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Biopolitical Theory of Virtuosity in the Oeuvre of Glenn Gould

Abstract: Over the course of the 20th century, the concept of virtuosity went through a transformation and adapted to its increasingly globalized and technological culture. In that sense, virtuosic performance and its reception were subject to the workings of social, political, economic, and historical factors. The emergence of a media-networked society conditioned a change in the perception of the artist, who now creates and transmits her works using media. Contemplating the concept of virtuosity in the age of post-Fordism, originally posited in the bio-political theory of the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno, this text analyses the concepts of the general intellect, labor power, as well as public political performance. Its focus is on the creative oeuvre of Glenn Gould, whose work combined different layers of pianist and performance heritage, and offered a new type of interpretation. Harnessing the power of his idea, he succeeded in using his radical musical philosophy to re-examine virtuosic performance and create a hybrid art as a blend of music and technology. In Gould's poetics, virtuosity was a skill that managed to transpose itself into the domain of media by building upon preceding discursivizations.

Keywords: virtuosity; the general intellect; labor power; public space; Glenn Gould; recording.

In modern art history, more precisely, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the term and concept of virtuosity spawned various interpretations. To begin with, its etymological root is found in the article on *virtu* in Sebastien de Brossard's *Dictionnaire de musique*, the earliest known lexicon of music, where it denotes skill and artistry, in music theory and composition alike. Its development culminated in the 19th century, with much suspicion as well as opposing positions in music lexicography regarding virtuosity. Virtuosity signified technical mastery in musical performance and virtuosos were presented as sources of creation and genius, which conditioned opposed and critical opinions that dismissed virtuosity as such, as an exhibitionist type of performance devoid of expression.¹

¹ Žarko Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815–c. 1850* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 1–6.

In the 20th century, more precisely, in the post-Fordist period,² the concept of virtuosity underwent a transformation and adapted to the changes that occurred during the last century in capitalist forms of production. In his book *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Paolo Virno defines virtuosity as an activity of performers and artists that does not leave behind a work of art and that finds its fulfilment in itself. At the same time, it requires the presence of others, because it exists only in the presence of an audience. Therefore, virtuosity entails the inclusion of public action in its work process.³

In his discussion of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Virno singles out Aristotle's classification of every human experience in three basic domains, which are essentially distinct for structural reasons: labor, political action, and intellectual reflection. Labor was a representative and repetitive process, involving the organic exchange with nature. Political action is public and exposed to the gaze of others. It intervenes only in social relations, not in natural materials, and the context in which it operates does not produce final objects, but modifies this very context. On the other hand, as the activity of thinking, the intellect is isolated and solitary. It did not point to any pursuit relating to public affairs.⁴

Hannah Arendt, the American philosopher and theorist of politics, maintained that politics⁵ had started to mimic labor. In her view, politics entails exposure to “the presence of others”.⁶ On the other hand, Virno maintains that the post-Fordist type of labor has incorporated some characteristics of political action. In that regard, he writes:

I maintain that it is in the world of contemporary labor that we find the “being in the presence of others”, the relationship with the presence of others, the beginning of new processes, and the constitutive familiarity with contingency, the unforeseen and the possible. I maintain that post-Fordist labor, the productive labor of surplus, subordinate labor, brings into play the talents and the qualifications which, according to a secular tradition, had more to do with political action.⁷

² As a contemporary system of production, post-Fordism emerged in Italy as part of a wave of social struggles collectively called the Movement of 1977. A well-trained, highly mobile, and unstable population of workers confronted the Fordist model of the assembly-line worker, his form of life, habits, and customs. In post-Fordism, the generic faculties of the mind, such as its linguistic ability, memory, predisposition to learning, ability and power to think constitute the main resources of production. The concept of industrialisation is abandoned, the service sector plays the dominant part in production, products are sold on smaller markets, and information technology is employed.

³ Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (Los Angeles & New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 50–51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 37, 50.

⁵ Here, politics does not refer to living in a political party, but to publicly organised space, the universal human experience of beginning something new.

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 217.

⁷ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 51.

The politicization of labor occurs when thought becomes the main driving force of production. It joins in the process of production and thereby becomes public. This relates to the general intellect, a concept originating from Marx's *Grundrisse*,⁸ the chapter on "Machines and Science in the Service of Capital", and a cornerstone in the analysis and definition of the post-Fordist mode of production. Marx conceives of the general intellect as objective scientific knowledge embodied in the immovable capital of the automated system of machines. Immovable capital denotes the means of production, consumed in the process itself. It is the technological condition that turns raw materials into products. In other words, the relationship between knowledge and production is articulated in the system of machines.

The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite.⁹

Accordingly, the worker is not the main participant in production; instead, the worker becomes an observer and guide of the process. The worker's participation transcends the activity of individuals, whose concrete activity is bereft of meaning. Therefore, knowledge becomes independent from the production process. In Marx's conception, the amount of labor time invested in the production of a commodity actually determines its value. The application and development of scientific knowledge determined the efficiency of machines and conditioned its growth, which in turn conditioned any decrease in the requisite labor time. The development of fixed capital highlights the degree to which general social knowledge has become a direct force of production. The general intellect controls the conditions of social life, which can only change accordingly.

On the other hand, when he writes about the general intellect, Marx also points to its incorporation into living labor. The development and education of an individual enhances the intensity of collaboration among living subjects. With the development of capital in post-Fordism, the tendency highlighted by Marx becomes almost complete. The respective amounts of time required for the work process to take place and for social prosperity are no longer directly related. The production of commodities now also depends on time spent outside labor. Whatever is learnt, applied, and consumed then becomes part of labor power's use value and constitutes a profitable resource. Prosperity is determined by language, collaboration, intelligence. Virno stresses that in post-Fordism, the general intellect implies the ability to think and is always a constitutive part of collaboration in production.

⁸ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973), 706.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 693.

The *general intellect* manifests itself today, above all, as the communication, abstraction, self-reflection of living subjects.¹⁰

Constituting a characteristic of living labor, the human ability to think and speak, propensity for learning, and power of abstraction, the general intellect does not imply only technical and scientific knowledge, as Marx originally suggested.

[I]t is the complex of cognitive paradigms, artificial languages, and conceptual clusters which animate social communication and forms of life.¹¹

In post-Fordism, discourses and thought constitute productive machines. The relationship between production and knowledge is now expressed in linguistic cooperation among people. The main pillar of the work process is located in communication exchanges. The general intellect is social knowledge, which has become the main labor power in production.

The concept of labor power constitutes a prerequisite for considering the biopolitical¹² theory of Virno. Setting out from Marx's definition of labor power as "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being",¹³ Virno explicates the concept of labor power as the *power* to produce. In that sense, labor power implies the faculty, the potential, the *dynamis*.¹⁴ Capitalist production is predicated on the distinction between labor power and effective labor, because pure power is entirely separate from individual activity. Power is defined as something un-real and un-present and subject to demand. The foregoing discussion leads us to conclude that the capitalist does not buy one or more specific qualifications, but the possibility of production as such.¹⁵ Virno asserts that power no longer remains an abstract concept, but acquires a generally useful, empirical, social, and economic form. It forms an exchange between the capitalist and the worker.¹⁶ Virno writes:

¹⁰ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 65.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹² As a philosophical concept, biopolitics was introduced by Michel Foucault in *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*. According to Foucault, biopolitics encompasses various techniques of performing power over individual and collective bodies that serve to establish and develop various forms of life in the capitalist system of production. Managing as well as shaping human life takes place through a series of regulatory and punitive procedures conditioned by the disciplining and taming of the individual. Biopolitics implements methods for controlling and regulating biological processes, enhancing the labour power and capability of the population, under the auspices of various institutions, such as the family, school, police, army, hospital, etc.

¹³ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I, Book One: The Process of Production of Capital*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1887), 119.

¹⁴ *Idem.*

¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁶ What is meant here is not the object of a transaction as a specific service rendered to the buyer, but something that exists neither in space nor time.

The living body becomes an object to be governed not for its intrinsic value, but because it is the substratum of what really matters: labor-power as the aggregate of the most diverse human faculties (the potential for speaking, for thinking, for remembering, for acting, etc.). Life lies at the center of politics when the prize to be won is immaterial (and in itself non-present) labor-power. For this reason, and this reason alone, it is legitimate to talk about “bio-politics”.¹⁷

Therefore, power forms a constitutive element of the worker’s bodily existence. It is inseparable from the worker’s living person. Labor power has acquired the status of a commodity and, as such, may be bought and sold. This kind of power sheds light on the living body as “an object of innumerable and differentiated governmental strategies”.¹⁸

Analyzing Virno’s concepts of the general intellect and biopolitics is crucial for conceptualizing and understanding post-Fordist virtuosity. In this approach, post-Fordist virtuosity is defined as the articulation, variation, and modulation of the general intellect, of labor power. Virtuosity is manifested in living labor and its linguistic cooperation. Namely, the prototype of all virtuosity is the activity of speaking.¹⁹

The virtuosity of the speaker is the prototype and apex of all other forms of virtuosity, precisely because it includes within itself the potential/act relationship, whereas ordinary or derivative virtuosity, instead, presupposes a determined act [...], which can be relived over and over again.²⁰

The virtuosity of the speaker produces language, which finds its own fulfilment in itself without having to produce an object that would be independent from public performance itself. In that sense, every utterance is virtuosic because it conditions the presence of others.

[T]he act of *parole* makes use only of the *potentiality* of language, or better yet, of the generic faculty of language: not of a pre-established text in detail.²¹

An utterance entails a publicly organized space and it is always political.

In the culture industry,²² post-Fordist communication takes place by means of media technology – means of communication, which are viewed as activities that shape

¹⁷ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 83.

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ This applies to an entirely ordinary speaker, not to highly educated ones.

²⁰ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 56.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The term *culture industry*, originating in the critical theory of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, carried a negative connotation due to its implication of a mass and standardised production of culture.

the development of media and consumer culture. Speaking specifically from the perspective of music as an art, technology “denotes a heterogeneous open or closed set of techniques, technical means, and forms of behavior related to employing or performing technique as well as rules or customs of using technique in relation to specific individual or collective forms of behavior linked to the production, exchange, reception, and consumption of music. In that sense, the technology of music signifies not only the performance of music on (a) musical instrument(s), but also the totality of relations linked to creating, performing, reproducing, recording, archiving, and presenting music in musical and non-musical institutions of art, culture, and society.”²³ Artistic labor is thus both virtuosic and political, because its products may not be separated from the activity itself, the core of which is communication. The technology of sound recordings, radio, and television is determined by the production (creation, distribution, broadcasting, reproduction) of musical works and by post-production (the wholesale processing of recorded material, which is distributed in communication, that is, media exchange). The media surroundings of artists are integrated by means of performative communication interactions and situations. In other words, a “media performance is a ‘live’ intervention focused on articulation i.e. music-making in media practice, i.e. system of communication and mediation.”²⁴ Post-Fordist artistic virtuosity is generically tied to the multiplicity of media performances. In that sense, virtuosity has no fixed or delimited territory. Media labor produces the work as “a surface set in motion that leaves its framing behind and intervenes in space, unfolding in time through its ‘audio’ and ‘visual’ intensities.”²⁵ It was precisely this kind of virtuosic, political, and artistic labor, essentially tied to the use of media technology, with communication at its core, that was presented and accomplished by the media *worker* Glenn Gould.

A case study: Gould’s virtuosity in the domain of media

The Canadian pianist, composer, author, and media worker Glenn Gould was one of the few artists who stressed the importance of media technology, its potential and key role in the future of art music. In 1964, at the peak of his career in public music performance, Gould abandoned the concert podium and devoted himself to making recordings, radio and TV programs and broadcasts, as well as writing. Gould posited the kind of close contact with music that he could accomplish only in the studio as the antipode to the collective experience produced by a public concert performance. In that regard, technology could anticipate an “analytic clarity, immediacy, and indeed almost tactile proximity.”²⁶ Critiquing the live presence of the audience, committed

²³ Miško Šuvaković, *Estetika muzike. Modeli, metode i epistemologije o/u modernoj i savremenoj muzici i umetnostima* (Belgrade: Orion Art, 2016), 303.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

²⁵ Miško Šuvaković, *VIRTUOZITET izvođenja PORTRETA. Oblici samog Rada i oblici samog Života* (Belgrade: Katalog izložbe a, Galerija Doma omladine, 2006).

²⁶ Glenn Gould, “The Prospect of Recording,” in *The Glenn Gould Reader* ed. by Tim Page (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 333.

to simple pleasures, that threatens the extraordinary character of musical experience, Gould highlights the radical change conditioned in the relationship between the performer and the listener by the totality of relations that are now realized by means of media communication. Gould views technology as an activity that incorporates, first and foremost, accumulated knowledge – the general intellect – and communication, whereby one implements the skill of controlling and performing techniques in the domain of media.

Technology [...] is not primarily a memory bank in whose vaults are deposited the achievements and shortcomings, the creative credits and documented deficits, of man. It is, of course, or can be, any of those things, if required, and perhaps you will remind me that “the camera does not lie”, to which I can only respond, “Then the camera must be taught to forthwith”. For technology should not, in my view, be treated as a noncommittal, noncommitted voyeur; its capacity for dissection, for analysis – above all, perhaps, for the idealization of an impression – must be exploited [...]²⁷

Positing technology as an opportunity to idealize an event, Gould resorts to editing as one of the essential techniques of working in a studio that enables the most faithful transmission of the composer’s idea. He maintains that the performer plays a key role in the quest for the ideal performance and that, as such, her role is not reducible to simple factors. As the medium between the composer and the listeners, a performer who commands professional knowledge in the performance of sound symbols also assumes the role of an editor. Taking control over editing entails experimentation, which is established by sublimating knowledge and skillful communication, resulting in the desired kind of performance. The use of recording techniques is unlimited for those pursuing the ideal performance. Gould maintains that every means is legitimate if it yields the desired end result.

I see nothing wrong in making a performance out of two hundred splices, as long as the desired result is there. [...] If the ideal performance can be achieved by the greatest amount of illusion and fakery, more power to those who do it.²⁸

An ideal interpretation, as a product of using post-production techniques, is transferred into the artwork as an object. A recording as such cannot constitute just a piece of music inscribed on a disc, but a complex process that invariably results from living labor and qualifies as art in its own right. As an instrument of communication, a recording is positioned between the performer and the listener, who can listen to

²⁷ Glenn Gould, “Music and Technology,” in *ibid.*, 354–55.

²⁸ Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould Music and Mind* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1978), 213.

it over and over again, always in the same form.²⁹ A recording demands listening in solitude, by an active and creatively-oriented listener who enters into an interaction with the work. The information she receives enables her to strike a more intimate relationship with the musical contents of the piece, as well as with the performer's and composer's conceptions.

As a composer, Gould acquired prominence with his documentary radio broadcasts or radio dramas, which may be viewed from the perspectives of musical, television, and cinematic art. On the one hand, he based the structure of his broadcasts on different musical forms (the fugue, the variations, rondo and trio), whilst, on the other hand, using certain media techniques (crossfading-dissolve). In a television show titled *The Well-Tempered Listener*, Gould explained his concept in the following terms:

The whole idea of what music is [...] has changed so much in the last five years [that] I feel something quite remarkable happening [...] I think that much of the new music has a lot to do [...] with the spoken word, with the rhythms and the patterns and the rise and fall and the inclination of the spoken word and the human voice. I work a lot with the spoken word because I've been doing, as you know, radio documentaries and it has occurred to me in the last few years that it's entirely unrealistic to see that particular kind of work, that particular ordering of phrase and regulation of cadence, which one is able to do, taking, let us say, the subject of an interview like this one to a studio after the fact and chopping it up and splicing is up here and there and pulling on this phrase and accentuating that one, throwing some reverb in there, and adding a compressor here, and a filter there, that it's unrealistic to think of that as anything but a composition, that it really is, in fact, composition. I think our whole notion of what music is has forever merged with all the sounds that are around us: everything that the environment makes available.³⁰

Gould made his documentaries not by means of musical notation, but by splicing magnetic tape by hand. He devised their dramatic contents by cutting, editing, and moving interviews with various people or dramatic characters. He used contrapuntal techniques to highlight their mental processes.³¹

What we've tried to do [...] is to create what I have grown rather fond of calling "contrapuntal radio", which is a term that I've picked up from a fondness for contrapuntal music and tried rather arbitrarily to attach to another medium, where it has not belonged in the past. It's amazing to me

²⁹ Sanela Radisavljević, "Glen Guld. Pijanizam u doba medija," in *Figure u pokretu: Savremena zapadna estetika, filozofija i teorija umetnosti* ed. by Miško Šuvaković and Aleš Erjavec (Belgrade: Atoča, 2009), 315.

³⁰ Glenn Gould, *The Well-Tempered Listener*, Television program: CBC, 1970.

³¹ Contrapuntal techniques denote the simultaneous devising and combining of two or more independent rhythmic and melodic lines.

that it has not, because there's no particular reason, it seems to me, why one shouldn't be able to comprehend, clearly and concisely, two or three simultaneous conversations. Some of our most aware experiences are gleaned from sitting in subways, in dining-cars on trains, in hotel lobbies – simultaneously listening to several conversations, switching our point of view from one to another – picking out strands that fascinate us.³²

In order to implement his ideas and concepts related to producing radio broadcasts, Gould spent hundreds of hours working in a media space with a sound technician. His documentary radio shows were made through a synthesis of musical dramas, experiments, journalism, anthropology, ethics, pronouncements on the condition of society, and contemporary history. As such, they entailed a huge deal of effort and a new kind of talent and thereby gave rise to a hybrid art that pushed the boundaries of radio as a medium.

In his explication of virtuosity in the performance practice of Glenn Gould, Paolo Virno points to his live concert performances, which directly confronted politics, that is, the gaze of others.

This great pianist, paradoxically, hated the distinctive characteristics of his activity as a performing artist; to put it another way, he detested public exhibition. Throughout his life he fought against the “political dimension” intrinsic to his profession. At a certain point Gould declared that he wanted to abandon the “*active life*”, that is, the act of being exposed to the eyes of others (note: “*active life*” is the traditional name for politics). In order to make his own virtuosity non-political, he sought to bring his activity as a performing artist as close as possible to the idea of labor, in the strictest sense, which leaves behind extrinsic products. This meant closing himself inside a recording studio, passing off the production of records (excellent ones, by the way) as an “end product”. In order to avoid the public-political dimension ingrained in virtuosity, he had to pretend that his masterly performances produced a defined object (independent of the performance itself). Where there is an end product, an anonymous product, there is labor, no longer virtuosity, nor, *for that reason*, politics.³³

Namely, Virno posits the performer's unique capabilities as the main criterion of virtuosity, discussing the relationship between public, political action and the work process. In Glenn Gould's case, such a notion of virtuosity was reflected in exhibiting an extraordinary level of technical accomplishment and musical thought in performance on the concert podium. For Virno, a virtuoso pursues an activity that finds its fulfilment in itself. As such, it does not produce a final or finite object that would retain the same form after the performance itself and must always materialize

³² Payzant, *Glenn Gould Music and Mind*, 216.

³³ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 53–54.

in the presence of an audience. In a discussion of Aristotle's distinction between work and political action, Virno highlights precisely this difference, which is based on the impossibility of attaining an object as a finished product of political action. Hannah Arendt likewise asserts that public performance as such is in an entirely dependent correlation with the audience, because it needs "a publicly organized space" for its work.³⁴ What the foregoing suggests is that in his concert career Gould engaged in a type of public performance that, by virtue of influencing social rather than material processes, constituted political action. Accordingly, Virno points to a causal link between virtuosity and political action.

One could say that every political action is *virtuosic*. Every political action, in fact, shares with virtuosity a sense of contingency, the absence of a "finished product", the immediate and unavoidable presence of others. [...] all virtuosity is intrinsically political.³⁵

Making a radical turn in his career, convinced that for him the concert hall belonged in the past, in 1964 Gould abandoned the concert stage and his brilliant career of a concert pianist. Perceiving the experience of the concert stage as barbaric and decadent, Gould rejected the artificial aspect of virtuosity, criticizing its external and visual effects that "threatened to divert the listener's attention away from the music and onto itself, in other words, away from the aesthetically autonomous product of rational mental activity and onto a sheer bodily act".³⁶ For Gould, musical worth resided in a commitment to the work's formal structure, which entailed a complementary presentation of melodically independent voice parts in a contrapuntal manner, with a harmonic and rhythmic dimension. Criticizing fashionable applause-seeking virtuosic treats for the audience, he maintained that a performer should ground their actions on analyzing and deconstructing the work, performing its structure and systematizing its form with precision and clarity.³⁷ Basing his thought on Arnold Schoenberg's ideas and dictum that "music should not decorate, it should be true",³⁸ Gould maintained that the performer's experience should be based on seeking and expressing formal beauty. It was precisely the environment and technology of the recording studio that were Gould's ideal allies in fulfilling his intent, because solitude, as a prerequisite for creativity and focus on the work itself, aided by recording technology, enabled him to achieve the ideal performance.

Paradoxically, if "every political action is *virtuosic* [and] all virtuosity is intrinsically political", critiquing the traits of virtuosic performers and performing music in concert halls before an audience, Glenn Gould left the concert stage in order to resist

³⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 154, quoted in Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 53.

³⁵ *Idem*.

³⁶ Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 264.

³⁷ Gilen Gerten, *Svestrani Glen Guld* (Novi Sad: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 2005), 251.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 248.

the politicality that constituted an integral and inseparable part of his profession. By leaving the podium, Gould in fact transposed political action into studio work, which gave him the opportunity to create works of art as finished and durable objects. This twist in the Aristotelian and Virno's conception of moving from political action into a type of work intended to produce finished products in Gould's studio-based oeuvre still reflects a virtuosic as well as political aspect. Technology, defined by production and postproduction, constitutes a new environment for the artist, similarly to Hannah Arendt's publicly-organized political space. Thus produced, the work continues to communicate to an active listener at the other end of the communication chain. Gould's excellent ability to interact with technology, his knowledge and activity constituted his working strength-power to produce a finished work of music as a form of capitalist production. Gould entirely fulfilled the tendency highlighted by Marx, inasmuch as the production of his recordings also depended on the time he spent outside the studio. Namely, Gould spent hours thinking about music, developing his own ideas, analyzing and writing texts about electronic media, which likewise constituted a useful part of the value of his labor power, a profitable resource.

In conclusion, Virno defines virtuosity in post-Fordism as an articulation, variation, and modulation of the general intellect, labor power. For him, the basic model of virtuosity is the activity of the speaker. In that sense, Gould the speaker transmits and records his "speaking" activity, as the prototype of all virtuosity, on the recording, which is determined precisely by modulating and articulating the general intellect. On the recording *qua* a finished work of art, Gould's thought, as the basis of his labor power and chief driving force, becomes public, because it is included in the making process itself. Incorporating virtuosic political labor into the musical work as an "object of possession",³⁹ Gould made a turn away from *exceptional live performance* to *productive labor*. As an *object of possession*, the recording-artwork emerged under the impact of media technology and constitutes a sublimation of various artistic, scientific, and social disciplines. As a reflection of the capitalist mode of production, art as a finished work examines our reality, surrounded by media. It requires virtuosic labor on technology, produces new meaning and communication, and is always collaborative, participative, performing, and adaptable. By radically abandoning the concert podium and pursuing artistic labor within capitalism, Gould "outlined a critical relation between living labor and media-pianist labor".⁴⁰ Highlighting the transformation of the product and human labor in the contemporary process of production, Gould showed how recording processes and techniques may produce a complete and closed work of art, which is simultaneously a presentation of performative and accumulated media labor and demands a different type of valorization and perception. Therefore, Glenn Gould redefined the concept of virtuosity, positing the studio recording as a procedure that transforms the trace of living labor into the processing of the multiplicities and potentialities of media.

³⁹ Miško Šuvaković, "KONTRADIKCIJE: Marcel Duchamp, Arthur Cravan, Glenn Gould, Joseph Beuys i Jerome Bel: Bitne karakterizacije unutar ljudskog rada i umetnosti (jedno pažljivo čitanje eseja Giorgia Agambena Privation is Like a Face sa znatnim odstupanjima tokom interpretacije rada u umetnosti)," *TkH* 12 (2006/7): 68.

⁴⁰ Idem.

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