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Coproduction: Towards a typology of collaborative practice in music production

Intro: The dominance of the one

The record producer has long been represented by the image of the lone figure of a man sat at a large mixing desk bestrewn with knobs and faders. All that has been captured from the virtuosic performers, creative artists and genius songwriters is now at his fingertips, with faders moving up or down at the inspired will of this solitary guru. The tracks laid down by the artists are just the raw materials to which this great sculptor of sound will roll up his sleeves, light a cigarette and mould the music into the fixed-for-all-eternity artwork that is the recording.

It is a romantic and seductive image (albeit the 'his' sticks out like a sore thumb to us now) and we do not need to credit him with the angst and expressive rawness of the artists who makes the sounds, the producer is the one who saves the artist from their failings and cuts the rough diamond into the shape that gives the sound its aesthetic and increased monetary value. George Martin was not the first Beatle but the fifth (and hence the 'quintessential' Beatle) and this not only recognizes his importance as being part of the music but places him as that calm in-control but nearly out-of-sight mastermind behind the sound of the records. And this is no illusion, as far as any truth can be true (which is a tough call in this day and age) we rightly revere Martin and so many others that have sat behind the desk on the other side of the glass and pushed and pulled the faders and routed this auxiliary through that effect. There were and are many great controllers of sound that can lay genuine claim to this singular title of 'the producer'.

This reality is further made evident in the literature of producers. The reading lists for our students of music production are likely to include classic works such as Howard Massey's *Behind the Glass* (2000), with more than 30 chapters each of which is titled only by the producer's name it features interviews with producers such as Brian Wilson, George Martin, Nile Rodgers *etc.* And I make no criticism, as for any budding producer here are the horses' mouths telling how they made the great works that we know and love, and beyond that Massey brings out the human in these people, they are not gods born with superhuman powers capable of doing things we will never be able to achieve, not at all, as the front

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cover says this is 'how they craft the hits', for indeed it is a craft and the producer does not always appear *deus ex machina* at the end to make the problems go away and bring a glorious final resolution to it all. I say 'not always' because there is probably enough evidence to suggest that at times they are literally the god from, or with, the machine. And perhaps it is the machine that gets in the way of our understanding of producers and production.

Anthony Savona's *Console Confessions* (2005), from the same Backbeat publications as *Behind the glass*, although different in approach to Massey's book it still has lists of those great names attached to the chapters: Les Paul, Phil Ramone, Herbie Hancock *etc.* and, like Massey, the book has those iconic images of the man and his machine, the console. In both these books the bearded and spectacled Ramone looks directly into the camera lens with the room full of gear as the background landscape, like a music studio take on a Reynolds or Gainsborough portrait but with knobs instead of trees. In another picture Herbie Hancock relaxes, hands behind his head, smiling at the camera off-centre to the left of shot so that the many faders and lights are visible to the right. In similar position, in Massey's book, sat relaxed with arms behind his head but with even more faders than Hancock, Humberto Gatica smiles (more cheekily than Hancock) and the shot is on a diagonal that maximizes the landscape aspect's capability of fitting in as much of the desk as possible across the diagonal from bottom left to top right. The console is of course an impressive instrument and we are amazed that this relaxed and in-control expert knows what all these buttons and faders do. Most people would probably be clueless as to what to do if they came face to face with such a beast, it looks like rocket science and these guys are creative engineers capable of getting a spacecraft to the moon and back. Yet they sit there and smile as if it's all in a day's work for them. Which of course it is. The images are incredibly seductive and yet they are also, in one sense at least, genuine. The literature and the recordings testify to their ability to use the equipment as the tools of their trade, so why not have Jack Douglas lovingly caressing his hands across the faders or Frank Filipetti sat at the console hands folded with an unlit cigar. Is it any different to picturing Jimi Hendrix with a Fender Stratocaster or Jimmy Page with a Gibson Les Paul? The answer is 'yes', it is different (and in one sense at least, disingenuous) hence there is a mythology at the route of the producer's art that has been oversimplified in the iconography. To say that Jimi Hendrix played the guitar on 'Purple Haze' is probably about as accurate as we might get with an attribution of what the artist

did. He played the guitar and we can hear it. The contribution is easily identifiable, we can make out the guitar quite clearly and attribute it (quite clearly) to one man. The guitarist is the person who plays the guitar, the producer is the person who produces, the obvious discrepancy is that where playing the guitar is clearly understood as the activity taking place, the act of producing, as we know, is multifaceted with no clear boundaries as to what it includes and excludes, and because we (the fans, the interested) want clarity then the desk becomes the catch-all placeholder signifying activity well beyond what the desk itself is capable of. Hence it plays into the fixity of signification that we associate with the guitar but in reality, try as the image might, it lacks the guitar's distinct denotation and by attempting to represent something that has no such definition it enters into the realms of dubious connotations and myth.

The iconography of the man at the desk as described here is a rough generalisation, one that we will instantly recognise whilst at the same time we may have a nagging doubt that the music producer extends far beyond this simple, yet dominant, representation. The ideology of the producer (but not the reality) is in some ways akin to the notion of the classical composer. They too are, or were, almost exclusively male and singular in their authorship, whereas we can quickly go straight to Lennon and McCartney when asked to give an example of a songwriting duo, we are likely to struggle when asked to do so for classical composers. That symphony co-written by Beethoven and Mozart never happened, and that opera by Verdi and Puccini never happened either. Even the idea sounds odd, but why should that be? Songwriters collaborate all the time yet somehow 'composers' don't, or at least they only collaborate in complimentary mode with other disciplines such as with poets and librettists. Even now one only has to take a look at new commissions for the BBC proms and one will be hard pushed to find much else beyond the singular composer. The BBC website (BBC, 2017) lists the 2017 commissions which include Julian Anderson, Mizzy Mizzoli and Laurent Durupt amongst the composers of new works. But in contrast production is not without its great teams, in the 80s we might well have been used to the names Trevor Horn, Giorgio Moroder, Quincy Jones, but then another name on everyone's lips at that time was SAW (Stock Aitken Waterman) with whom we associated the great 80s names of Kylie Minogue, Rick Astley and Bananarama amongst so many others with whom they developed ways of turning out hits that, 30 years on, are still loved, admired and respected. And maybe this has something to do with the team spirit and the collaborative

processes out of which they were forged. Producer at PWL studios (the 'factory floor' of SAW), Phil Harding, writes openly about the creativity of collaboration with his colleague Ian Curnow, writing with wonderful generosity that 'There's something unique about working partnerships where you get to the point where you know what each other are doing and thinking without verbal communication. In other words, a telepathic understanding where you get on with creating what you feel is right' (Harding, 2010: 129).

The term production is immediately thrown wide when we speak of Stock, Aitken, Waterman, or of Motown before that. Hepworth and Golding in *What is music production*? (2011) note three general stages of production as 'capture, arrangement and performance' and each of these has many sub-categories as well. We have long accepted that the production-line involves stages that might otherwise be named differently, such as composition, or performance, or engineering, or arranging, or even inspiring (definitely 'inspiring', getting the best from one's performer) and it is hard to give it a definition least to say that usually (but not always) there is a 'recorded' element in there somewhere. It is easy for us to understand the idea of one person as the artist, or as the producer, and of the individual who has a role within the team. But what is *joint* authorship, what is coproduction?

Rather than attempting an ontology the aim here (and the aim of the book on coproduction that is to follow in this series of publications on *Perspectives on Music Production* that myself and Chris Johnson are coauthoring) is to find the different ways in which coproduction occurs. It would be nice to find that moment, one clear example, where we can with absolute certainty say 'there is a singular joint authored moment', not a moment where we can identify individual contributions, or where we cannot identify individual contributions but only because we cannot see the history of its production, but because this moment is genuinely a result of, dare I say it, 'when two become one'. In *Behind the Glass* Massey transcribes this conversation with Brian Wilson:

> [Massey] Recently, though, you've been working with coproducers as opposed to being the sole producer. Is there a reason for that?
>
> [Wilson] It's because I needed to have the springboard of ideas between people. Because I'd run out of ideas – I had writer's and producer's block
>
> (Massey, 2000: 43)

There are many reasons for coproduction, the sparking of ideas, the complementarity of skills, the desire to work together, the potential for greater success of the whole through team effort. And there are many forms that coproduction can take from two producers knowingly working together to a whole world that works together on a singular project (either in denial or without realizing it). Even the individual may have to acknowledge that they are also others in themselves, those internal voices of one's influences. The aim here is to forefront joint authorship in producing music, production that is coproduction, that is multi-authored in all its manifestations from the agreed collaboration of two producers working closely together to the many and varied contributions to a project by contributors that have no such contract or contact between those making the work. Even the solitary guru cannot override all the decisions that have been made leading up to the point that has presented the material before them, production has already taken place and they have to work with that as part of their product. Producer, songwriter (and collaborator) Chris Johnson and myself have begun researching coproduction that explores these types, and this chapter attempts to set out some of the initial territory of that larger study and begin to put into types the various modes of coproduction that we will explore in greater detail later. Of course, the caveat is that these categories and types may change as the research progresses but by way of introduction the types presented here form a key part of our research methodology. With this we note that these are characteristics and types are not, as yet, case studies of actual production teams. Putting names and faces to the types will have to wait.

Type overview

Only part of the study will focus on those groups of producers that work together to produce their product in the traditional sense, that is, the team that is attributed to the finished recording of the song. Although that study deserves greater research in itself, to begin with we want to throw the net as wide as possible and find not only the cutting edges but the extreme middle, a place that was sadly neglected in a modernist last century. We are under no illusion that the main interest will be in the teams of producers and how they work together, the actual people coproducing actual hits, but in this first attempt we want to zoom out to view as much of the territory as possible, even if that means covering ground that some will find uninteresting and possibly unconvincing. This is not then a study just of

those collections of individuals that form production teams, albeit that category and the types within it are part of what is outlined here, and we recognize that most interest is likely to lie in that area rather than in fanciful philosophical speculations and assertions (the outlying territories). There are different modes of collaborative practice that we can bring to this aspect of the study, in particular those identified by Vygotsky-influenced collaborative theorist Vera John-Steiner, but we are also excited to venture into less conventional areas of coproduction and take a look at the individual as a collective in themselves, as well as the individual's place within a collective of actual others. Then we observe that music in general, and popular music in particular, is an ongoing coproduction by the many millions of us that are involved in producing this ongoing singular thing (popular music) that we have called 'The Song of a Thousand Songs', which is something of an 'all the world's a stage' approach to pop music collaboration. And we are aware that not everyone in coproduction is a willing collaborator and acknowledge that plagiarism is also a form of joint production. If collaboration can only be called such if all participants are willing and in agreement, if consent is a predicate of collaboration, then we are already at fault and you need read no further, this is a localized calibration for locally calibrated people (there's nothing for you here). We also wonder where it could all end up, this is in the realm of philosophical speculation but we will look to a future point where production may have ceased because all has been collectively produced. Not a Hegelian 'end of art' where art's function has ceased but where there is actually nothing left to produce. We will even attempt to do that ourselves. We will, without any doubt, fail but perhaps we can put the wheels in motion and in doing so we might well spark a few thoughts and ruffle a few feathers. Good, it will have been worth the attempt if we do, the feathers of authorship and ownership in music production could do with a good ruffling.

To put these larger categories into manageable types we list the top-level categories of coproduction as:

1. Group coproduction (collaboration between individuals)
2. Internal coproduction (the self as many)
3. Coproduction without consent (denial or unknowing collaboration)
4. Deproduction (the collective disappearance of production)

Each of these will be introduced separately, mostly with further subdivisions within categories. Some of these types are drawn from observation of the real world, of an engagement with the act of production and coproduction as well as the observation of them, but some of the models are also set up *a priori* so that they can be tested against real situations later. Hence the types will shift from the blindingly obvious to the utterly ludicrous (by which I mean 'playful' in its exploration of ideas rather than demanding universal validity). Ultimately it might turn out that coproduction is nothing more than a discipline specific study of team work, if that is the case it will still be an interesting area to study but not a paradigm shift into some exciting new realm of music production studies. That remains to be seen.

1.Group coproduction

Emerging form a Vygotskian social science approach to joint authorship, Vera John-Steiner in her seminal book *Creative Collaboration* (John-Steiner, 2000) identifies four 'patterns of collaboration' that she carefully caveats as being on a fluid spectrum, and these move from the closest of collaborations to the widest and most open form (and vice versa). They are labelled as Integrative, Family, Complementary, and Distributed. These have associated roles, values and working methods and they form a useful model for understanding different types of coproduction. John-Steiner's model, neatly depicted as a circle in order to avoid a hierarchical taxonomy, starts from the widest heading to the most integrated, however we will work outwards only because the most open collaboration (distributed) leads to later types, that of 'coproduction without consent' and 'deproduction'.

1.1 Integrative coproduction

This is the mode in which we might best hope to find that purest of coproduced moments, the integration of producers at this point is such that their understanding has moved beyond the need for discussion, beyond the need to divide roles, in fact beyond any recognition as to who contributed what to the point where there is no difference between the operation of the one and the operation of the many. This moment may not actually exist outside of theory, even in a hypothetical example it seems hard to see how there could be this pure moment. One might imagine two producers with hands on the same fader making adjustments almost as if receiving spiritual guidance on a Ouija board, but even then

(ghostly externality aside) we are drawn to the separate decisions that provided the pressures on the fader, and hence are thrown back into knowing that there is separation. Perhaps Integrative coproduction is in *proximity* of this pure moment rather than achieving it. John-Steiner's descriptions of this type are of 'braided roles', 'visionary commitment' and 'transformative co-construction' (2000: 197), the 'braiding' confirming that separate strands still exist, making this model far more discoverable than the pure moment might be. That said, Keith Sawyer in his research on 'group genius' points to moments of group decisions that are exactly this, that is, where the group finds a solution to a problem but that none of the individuals within the group are aware of that solution. Following a narrowly avoided shipping disaster in 1985 on the USS Palau, researcher Ed Hutchins analysed the responses and actions of those involved in averting the disaster and concluded that "the solution was clearly discovered by the organization itself [the collective group] before it was discovered by any of the participants" (Sawyer, 2007:28). So there may be hope of finding similar moments of coproduction that are outside that of any individual control or contribution.

1.2 Familial coproduction

Trust and common vision are central in this type, coproducers will be highly 'familiar' with each other, will have become used to each other's ways of working and cross over roles easily. John-Steiner's term is 'family' but we have used 'familial' here to emphasize that the mode is 'typical of a family' just to avoid any misunderstanding that shared genetics is essential. In this mode any division of labour might change and expertise becomes dynamic. This is a 'pre-Integrative' model where there are still identifiable contributions but much cross-over. Here one might find coproducers feeding in and out ideas and activity in all stages of capture, arrangement and performance, comfortable enough to know that one has permission (indeed encouragement) to do so from the 'family'. One producer has gone into the live room to move the kick drum microphone that the other set up without asking because they know they can act upon their own informed decision to do so, and that consent is implicit.

1.3 Complementary coproduction

Perhaps the most common form of coproduction is the mode in which roles are clearly identified and executed as such. In this way one can assemble a team of experts trusted to

do their activity best and that it will benefit the whole. One producer might be able to EQ the singer's voice better than the other, but the other has inspired the singer to give the best performance in the studio, and so on. Separation of roles is key here but so is an 'overlapping of values' (John-Steiner, 2000: 197) so that the final product works as one unified thing.

The artists themselves are perhaps the most frequent coproducers, and most likely this operation will fall into the 'complimentary coproduction' type, that is where the division of roles is clear and complimentary but there is a shared vision (if it is to be successful) and the artists will often be with the 'producer' validating their decisions or trying out ideas with them in the control room. Complementarity is also probably the best understood of collaborative types. Where John-Steiner uses 'complimentary', Interdisciplinary collaborators have used the Deleuzian terms 'striated' and 'stratified' (see Alix, Dobson, Wilsmore, 2010), Joe Bennett in songwriting collaboration uses the term 'Demarcation' (Bennett, 2011), and business teamwork theory have this model worked out in great detail, in particular the roles identified by Meredith Belbin that produce successful teams (see for example Belbin.com, 2018) is an internationally successful method for bringing together teams that work in complimentary mode.

1.4 Distributed coproduction

In terms of normal studio practice this would seem to be a somewhat anarchic working model as its methods are 'spontaneous and responsive' with roles that are 'informal and voluntary' and might even lead to sabotage (as we will see in the 'weasel words' intervention later). This model suggests a rather more open approach that might see the production group widen to anyone who might want to 'have a go'. Hence this is not likely to be a typical model in terms of song production in a studio. We will need to look wider to see this model in operation. Artists sometimes put out stems for fans to mix and produce as they will, and this fits this model well. Moving out even further we might view the artist that coproduces by using a sample of a previous work, with or without consent. Further out still we may see the whole of popular music as one production that everyone contributes to, and indeed that notion will be explored in more detail under the discussion of 'coproduction without consent' which aligns with John-Steiner's role description of 'informal and voluntary'.

2. Internal coproduction

As with the patterns of collaboration, the types identified here will often overlap or they may even be considered as the same model but viewed from a different angle. And so it is with internal coproduction. Notwithstanding one's ability to argue with oneself, we might also recognize that our decisions that ultimately manifest themselves in terms of what comes out of the studio monitors will include thoughts of those that *have* influenced us (past), and thoughts of those that *will* listen to us (future). Unlike the composer who walks a dangerous legal tightrope when stringing together a sequence of notes the producer has been freer to take on influences of the past with less fear, though even that territory is now being claimed and fenced off. The Monopoly board of music production is expanding and one has to be ever more careful as to what square one lands on. There is no longer a 'free parking' space or a 'get out of jail' card in this game. Within the self one might have to identify one's influences *and* one's audience (past and future others). The discussion relates to artists of any type and any discipline with regard to decisions one might identify as one's authentic self, and then those decisions that second guess what the other wants (the audience). Heidegger notes that the inauthentic self includes the other as our *'they-self'* in that "The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from *authentic Self -* that is, from the Self which has taken hold of in its own way" (Heidegger, 1962: 167). For Deleuze and Guattari the 'I' is does not disappear but rather becomes much reduced, as they write with regard to their collaboration on *A Thousand Plateaus* they want "to reach the point, not where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 3-4). Not only are they collaborating with each other, they also acknowledge that as individuals they are already a collective of others.

We can try out two models in this category, one that is before one's production and one that considers the 'after' of one's production.

2.1 Present past internal coproduction

The influence of existing production that comes to bear on one's own production. To produce with producers of the past, presumably without their consent (which also means this sits in another category) but if one is to stand on the shoulders of a giant, does one

need to ask their permission to do so? Although one could, it is not every case that one *has to* return to one's collaborator for permission after making a contribution. Perhaps this type does not need a new name, it is simply that of the self as constructed from the many but it gives an opportunity to think of our engagement with the past as a collaborative venture. The past is tried and tested, hence we might go straight for that Neumann U87 for the vocals and an AKG D12 for the kick drum because it has worked *before* for others. Or perhaps we can be inspired by Martin's discussions with Lennon and subsequent decisions that gave rise to the extraordinary 'Strawberry Fields' recording where the desire to achieve something new required a problem-solving approach to production. The past telling the future to try out new ideas. In this particular example Lennon liked the first part of one studio recording and the second part of another and wanted to combine them, George Martin pointed out that they were in difference keys and had different tempi, to which Lennon replied "Yeah, but you can do something about it, I know. You can fix it, George." (Martin, 1979:200), which of course he did ('*deus ex machina*').

2.2 Present future internal coproduction

The future of one's production lies with the listener. In this mode we are familiar with what they will like and give it to them, or we give them something one knows they will like but that they don't know it yet (a disruptive model in the manner of Henry Ford or Steve Jobs). Either way, although the second notion seems more creative, both involve the consideration of the judgment of the other that is yet to come. The wanting to succeed, the need to be wanted, the need for money *etc*. drive an inclusion of the future other into the production decision. Do we have to tune that vocal? Who are you doing that for? Is it because we believe the audience demand it? Actually, another 'other' here is the artist themselves of course to whom (one version of) the producer must be subservient to, but this model best sits in the complimentary coproduction model. Here we are in a dual position of basing future audience demand on past audience behaviour, or basing future demand on our intuition that goes against past audience behavior (they haven't behaved like this before because they've never heard it this way before). The latter model has been the dominant model of creativity, certainly in modernist times, but we are less convinced that it works now. It is time to retreat from the cutting edge (have we not noticed that it has become

blunt?) and move instead towards the middle (towards James Blunt) for that is where the creativity of this age really lies.

3. coproduction without consent

Here we will outline two modes of coproduction without consent, although we will also have to say upfront that there is also a 'knowing' in this category as well as an unknowing, however as a general heading it will work for the moment. The first type is that of the distributed model of collaboration, as discussed earlier, but in this case it has been widened out to encompass the whole world, so that everyone who produces 'popular' music is a collaborator on one singular song which we have called 'The Song of a Thousand Songs'. The second type in this category is that of denial or unknowing collaboration. In this type it might indeed be 'knowing coproduction' (but denies this knowledge) where an artist has deliberately taken the work of another and used it in their own creation, though more often than not this category will not be aware that it is coproducing but rather will be asserting originality and authorship. This category has clear connections with that of the 'internal coproduction' model described earlier, as it draws externality into an internal creative process, so that they might be considered as two sides of the same coin.

3.1 The Song of a Thousand Songs

This first type is actually where this whole project started, having its roots in a paper given at 'The International Festival for Artistic Innovation' at Leeds College of Music in March 2014 which was called 'The Song of a Thousand Songs: Popular Music as a Distributed Model of Collaboration' (see IFAI, 2014), and bit by bit the theory has expanded to encompass the many other modes that are now beginning to be explored. The notion of joint production, unknown (or un-thought about) collaboration where everyone in the world is continually adding to this singular song that is called 'The Song of a Thousand Songs'. Theoretically we (it is now 'we', that is , Chris and myself) have found that the articulation of this concept works best as a combination of the social science 'distributed' model of collaboration by John-Steiner and of the postmodernist ever-connecting rhizome of Deleuze and Guattari (1987). In this way the extravagant and poetic philosophy of postmodernism is held to account by a grounded social science approach or at least by a large dose of pragmatism. And they are not mutually exclusive, in fact the multiplicity of the rhizome is simply another

version of distributed collaboration, decentered and de-ontologised in order to point out the singularity and connectedness of things rather than the separations which may indeed not be there at all. We put it in our last chapter in this series on the ontology of the mix, 'The mix is, the mix is not' (Wilsmore and Johnson, 2017) that the separation of songs in our everyday world is nothing more than a prescribed division, where these separations (ends of songs) seem to have nothing at all to do with sound and as such should not be thought of as endings. We wrote that:

> If songs are separated largely by non-musical signifiers (the composers, the song titles, etc.) we can "nullify endings and beginnings" [Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 25] for these starts and finishes are nothing more than segmentation caused by the effect of imposing non-audio signifiers onto audio. When we do this, we cease to operate within a representational system. There are no longer identifiable ones of songs—the removal of the artificial beginnings and ends has shown that they are actually all joined together. In fact, it is not correct to say that they are joined at all, once we have removed the sticky labels marked 'beginning' and 'end' we see underneath that there is nothing but continuity. (Wilsmore and Johnson, 2017: 196)

In one respect the model is far-fetched and a long way from our everyday understanding that individual songs are composed by individual artists or bands, but then it is also a familiar notion that music has a life of its own and that 'rock n roll ain't gonna die', even if that is only as a metaphor rather than a belief in music as a living thing. And the main focus here is not to indulge in transcendental materialism (although we will indulge, it's just that it is not the main focus) but rather that we want to point out the grounded observation that endings and separations of songs are indeed mostly about something other than the sound itself, and in doing so we hope to clarify what endings are in the 'real' world (our everyday phenomenology) and how this might affect considerations of what to produce and what coproduction means. This postmodernist take is not intended to be sophistry, it is intended to help show how the world actually works, in reality, in real life. It intends to show that some of what is sold to us as singularly produced is in fact 'fake news'.

3.2 Denial or unknowing coproduction

There is a familiar saying that 'where's there's a hit, there's a writ' and we never have to wait very long to read in the press another case of artists (or their estate or their lawyers) laying accusations at the feet of another artist that they believe has stolen their creation. At the time of writing there is a particularly interesting one that the press reported this week. Interesting because the song in question has already been through the legal process of another artists laying claim to it itself, and the song having to state that is was coauthored already (at first it was coproduced without consent, but then consent was retroactively applied). In this case the BBC reported the following headline 'Lana Del Ray says that Radiohead are suing her' (BBC, 2018) and on her Twitter account she let it be known that:

> It's true about the lawsuit. Although I know my song wasn't inspired by Creep, Radiohead feel it was and want 100% of the publishing – I offered up to 40 over the last few months but they will only accept 100. Their lawyers have been relentless, so we will deal with it in court (Lana Del Rey, 2018)

The song in question is Lana Del Rey's 'Get Free' (Lana Del Rey 2017) The BBC article then notes that 'Interestingly, Radiohead themselves were successfully sued by The Hollies over Creep's similarities to The Air That I Breathe. Albert Hammond and Mike Hazlewood are now listed as co-writers for the song, and split royalties with the band.' (BBC, 2018). Lary Bartleet writing in the *NME* gave some clarity on the issue:

> Radiohead's publisher denies that any such lawsuit exists but explains that they are asking for Radiohead to be credited on the song. A statement from Warner/Chappell reads: "As Radiohead's music publisher, it's true that we've been in discussions since August of last year with Lana Del Rey's representatives. It's clear that the verses of 'Get Free' use musical elements found in the verses of 'Creep' and we've requested that this be acknowledged in favour of all writers of 'Creep'. To set the record straight, no lawsuit has been issued and Radiohead have not said they "will only accept 100%" of the publishing of 'Get Free'". (Bartleet, 2018)

Not surprisingly those on social media responded in a variety of ways in support or against each artist, but many noted the problem of owning a melodic sequence or a chord structure. So if Lana Del Rey's song 'Get free' is adjudged to have come 'Creep', and 'Creep' from 'The Air that I Breathe', then we can trace that song back to one before it, and that

song to the one before that, and so on, until we get to the very first song. We have done the 'research' and have found the *very first* song, the song from which all others come from, and the very first song that was written before all other songs is called 'This Song Sounds like Another Song'. If Warner/Chappell want an acknowledgement in favour of "all writers of 'Creep'" then it should hold that every song credits every contributor from the writer(s) of 'This Song Sounds Like Another Song' onwards. Ridiculous, of course (but which bit is ridiculous? My example or the real situation?).

Baudrillardian notions of simulacra in the recording are a firm part of the music production curriculum now for those of us teaching music production musicology in Higher Education, and Auslander, pulling on the work of Gracyk and Baudrillard, notes the simulacra of the recording as the copy that precedes the real (see Auslander, 2000. Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]. Gracyk, 1996). The concept behind this hypothetical first song 'This Song Sounds like Another Song' is of course to highlight the questionable link between origination and ownership. This system of ownership will have to crash at some point in the future but for the moment at least it is fair to say that the Lana Del Rey and Radiohead conflict will not be the last of its type and the crash will not be happening anytime soon. And so lots of songs (that sound like other songs) have been claimed to be owned and the lawyers set to work. So we can legally own those things as writers, we can lay claim to putting one note after another in a particular sequence and own it (and defending it in court), so can we do the same with creative production? What if I creatively EQ, fix a specific compression ratio and pan the guitars hard left and right, can I own this? Maybe it is no different except that it can't be policed as well (yet) or maybe it's that no one cares as much. I should add that we are not advocating a 'copyleft' ideology that "seems to argue for the reduction of, or extinguishment, of copyright altogether for an alleged greater cultural good" (Bargfrede, 2017:xi) or indeed are we affirming the copyright, rather we are exploring the discourse. Perhaps, to retain our Deleuzian leaning, we should consider ourselves as the 'copy *milieu*' or 'copy middle' (rather than the 'copy centre' which is where one would get one's photocopying done).

Deproduction

At a hypothetical point in the future when collectively we have produced all that can be produced the territory of production will begin to vanish. The process towards this is that of

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deproduction and it might be said that this process has already begun. In reality the final absolute point is unlikely ever to be reached but the process towards that end will have significant impact upon how we view production both by reframing the local and ultimately by accelerating output so that, if the totality of production is finite, output stops (the coal has been mined, the pits closed and dismantled).

The rise in technology that has driven the decentered internet and globalization has produced some fine examples of distributed models of collaboration that Vera john-Steiner might never have considered even just two decades ago. Where there were territories that had borders and where maps remained fixed (at least for a while) there was some sense of security, but that has been replaced by the security of the omnipresent, that is, our ability to access information and experience anywhere, anytime. The authenticity that decided that the singer was only authentic if their singing accent represented their home town (their physical territory) has given way to something much more local, namely, the global. The voice in one's room (in York, for example), that is the recorded voice emanating from the speakers, might be from New York, but that voice is nearer to the listener physically than their next-door neighbor and they are more present in the house than the neighbor probably is. In this case the territory, the social locality, has been reterritorialized by the global. Arguably, when a singer is in a Yorkshire studio in the flesh (the one from York but with the New York Brooklyn accent) we can confidently say that their accent is more authentic, because they relate to the voice that is *nearer* to them, than the singer from York with the Yorkshire accent.

In terms of the global-local ('glocal'), Wikipedia is a fine example of the global over the international and of a distributed model of collaboration. In one entry on deterritorialization, including a discussion on Anthony Giddens' notions of globalization in *The Consequences of Modernity* (Giddens, 1991), there is a particularly revealing intervention, the entry includes an edit in superscript in square brackets from a contributor who, in doing so, wittily demonstrates exactly how a distributed model operates:

> In the context of cultural globalization, some [*weasel words*] argue deterritorialization is a Cultural feature developed by the "mediatization, migration, and commodification which characterize globalized modernity". This implies that by people working towards closer involvement with the whole of the world, and works

towards lessening the gap with one another, one may be widening the gap with what is physically close to them.

<div align="right">(Wikipedia, 2018)</div>

The global intervenes by becoming closer in proximity than the local (it is nearer to you than your neighbor). The intervention likewise destabilizes the local ownership of knowledge, just as it destabilizes and then re-stabilizes the authenticity of the recorded voice. As the world is at liberty to collaborate, to contribute, to produce, and technology increases the rate and quantity of contributions we might consider what might result should it turn out that production is not infinite but finite. To transfer this to music production, can we reach a point where we have collectively produced every record that can be produced to the extent that not only does further production become impossible but the *idea* (and its apparatus) also fall out of use and hence out of existence? How could that happen? Here is one small way to start: Write every tune that ever did, and ever could, exist. Impossible? Perhaps, but we can have a go. We can begin step by step. Most tunes fall within certain parameters, maybe a few bars, normally within a key or mode that is limited, normally it will be a tempered scale that is fixed, note lengths might be between a whole note and a sixteenth note *etc.* Suddenly limiting parameters emerge that make it look slightly less than impossible. Achievable even. And they could be written systematically and categorized, particularly if we can write the software to generate these. We would encompass every tune (at least within the chosen parameters) that has been written, and we would also then have written every tune that is to come. What then of ownership? Perhaps the money we will owe, because we will be sued for writing tunes that are already 'owned', could be off-set by the income from those future composers that we will sue because we have already written the tune that they will claim as their own. Just imagine how that might play out in a court of law. As mentioned earlier, at some point ownership will have to come crashing down and that will be one of the stages on the journey of deproduction, and it does not need to reach the final realization of all production for the process to have impact. Beyond this we are not claiming a 'death of art', music will be there, in fact *all* music will be there already, it is just that production will have stopped.

Outro: The rising of the many

That will not happen, of course, this is conjecture and speculation, but it is not without actual purpose, somewhere along the way to these (ludicrous) concepts there lies a few shifts in our collective understanding of music production. And as we accept our collective approach to production and let go of the individual as producer then we may find that we are freer to produce. Coproduction, in its reduction of the 'I', ought also to reduce the grip on ownership that stifles creative acts and creative generosity. It may turn out that the field of study of coproduction is nothing more than how the known types of collaboration are manifest in the discipline of music production. If so then that is fine, it is still worth the effort. And it would be hypocritical for Chris and myself to lay claim to this territory, we are neither the first or the last to research it, we are just another local calibration in the wider rhizome. However, it is time for the rhizome to spread, coproduction may yet have much to offer as an activity and as a field of study.

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