

...briefly on Produktionsmittel II...

What *Produktionsmittel II* brought to my body of work was the possibility of greater imagination. Ironically, it is possibly my least abstract work: it was written after the notes I took while reading Marx's *Das Kapital* in 2013. The piece comprises a simple and often linear narrative with clear beginning and end.

I had known some of Marx's oeuvre earlier, in particular the *Communist Manifesto*, but I now realize that the true discovery I made after tackling *Das Kapital* was not its theoretical analysis of capitalism, but the development of its literary form (i.e., *how* capitalism is scrutinized). David Harvey describes this particular facet of the work very eloquently:

Marx's method of inquiry starts with everything that exists—with reality as it's experienced, as well as with all available descriptions of that experience by political economists, philosophers, novelists and the like. He subjects that material to a rigorous criticism in order to discover some simple but powerful concepts that illuminate the way reality works. This is what he calls the method of descent—we proceed from the immediate reality around us, looking ever deeper for the concepts fundamental to that reality. Equipped with those fundamental concepts, we can begin working back to the surface—the method of ascent—and discover how deceiving the world of appearances can be. From this vantage, we are in a position to interpret that world in radically different terms.

Excerpt from "A Companion to Marx's Capital"

This going-back-and-forth between surface and depth has become one of the most powerful instruments that I have managed to produce in order to address not only the ramifications of my work as a composer, but also my life as a citizen of this planet. Still, this *life project* is a work-in-progress and I believe that I'm only scratching the surface of its latent possibilities; *Produktionsmittel II* (as well as the version for solo flute and electronics [PSI]) emerged as the first work of mine that deliberately contextualized this analytical framework into a musical paradigm.

Prior to 2014, I would primarily experiment with notation, sound, and structure. In retrospect, my work before *Produktionsmittel II* may be summarized as a series of etudes on the futility of formalism: it certainly led to some interesting results, but it was vague in its purpose; *it was aimless*. **My idea of freedom was embarrassingly limited**; I was merely toying with an illusion that was very real, though far from truthful. I was speculating—with intricate algorithms, postserial procedures, and so on—and, while I do not have anything against the mere act of speculating, I *really* didn't know why I was doing it. At best, I was trying to fulfill an instinct, which pointed to a rather visceral need to transcend the boundaries of my *Realitätsprinzip*.

What happened next was precious. The impact of *Produktionsmittel II* on me transmuted into a higher awareness of my surroundings. **"Transcending boundaries *without* recognizing what the boundaries are": that was the origin of the problem.** To some, this may appear to be obvious, but it wasn't for me. With a couple of exceptions, none of my education had trained me to operate according to this basic principle. And, in spite of what some may think, being able to generate musical work in response to (finally!) recognizable flawed traditionalisms has opened a wide palette of materials and procedures for me, far from the constraints that I used to take for granted. *...some things had always been impossible...*

I believe that I am now more capable of making music (and life; I do not differentiate them both very much) that is not as willing to recognize the inevitability of the impossible as it used to. One more (small) step towards liberation.

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