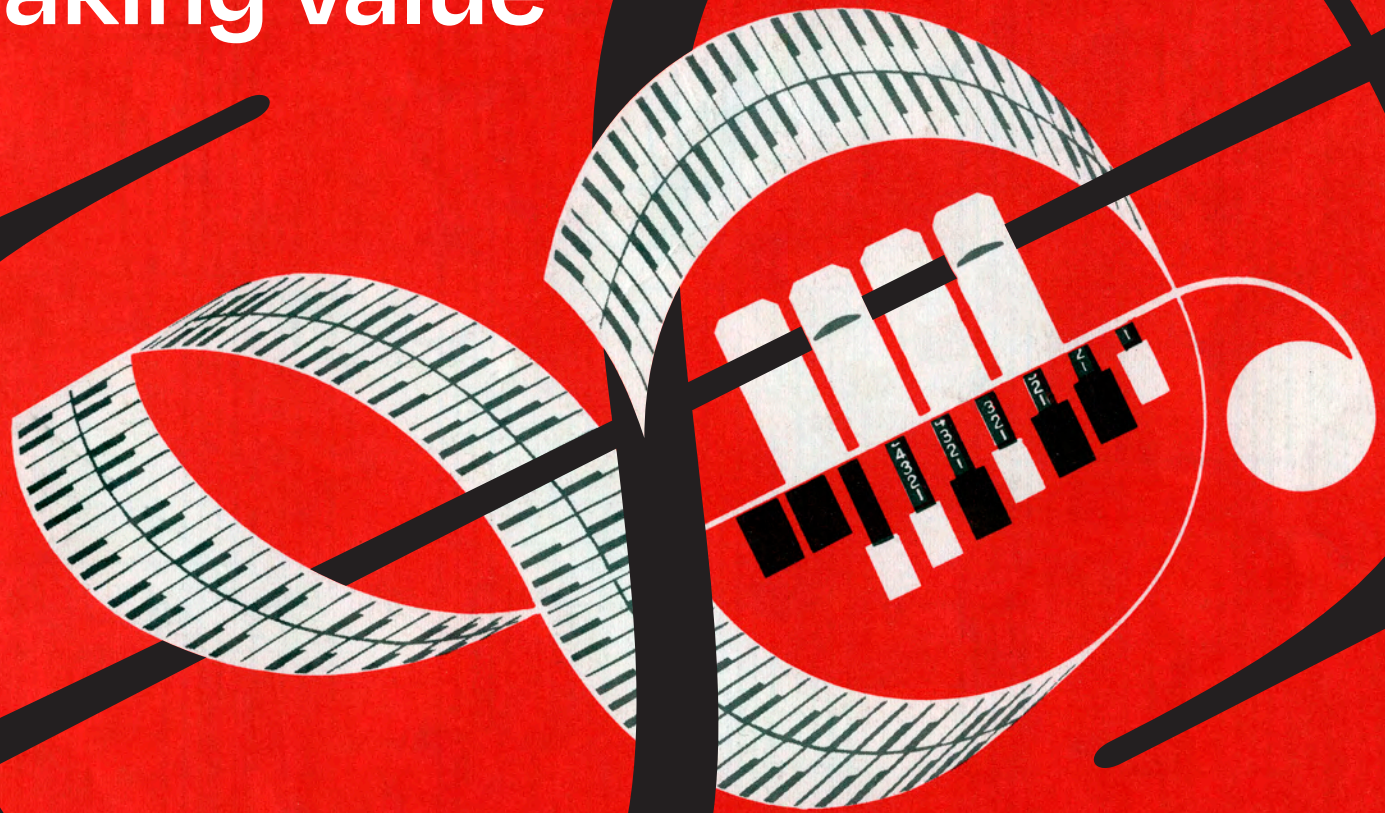
making value



TIMOTHY D. TAYLOR

music, capital, and the social

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DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Durham and London
2024

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Project Editor: Livia Tenzer
Designed by A. Mattson Gallagher
Typeset in Untitled Serif by Copperline Book Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Taylor, Timothy Dean, author.
Title: Making value : music, capital, and the social / Timothy D. Taylor.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2023033162 (print)
LCCN 2023033163 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478030355 (paperback)
ISBN 9781478026143 (hardcover)
ISBN 9781478059349 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Music—Economic aspects. | Music—Social aspects. | Music—Labor productivity—History. | Value. | BISAC: MUSIC / Ethnomusicology | SOCIAL SCIENCE / Anthropology / Cultural & Social
Classification: LCC ML3916 .T3905 2024 (print) | LCC ML3916 (ebook) | DDC 338.4/778—dc23/eng/20231103
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023033162
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023033163

Cover art: Illustration using "Treble Clef Musical Note with Keyboards," color lithograph, American school, 1946. Photo © GraphicaArtis/Bridgeman Images.

For Sherry

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some years ago, I asked Steve Feld to read something I had written, and he kindly obliged. The only comment I now remember was that while he thought what I had written was good, it would benefit from a reading of Fred Myers's introduction to his edited volume *Empire of Things*. I made a mental note but that's as far as it went. A while later, Steve again generously agreed to read something, and again he said that while what I had written was good, it would (also) benefit from reading Myers's introduction. Which I finally did. That was the beginning of my venture into anthropological value theory. So, first thanks go to Steve, as well as Fred, whose book, along with his monograph *Painting Culture*, have become essential texts.

I will let the existing acknowledgments in the publications collected in this volume stand, but I would like to thank, and in some cases rethank, people who have been helpful to me in the work collected here: Hannah Appel, Giorgio Biancorosso, Jessica Cattelino, Hauke Dorsch, Shannon Garland, Brent Luvaas, Louise Meintjes, Anna Morcom, David Novak, Ana-María Ochoa Gautier, Ron Radano, and Markus Verne. The previously unpublished chapters were auditioned at a couple of places, so I would like to thank the audience in the Music Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara, for offering comments on chapter 2, and the audience in the Department of Communication, Culture, and Media at Drexel University, which heard chapter 3.

Thanks also go to the anonymous reviewers of this manuscript. Sincerest thanks also go to Ken Wissoker at Duke University Press for his enthu-

siastic support of this book, as well as to others at the press: Kate Mullen, Chad Royal, and Livia Tenzer. I would also like to thank indexer Diana Witt.

I would like to express my gratitude to Shelina Brown, Erin Estrada, and Maya Gutierrez for transcribing interviews. Interviews and other ethnographic research for this book were approved by UCLA's Institutional Review Board (IRB 14-000223 and IRB 15-000426).

As always, deepest thanks go to Sherry B. Ortner, whose love, encouragement, sharp intellect, and critical eye I value more than anything else.

Introduction

Theorizing Value in Practice

This book collects some of my recent writings that draw on anthropological value theory in the study of cultural production and consumption. I first forayed into this territory in *Music and Capitalism* (2016b) and in the concluding chapter of *Music in the World* (2017), and I continued this line of inquiry in my most recent monograph, *Working Musicians* (2023), but these chapters flesh out my interest in value in greater breadth, depth, and detail, covering the creation and exchange of value in a wide range of contexts: an indie rock scene; an Irish traditional music session; supply chains as sites for the creation of not just capitalist but also other forms of value; the value-seeking and -creating practices of trendspotters; musical performance as a medium of value; the work of music managers; and more. The chapters not only offer ethnographic and historical treatments of various conceptions of value but also extend anthropological value theory into considerations of cultural production and consumption.

Why value theory? What people value shapes their actions as they promote and defend what they value against those who value something else, in a ceaseless social dynamic. Conceptions of value are everywhere, not just in the political or cosmological realms. As I argued in *Music in the World* (2017), focusing on value is a way of considering meaning, as urged by Clifford Geertz (1973)—that is, concentrating our attention on what is meaningful to the people we study. I view value as a variation of the idea of meaning, though broader, in that it includes "the economic" (where "meaning" tends to be more idealist). In an era when so many fields are internally fragmented, splintering, and moving in different directions, the example of Geertz—who provided no conceptual model other than this concern for meaningfulness for social actors—has not lost its utility nor been rendered passé, even if Geertz's influence isn't what it once was. Models come and go; meaningfulness does not.

Value Theory

Neither does value. There are various ways of considering the question of value. Marxists have debated the labor theory of value for, it seems, generations (e.g., Steedman et al. 1981). Humanists have contemplated how to value aesthetic works (Smith 1988 is probably the best-known example; see also Fekete 1987); Simon Frith's *Performing Rites* (1996) draws in part on this literature to wonder about value judgments in popular music. *Making Value*, however, is less concerned with consumption of works or value judgments about them and instead considers the production of value. I draw mainly on the anthropological literature on value, in which there have been two historical trajectories.[1] One stems from Karl Marx's writings on forms of capitalist value, and the other from Marcel Mauss's classic *The Gift* (2016), on gift exchange. Writings by anthropologists have tended to veer toward one or the other, viewing them as essentially dichotomous until fairly recently.

Marx famously argues that commodities have a dual character, the aspects of which he called "use-value," the utility of a thing, and "exchange-value," the amount of one commodity required to exchange for another. And there is the famous labor theory of value, the amount of "socially necessary" labor time required to produce a particular commodity. The addition of the phrase "socially necessary" is Marx's innovation, an advance on Adam Smith and David Ricardo that understands labor not simply in an abstract, calcu-

lable, rational way, but raises questions about what is socially necessary and who decides what is and isn't (see Harvey 2010). Marx isn't concerned with other sorts of value beyond these (as he was, according to Keith Hart,[2] playing a kind of intellectual game with Adam Smith in attempting to devise a science of capitalism). Nonetheless, Marx's tools continue to be powerful if one is concerned with conceptions of value produced in capitalist exchange.

Until fairly recently Mauss was usually seen as the antithesis of Marx, at least with respect to questions of value, but some anthropologists have offered readings that interpret his work in *The Gift* and beyond as providing a more capacious conception of the value of goods (Graeber 2001, and Hart 2014 in particular). These interpretations move beyond a fairly strict functionalist orientation (that gift giving and reciprocity bind societies together) to argue that Mauss recognized that all societies practice gift exchange, and at the same time, all societies employ something that could be considered to be exchanges with money. Rather than viewing Mauss as the non-Marx (or anti-Marx), David Graeber (2001), Hart (2014), and others see his work as encompassing both capitalist exchange and gift exchange and emphasize how Mauss viewed capitalism as engendering an extreme form of exchange that casts all of the other sorts in its shadow. Mauss in effect attempted to de-focus us on the commodity in order to throw into relief other forms of the production of value and its exchange.

I said earlier that Marx wasn't really concerned with conceptions of value other than capitalist forms, which in part explains why Mauss was seen for a time as offering a clear alternative. Others have explored the sorts of value that can be produced that aren't capitalist. A major advance was the intervention by feminist scholars who challenged the Marxian, patriarchal, notion that the labor performed by men outside the home, in factories that produced commodities, was productive (i.e., generative of surplus value for capitalists), while the labor performed by women in the home was unproductive, or merely "reproductive." J. K. Gibson-Graham (2006) and others argued for breaking down the capitalist–productive labor/noncapitalist–unproductive labor dichotomy and offered ways of thinking about how noncapitalist labor could be considered to produce value (see Bear et al., 2015). This perspective was influential on Graeber's (2001) theorization of the production of value as stemming not (merely) from what could considered productive labor, but from action more generally, a perspective that I have linked to Geertz's insistence on the importance of meaning to social actors and theorized as "meaningful action" (Taylor 2017).

Apart from feminist scholars and Graeber, probably the most influential author on the question of noncapitalist and nongift conceptions of value has been Arjun Appadurai, in his introduction to his edited volume *The Social Life of Things* (1986a), which advances the term "regimes of value" to describe the various sorts of value that social actors can devise and employ. Appadurai implicitly rejects Marx in favor of an approach derived from Georg Simmel in *The Philosophy of Money* (1990), which characterizes value as defined by an object's resistance to our desire to possess it (a position critiqued in Graeber 2001). This has been a useful move, for it allows for forms of value that Marx's labor theory of value, or even Graeber's expanded action theory of value, cannot, such as luxury goods (which Appadurai considers, drawing on Mukerji 1983 and Sombart 1967), and, as I have argued (Taylor 2017), artworks—two categories of goods that can be thought to possesses values that are seemingly irrational—unrelated to the amount of socially necessary labor time expended in their production—but more comprehensible in Simmel's and Appadurai's terms.

Following Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff (1986), subsequent anthropologists emphasized that goods have careers—that they can be placed in different regimes of value, and that these regimes can be short- or long-lived. I can purchase food as a commodity at my local grocery store, then cook a nice meal as a gift for my wife. Or a commodity can become an heirloom for a generation, then become a gift or a commodity again. And Anna Tsing (2015) has theorized how a good in a noncapitalist regime of value can be "translated" into a capitalist good.

Graeber was also deeply indebted to the writings of Terence Turner, some of which were unpublished but were in circulation among graduate students in the Anthropology Department at the University of Chicago, where Graeber earned his PhD. Graeber's 2001 book on value is essentially an extensive working out of a 1979 article by Turner, "Anthropology and the Politics of Indigenous Peoples' Struggles," which takes the encounter between native peoples and colonizers (or other intruders) to fashion an argument that moves beyond a binarized conception of the extinction or preservation of traditional ways of life. Turner argues instead for a more complex consideration of how dominated peoples can continue to practice and believe what they value from their own point of view, rather than regarding them as victims whose culture has seemingly been obliterated. An example for students of music would be the (common) adoption of Western instruments tuned in equal temperament, which would seem to eradicate

indigenous tuning systems—and may in fact do so. But this doesn't mean that indigenous peoples cannot and do not make music with Western instruments that is still meaningful to them, that still articulates what they value, musically, culturally, and socially.

Anthropological perspectives on value have continued to expand more recently, following not only Graeber but also Fred R. Myers (2001, 2002); Tsing (2015); and the authors included in a 2013 special double issue of *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, titled "Value as Theory" (Otto and Willerslev). In 2023 a special issue of *Economic Anthropology* titled "Value and Change, Value in Crisis" and a special issue of *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* titled "Infrastructures of Value" brought together new contributions to this field (Souleles, Archer, and Thaning; Lammer and Thiemann). The authors collected in these special issues and others have helped reinvigorate studies of value, building on some classic earlier publications (e.g., Gregory 2015; Munn 1992).

In addition to Graeber, this book is perhaps most indebted to Tsing, whose work has been the most influential on my own in recent years (see Taylor 2023). She has fruitfully combined Marxist, feminist, and other bodies of work into a bold and compelling interpretation of capitalism as global yet patchy, hegemonic yet not ubiquitous—theorizing how noncapitalist forms of value can be "translated" into capitalist forms, and how the workings of supply chains create value; analyzing the scalability (and nonscalability) of production; and offering still other critical perspectives that help us understand not only today's capitalism in the present but also how it came to be.

Value Theory in Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicological readers may recall that a classic in the field, David P. McAllester's *Enemy Way Music* (1954), participated in mid-twentieth-century anthropological conversations about value (the subtitle of his monograph is *A Study of Social and Esthetic Values as Seen in Navaho Music*). McAllester's book appeared in a series edited by anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn—the main driver of anthropological studies of value in this period—entitled "Reports of the Rimrock Project Values Series."

McAllester drew on Kluckhohn's work, clearly summarized by Florence Kluckhohn (Clyde's wife, also an anthropologist), who wrote with a collaborator that variation in "value orientation" was the most important type of cultural variation and thus the main feature in the structure of culture; they

clarify this point by equating value with meaning (which provides a link from Kluckhohn's work to his student Geertz): "The 'system of meanings' of a society, its ethos, is more realistically and adequately derived from an analysis of the dynamic interrelationships of the variations in its value orientations than it is from a study of only the dominant values" (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, 28).

Graeber discusses Kluckhohn and his colleagues at some length, writing that Kluckhohn's overall project was to recast anthropology as the comparative study of values. He observes that Kluckhohn's definition of value changed over time, but he focuses on what he says was Kluckhohn's central assumption, that values are "conceptions of the desirable" that shape the choices made by social actors (Graeber 2001, 3). But, as Graeber writes (2001, 5), the Kluckhohns' values project fizzled, despite whatever promise it might have shown in its time (though I have written elsewhere [2017] that I thought Graeber was mistaken, or at least not wholly correct, for it is clear that Geertz's insistence that the anthropologist/ethnographer focus on what is meaningful to the people they study is a refinement of the theory of values advanced by his graduate school advisor Kluckhohn).

Kluckhohn provided a foreword to McAllester's book that, while brief (less than a page), nonetheless makes his case for the centrality of the study of values to ethnographic work (though employing the notion common at the time that "cultures" were bounded, coherent, systematic):

> Dr. McAllester has treated music for what it is: an aspect of culture which can be fully understood only if its manifold and often subtle overflows into other aspects of culture are grasped. The music of a culture, in its turn, as David McAllester so brilliantly shows, reveals many hitherto hidden or half-hidden facets of the rest of the culture and gives excellent clues to the underlying premises that give cultures their systematic quality. This leads immediately into the realm of values. (Kluckhohn 1954, v)

Kluckhohn acknowledges (as does Graeber later [2001]) that practitioners in many fields articulate conceptions of value, mentioning economists, philosophers, social scientists, and aestheticians, but, he writes, McAllester's study is "the first empirical and detailed exploration of the interconnections between esthetic values and the more pervasive standards and value-orientations of a particular culture," calling it "a pioneering study

in esthetic values and their relations to the total value system of a culture." And he writes that McAllester's work "greatly strengthens the hypothesis that values give the key to cultural structure and that values of all types must be investigated—not just those ordinarily designated as 'moral' and 'religious.'" Kluckhohn's final sentence announces a paradigm shift initiated by this book: "With this monograph musicology appears for the first time as a highly significant social science" (Kluckhohn 1954, v; the claim is disputed by Nettl in one of his reviews [1956a]).

McAllester's brief book states its Kluckhohnian position clearly in an introduction entitled "Music and the Study of Values": "The research described on the following pages is an attempt to explore cultural values through an analysis of attitudes toward music and through an analysis of the music itself" (1954, 3). McAllester writes that through his ethnographic studies of various events, he "made observations and asked questions with the aim of discovering what the musical dimensions of social behavior could contribute to the study of values and value theory" (1954, 4).

McAllester draws on Evon Z. Vogt, Kluckhohn's colleague in Harvard's Department of Social Relations, for his presentation of the theory of values, quoting Vogt: "A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action" (Vogt 1951, 6). Vogt's overall characterization of values and value-orientations includes a classificatory scheme: values and value-orientations are

> what is or is believed to be (existential)
> what one wants (desire)
> what one ought to want (the desirable). (Vogt 1951, 7)

McAllester takes these categories and employs them with some refinements and modifications to analyze his ethnographic and musical data. His book is in general a description accompanied by musical transcriptions of a ceremony that rids the afflicted of maladies brought on by their contact with others (a white person or other non-Navajo), followed by a discussion of values at the end. Existential values, for his purposes, concern what people conceive music to be, but an investigation of existential values, he says, leads to a consideration of normative values—what one ought to want. This in turn generates a discussion of the category of aesthetic values, which McAllester considers at some length in the course of his book, devising "a

construct of Navaho musical esthetics" (1954, 73) with respect to various musical parameters. And he describes other cultural values, concerning competition, self-expression, quietness, the prestige that derives from musical knowledge, humor, women in religion, individualism, provincialism, formalism, and what he terms "music as an aid to rapport in field work" (1954, 84). These are then discussed further as Navajo values in the next chapter, following the framework established at the beginning, as things that "are" (existential values) and statements using "should" (normative values), thus concluding the book.

What is striking to readers conversant with subsequent anthropological value theory—which encompasses both the sorts of value succinctly described by Michael Lambek (2013) as economic and "ethical" (noneconomic)—is the absence of a consideration of "economic" forms of value, even though there are several descriptions of episodes in which McAllester's interlocutors clearly think of their music in terms of ownership, exchange, and as a good or a gift. Here, however, McAllester is simply following Kluckhohn and Vogt. For Kluckhohn, "the economic," and money in particular, is an expression of some other value beyond his interest or classifications.[3]

McAllester's interlocutors' actions and statements about forms of exchange and economic value are frequent and worth considering; the description of the enemy way ceremony, for example, headed "Preparation," says, "Tentative explorations sound out the clansmen who will be expected to share in the expense. If family support is forthcoming, the decision is finally reached," and preparations for the ceremony can commence (1954, 8).

McAllester's discussion of the enemy way ceremony is peppered with descriptions of money and various exchanges, as are other descriptions of encounters with his interlocutors. We learn of conceptions of ownership, exchanges of gifts and money, and these reveal, and generate, value as much as any other actions and tokens. The world of the Navajo studied by McAllester is not wholly apart from the market economy of the surrounding United States, and it is significant that McAllester (like Vogt before him) spends considerable time discussing the changing values of the Navajo, both with respect to musical aesthetics and more generally, but not about the inroads made by the market economy and the coexistence and interpenetration of this money system of value with others.

McAllester also provides interesting ethnographic observations about conceptions of song ownership, teaching and learning, and exchange. One description, albeit brief, considers how learning is akin to purchasing, even

when no such act is involved: "A man who has learned a chant has 'bought' it not only by his effort and mastery but also by actual payment. This feeling of transfer for value received is important in all Navajo ceremony. The patient must pay for the ceremony in order for it to be effective. Similarly, the neophyte must have the ceremony performed over him for pay as part of his training" (1954, 66). And occasionally, straightforward exchanges of money would, or could, occur. McAllester quotes one of his key interlocutors, Eddie Cochise, who sang some Moccasin Game songs, which he described as "rare songs," but he told McAllester, "I'll teach you those for a dollar an hour." This would have been a profitable endeavor, for, Cochise said, "It takes a whole day to learn one of those, or we should get together in the night, that's the way you should learn a song. . . . " (1954; 73, ellipsis in original). Clearly, the money economy had entered Navajo life, though sometimes money was used as a universal equivalent, and sometimes employed as a token to be exchanged for another in the course of the enemy way ceremony.

Enemy Way Music received only two substantial reviews, both proclaiming its significance.[4] The review in *American Anthropologist* is prefaced by a note from the editor informing readers that since the book "combines two divergent areas of anthropology into a single whole," two reviews were necessary, "one from the interest of cultural values, the other from musicology" (Merriam and Moore, 1956, 219). Alan P. Merriam goes first, referring to the book as pioneering: "What McAllester has done, quite simply, is to relate music to culture and culture to music in terms of the value system of the Navaho; the idea of doing such a thing has occurred to ethnomusicologists with surprising infrequency" (1956, 219). Merriam provides a quick gloss of McAllester on value, but that is the extent of his contribution. Harvey C. Moore (an anthropologist at American University), for his part, essentially provides a summary, having left the discussion of values to Merriam.

Bruno Nettl's review characterizes the musical presentation and analysis as "relatively conventional" but says that the portion of the book devoted to the discussion of values "lends the entire study the status of a landmark in ethnomusicology." He notes that earlier observations about Native Americans' attitudes towards music had been presented before, but that "McAllester, for the first time devotes an entire book to the problem of the attitudes of a culture towards music, and he indicates methods which, we hope, will be followed by many scholars in case studies of other cultures" (1956b, 27).

The paradigm shift predicted by Kluckhohn in his foreword to McAllester's book never happened—the road not taken. McAllester's focus on

value has gone virtually unnoticed by music scholars (though there is a sympathetic mention by Alan Merriam in *The Anthropology of Music* [1964, 249]). I would contend, however, that McAllester's study could be considered a "musical anthropology" (Seeger 2004) avant la lettre.[5] Recently, however, a few music scholars have begun to engage with this body of theory. Early in the game was Jayson Beaster-Jones's work on conceptions of musical value in the field of ethnomusicology (e.g., Beaster-Jones 2014), followed by, among others, Shannon Garland (2019) on music and value in indie rock scene in Santiago, Chile; Deonte Harris (2022), who introduces race into considerations of value; Anna Morcom (2020) on value in Hindustani music; and Eric J. Schmidt (2020) on the circulation of Tuareg recordings.

Value in Action, Value in Practice

As much as I have learned from these and other anthropological writings on value, there is still the risk that whatever one means by "value" can appear nebulous. If it is action, according to Graeber (2001) that reveals and creates value, then we also need to attend to how value is made, unmade, contested, and defended through the various practices in which social actors engage. It is necessary to ground theories of value in theories of what social actors actually do.

Curiously, Graeber didn't really provide any.[6] The essays collected in this book not only draw on and extend anthropological value theory but join them together with practice theory, which remains the most thoroughgoing and useful way to theorize how individual social actors devise projects, make plans, and attempt to carry them out in the face of social, historical, cultural, economic, and other constraints (see Ortner 2006). Theorizing how social actors act with/against such constraints—conceptualized as "structures"—was the basis of practice theory, which was mainly advanced at first by Pierre Bourdieu in France (1977, 1990), Anthony Giddens in the United Kingdom (1979), and Marshall Sahlins in the United States (1981).

Bourdieu has been the main proponent of practice theory, along with Sherry B. Ortner and William Sewell (2005) in the United States, finding a way between the extreme objectivism of Lévi-Straussian structuralism and the extreme subjectivism of Jean-Paul Sartre, which were the main paradigms circulating in France when Bourdieu entered the scene. The practice theory approach, as Bourdieu puts it, "offers perhaps the only means of

contributing, if only through awareness of determinations, to the construction, otherwise abandoned to the forces of the world, of something like a subject" (1990, 21). This rather grudgingly articulated project nonetheless produced an immense and elaborate theoretical system that, while not explicitly dealing with questions of value, nonetheless employs concepts and theoretical tools that are useful in attempting to understand how social actors conceive of value and act on those conceptions as they simultaneously act against others' conceptions.

Ortner best articulates the practice theory approach, starting from a Geertzian appreciation for culture but with greater sympathy for, and attention to, social actors. I can think of no better summary of the practice theory perspective than Ortner's response to critiques of her influential article "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties" (1984):

> Practice theory always has two moments, one largely objectivist and one largely subjectivist. In the first, the world appears as system and structure, constituting actors, or confronting them, or both, and here we bring to bear all our objectivist methodologies. But in the second, the world appears as culture, as symbolic frames derived from actors' attempts to constitute that world in their own terms by investing it with order, meaning, and value. (Ortner 1989, 112–13)

Ortner has been instrumental not just in de-hermeticizing Bourdieusian iterations of practice theory by culturalizing them (e.g., 2006), she has also brought practice theory into meaningful dialogue with feminist theory (e.g., 1996), all as part of a broader project of attempting to take seriously, as she writes, both of the perspectives she outlined above. But, she says, practice theory's

> special contributions lie in the ways in which it plays on the margins between them, examining those processes by which the one side is converted into the other. Thus we watch actors in real circumstances using their cultural frames to interpret and meaningfully act upon the world, converting it from a stubborn object to a knowable and manageable life-place. At the same time we watch the other edge of this process, as actors' modes of engaging the world generate more stubborn objects (either the same or new ones) which escape their frames and, as it were, re-enter ours. Here subjective and objective

> are placed in a powerful and dynamic relationship, in which each side has equal, if temporary, reality, and in which it is precisely the relationship between the two that generates the interesting questions. (Ortner 1989, 113)

One of Bourdieu's overall aims was to combine perspectives from Marx on social class with Max Weber's writing on status and status groups into a single theoretical system that explained how certain groups achieved and maintained dominance over others. If groups are united by what they value and by their opposition to others' values, then we need to pay attention to issues of group formation and coherence. Weber thought that status groups were connected to the group's conception of honor, which could be anything to which a plurality of the group agreed. And he recognized that class and status were complexly intertwined: "Class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions" (1946, 187). Weber thought that people with and without property can coexist in the same status group. "Status honor," he writes, "need not necessarily be linked with a 'class situation.' On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretentions of sheer property" (1946, 187). And Weber realized that economic capital supersedes everything else: "Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinarily regularity" (1946, 187). Weber understood that "both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group," as we also understand from Bourdieu: the dominant group in a society is composed of both people with large amounts of economic capital but not cultural capital and people with less economic capital and more cultural capital.[7]

Bourdieu offers several ways of talking about what people value: there are forms of capital in society in the broadest sense, forms of capital in particular fields and social spaces, and position takings that reveal actors' conceptions of value (the last I have elaborated on in Taylor 2017). Let me explore a bit more Bourdieu's (1986) influential articulation of the forms of capital, which seems to come closest to theorizing how social actors conceptualize value. Bourdieu famously posited several types of capital, all of which could be expressed in terms of symbolic capital, and he thought that all noneconomic forms could, in certain situations, be converted into economic capital. Bourdieu's theorization of the forms of capital is well-known but it is worth revisiting briefly to address the question of value. Here is Bourdieu's initial sorting out of the forms of capital:

> Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility. (1986, 47; emphases in original)

Convertibility matters; Graeber's critique of Bourdieu is that he is economistic—everything turns back into economic capital, or is always a form of it (2001, 26–30), which I think is a misunderstanding or even a misreading of Bourdieu. These conversions don't always occur—they require social actors making decisions based on their habitus, their location in social space. And, anyway, if something can be converted into something else, then they're not the same thing. Bourdieu's noneconomic forms of capital aren't the same as economic capital; they can be considered forms of noneconomic value, though, like the forms of value theorized by Graeber (and Geertz before him [1973, 127]), they need to be presented or stored as tokens—in this case, symbolic capital. Graeber likens convertibility to equality, but Bourdieu makes it clear that noneconomic forms of capital don't begin as economic capital and can't always be converted into it. Ultimately, I am considering Bourdieusian forms of capital to be a way of understanding how social actors conceptualize value and how they act on those conceptions. Viewing value thus is a way of particularizing it, making it less amorphous, analyzing it as a way to try to understand what particular social actors are doing in particular times and places.

And what they are doing includes the production and consumption of culture. While most anthropologists—with the most salient exception being Myers (2002; though see also Shipley 2013 and Trapido 2016)—haven't employed theories of value in studies of cultural production and consumption, I have found such theories to be enormously useful in this endeavor. The essays collected in this book draw on these recent writings by anthropologists to understand the production of value and the value of production of cultural goods, particularly music. I am concerned with the myriad ways that value is produced and consumed, how it travels, and how it is actively maintained, contested, and transformed by social actors—what one could

characterize as the social life of value in the production, marketing, and consumption of goods, cultural and otherwise.

Understanding conceptions of value to be in motion, in progress, helps us better comprehend how commodities are produced, marketed, and consumed. It has become all too simple to assume that popular music is a commodity and not much else; or that classical music (or other music in what Bourdieu called a restricted field of production) is anything but a commodity. But if one pays attention to what people actually are doing with these and other cultural forms, it becomes clear that something that is produced as a commodity can be more than just that; or something not produced as a commodity can also be just that. Cultural goods, like all things, have social lives (Appadurai 1986b), cultural biographies (Kopytoff 1986).

Focusing on value also provides a way out of the endless taxonomizing that seems to plague many academic discussions of just about anything. We think we know what labor is, but what about immaterial labor, affective labor, creative labor, musical labor? I think such questions should be less about the nature of labor itself and more about how particular groups of people value particular forms of labor, and why some of these forms are valued more than others. The same goes for the products of labor. Instead of considering, say, cultural commodities to be special types of commodities (or not even commodities at all), let's ask instead: How are particular commodities valued? By whom? Why are some commodities valued more than others?

Some sorts of valuations are clearly economic, even though that category isn't separate from the rest of social life. Yet, as Lambek observes in a useful comment, there's a difference between playing the violin for pleasure and playing it to make a living (2013, 142). How do we talk about these divergent sorts of value? At least with respect to the second, studies of "the economic," and capitalism in particular, have proliferated in recent years, perhaps most significantly marked by the unlikely success of Thomas Piketty's massive *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* in 2014. Publications in the music fields that consider issues considered to be economic—whether about capitalism and the cultural industries, music as a commodity, musicians' labor, or other related matters—have greatly expanded our understanding of music as it is caught up in various social aggregations and processes. We are beginning to gain clearer pictures of how cultural producers conceptualize their work as an economic endeavor, how they attempt to make a living in various sorts of systems, be they capitalist, patronage, gift-exchange, informal economies, or other forms of exchange and reciprocity.

If "the economic" is everywhere, embedded, as we know from Karl Polanyi (2001) and many others (e.g., Appel 2017) in the fabric of social life (hence my enclosure of the term in quotes), how do we think about the particular social formation and system for the production of value known as capitalism? There seem to be two main ways that observers view today's capitalism. According to the first, capitalism is hegemonic and ubiquitous—what I would consider to be the classic Marxist position, adopted and updated by Foucault, Wendy Brown, and many others. Such studies have made much of the idea that under today's capitalism, everything is—or can be—commodified, that the logic of the market has infiltrated every aspect of life. According to Brown (2005, 39–40), "Neoliberal rationality, while foregrounding the market, is not only or even primarily focused on the economy; it involves *extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action*, even as the market itself remains a distinctive player" (emphasis in original). This position is, to recall the practice theory orientation, one that is more objectivist, concerned with capitalism as a structure.

Advocates of the second view—more subjectivist—prefer to focus more on actors' points of view, what is left out of, overlooked, or abandoned by this capitalist structural hegemony, a preference forwarded (or implied) by Gibson-Graham (2006), Graeber (2001), Lambek (2013), Maurer (2006), Sanyal (2013), Tsing (2015), Zelizer (2011), and others. While I find the former position to be extremely useful in understanding how capitalism functions as a hegemonic social formation, the arguments of the latter group are compelling as well, especially if one is concerned with finding ways of moving beyond or around capitalism. The difficulty in studying a social form—a "structure"—like capitalism stems from these two vantage points. If one is concerned with capitalism as a global system, then that's what one sees (as we know from Ortner): all of the aspects of it that help us understand it as system and structure. But if our focus is on social actors, then our work reveals all of their practices, their forms of complicity and resistance, their conceptions of their own culture—in short, the production, reproduction, and transformation of capitalism itself. A theory of practice helps to keep both perspectives in view.

What I take away from these two orientations, however, is not that capitalism has limits, for it seems not to. There are simply places it hasn't gone yet, and places it has visited and quit, as evidenced, for a quick example, by the many musicians whose popularity has waned and whose music no longer appeals to mass audiences—reproducing, inversely, the beginnings of many

a career. Capitalism is everywhere capitalists have figured out where to take it, but that is not everywhere, always. And there are places where capitalism is resisted, such as the world of independent film (see Ortner 2013) and independent music (Taylor 2016b; chapter 3, below). There are plenty of goods that aren't (yet) commodified or that have lost their potential to be commodified; most of the musicians I know are desperate for the opportunity to commodify their music so they can hope to make a living (see chapter 5). Film and television composers work as merchants in Marx's sense, selling their work for a one-time fee (and perhaps royalties, depending on the medium). Almost never, however, do they own the copyrights to their music (copyrights are owned by producers), so the opportunities of rentier capitalism are denied them (see Taylor 2023 and n.d.).

Let me continue a bit on this question of capitalism's reach and our perspectives on it in a practice theory framework. Capitalism is hegemonic but not total; there is no "outside" of it, at least in the so-called developed world (and increasingly the rest). But there are areas of concentration of capitalist projects such as factories or banks, places where the pursuit of capitalist value—and surplus value in particular—is paramount. Such enterprises compete internally and externally to discover or create and promote the next big thing, whether it's a musician or a kitchen gadget or a soft drink. Speaking of "insides" and "outsides" of capitalism is a matter of where our attention lies—focusing on where capitalist activity occurs and where it doesn't, what sorts of entities that are dedicated to the generation of surplus value and which are not. But capitalist projects, while not ubiquitous, are nonetheless so present, so dominant, that they condition all other forms of the production of value and exchanges of value.

But how? Appadurai's theorization of what he called "tournaments of value" can be useful here. He wrote of such tournaments as comparative rarities in social life, events that happen periodically and that are distinct from everyday occurrences. Participants are privileged and are caught up in status contests through these tournaments. Appadurai also observes that "what is at issue in such tournaments is not just status, rank, fame, or reputation of actors, but the disposition of the central tokens of value in the society in question" (1986a, 21). From here, Appadurai theorizes (via Edmund Leach on the kula and Jean Baudrillard) the art auction as a tournament of value perhaps more familiar to nonanthropological readers.

The point I would like to make is that tournaments of value are extreme forms of the sorts of daily contests that occur in countless places; fields

and social spaces, to recall Bourdieu, are battlefields (Weber famously observed that in the United States, capitalism had taken on the character of sport [2001, 124]). Appadurai's concept can be greatly expanded beyond the kula or art auction to theorize how capitalism can be both hegemonic and not total. Any capitalist enterprise is a tournament of value with its own playing field, players, and rules of the game. Tokens of value here are more obviously money than status, as in Appadurai's tournaments, but status in particular fields does matter.

By extending what Appadurai meant by tournaments of value to most forms of capitalist concentration and organization and bringing it into a practice theory orientation—which makes ample use of metaphors of sport and games (e.g., Bourdieu 1990; Ortner 1996) and conceptions of fields as battlefields—I am not minimizing the importance of the sort of elite tournaments of value he theorized, for they can still be considered to be events distinct from the quotidian events in which tokens of value are as much the expenditure of money as the display of status. My point here is that such competitions in more mundane form are common in social life when conceptions of value are at stake and as such allow us to comprehend the hegemony of capitalism. Tournaments—or, less grandiose, contests—are everywhere, though in different social spaces, different fields, and with different players, different rules, different forms of capital. One can be "outside capitalism" or in its margins if one is, say, struggling to make a living at music while trying to enter the capitalist music business, but this doesn't mean that one is "outside" capitalism; one is simply outside a particular capitalist tournament or battlefield or game, while at the same time participating in all sorts of other capitalist—and noncapitalist—exchanges. As do we all.

Emphasizing the actor's point of view and experience is not to reject the more objectivist perspective. But I do think that claims such as Brown's lack potency unless we examine what this capitalist penetration looks like in practice. Ideologies need to be instituted in practices, ways that people produce and reproduce themselves, their universes. The logic of the market may have infiltrated everything, but it is not until social actors act that we know what particular forms this capitalist logic takes and where it is inactive, however temporary that may be. In this sense I lean more toward the second perspective, seeking some of the ways that capitalism appears to be patchy and contingent, ubiquitous though it may be.

The Chapters

The first chapter argues that that one of the ways that capitalism operates, at least in the realm of cultural goods, is by disciplining, or creating, forms of value that exist alongside it; these are forms of value that might be viewed culturally as something other than capitalist forms but actually are part of capitalism—camouflaged and stored forms of capitalist value that I theorize, following Bourdieu, as symbolic capital. Three case studies help make this argument: the rise of the virtuoso music performer in western Europe in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries as a new social personality, giving profit-oriented concerts managed by concert agents; the history of provenance as a form of value in the visual arts; and the process of designating a local cultural practice as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which shows how bureaucracies create a form of value that becomes linked to the value of traditional cultural practices but that is also a stored form of capitalist value as symbolic capital.

Chapter 2 employs Tsing's work on scalability to examine the music manager, a kind of popular-music analog to the nineteenth-century concert agents discussed in the previous chapter. Today's music managers act as chiefs of staff for musicians, helping them build their team of lawyers, publicists, agents, and more, and attempting to make what is nonscalable—a musician (who can only write so many songs, give so many concerts, make so many recordings)—as un-nonscalable as possible. Music managers attempt to transform their clients into productive laborers whose work can be scaled through building and maintaining an audience and loyal fanbase, which must be constantly cultivated, through the unceasing labors of musicians on social media.

My interest in anthropological value theory has taken me occasionally away from a focus on music. Chapter 3 is an example, though music as a lens through which to understand consumer tastes is important here. This chapter examines some of capitalism's agents by exploring the practices of trendspotting, carried out by people in advertising agencies and all sorts of consumer research companies that employ different methods, including ethnography, to learn more about consumers. These workers act as agents of capitalism in several ways: by making their clients' quantitative data more qualitative through ethnographic studies; by educating clients about their

markets; by ethnographically describing consumers in order to improve their clients' products; and by identifying markets and helping to make a product appeal to that market. Trendspotters take the preferences of consumers segmented into particular groups and regularize them as "values," which are then employed to market products.

Chapter 4 considers how musicians and others create or increase the economic value of cultural commodities in the capitalist marketplace. For Tsing, supply-chain capitalism creates value at various nodes of a supply chain through processes of translation and purification that appear to strip away the noncapitalist social relations and noneconomic forms of value that went into the production of a particular good. While Tsing views various forms of promotion simply as different ways to create value, I argue that capitalist supply chains that generate what Tsing calls inventory frequently necessitate other means of the creation of value. These include processes of consecration and promotion (broadly understood as advertising, marketing, and branding) that reanimate cultural commodities with values that masquerade as noneconomic forms of value—firms need to claim that their inventory is superior to others'. In essence, this chapter argues that, through supply-chain capitalism and processes of translation, capitalist practices appear to take the gift out of the commodity by alienating labor and masking social relations, but, through more capitalist processes of advertising, marketing, and branding, insert representations of unalienated labor and social relations to make the commodity seem like a gift again.

If capitalism creates other forms of value that accompany it, there remain still other forms of value that can exist apart from it. Chapter 5 is based on an ethnographic study of the independent (indie) rock scene in the east Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park. There is very little money generated from music circulating in this scene (musicians are routinely paid only thirty-five to forty dollars for a show), and musicians, indie label owners, and others attach symbolic values to certain amounts of money, which are viewed in terms of what they can help the musicians purchase, such as gas for the band's van. People in the scene also produce and exchange value in a number of ways that aren't capitalist, from generalized reciprocity to several forms of patronage. This chapter ultimately argues that scenes such as this are simultaneously maintained and destroyed by capitalism: maintained because capitalism needs a reserve army of those who operate outside of it, but destroyed because such scenes are deprived of their ability to reproduce themselves given how little money circulates.

Chapter 6 attempts to understand the value of a particular traditional music, constructed as "world music" in a capitalist marketplace. It is not a matter simply of the commodification of something previously uncommodified but rather of the shift from one regime of value to another. Taking the Irish traditional music session as a case study, I argue that, while some Irish traditional music today can be understood as a commodity, most of the music occupies another regime of value in which it is sociality that matters to participants. This conception of sociality includes the practice of many musicians posting photographs of sessions on social media and participants sharing memories of tune sources, teachers, and other sessions.

Chapter 7 draws on theories of value, mainly from Turner and Graeber, to argue that musical performances, and those that are caught up in broader contexts such as festivals, rituals, or ceremonies, play important roles in realizing, consummating, establishing, and reinforcing values held by communities that engage in such performances. I define performance as something that takes place with an audience and that is culturally and socially understood as a performance. Value is built up privately in preparations for performances but is only realized or consummated in the moment of performance, with the presence of and interactions with audience members. South African *isicathamiya* music serves as a case study of how a community-defined value of excellence in performance is cultivated.

The final chapter moves beyond the common metaphor of "flows" to describe how music moves in an era commonly thought of as globalized. "Circulation" today refers to people as well as goods, and it labels an idea with a long history, going back to Marxian conceptions of the movement of money, and still useful with respect to cultural goods such as music. Drawing on Marx and anthropologists who have studied value and exchange such as Jane Fajans and Gabriel Tarde, this chapter argues that things circulate because they have value, and circulation therefore manifests as constant exchange—of time, money, goods, and more—that constantly (re)makes social life and relations. Radio serves as a case study in this chapter, especially as it plays an important role in the indie rock scene in Southern California. Returning to classic theories of the audience as commodity from Dallas Smythe (1977), which are still useful if liberated from a strict Marxian framework and applied to broader conceptualizations of value, I argue that Smythe's conception is predicated in the idea of exchange, and that his insights can be extended from radio and other broadcast media to the circulation of digital media today.

Taken together, I hope that these contributions not only help to bring anthropological value theory and practice theory closer together but also demonstrate how cultural goods, whether or not they are commodities, are meaningful and valuable to those who make and consume them.

NOTES

Introduction. Theorizing Value in Practice

1 This is a very brief overview; for a more in-depth treatment of the history of value theory in anthropology, see Graeber 2001.

2 Keith Hart, personal communication with the author, March 12, 2006.

3 Kluckhohn quotes George A. Lundberg's "Human Values: A Research Program" from 1950, which argues for what today appears to be a rather Graeberian action theory of value: "It is possible to infer the values of groups from the way in which they habitually spend their time, money, and energy. This means that values may be inferred from historic records of all times, from ancient documents to the latest census of manufactures, scales, and expenditures" (Lundberg 1950, 106, quoted by Kluckhohn 1962, 407). But Kluckhohn sets aside this inclusion and consideration of money in his footnote to Lundberg's text: "Lundberg's basic point is well taken, though a caveat must be entered against the culture-bound judgment inherent in the emphasis on 'money.' . . . Money is, of course, merely a cover for a very large system of needs and values which in our culture become expressed for market purposes in money" (Kluckhohn 1962, 407n30). Money, however, is more than a "cover," as we know even from McAllester's book and much subsequent research) it is a universal equivalent that not only represents value but can be a token of value itself.

Ethel M. Albert, a Kluckhohn associate, in her introduction to a chapter about expressive activities by Kluckhohn in *People of Rimrock*, offers a robust defense of the importance of focusing on such activities in the overall

Kluckhohnian project of seeking to discover "human universals of which each culture pattern is a distinctive interpretation" (Albert 1966, 265; see Kluckhohn 1966). These universals include recreational and expressive activities that provide insights into cultural values (and, as a Kluckhohnian, she claims that the study of aesthetics and expressive activities can be examined in a "rigorous, quantitively-oriented approach" [1966, 270]). But Albert also notes that the expenditure of resources, in the form of money, time, and energy, in the cultures considered in that volume should convince anyone of the importance of studying the sorts of aesthetic and expressive activities in which people engage: "We cannot figure the costs to the penny, but we know that much time, money, and energy go into rodeos, fiestas, and dances; ceremonials and sings; decisions by shoppers requiring or allowing choice from a variety of available jewelry, clothing, or other objects; funerals and the accompanying concerns with mourning dress, feeding or feasting the funeral party, presenting gifts, and doing services for the bereaved" (1966, 271). Kluckhohn thus seems to have been more inflexible in his exclusion of "the economic" than others even in his intellectual circle.

4 Two other brief reviews appeared, devoting no more than a paragraph or two to *Enemy Way Music*: Nettl 1956a; Streib 1955.

5 Seeger generously credits McAllester and some others.

6 While Graeber largely rejects Bourdieu for being reductionistically economistic, he nonetheless requires some sort of theory of structure and action and introduces one—from Jean Piaget (1970)—that is quite recognizable to students of practice theory. In line with his own orientation toward value, as created or revealed by action, Graeber emphasizes Piaget's focus on action, so that structure, he summarizes, is "the coordination of activity." Graeber writes of Piaget's insistence that the basis of any knowledge system is a set of practices. Structure does not exist prior to action, Graeber says, so that "ultimately, 'structure' is identical with the process of its own construction" (2001, 61). None of this, I would say, is inconsistent with a practice theory approach, though Graeber largely avoids it.

7 It seems to me that Bourdieu has been more thoroughly interrogated and critiqued for his debt to Marx than to Weber. Those who address the question of whether Marxian value is equivalent to Bourdieusian capital tend to overemphasize whatever might be Marxian in Bourdieu's thinking (and accuse him of not being Marxian enough), while de-Weberizing him (see, e.g., Beasley-Murray 2000).