *World Music* is a constituent of the *empire's* epoch reality because it proceeds from traditional or post-traditional kinds of music of extra-Western or marginal Western cultures and filters them through a media *arrangement* of Western popular mass and media music. *World Music* is a construct of the *new world* because it participates in performing the social reality of the *empire. World Music* is a symptom of the *new world* because it leads us into a nonverbal *wrapping* of reconstituted post-plural body: a body of multiplicity that realizes *it* (the Empire). It is at that moment, however, that *World Music* also becomes a symptom in which an obvious slipping of the global (which conceals the local) and the local (which makes the global *incomplete*) occurs in a preverbal or post-verbal way precisely on the music plane itself.

Translated by Dušan Zabrdac

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[25] Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Imperij*, Arkzin & Multimedijalni institut, Zagreb, 2003.