CULTURAL MIXING AS A MAJOR FEATURE OF ROCK MUSIC

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Abstract: *Rock music has since the start been a "genre" that subsumes other genres in a play of décentrage, between a centrifugal movement of expansion and research, and a centripetal movement of céntrage, useful for its recognition as a genre. Furthermore, with improvisation as one of its main features, "each moment becomes unrepeatable, it can depend on the preceding moment but not on the subsequent one, it is central, equal to every other, essential but not indispensable", therefore marked by a broad creativity of the player and the use of electric instruments. It may be interesting to show the process that leads from the original meeting of a few genres to an increasingly significant expansion. Rock music loves the mixing of genres, not their singularity and recognisability. In a sociological perspective, such fusion is very useful for understanding changes, especially with a younger audience whose rigid division is fading: rock is the first musical genre capable of unifying the tastes of young people, beyond class differences and social backgrounds. Rock music is always looking for new sounds, which are distinguished into two broad strains: the United States sound and the European sound, with a British prevalence, but present in every country. British-American rock music broadcast worldwide has stimulated the development of local versions, and the countries that adopt and appropriate it use their own "language" and culture.*

Keywords: *rock music, music migration, electric instrument, local versions of rock music, mixing of genres*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is utopian to hypothesize a world-economy; one is tempted to think that modernity and postmodernity will lead to a unification of the way we comprehend the world in its various aspects, with the revolutionary contribution of information technologies.

> The dream of making all individuals obey the same universal laws of reason, religion or history has always turned into a nightmare and an instrument of domination; but the rejection of all principles of unity and the unqualified acceptance of differences leads to segregation or civil war (Touraine, 2000:14).

To find a way out of this dilemma, personal identity and particular culture need to be associated with participation in a rationalised world; but the subject's responsibility and freedom must also be affirmed. This is the only way that "allows us to explain how we can live together, equal and different" (Touraine, 2000:14). It is utopian to think that all the nations in the world could act simultaneously toward shared objectives. The theories relating to the current world economy interpret the modern age in the light of a dynamic between centre and periphery, which was used as a post-analytical model to understand some nerve centres of the development of economy itself. The creation of an international democracy based on an economic science able to organise public finances and policies for employment, development and overcoming territorial imbalances at different levels of government, from the local to the national, continental and world level (Wallerstein, 1974) is almost impossible.

Braudel acknowledges that in order to study the changes in society, it is necessary to re-locate the centre and reorganize peripheries in each placement. Only thus can identity be maintained, allowing each people to be free and to collaborate with other peoples. An important consideration is that the tempo of world-economies is slow, it has a long span, and the study that relates to it is relative to its orientation, which may last for centuries and is marked by ascent, crisis and decline. The history of the world presents itself as a succession of world-economies generated by the mechanism of centre re-location.

> Every time the centre moves, a re-centring takes place, as if an economy could not function without

a centre of gravity, a pole. Such processes of *décentrage* and *récentrage*, however, are rare and therefore significant (Braudel, 1986: 95).

Wallerstein sees the world as a multiplicity of societies connected to one another by a debate on core and periphery. His studies focus on the dialogue between history and social sciences, on the plurality of historical time, the importance of the space dimension in the study of social reality and its major structures, global explanations versus partial ones, long duration versus occasional facts, identification of long-term economic cycles and trends. The basic question, however, remains the identification of the correct unit of analysis for the study of social change. For this purpose, social systems are chosen because they are worlds for which boundaries may be defined. The territory around the centre, intermediate zones and periphery change over time through processes of centre re-location; such processes stem from rivalries and competition, and from economic crises that modify hierarchical structure. Furthermore, different forms of society that are positioned on a hierarchical scale coexist. The one occupying the central position (the highest) has an attitude of domination, even though it relies on "supplies" from the periphery; the periphery, in turn, depends on the needs of the core, which imposes its law. In addition, in each sector, specific times and laws coexist and the interrelation established among them identifies the temporarily unitarian area where a phenomenon is rooted, making it visible. In order to overcome this complexity, the characteristics that are specific to each field of inquiry and rules for the definition of such field need to be identified.

Wallerstein and Braudel are not the only scholars to have dealt with issues of re-centring after centre displacement and promiscuity due to the most various causes. Toynbee (1946), the British social historian, ascertained that all civilizations, after passing their apogee, saw a loss of the aspects of original consistency in their culture that were the expression of a creative minority. Cultural promiscuity, or panmixia, establishes between the dominating minority and the ever-increasing internal proletariat, while more and more frequent cultural exchanges take place with the less developed peoples (external proletariat), in such a way, though, that reciprocal inputs are not organically integrated in either culture. Panmixia may be seen as a preliminary symptom of decadence, or as a social premise of future recovery.

A sense of promiscuity is a passive substitute for that sense of style which develops *pari passu* with the growth of a civilization. This state of mind takes practical effect in an act of self-surrender to the melting pot; and in the process of social disintegration an identical mood manifests itself in every province of social life: in religion and literature and language and art, as well as in the wider and vaguer sphere of 'manners and customs' (Toynbee, 1946:455).

Today the process of panmixia takes place as an intercultural levelling between social classes, as intercultural hybridization between economically dominating culture and dominated cultures. Panmixia is precisely the starting point for kitsch, with the abandoning or deterioration of the old popular folk culture, with its ethnic values. The avant-gardes will try to retrieve some ancestral values that may be found in folk works. Morin shows another aspect of panmixia that deserves to be illuminated, the push toward universalism beyond merely syncretic forms. That cosmopolitanism has a double nature: anthropological on one hand, that is, a base shared by men of all civilizations and concerning not only cultural products, but also primary and fundamental passions, processes of projection and identification. "The cosmopolitanism of mass culture, however, in his view is also the promotion of a type of man on the way to universalization, one who aspires to a better life, who seeks personal happiness and asserts the values of the new civilization" (Morin, 1970:187). True modernity should be understood as a capacity for decentring perspectives and for taking the other's point of view. Such decentring is not only the foundation for rational thinking, it also extends to social relations.

In every period the arts are marked by a predominant style, with cultural and artistic products recognized and accepted as "normal" by listeners, readers, viewers and art users. Next to such styles, and generally in contrast with them, "modern" or "new" styles that have not yet been fully accepted by the public at large are manifested. In many cases such novelties, temporarily labelled as revolutionary, will later become predominant styles and be well rooted in the next age. Similar revolutions, often deemed to be anarchic and destructive by the mass of artists sticking to conformity and by a specific public as well, are the product of constructive efforts representing the younger generations (Weinstock, 1969) who claim for themselves the unquestionable right to a different and contrasting expression, in comparison with the older generations.

Consumer products and consumption modes are contemporary; production creates the consumer by generating need and desire. The music industry works on objective roots in order to shape consumers' taste and habits; at the same time,

though, it endeavours to leave consumers the illusion of being free, thus realizing what Adorno calls "pseudo-indivualisation" (Serravezza, 1976:123). In production there is a form of con-centration facilitated by technology. Technological facilitations, in fact, lead to an exponential increase in music usability. Music may be listened to far from its production place.

> By replicating the work many times over, technology substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to reach the recipient in his or her own situation, it actualizes that which is reproduced. These two processes lead to a massive upheaval in the domain of objects handed down from the past (Benjamin, 2008:23), already modified and actualized (Giddens, 1999; Hobsbawm, Ranger, 1983).

The ritualistic character of art is weakened by technique and, in our case, technique brings music towards an authentic art; the latter shows its original ritual function by increasing its usability. Technical reproducibility emancipated art from its functional connection, magical and ritual.

> The masses are a matrix from which all customary behaviour toward works of art emerge anew. Quantity has been transformed into quality: the greatly increased mass of participants has produced a different kind of participation. The masses are criticized for seeking distraction (*Zerstreuung*) in the work of art, whereas the art lover approaches it with concentration (Benjamin, 2008:39): a commonplace reproach, in the author's view.

In this paper, rock music will not be dealt with as a generational product connected with youth[1]. The reason for this choice does not relate to scarce consideration given to that aspect, but to the intention of investigating a particular process of creativity, whose roots may be found among young people and that will later involve more young people, with an acceleration that is typical of the extraordinary history of human creativity and unthinkable even in a cultural sector such as that of "rock music".

1.2 Features of social changes: expectations and actualizations In social life, a dynamic is always there between expectation and fulfilment, between social expectations and individual actualizations (G.H. Mead, 1950). Society itself hinges around these two possibilities. One is social (macrosociological) and tends to keep society compact; the other is individual (microsociological) and invites creativity and excitement, showing individuals the trend to follow. Society expects an individual to behave in a given way: expectations are, in fact, centripetal. They tend to centralisation, which in turn means safety; they also show that the subject is well socialized. Therefore, expectations tend to converge: the more they converge, the more compact society is and the slower or harder the changes. The microsocial aspect relating to actualised actions consists in an interpretation of social expectations, that is realised in actions showing that the individual resents being constrained within a "social mould". The *continuum* between an actualisation close to expectations and the opposite is very wide and it comprises creative situations of different kinds. Within the *continuum* there is routine, and that is indispensable for the creative process to take place. In every new generation social changes, even very fast, and short-lived rules may be foreseen. If we think of such a constant dynamic situation, it must be acknowledged that, in society, or in each historical period, though in different ways, there is a search by the individual to find the centre again, and this is done by displacing oneself and carrying with oneself – and changing – the social expectations. Such *centrage*, or search for the centre, remains stable until the changes underway are reabsorbed. Economic and political systems undergo changes, as do the more dynamic cultural systems, the socially less "dangerous" or "useful" ones such as fashion, music or other arts. After the change there comes a pause, allowing one's identity to be found again; followed by a rush towards novelty, because what is exhausted loses its character of identifying element for the subjects who determined it.

The causes generating a continuous proliferation of new trends in the audience may be ascribed to new technologies offering culture makers an ever-increasing control over the production of images and sounds. The sense of fragmentation of the present and the sense of breaking with the past reflect an experience laden with paradoxes and ambivalences, and therefore unstable meanings. As Braga writes (1974), the sense of cultural promiscuity works as intercultural levelling among social classes and as intercultural hybridization between the hegemonic culture and the dominated cultures.

2. ROCK IS CONSTANTLY NEW

Music is a universal human trait, though it may not be transmitted or make sense outside a specific cultural context. In this sense, all music is popular

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[1] The British sociomusicologist Simon Frith wrote two interesting volumes on the subject, published in English in 1978 and 1988.

(Blacking, 1973). Art, in fact, is the product of another form of consciousness we may call individual. This means that music represents the individual, his/her environment and people, through personal creativity that may not be repeated (Propp, 1975). It is impossible to identify all the processes taking place in folklore during the transition to new forms of social order or during the development of a given order, within it. One of the processes taking place with astonishing speed is that, from time to time, the inherited folklore finds itself in contradiction with the "old" social order, the very same order that created it and now denies it. The old and the new may be found within a state of contradictions that are not harmonized; they may also appear in hybrid combinations. The transfer of the new into the old involves complex interweaving. One may even think that the old is simply reinterpreted and the possible forms for reinterpreting it are numerous. Reinterpretation is a change of the old according to new life, new representations and new forms of knowledge. We will never know "how musical man is" if we do not understand and exactly describe what happens in any musical piece, or until we know what happens to human beings while they produce music: music remains a synthesis of the cognitive processes present in a culture and in the human body. Furthermore, since music is humanly organized sound, it expresses the individuals' social experience.

> There follows that any assessment of human musicality must account for processes that are extramusical, and that these should be included in analyses of music. The answers to many important questions about musical structures may not be strictly musical. Why are certain scales, modes, and intervals preferred? The explanation may be historical, political, philosophical or rational in terms of acoustic laws (Blacking, 1973:89).

Rock is an elusive and manifold phenomenon and, fortunately, being music, there is always something that escapes attempts at its normalization. Maybe because rock, although young, comes from far away, collects extremely old legacies and responds, largely unaware, to a precise need that we could synthesize in the idea of the tribal field, the joining of body and mind that our society has tried to eradicate in all possible ways, that can nonetheless find its way back from the most unexpected directions (Castaldo, 1994:11). Rock is many things, it is the vital symptom of a conflict, it is at the very centre of the entertainment industry. The problem is that of individual and collective freedom, and if there is a stream of contemporary culture where the word

"freedom" occurs almost obsessively, this is rock, developed in an age marked by the ease of technical reproducibility. Rock was born with consideration for its potential for reproduction in an unlimited series of forms, or better: rock needs to be thus reproduced. It is also important to remember that rock does not suffer from technical reproduction, but is born thanks to this. It is the only such case in the boundless world of music (Castaldo, 1994:24).

2.1 The heart of rock. Rock may be defined as a heart, that is, a territory surrounding a centre; but in order to better understand such an outstanding position, the middle zones and a vast territory of peripheral zones need to be considered as well (Braudel, 1986: 91-92). In creativity, in fact, a territorial displacement may be found, a creative polycentrism also relating to musical production. The displacement of rock, blues and jazz music in the USA is a field in which very different cultures have clashed, cultures connected with emigration from Europe and also with forced migration from Africa. Black people brought their music with them and mixed it with the new, in a process lasting hundreds of years. Rock's second homeland was Great Britain.

Jazz, blues and rock are products of network cultures of working classes, but rock arose much later than jazz and blues. It derives from the fusion of two musical traditions: country music, associated with white people, and blues [2], associated with black people. These were distinct music traditions with distinct audiences, record companies and places of exhibition. It was the Second World War that brought working classes together in munitions factories and during that peculiar period, the members of both groups were exposed to each other's music (Lipsitz, 1984).

Rock came from the fusion of two or more mass genres (pop, R&B, country and western); but the fusion then modified the genres themselves, which are no longer only American. Rock is an art with folk features, and as such it undergoes changes that are both educated and kitsch; in turn, such changes will then influence the folk character of rock. An evolutionary chain that has always marked the history of music is constituted in this way (Carpi, Veroni, 1982:125). In 1954 the first rock record, the Chords' record[3] titled "Sh-Boom", left the adult audience familiar with pop music

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[2] Rhythm and blues, played almost exclusively by black people: a musical genre strongly influenced by jazz, boogie woogie, blues and gospel. In the sixties R&B was replaced by other musical genres.
[3] The YouTube link is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBgQezOF8kY.

stunned, as that new music[4] was not understood. With Bill Haley's "Rock around the clock"[5] the style was already defined as music for the world of youth, intolerant of the adult world.

Rock is not strengthened as much by the contribution of mass communication as it is by its recording (each product becomes one work). The combination of these two factors generates a difficulty: rock scores for guitar are tablatures where each note must correspond, as much as possible, to the original version (transcriptions, therefore, not arrangements). "Each piece must be transcribed with the tablature method as well as on the ordinary stave, and technical suggestions must be added where necessary for better performance, type of tuning, special or unique effects, since it may be difficult to understand how such sounds were created" (Carpi, Veroni, 1982:9). The use of tablature requires listening to the corresponding record. The guitar itself underwent technical modifications to achieve an optimal volume, including f-holes. But the louder volume was not sufficient, so a metal resonator was added and in 1931 Rickenbacker[6] applied a pick-up (a magnet) to the guitar's metal body, thus eliminating any volume problem. That innovation was conceptually identical to the device in use today. The modifications were reflected in the changes in style[7].

In rock music, therefore, the instrumental accompaniment and the singer's voice form a whole that is meant to offer a compact image. In the seventies, music arrangements had shifted from orchestration to the use of synthesizer and recording effects (Durant, 1984). Rock is not improvisation; rock recordings are generally "the music's initial medium" while later live performances are, in fact, a reproduction (Belz, 1969:2).

3. IMPORTANCE OF DIFFUSION: RECORD COMPANIES AND RADIOS

At the core, in the cities, the cultural product already established is easily absorbed, but the "game" or "effort" of searching for what is new (a new core) continues and it starts with the process of cultural recycling, that expresses the constant search for novelties. The effects of saturation generated by overabundant messages in the field of country music are examined by Peterson (1978), who notes that this musical genre, in its process of diffusion and acceleration, progressively developed a sound similar to other popular music genres, thus losing its peculiarity. Two different systems of gatekeeping exist as regards cultural products. The first one is acceptance of a product by diffusion; the second is acceptance by assessment, a way for a product to gain access to a more restricted system of presentation and diffusion. It is a multi-stage approach involving the participation of different groups of selectors: a successful debut is vital for succeeding later. In the world of pop-rock, musicians are selected and taken to a recording room by the record company; but in order to actually become familiar to the public, their recordings need to be selected by several famous DJs and transmitted by radio stations with continuity[8].

Transmitting a small repertoire of recordings means less radio space for other recordings, as well as a smaller range of styles within the same genre. "This is the reason why the subgenres of country music, folk country, country crooner and bluegrass music, that used to be contemplated in country radio programme schedules, were excluded by the new radio stations" (Peterson, 1978: 306).

At the beginning of the fifties, in spite of the economic and demographic growth, overall sales of records were notably lower than in 1948. The inadequacy of record supply was highlighted by the exponential increase of music not commercialized by the mass media and spread by live performers. The success of television caused a decrease in radio networks' revenues and deprived record companies of the main system they used for presenting records. It was replaced by independent, small local radio stations broadcasting recorded music 24 hours a day, thus opening a market for small record companies that were promoting the new style of popular music broadcast by independent radio stations, rhythm and blues (Peterson, Berger, 1975).

A turbulent period around the mid-fifties was followed by a period of consolidation in the early sixties and by a later differentiation between 1964 and 1969. Over these years, numerous record companies were created and small businesses set up under the control of famous musicians who secured themselves in this way a strong autonomy in the making and production of their music. This

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[4] The pop world tries to smooth this music (for example, in "Tutti frutti" by Little Richard or Pat Boone's music). The links are respectively: https://www.youtube .com/watch?v=LVIttmFAzek;https://www.google.it/?g ws_rd=ssl#q=Pat+Boone+tutti+frutti+youtube

[5] The YouTube link is: https://www.youtube.com/watch ?v=ZgdufzXvjqw.

[6] U.S. manufacturer of electric string instruments, especially electric bass and guitar, based in Santa Ana, California.

[7] Blues, for example, becomes more aggressive.

[8] 79% of all the recordings that achieved number one status in *Billboard*'s chart between 1940 and 1977 were owned by major companies (Crane, 1997).

was rock's golden age, marked by a high level of innovation. Major record companies regained control over the sector during the seventies.

In the two decades between 1970 and 1990, with a view to maintaining control of the market, record companies selected their musicians among those who had already recorded for smaller labels: such previous work served as a test and provided a ranking for appreciation. At the same time, the radio network gained strength by reducing the programme schedule to a small number of successful recordings; this led to an increase in the sales of larger companies (Crane, 1997)[9]. So by 1980 the pop music industry was concentrated among eight companies, few actors for a growing share of products[10]. Alternative radio stations[11] played a significant role in the formation of subcultures based on musical preferences. An alternative radio station is a form of "electronic community" for its listeners, and it may help to support new musical groups that did not pass the selection in the first stage (Crane, 1992)[12].

The change in musical trends is continuous and record companies include such trends in their offer. During the period of institutionalization, i.e. of strengthening (*centrage*) of a new musical trend, there is a high rate of differentiation and this may be seen by the position in the rankings. Cultural organizations, according to Crane, may be central (at national level), peripheral (middle level) and urban (local level). The central belt is marked by superficiality but also great visibility; urban culture is comparable to avant-gardes; peripheral culture is segmented into lifestyles and is quite homogeneous

as regards cultural production. Access to the core is highly coveted and competition is increasingly stronger, so much so as to cause an acceleration in the rate of cultural change.

4. THE 'WORK' OF THE DISCH-JOCKEY (DJ)

The specific musical genres with which DJs are concerned are those for the discotheque. The work of the DJ becomes very creative: it is an activity of assembling, of putting together the different pieces of a puzzle, joining different elements and shaping a final single, continuous, smooth "block" (able to guarantee the dancing subject a uniform linearity in his/her dance). The mastery of a DJ, therefore, lies on the one hand in the art of choosing the pieces that most suit the ritual, and on the other hand in the genius and inexhaustible ability to paste, join and mix together heterogeneous pieces in a unitary and sequential way: reproduction starts to become creation (Marinozzi, 2004:151). The DJs are often authentic stars, true musicians of the turntable who carry out elaborate mixings (running mix, chop mix, transforming) with which they create new music.

> Records are the raw material for the DJ's performance. House records are not recordings of music played, but ways of playing music that the DJ creates directly and that make room for spontaneity, surprise and creativity (Langlois, 1992, quoted in Thornton, 1998:83).

The DJ's work includes the quotation of music pieces from the rap repertoire. This operation is emblematic because it shows how the aesthetic of reuse (of musical fragments) causes the pieces to lose the meaning they had at the time of their production; they acquire a new connotation and are inserted in a new context, thus making a collage of elements that are heterogeneous at the start, even though they are all intended to communicate the same thing. Another operation is patchwork: instrumental lines created for repetition are organized in a single structure, that may be vertical (superposition) or horizontal (juxtaposition).

Punk music featured sharp tonalities of a direct and aggressive sound, simple in its performance and intentionally "polarizing" in its effects. Punk groups boasted of not knowing musical techniques and not being able to play professionally. They transformed their lack of experience into a source of pride and transmitted the notion of a music that could be played by anyone, regardless of technical skills and personal talent. Unlike other youth subcultures, punk started with the music; in other words, it coalesced around music, rather than

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[9] The number of hit songs in radio programme schedules decreased from 40-50 to 15-30 (Belifante, Johnson, 1983).

[10] At the end of the eighties, music videos helped strengthen the market.

[11] The most famous is Radio Caroline, starting in 1964 aboard a ship (to avoid being illegal) and transmitting music 24 hours a day. It was one of the first pirate radio stations to avoid British laws and still survives. The first song to be broadcast was "Not Fade Away" by the Rolling Stones. In those years, in Britain, the Beatles, Moody Blues, Who, Rolling Stones and others were playing. On BBC radio, pop music was confined to five hours per week. The DJs could choose the music they preferred without any compensation for authors. When the British law on radio broadcasting from ships or planes was changed, Radio Caroline stopped for four years and resumed broadcasting in 1972.

[12] Young rock musicians sometimes refused the most commercial aspects of music and used the circuit of clubs to create a resisting community (Clarke et al., 1976). Such was the case of the teenagers who rejected rock establishment and created punk, in order to preserve their character of protest.

integrating an already-existing style into an already formed or forming whole (Middleton, 1990:236).

The DJ is not just a technician, he/she may create mixings, scratches, cuttings on a pre-recorded rhythm base. Rap music in its purest form is a metrical recital on a base created in the instant (Rinaldini, 1997: 153). The production of music starting from the sampling and rearrangement of sounds is increasingly frequent, it is almost a collective process (Lévy, 1999:13).

Post-rock was one of the most innovative musical movements in the years 1999-2004; it represented an attempt to rethink rock in an age when the pushes towards innovation were related to electronic. Rock had lost its ability to come up with novel, innovative features by joining rhythm and melody (Reynolds, 2008). Mostly, rock could take the styles of the past that were tuned on the same frequencies (as in grunge) and adjust them to a more contemporary feeling. Post-rock artists combined modern electronic styles, particularly dub and ambient (strongly rhythmical music as in the Jamaican style), and retrieved the lessons from the kraut-rock of the seventies. They found inspiration for a non-rock use of rock instruments in contemporary avant-garde and in jazz; guitars were used to create atmospheres full of feedback and to generate harmony textures, rather than melody; rhythm, as in classical music, would just highlight the accents. Once again, harmony was more important than rhythm (Cilia, 1999).

Another element that is difficult to precisely assess is the differentiation, as each geographic context gives its own artists. Cilia (1999) identifies post-British rock, American, Canadian French and Italian rock. The mixing of genres and the acceptance of electronics has caused an incredible widening of the boundaries of rock, putting an end to the orthodoxy of the power of the rhythmic trio (drums, bass and guitar)[13].

Rap music[14] features a voice speaking syncopatedly on a clearly marked rhythmic base; its source was a particular way of interpreting the DJ's profession. In the Bronx, the most important part of the record was the break, the part of the song where the drums take the lead. The DJs started to use two turntables and repeat the same few bars successively, in sequence, thus extending the break

and transforming it into an instrumental piece (Toop, 1984:2). From a technical point of view, the making of rap music did not require the ability to play an instrument or sing; manual techniques were used to obtain repetitive, rhythmic or particular sound effects such as scratch or back spin[15] (Rinaldini, 1997:34). Rap was the music of rebellion, and to communicate the words of rebellion so that they would be understandable, Italian was chosen in Italy. Dialect was used as well, for the same purpose, in an attempt to give rise to new identities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The parcelling out and fragmentary nature by which postmodern society is marked do not prevent the construction of structures allowing society itself to appear as an organized ensemble of interacting individuals, independently from the smooth flow in which artists and users move. Rock music is always looking for new sounds, which are distinguished into two broad strains: the United States sound and the European sound, with a British prevalence, present in every country. British-American rock music broadcast worldwide has stimulated the development of local versions, and the countries that adopt and appropriate it use their own "language" and culture. The game is always to move closer and further away: when new fusions are created, the tendency is to close and lock the system with strict rules that give those who apply them the illusion of mastering other cultures.

Recurring words such as contamination, hybridization[16], gemmation, mix or hypersegmentation (Cathelat, 1985), show the polisemy present in the words "pop" and "rock" themselves, cause of their diffused interchangeability. To this "darkness", or rather "confusion", the one relating to language should be added, enlarged by the birth of uncertain and mysterious neologisms only lasting the time of a song. The so-called world music contributed to and enriched the vocabulary with terms from all over the world (Quarantotto, 1994).

In the constant formation of novelties in the proliferation of new rock subgenres, the process of taking distance from genres that may be identified

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[13] The Stormy Six was an Italian musical group (1965); the following link allowed it to be heard in 2011: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WvibLmVMMU. Italian progressive rock groups active in the seventies were Le Orme, New Trolls, Premiata Forneria Marconi, Osanna and Arena.

[14] "To rap": to strike (with a sharp blow); also, to talk and narrate freely.

[15] "Scratching" means manually moving a vinyl record back and forth on a turntable; "backspinning" means manually causing the record to spin backward. These techniques allow original music to be created by mixing existing material.

[16] Hybridization is a generic category and this is a difficulty, because it means that generic categories are not relevant and mutually exclusive or distinct (Allen, 2013).

as "lead genres" increases. Following modes used by Wikipedia for framing the single genres (stylistic origins, cultural origins, typical instruments, popularity, subgenres and derivative forms), it may be stated that the lead genre is not always the one with least contacts and con-fusions with other genres. If heavy metal is considered, with stylistic origins derived from hard rock, acid rock, proto metal and blues rock, the relative subgenres are as many as 31[17]; while gothic metal stems from gothic rock, heavy metal and doom metal and is not related to any genre.

This shows how difficult it may be to clearly, distinctly identify a subgenre; sound and voice, in fact, often allow recognition of the genre itself. Besides "musical" knowledge there exists a "linguistic" knowledge, able to give names; but the difficulty is evident when listening and trying to identify different genres and subgenres of pop-rock music. In a survey conducted by Ala et al. (1985), the interviewees declared their knowledge of the name of 88 musical genres. Other surveys show that young people know the name of 24 genres; when asked to listen to ten pieces, though, classic rock is identified by 91.4% of interviewees, jazz by 92.1%; disco and techno are confused one with the other and vice versa; country with folk; acid rock with heavy metal and vice versa [18] (Tessarolo, 1990, 1991; Lisei, 1997).

In 1967 Berio recognized the creativity of rock when he wrote that even if it evokes the rock'n'roll of a decade earlier, rock may not simply be considered a continuation of it with some modifications. Rock'n'roll, an off-shoot of black blues, has rather uniform and rigid formal aspects; the same is true of rhythm and blues and of soul music. Rock represents an escape from the restrictions of its stylistic origins, a tribute to the liberating forces of eclecticism. Such eclecticism is not a fragmentary drive towards inclusiveness and, with rather primitive means, towards integration of a simplified notion of multiplicity in tradition.

We share the positivity with which Berio speaks about rock at a time when the process of *centrage* and *décentrage* was only at the beginning. We agree with Carrera that even if not all hopes of synthesizing the multiplicity of

influxes, forms and traditions would take place mostly elsewhere, in new jazz, in European improvised music, yet the underlying intuition was valid and it still is. Rock must lose its false prominent position, though, and the presumption to be the only catalyst of languages. Forms must move freely and rock is just one of them (Carrera, 1980:217). We think that over the last sixty years rock not only kept its promises, but more than that: this music was able to surprise and win over a constantly new audience, fulfilling the need for change that the system rapidly reabsorbs. Rock, up to now, has proved itself to be an active instrument for a recurring challenge. This music is a line without boundaries.

It seems very appropriate to apply Eliot's comment on tradition and the new of each successive generation to the history of rock (Eliot, 1998:28):

This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes [an artist] traditional. And it is at the same time what makes [an artist] most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

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[17] The 31 genres are: Alternative, Avantgarde, Black, Classic, Christian, Death, Doom, Epic, Folk, Gothic-metal, Grindcore, Groove, Hair, Hard & heavy, Industrial, Melodic-death, Metalcore, Neoclassical, Nu, Pop, Post-metal, Power, Prog, Proto-metal, Punk, Rap, Sludge, Stoner, Speed, Symphonic, Thrash, Viking.

[18] Techno and disco music share the rhythmic component–common 4/4 time and charleston upbeat–but have different sounds and melodies (Tessarolo, 2015:65).

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