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Poetry in the Music Between 1965-1975

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A decade of overlooked poetry in psychedelic
and progressive rock

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PART 1: Poetry and Music	4
The origins of expression	4
Formal differences between poem and music lyrics	9
1. <i>Tactus-based rhythm</i>	11
2. <i>Strophic/Verse-chorus form</i>	15
3. <i>Conciseness</i>	27
4. <i>Trivial theme</i>	29
The merging of two languages	30
PART 2: Psychedelic rock	35
LSD: The drug that started it all	35
The psychedelic experience of the Beach Boys.....	36
The psychedelic experience of the Rolling Stones	39
The psychedelic experience of the Beatles.....	41
Birth of a Genre.....	55
The madcap – Pink Floyd’s rise and Syd Barrett’s downfall.....	64
Progressive Rock collaborations: Peter Sinfield and King Crimson	92
CONCLUSION	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110

INTRODUCTION

To most, drawing a line between poetry and music might seem a hopeless endeavour. It probably is. Countless academics have tried to define one and the other in attempt to reach a conclusive answer and a definite distinction between the two forms of art, just to end up more confused than before. The reason for this can be found in the very nature of the two arts, and in the hazy line that divides them: A fair amount of poetry can undoubtedly be found in music, and poetry itself has never been unfamiliar to musicality. Much can be said or written without potentially achieving anything. Therefore, shedding light in this matter is by any means not the preoccupation of this humble dissertation. Instead, the following pages intend to simply try to reveal how the beauty of poetry can be found even in the most surprising circumstances.

The first part of this writing will try to identify and distinguish the features commonly associated with poetry and those associated with music, putting the emphasis on all tendencies which have been noted throughout history and which differentiate the two arts, and on what brings them together. After all, both use the power of words and sounds in order to express feelings or to convey a message. Frith (1983, 35) writes that *in songs, words are the signs of a voice. A song is always a performance and sung words are always spoken out, a vehicle for the voice structures of sound that are direct signs of emotion and marks of character.* But is this not true also for poetry? A poem plays with the sounds and meanings of language just as much as every song lyric does and to some extent it can be even argued that every poem ever written was not written for the page but for the voice, just like songs. And it will be disclosed how the resemblances stretch even much further than that.

This brief dissertation aims to spend a few words on a little portion of the precious literature that is never taught in school, speaking of the elements which are necessary to fully understand it, and explaining why it is appropriate to write about them.

More specifically, the second, more practical part, will try to apply the concepts of the first to actual song lyrics, and in this case, of psychedelic rock songs. It is an unusual enterprise, but a potentially purposeful one, when thinking that the aim of the paper is the attempt of rightfully unveiling the poetry that finds no place in schoolbooks, and that can be found in the most surprising places.

It will be explained how the psychedelic experience changed the rules of music in the mid-60s, giving birth to a new approach to songwriting which in turn started a chain reaction of innovation and experimentation in music leading to countless new genres and sub-genres. As a matter of fact, it has been noted how psychedelics influenced songwriting in general from the approach to sound and music, to the approach to the actual writing of the lyrics, which have experienced a turn towards the mature even in mainstream popular music. It will be disclosed how lyrics of already famous songwriters became more intense, how newly founded bands started to conceive themselves as artists and every aspect of their music –lyrics included– as art, and even how bands relied on the hand of actual poets to give added value to their creations. Notable artists of the movement will be contextualized and discussed, and examples from the discography of the discussed artists and brief analysis thereof will provide proof of the poetic value of the lyrics.

PART 1: POETRY AND MUSIC

THE ORIGINS OF EXPRESSION

Since its early beginnings, mankind has always felt the need of communication. More specifically, human beings have started to use more or less articulated vocal sounds to express their feelings and interact with their kind. Before the dawn of the first concrete words, it was surely common for a primitive man to express his anger through shouts and roars, his amusement through laughter, his pain through squeals or his fear through screams. In short to communicate through sounds. La Via (2006; 23, 24) suggests that it could be quite safe to assert that the need of singing was felt and contented much before the advent of words, by arranging a systemized melodic succession of sounds, howls and moans. The concept of "singing" as we know it, i.e. uttering words organising them with a certain degree of melodic and rhythmic consciousness comes later, and as Sachs (1943; 59) puts forward, the purpose of spoken language and the purpose of singing tread separate paths for quite some time, even though it is still not clear whether the emotion-driven expression was attributed to singing and the communicative one to speaking, or vice-versa. Also, it can be argued whether the first manifestations of musical expression were pathogenic (i.e. fuelled by feelings and the urge to express them) or logogenic (i.e. strictly purpose-born and straightforwardly communicative).

Nonetheless, history has shown how the two worlds of speaking and singing have always been under the effect of a magnetic attraction. Despite the clear separation in their origins, the two forms of communicating seem to have soon

merged in every culture, all over the world and all throughout history, giving birth to a new, more sophisticated human need: the one of singing the words.

To summarize, it can be quite safe to assume that music appeared on earth before poetry did, and that it bore the functions that poetry would later help to bear: to express feelings, communicate and convey meanings.

However, it cannot be denied that words do have a natural musicality, even when not expressly sung; thus, the appearance of poetry as we know it, had never been far away. In fact, it can be argued that poetry might even have been a spawn of music, or better, of the rhythmic and melodic organization of sounds and words, which had always been an innate aptitude and urge of the human being. As a matter of fact it appears that the first recorded poems were hymns or prayers, and only later became historical narrative, means of storytelling and even love songs, slowly evolving into the written poetry as we know it today, once again somewhat estranged from what is meant to be sung, from what we call the "lyrics" of a song, which brings us to the next issue.

Lindley (1985; 1, 2) provides us with his viewpoint on this matter starting from the term "lyric". It is undoubtedly an interesting perspective, since, as he points out, the term had always been quite ambiguous, serving as a universal definition for poetry in contrast with drama or prose, but also as a definite classification of one clear-cut poetic genre. Moreover, in modern mass-culture, the word is extensively used by the wide majority of the population when referring to the words that constitute the verses and choruses of a song. This can be regarded as some sort of return to its roots, since the term, derived from the Ancient Greek tradition, originally referred to a series of verses sung to the sound of a lyre, opposed to epic and drama, which were, respectively, recited and spoken. With the passing of time, the term gradually lost this specificity and

academics have since tried to find an agreement upon what is contained in the concept of lyric; it appears that an agreement has been found, recognizing three qualities as characteristic of the lyric. Unfortunately, none of these traits are definite. Let us see why.

Firstly, it occurs that a lyric implies a first-person speaker who, usually, uses the words to express his feelings and emotions. Indeed this feature can easily be regarded as true. Let us take the work of an artist who is universally regarded as one of the first and most important lyricists of all time: Sappho, one of the most important classic poets, who lived in the 6th century B.C. Today, the majority of her work has been lost, but the surviving works are famous for their introspection and contemplation, and such features are no stranger to the average lyric-writing poets:

*I have no complaint
Prosperity that
The golden Muses
Gave me was no
Delusion: dead, I
Won't be forgotten*

Sappho, translation by Bernard (1958)

In her work, Sappho shows a great loyalty to the literary device of a marked "Lyric I" presence, with a genuine and captivating declarations of strong feelings and emotions, usually imagining a divinity or another human as interlocutor. There is much space for psychological contemplation and recalling of emotion-conjuring memories, and her work is one of the first records of feelings of love from a woman's perspective. However, this is a problematic aspect: despite being a very simple and straightforward feature, the first-person speaker is such a common literary device that it would be wrong to assume that every first-person poem counts as lyric. Equally wrong would be the

excluding the entirety of poetry that does not involve a first-person viewpoint from the definition of lyric. Even in ancient Greece, lyrics were subdivided in two branches. On the one hand the more intimistic lyrics, such as Sappho's, meant for the singing of one person in combination with the sound of a lyre. On the other hand the choral lyric, which is usually commissioned to the poet and which calls for the performance of a choir during official ceremonies, such as weddings or various kind of celebration. Both these types of compositions can be called lyrics and are written by classical lyricists, but do not have the above-mentioned trait in common. Examples of discrepancies between this feature and the actual facts can however be found also in more recent times: many lyrical poets who do not necessarily belong to classic tradition, such as Thomas Hardy, have put much effort in detaching themselves from the poem. Therefore, this characteristic alone cannot be expected to be sufficient to define lyric.

Secondly, a lyric is supposed to deal in present tense, often applied to the expression of the immediate feelings dictated by the circumstances, to the description of occasions of great consciousness. Another Greek classic lyricist, Pindar, (translated and commented by Miller, 1996) can easily be used as example. His work, among all lyric writers in ancient Greece, and even among the circle of nine melic poets (of which also Sappho was part) counts as the best-preserved and is marked by an incredible sense of immediacy and closeness in his celebrations of victory and contemplative lyrics. Equally common are his personal reinterpretations of myths and legends, but also his victory odes written for more trivial events, most times using the facts at hand as starting point, and imprinted by the present tense.

*One ought, my heart, to cull desires
In season, in youth's prime.*

*And yet whoever, catching sight of the flashing
Radiance
Of Theoxenos' eyes,
Does not surge with longing, that man's murky heart
Must have been forged from adamant or iron*

*by a cold flame: held in dishonour
by quick-glancing Aphrodite,
he either toils compulsively for money
or by women's impudence
is carried along a path of utter coldness, doing
service
But I, stung through that goddess's power, melt like the
Wax*

*of holy bees in the sun's heat whenever I look
on the youth and freshness of boys' limbs.
On Tenedos too, it seems,
Attraction dwells, and Charm,
in the person of Hagesilas' son.*

This ode is dedicated to the celebration of the beauty of Theoxenos, a young man from Tenedos, Asia Minor. Critics assume that this kind of praise-poem was intended to be performance in the context of a symposium, and called it "enkômion". It is clear that it is all written in present tense: the poet starts from the perceiving of the young man's beauty and builds his verses on the description of the feelings such beauty generates in the observer, describing how all those who are not affected by the power of his charm are either supremely materialistic or stringently, numbly heterosexual. There is also space, in the last few lines, for the poet's own feelings: as he discloses how he "melts like wax" every time he sets his eyes on young Theoxenos.

It would appear that the present tense, with its sense of closeness and immediacy, is the perfect basis for a lyric, since it allows the poet to start from his direct experience to express what the circumstances make him feel.

Yet this postulate is also quite sluggish. On the one hand it would appear that this feature simplifies excessively the idea of lyric, drastically reducing the

exceptional poetic value of many lyrical efforts. On the other hand, if taken literally, this feature would exclude all narrative poems, many of which have always been doubtlessly regarded as lyrics.

Thirdly, a lyric is generally associated with brevity and straightforwardness: a lyric must be short. But once again we are dealing with a shallow idea. The term "short" is much too equivocal to be effectively used when speaking about lyric. Moreover, it would be wrong to exclude all lyrics which are commonly considered "long" from our list: even Pindar, who counts as one of the most relevant classical lyricists is famous for the length of his compositions.

As a way of escaping these conceptions, Lindley suggests to consider the term "lyric" as some sort of domain which comprises several sub-genres, ranging from pure introspective poetry, to dramatic monologues, allowing for flexibility in the evaluation through the analysis of every poem contextualized in its own historical moment, which is a critical discriminating factor.

FORMAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POEM AND MUSIC LYRICS

Even when letting go of the very common presumption that lyrics are poems meant to be sung, we still have centuries of history in which there is a clear distinction between such poems and lyrics which, when written, were not supposed to be put to music. When analysing texts belonging to both these categories, a question comes to mind. Is it possible to spot formal features and differences which can clearly disclose to which category a text belongs to? Once again, the answer is negative. However there are several recurring patterns and characteristics which could help to do so.

Let us start with the assumption that music, and, consequently, a text which is supposed to be set to it, triggers reactions in the listener that are completely different from those triggered from the listening or reading of a poem. Rhythm and meter in music are tied more strictly to the natural pulsations of the human body. When listening to music, even if only passively, the listener is instinctively drawn to move: one might nod their head or tap their foot, not to mention the common impulsive reaction which even moves many to dance. Both those who sing poems and those who merely put their words to music without the meticulous attention which would be expected from the writing of an actual poem usually create a much deeper bond with what they say, by relating all they say to their essential human vibrations, to their more or less conscious breathing, their heartbeat. Spontaneously adapting the agogic stresses (i.e. rhythmic emphases) of the text to their psychological, emotive state. As a consequence, in musical cadence, just like in poetry, even though there always is a complete freedom in the rhythmic choice of meter, which can potentially be totally free, there usually is a tendency of choosing a logical, almost mathematically calculated form. This is partly due to the fact that musical sensitivity in the human being is closely tied to the intellect, to the need of giving logical order to the flow of sound. The oldest testimony of this fact is the finding of a series of clay tablets in Syria in the 1950s, which are supposed to date back to the 15. Century B.C. Once analysed and interpreted, the tablets unveiled a melodic progression built on a diatonic scale, which even presented harmonies, proving that all scientists were wrong when they attributed the creation of scales and harmonic sensitivity to much later times. This suggests that the strive of searching and finding a way of organizing sounds and creating music has always been an innate feature of the human being. On a more practical terrain, the attempt to achieve this almost mathematical

precision and fixed musical rhythm is mostly believed to be conceived, or at least ostensibly manifested for the first time with the birth of polyphony. Obviously, the organisation of several individuals who simultaneously contribute with their performance to the outcome of the same act requires a certain amount of organization. As a consequence, the need was felt for an introduction of universally recognized, measurable regulations and commonly understandable guidelines from the melodic/harmonic point of view, as well as from the rhythmic/metric one. Since this paper does not focus on the purely harmonic and melodic aspect of musical lyrics, but much rather on the words that are set to music, the attention will be put mainly on the rhythmic aspect of the texts.

1. TACTUS-BASED RHYTHM

This small digression was necessary to introduce one of the main features of musical lyrics, which is one of the essential requirements for a tune which can be considered euphonious, or, using a more down-to-earth term, "catchy": a tactus-based rhythm. To explain the concept of "tactus" it is necessary to digress once again, and picture the renaissance, when for the first time the urge was felt to organize and universally measure rhythm and cadence. Starting from the heartbeat pulse, an absolute, global, precise duration of a beat was instituted, in order to allow a comprehensive measurement of rhythm to be learned and, more importantly, to be performed. The idea of "tactus" can be put down simply as an ancestor of the metronome, which is just a mechanical aid that was invented later and absolutely and totally defined and unified the measurement of rhythm and metre.

However, this type of measurement alone does not necessarily define what is commonly understood with "metre". In order to create a pleasing, resonant, euphonic text, the precise and linear beats of the tactus must be merely used as a structure, a starting point to give life to a different organisation of accents and sounds, which will be coherent on and with its own, but on a different level, thus creating what is generally called the "beat". Strictly speaking, composers and songwriters have countless tools at their disposal to create a unique rhythm starting from the mere, linear ticking of a metronome, but whatever beat they invent must necessarily have a logic of its own. Keep in mind that this is only a tendency observed over the years, and that the exceptions are numerous and manifold. For example many of Bob Dylan's texts bear great discrepancies with the music they are sung onto.

Assuming that the writing of a text, which is written to be set to music kicks off from this basis, the whole text will be enormously and inevitably influenced by the quest for this apparently more logical, analytical order; in other words, when compared to a pure poem, a text written for music will probably display a more tangible yearning for a definite anatomy of verses, for an easily comprehensible subdivision of accents, for a clear, euphonic order of regular stresses.

To clarify, Marlowe's poem "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" will be taken as example, since it has been put to music by Annie Lennox in the album "When Love Speaks". The original, written by Christopher Marlowe in the 1590s, is one of the most famous love poems of English culture, written in the poet's final years. The form is the one of iambic tetrameter and each stanza is composed of two rhyming couplets.

Come live with me and be my love,

*And we will all the pleasures prove,
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.*

*And we will sit upon the Rocks,
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow Rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.*

*And I will make thee beds of Roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;*

*A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;*

*A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.*

*The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.*

In 2002 EMI classics publishes a CD in which a collaboration of various actors and musicians reads or performs Shakespeare's sonnets with a musical background. "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" finds place in this collection, since, as a matter of fact, Shakespeare worked on a re-writing of Marlowe's text, which resulted in an almost identical poem, with some tweaks in the ending, entitled simply "Live With Me and Be My Love". It is exactly this poem that Lennox decided to work on. The rendition by Annie Lennox features a minor re-writing of the first three stanzas, and cuts out the final three.

*Live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
By hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And all the pleasant pastures yields.*

*There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.*

*There will I make thee a bed of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies.
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.*

Apart from cutting away great part of the poem, the variations Lennox brings about in her rendition of the text are minimal, and are aimed to give the song a more linear metric structure, or to provide the text with more “singable”, vocal sounds. As a matter of fact, line 3, for example, which is the line that most differentiates itself from one version to the other, might be slightly easier to be sung in Lennox’ version, where the new word order and the introduction of one more “and” render the act of singing the line easier and the sound of the words more euphonic. But that is not all, the main difference between the two versions lies in a matter which cannot be discerned from the plain reading of the two texts. Since Marlowe did not plan his composition for the singing, the plain text of his work is all that is necessary for the reader to read and understand or recite. Readers around the world will interpret and deliver Marlowe’s work in their own way, reciting the poem with the intensity, volume, speed, stress and character they find more suitable, giving live to almost infinite potential interpretations of the text. Lennox, in contrast, has written a score for the poem. When reading the score, or, more obviously, when listening to the song, there is much less space for imagination. Lennox chose a beat and put the text in a three-beats-to-the-bar tempo, in order to make the most of the iambic form of Marlowe’s lines, and wrote a melodic line for the lead voice to sing, as well as writing the parts for all instruments, organizing the arrangement of the song in the way she considered to be more efficient. The effective possibility of writing down and thus setting all these variables allows for great precision in the performance of every song, making it possible to perform the

song the exact way it was meant to be performed, an effort that would be vain with the reading and staging of a poem.

This is just one of the many small elements that constitute the “magic” of music, which, in order to work at its best, must be clearly organized. As a matter of fact, exactly the features of this necessary organization are the ones which most clearly diversify a musical lyric from a purely poetic text. The list goes on, however it cannot be stressed enough that each and every one of these features cannot be regarded as absolutely discriminating and distinctive, even though the greater part has been proven to reoccur in several historical times in disparate places and cultures, therefore suggesting a somewhat reliable pattern.

2. STROPHIC/VERSE-CHORUS FORM

One of these recurring features of musical texts is the marked strophic form. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that, along with the above-described clear metric regularity, a text which is written for music usually exhibits a clear, regular and recurrent structure in its number and grouping of lines, presenting a symmetric pattern to be followed by the writing –and performing- of the lyric. In other words, a poem meant for singing (especially in modern times) is very likely to be subdivided in what is commonly called a series of verses, often interposed with a so-called chorus.

At this point, another brief excursus is needed. When confronting the figure of a pure poet, to the one of a composer or songwriter, it must be noticed how different their approaches to literature actually are. La Via (2006) points out that the pure poets have their language at their complete disposal. They are free to use whatever artistic and literary means to express what they want to,

and, as a consequence, make their work achieve an unmatched literary value. The songwriter, on the contrary, has the “restraint” of having to come to terms with another, parallel “language”, the one of music, which comes with its own rules, conventions and restrictions, and which must necessarily be applied to the writing of the text. As a consequence, it might seem logical that it should be harder for a songwriter to create a lyric with a poetic value comparable to a pure poem. It is clear, and the examples are countless, that also this statement is not true on all levels, but it is nonetheless worth stating, since all the features which will be discussed in these chapters can be regarded as the above-mentioned “restraints” of a songwriter, which, more often than not, reflect themselves in the greater part of the world’s musical production .

Let us return to the concept of verse and chorus, and be more specific: the language of music is very much based on repetition and redundancy. Let us bear in mind that one of the main functions sung lyrics were employed for in their origins, was to make it easier to memorize long texts. Meaning and sound-based rhetorical figures aimed to the simplification of the effort of learning a text by heart. Moreover, in general, a musical text is meant to be performed. Repetitions and recurrences in structure belong to the very nature of music, and in order to make any tune easier to memorize the redundancies must be as continuous as possible. As a consequence, lines tend to repeat themselves keeping a steady metric module in their syntactic articulation, and verses always present the same number of lines throughout the lyric, as well as maintaining the same metric and rhyme scheme. This approach does not only simplify the work of those who will have to memorize and perform the song, but also the work of the songwriter, who has the possibility to apply the same music to every verse. In other words, the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic progression

of a stanza can potentially be “copied” and “pasted”, to all stanzas of the song.

This concept of redundancy is even more apparent when speaking about the notion of chorus. The chorus, or refrain, consists in one or more lines in a song which are repeated in various sections of the song, between the various verses. Most times, it stands out from the verse by presenting a different melodic, rhythmic and harmonic structure, in addition to raising the dynamics of the song for its duration. Moreover, in popular music, it is the chorus, which, practically always, contains the so-called “hook” of the song, i.e. the catchphrase, the line (or instrumental riff) which is meant to attract the listener’s attention: repetitive, catchy, easy to memorize and to dance to, and usually gives the name to the song. In almost all cases, the chorus does not vary its words throughout the song, and even the differences in arrangement are usually minimal.

Countless musical genres throughout history have widely adopted the strophic or the verse-chorus form; to those familiar with it, the structure is almost obvious and effortless to recognize, and, as a consequence, it is equally easy to classify a lyric written in such form as a song text by simply looking at it. This is especially true when dealing with modern popular songs.

A good example for a contrasting verse-chorus form, in which the music for the verse differs from the music of the chorus, is The Beatles’ world-famous hit “All You Need Is Love”, or Deep Purple’s legendary song “Smoke on the Water”. Let us put the latter under exam.

*We all came out to Montreux
On the Lake Geneva shoreline
To make records with a mobile,
We didn't have much time*

*Frank Zappa and the Mothers
Were at the best place around
But some stupid with a flare gun
Burned the place to the ground*

***Smoke on the water, fire in the sky
Smoke on the water***

*They burned down the gambling house
It died with an awful sound
Funky Claude was running in and out
Pulling kids out the ground
When it all was over
We had to find another place
But Swiss time was running out
It seemed that we would lose the race*

***Smoke on the water, fire in the sky
Smoke on the water***

*We ended up at the grand hotel
It was empty cold and bare
But with the Rolling Stones truck thing just outside
Making our music there
With a few red lights and a few old beds
We make a place to sweat
No matter what we get out of this
I know we'll never forget*

***Smoke on the water, fire in the sky
Smoke on the water***

Identified with simple italics is the verse, in bold italics the chorus. Those familiar with the song will immediately observe how different the verse and the chorus undeniably are. The chorus is much shorter, the chords are different, the energy is much higher and the notes on which the words are sung are much more sustained than in the verse. The verse, in contrast, is much more rhythm-based and discourse-like, the intensity of both the sung melodic line as well as the instrumental track is contained. Notice also how the chorus of the song not only contains the hook (in other words, the line which is supposed to be noticed and remembered by the listener), but is composed almost entirely by its repetitions. This structure can be found in almost the entirety of modern mainstream songs, which appears to be the most enjoyed form of lyric in recent times.

Indeed, the last century seems to have been dominated by mainly one genre of poetry set to music: exactly the “song”, marked by the above-mentioned strophic structure. Such mainstream genre, today, seems to be the most enjoyed type of lyric.

To make the matter clear, and at the same time, to provide an example for a strophic form in which the refrain is contained in the verse, two examples of ancient ballads will now be provided, which have been re-interpreted in modern times. The objective of the comparisons will be not so much the highlighting of the differences, but to show how crystallized and always actual the form they are written in appears.

The first example, which will be taken under inspection, is the Anglo-Scottish ballad “Lord Randall”, which, has been reworked by Bob Dylan in order to convey a different message, but using all typical rhetorical figures of the ancient ballad in order to create a particular nostalgic atmosphere. In his early works Bob Dylan was no stranger to the reinventing of old ballads to suit his message. The traditional Scottish ballad “Lord Randall”, probably deriving from the late middle ages, tells the sad story of a nobleman who is poisoned by his mistress, and recounts the events to his mother as he gets home from the meeting feeling sick and weary. The first stanza of one of the most popular versions goes as follows:

*O where ha you been, Lord Randal, my son?
And where ha you been, my handsome young man?
I ha been at the greenwood; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi hunting, and fain wad lie down.*

The story is slowly disclosed in this question-answer structure with the same crystallized sets of word in the same place in every stanza. The most famous

version of the ballad is composed by 10 stanzas, identical in their structure: in fact, it is typical for the ballad to be composed by short stanzas of two or four lines, using simple language. Moreover, rather than relying solely on words, it was common for Balladeers to use stocks of phrases, repeated and combined in other ways. As shown in the next bit, little changes from one stanza to another.

*An wha met ye there, Lord Randal, my son?
And wha met ye there, my handsome young man?
O I met wi my true-love; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down.*

*And what did she give you, Lord Randal, my son?
And what did she give you, my handsome young man?
Eels fried in a pan; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down.*

This kind of repetitions, called "refrains", are a fundamental aid to the balladeer's memory, chanters who were supposed to tell the tale faithfully by the only means early ballads were recounted: oral transmission among the country people. This makes this kind of ballads difficult to date, since the first datable written collections were composed very late.

Notice the structure of the ballad: all stanzas are identical in their length and metric composition, with the same number of lines in every verse and the same number of feet in every line. This is a clear example of strophic structure.

Bob Dylan composed the song "A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall", which appeared in the album "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" in 1963. The song is still identifiable as a ballad, starting off from the structure and refrain of „Lord Randall“, but with a few tweaks. First of all, the protagonist of the ballad is not poisoned by his lady, but laments on how humanity and the whole world are poisoned, evil and

wicked. The big difference is in the structure. The horrors and experiences of the lyric I's visions are too many to be contained in the simple four-line stanzas of the original ballad. Instead, Dylan decides to make the speaker exceed in his lines. When he is asked what he has seen, what he has heard, who he has met and what he will do he gradually uses more and more lines to explain it gradually increasing the asymmetry of the ballad with each successive verse:

*Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, where have you been, my darling young one?
I've stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains
I've walked and I've crawled on six crooked highways
I've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests
I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans
I've been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, and it's a hard
And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.*

*Oh, what did you see, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, what did you see, my darling young one?
I saw a new-born baby with wild wolves all around it
I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it
I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin'
I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin'
I saw a white ladder all covered with water
I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken
I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.*

[...]

*Oh, what'll you do now, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, what'll you do now, my darling young one?
I'm a-goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a-fallin'
I'll walk to the depths of the deepest black forest
Where the people are many and their hands are all empty
Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters
Where the home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison
Where the executioner's face is always well hidden
Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten
Where black is the color, where none is the number
And I'll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it
And reflect it from the mountain so all souls can see it
Then I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinkin'
But I'll know my song well before I start singin'
And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.*

Bob Dylan takes on highly poetic themes and does so by conveying a series of striking and dramatic images in the somewhat "outdated" structure of the

ballad form, which is famous in popular culture for being used for very basic storytelling and simple entertainment. The contrast is evident, especially if the listener knows the original text. Even though we can still identify a verse and a refrain, the structure is warped and modified to suit the balladeers' message. We can still identify a strophic structure, but in this case the term is quite unreliable, since there are many major, substantial differences between all of the verses. Moreover, these modifications clearly make the text much more difficult to memorize.

The other example describes a much more linear and faithful approach to the ancient ballad. The Ballad of Barbara Allen originated in Britain, like the majority of ballads, and thanks to its popularity survived in time and spread out worldwide, giving birth to countless variations not only in the structure and sound of the song, but even in the plot. The most common storyline involves a young man who is dying of love of Barbara Allen. Barbara is brought to him by the young man's servants in order to soothe his pain, but once she arrives, she mocks him and leaves. Shortly after the young man dies, and at his funeral, as the death bells toll, Barbara is struck by a strong sense of guilt and grows ill, feeling that her own end is nigh. After her death, the two lovers are buried one beside the other, and the song ends with the recurrent "rose-briar" design, common in medieval ballads, in which a rose and a briar grow out of the graves, bloom and twine together, symbolizing true love and loyalty even after death. There is no "original" version of this ballad either, since for decades, even centuries it was transmitted only orally, leading to hundreds of versions. However, the differences are often minimal. Let us compare three versions. The first, courtesy of the English Broadside Ballad Archive, is a print dating back to

the mid-16th century. The second and third, are very recent renditions by Joan Baez and Art Garfunkel, dated 1961 and 1973 respectively.

ANONYMOUS, 16th century

*In Scarlet Town where I was bound,
There was a fair Maid dwelling,
Whom I had choosd to be my own,
Her name was Barbara Allen.*

*All in the merry Month of May,
When green leaves were a springing
This young Man on his Death-bed lay,
For love of Barbara Allen.*

*He sent his Man unto her then,
To Town where she was dwelling,
You must come to my Master dear,
If you be Barbara Allen.*

*For Death is painted in his Face,
Sorrows in him are dwelling;
Thou must come to my Master dear,
If you be Barbara Allen.*

*If Death be painted in his Face,
And Sorrows in him dwelling;
Then little better shall he be,
For bonny Barbara Allen.*

*So slowly, slowly, she came to him,
So slowly she came to him,
And all she said when she came there,
Young Man I think youre dying.*

*He turned his Face unto her then,
If you be Barbara Allen;
My Dear, said he, come pity me,
On my Death-bed Im lying.*

*If on your Death-bed you be lying,
Whats that to Barbara Allen;
I cannot keep you from grim Death,
So farewel Barbara Allen.*

*He turnd his Face unto the Wall,
And Death came creeping to him,
Adieu, adieu, and adieu to all,
Adieu to Barbara Allen.*

*And as she was walking one Day,
She heard the Bells a ringing,
And they did seem to ring to her,
Unworthy Barbara Allen.*

*She turnd herself round about,
And spyd the Corpse a coming,
Lay down, lay down the corpse, she said
That I may look upon him.*

BAEZ, 1961

*Tw as in the merry month of May
When green buds all were swelling,
Sweet William on his death bed lay
For love of Barbara Allen.*

*He sent his servant to the town
To the place where she was dwelling,
Saying you must come, to my master dear
If your name be Barbara Allen.*

*So slowly, slowly she got up
And slowly she drew nigh him,
And the only words to him did say
Young man I think you're dying.*

*He turned his face unto the wall
And death was in him welling,
Good-bye, good-bye, to my friends all
Be good to Barbara Allen.*

GARFUNKEL, 1973

*All in the merry month of May,
When green buds all are swellin'.
Sweet William on his deathbed lay
Ffor love of Barbara Allen.*

*He sent his servant to the town,
The place where she did dwell in.
Saying, "Master dear has sent me here
If your name be Barbara Allen."*

*Then slowly, slowly she got up
And slowly she went to him,
And all she said when there she came was
"Young man, I think you're dying.*

*"Don't you remember the other night
When we were in the tavern?
You drank a toast to the ladies there
And slighted Barbara Allen."*

*He turned his face unto the wall,
He turned his back upon her.
"Adieu, adieu, to all my friends.
And be kind, be kind to Barbara Allen."*

And all the while she looked on,
So loudly she lay laughing;
While all her Friends cryd out amain,
Unworthy Barbara Allen.

When he was dead and laid in grave,
Then Death came creeping to her.
Oh Mother! Mother! Make my Bed,
His Death doth quite undo me.

Hard hearted Creature that I was,
To slight one that lov'd dearly;
I wish I'd been more kind to him,
In Time of his Life when near me.

So this maid at last she did die,
Who would be buried by him;
Repented herself before she dyd,
That eer she did deny him.

As she was lying down to die,
A sad feud then she fell in;
She said, I pray take warning by
Hard hearted Barbara Allen.

When he was dead and laid in grave
She heard the death bells knelling
And every stroke to her did say
Hard hearted Barbara Allen.

Oh mother, oh mother go dig my grave
Make it both long and narrow,
Sweet William died of love for me
And I will die of sorrow.

And father, oh father, go dig my grave
Make it both long and narrow,
Sweet William died on yesterday
And I will die tomorrow.

Barbara Allen was buried in the old
churchyard
Sweet William was buried beside her,
Out of sweet William's heart, there grew a
rose
Out of Barbara Allen's a briar.

They grew and grew in the old churchyard
Till they could grow no higher
At the end they formed, a true lover's knot
And the rose grew round the briar

As she was wandering on the fields she
heard the death bell knellin'.
And every note, it seemed to say,
"Hard-hearted Barbara Allen!"

The more it tolled the more she grieved,
She bursted out a-crying.
"Oh, pick me up and carry me home.
I fear that I am dying."

They buried Willy in the old churchyard and
Barbara in the new one,
And from William's grave, there grew a rose
From Barbara's, a green briar.

They grew and grew in the old church yard
Till they could grow no higher,
And there they tied in a true lover's knot,
The red rose and the briar.

The diagram-like comparison above makes it very easy to spot the many little differences in the plot presentation, depending on what the artist wanted to focus on. The older version, in addition to being written in a sensibly older language, has no sign of the rose-briar finale, whereas Baez introduces two stanzas in which the repented Barbara deplores her mistakes with her parents and foresees the consequences of her actions, while Garfunkel mentions another recurrent episode of this ballad that the other two versions of this comparison do not mention: the protagonists' encounter at the tavern in the previous night. Moreover, we have very little insight on what the rhythmic, harmonic and melodic structure of the older rendition might have sounded like,

while Baez and Garfunkel, having had the appropriate knowledge and technologies, have arranged and recorded the song. Baez used the typical songwriter/balladeer approach, opting for a simple acoustic guitar + voice construction, which, in addition to being very effective in conveying the appropriate atmosphere for the song, is also very traditional, and potentially bears many resemblances with what it may have sounded like when performed by a balladeer in more ancient times. Garfunkel, instead, preferred a more orchestral approach, choosing strings and flutes for the instrumental track, and doing, perfectly in line with his particular style, many takes for harmonies in the vocal line, providing for a more operatic feel.

Apart from the differences in the plot presentation and musical arrangement, however, there is very little difference between the three versions, especially when looking only at the lyrics. As a matter of fact the three texts are constituted by a variable number of four-line-stanzas with rhymes or imperfect rhymes in the second and fourth lines. Moreover, each stanza ends with "Barbara Allen" or a word construction that bears strong resemblances to it, which can be regarded as our refrain. These intense similarities may hint to the fact that there is a strong continuity in history for what concerns the structure of songs. The above mentioned structure strophic structure would be equally regarded as perfectly normal both by a listener of the middle ages and a listener today, suggesting that in the very nature of the strophic form lies the key of popularity, of universal approval.

But what are the consequences of the popularity of this structure?

Today, it even seems that, in its most popular expressions, all musical lyrics conceived for mass consumerism, those which often abuse all kinds of

publishing channels (discographic distribution, internet, radio, television) for advertising and spreading the song's notoriety, are written solely in this form.

La Via once again points out that the "song" has gained an inferior connotation in modern times, as the more educated spheres of musicophiles refused to give into the digesting of a musical genre made for the average street consumer, and which, in truth, is often frivolous, elementary, and in more recent times often even inappropriate. Thankfully, the song is a flexible and adaptive type of musical expression, and many of the following features make the song an almost universally beloved genre.

First of all, there is immense freedom and flexibility in the choice of musical arrangement and style. Since its very origin, the song has spawned an abounding variety of approaches, a multiplication which has been particularly generous in the last century, culminating in the almost exponential increase of countless sub-genres which, in time, spawned even other, more specific styles, are sure to be found appealing by almost everyone. Moreover, globalization has made local or exotic musical instruments world-famous, giving songwriters and arrangers much more choice over the years. Technical breakthroughs over the years have also drastically increased a musician's possibilities: some notable examples can be the invention of the electric guitar or of electronic sampling tools, devices which, in different periods, have undoubtedly provided the music industry with a ground-breaking array of new possibilities and sounds, further expanding the opportunities to arrange and make genres influence each other. Furthermore, the industrialization of musical instruments and tools such as mixers, speakers or digital sequencers, made the art of music-making widely available to the public, dramatically increasing the number of music enthusiasts

and potential songwriters over time, and therefore sustaining the flourishing of countless ideas, styles and stylistic novelties.

These differences in style translate also in how the text for a song is written. Rock and pop musicians may prefer constructions with many “singable” vowels to intone and sustain, while rap artists do not perceive this need, since their lyrics are mostly spoken rhythmically and rapidly, and rarely sung.

Furthermore, the differences in style and genre may often influence not only the form, but also the topic of the songs. For example, a rap song is more likely to speak about life in the ghetto than a country song, a black metal song is more likely to speak about an innocent bloodshed than a rap song, a country song is more likely to speak about a love story in Alabama than a black metal song, and so on.

Secondly, there is much space for ethnic, national and regional variations, which not only appeal to the listener’s potential sense of patriotism, but also uphold the song as a useful and efficient device for social and historical analysis. For example, even today’s English and American mainstream songs cannot disacknowledge their roots, deeply sunk in Afro-American jazz and blues, which in turn derive from both spirituals/gospels of African and ballads of European provenience.

Thirdly, the brevity and catchiness typical of the song make it an incredibly exploitable means of expression. Songs can be used in a variety of different ways in the context of movies or even theatre, thus contributing to the genre’s appeal to the more educated spheres of society.

3. CONCISENESS

This feature has already been mentioned, and it has already been disclosed that such categorisation is potentially inconsistent and ambiguous: what does “short” even mean, when referring to a lyric? Giving a definite, “scientific” answer is impossible, but it is probably not hard for the readers to envision an interpretation that satisfies them, for the sake of following the following line of thought.

Starting from the blatant example of modern popular music, any observer would surely notice that almost the entirety of mainstream repertoire consists of relatively short songs. Most tracks are 3-5 minutes long, which translates into a very limited number of lines and stanzas. Even though this statement holds true today, once more it must be noticed how the feature, which is being mentioned, is a heirloom of a long history of music-making all over the world. In fact, there is a marked tendency throughout history of writing short musical poems or songs. This applies not only to the metric structures which call for one or several short repeated stanzas with a hook, such as many ballads, arias or the German traditional Lied, but also to those which feature a non-strophic structure or free verse, such as the madrigal or the secular canzonetta, typical for the 17th century in Italy. Despite the differences in style or metric form, the genre of the song in general has been of huge success throughout the centuries, and the fact that the element of brevity is among the more common ones which can be found in song lyrics of every age, may be even interpreted as evidence of the fact that brevity is a natural prerogative of popularity. It is indeed a hard-to-prove theory, but it may explain the success of other brevity-based poetic structures in history, such as the sonnet, or even the extremely concise haiku, characterized by both its sharpness and the uncommonly low syllable count. Moreover, when evaluating the poems which were originally

not intended to be sung and which have later been put to music, it appears that both poems in strophic form, as well as to poems written in non-strophic form alike have been chosen for this process by songwriters and composers, indicating that an artist may be willing to put aside many of the above described discriminants when composing a song or writing music for a poem, but hardly the one of conciseness.

4. TRIVIAL THEME

If the previous feature was among the most undisputed, the following might be the most controversial. It has been noted that the majority of music lyrics in history have a substantially frivolous subject matter as foundation. Love stories, erotic descriptions, narration of unimportant or uninspired events and situations, with recurring situations and clichés have been at the bottom of the majority of compositions, and the academics which endorse this theory are able to prove their point with evidence which dates back even to the 12th century, with texts in which the very authors of songs of the time admitted that the average target of the composition, i.e. mainly the uneducated, would find a theme other than the above mentioned, boring or unattractive. Moreover, it is believed that such shallowness in inspiration and theme reflects itself even in the style of the composition, giving way to large use of stereotypes and to an extreme poverty in vocabulary. Sadly, if this feature was to be taken for granted when comparing mainstream music over the ages, one would easily almost always recognize this trait among the most popular genres. Even today's dominant pop music does not fall far from this description.

It cannot be stressed enough that the mentioning of this feature is remarked only because it is a derivation of an observed tendency in history. As such, it

must not be taken for granted, on the contrary, it is the attribute of this chapters' list which is probably the weakest. There is an overlong record of songwriters and artists who occupy a fundamental place in the history of music and who have composed lyrics of incommensurable poetic value, social criticism, political protest and deep personal introspection in all ages, even in contemporaneity, such as Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen or John Lennon, just to name a few.

THE MERGING OF TWO LANGUAGES

As we approach the more practical part of the dissertation, one final aspect must be discussed. Even though this work, due to its comparative nature, focuses more on the words than on music, the songs cannot be expected to be analysed without speaking of the music which goes with the words, or even the music which is expected to be created with the rhythmic intonation going with the words. This dissertation will refrain from going into excessive detail. It will, however, put much attention on the examination of the musical aspect of the songs. As already pointed out, instead of relying solely on the power of language, as expected from a pure poet, the songwriter must speak two "languages" and his skill stays in the ability to make them merge as effectively as possible, making their interplay its strength of composition instead of its weakness. Therefore, the tools for the analysis of pure poems will prove immensely useful; yet, they will, however, not be sufficient.

In order to make the concept clear, let us compare two famous structures. One of the best-known forms of pure poetry: the sonnet (in its Shakespearian variety) and a very famous musical genre with an almost crystallized structure will be analysed: Blues. There is very little the two forms have in common: their structure, historical collocation and geographical origin differ immensely. The

following comparison simply aims to clarify the above-mentioned concept, through the brief study of two genres, which have been chosen exclusively for their immense celebrity, one of the few features they share.

The obvious starting point for understanding a sonnet would be recognizing its metric and rhyme scheme. In our case, the basic Elizabethan sonnet features four stanzas, three of which are quatrains and one is a couplet, usually written in iambic pentameter (which means that all lines will be equally long: five feet) with a ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG rhyme scheme. When given this information, the identification of a sonnet becomes elementary and foolproof for anyone.

The identification of a Blues text, however, can be more challenging. First of all, let us take a look at its most common structure, which is based on the lining of an indefinite number of triplets with the following features: Each triplet sets off with one line, the metre of which can be freely chosen, which, however, should have a caesura halfway through. Let us take the first stanza of the blues standard "Sweet Home Chicago" as example:

*Come on, oh baby don't you want to go
Come on, oh baby don't you want to go
Back to the land of California, to my sweet home Chicago.*

The caesura after "Come on" is evident even for all those who are not familiar with the song. After the stating of the first line, there usually is a repetition of the first line. Such repetition can be identical or present small variations, must however bear strong resemblances with the first line. Some renditions of "Sweet Home Chicago", in fact, may replace "Come on" with "Hi-De-Hey" or other motives made of words or onomatopoeias. Then there is the presentation of the release in the third line. As a matter of fact, the first line usually conveys a strong sense of incompleteness, and its repetition only emphasizes such feeling. The third

line provides the listener with the missing elements of the discourse, and resolves the narrative suspense of the stanza. This is called an AAB structure. In this case, A and B do not refer to the rhyme of the lines, but to their entirety. Line A is repeated (A) or slightly altered (A'), then comes line B.

Before turning to the analysis of music, it can be added that the blues usually deals with situations of unrest and pain proper of the black population of the US, hence the term "to feel blue" e.a. .

The ones which have just been mentioned are the features of blues which can be inspected without speaking of music. There are already enough elements to recognize a blues form when encountered, but only the surface of the topic has been scratched. As a matter of fact, much more can be said about the structure of blues, one must only use the right means.

Indeed, even though there is no prescription for the choice of the lines' metric form, there still are some musical rules to respect: in the majority of blues songs we find a 12-bar structure. This means that the stanza must be contained in 12 bars (or measures) organized by the chosen tempo, which in turn means that each line must be contained in 4 bars. In other words, there is a limited amount of beats in which the text must be sung. Most times it is written so that it perfectly fits, some other times it must be squeezed in, as in "Every Day I Have the Blues", another world-famous blues standard.

Oh I'm gonna pack my suitcase, move on down the line.

Moreover, there is a fixed harmonic progression to be followed, in other words there is a chord progression which must be roughly the same in every blues song. This does not mean that every blues song has the same chords. A

songwriter chooses the tonality which best suits his voice and the song in general, then uses such scale as his starting point. In a C scale, for instance, the notes are C D E F G A B. On each of these notes, called degrees, the songwriter can build a chord, and, in blues, chords built on the first, fourth and fifth degree are used. In a C scale, the chords for the blues progression will therefore be built on the notes C, F and G. More specifically the chords will interact with each other in a particular, fixed order; refer to the following diagrams:

<i>Chords (in C)</i>	<i>Degree</i>
<i>C - C - C - C⁷</i>	<i>I - I - I - I⁷</i>
<i>F - F - C - C</i>	<i>IV - IV - I - I</i>
<i>G⁷ - F⁷ - C - G⁷</i>	<i>V⁷ - IV⁷ - I - V⁷</i>

The small 7 over some of the degrees indicates the presence of a seventh chord, which means that such chord contains one extra note, which forms an interval of a seventh above the chord's root note. A small detail, without which, however, the "bluesy" sound of the harmonic progression would not be achieved.

The bluesman must respect this structure when writing and performing the songs. He has freedom in the writing of the lyrics, in the arrangement, in the choice of tempo, intensity and tonality, in the order of the verses, in the allowance of a bridge's or an instrumental solo's presence, but the chord progression inside the verse is fixed. This is a huge help when improvising (which is very common in blues), since the bluesman can improvise his words knowing what to expect from the development of the song and from his band. Also the structure of the verse hints to the fact that blues is improvisation friendly: the repetition of the first line gives the bluesman more time to think of a poignant release line.

Speaking of which, one cannot write about the musical characteristics of blues without mentioning the so-called blue notes. The blues has humble origins, it is a spawn of the negroes' working songs, which in turn derive from African chants and European ballads. Having a backbone constituted of uneducated musicians, the main issue of blues was the risk of being played unconventionally, more precisely, to include notes in the harmonic and melodic structure which do not belong to the scale the song is played to. As a consequence, bluesmen not only played those notes, but even enjoyed doing so, since an ill-suited note only helped to convey the feeling of unrest bluesmen strive to express.

The reader may have now recognized that it would have been impossible to give a complete idea of the blues and its features without mentioning at least a small part of the relevant musical theory facts. This obviously applies to every art, but such introduction was necessary before venturing into the second part of the dissertation, in which the comparison of poems and music will be dealt with on several levels.

PART 2: PSYCHEDELIC ROCK

LSD: THE DRUG THAT STARTED IT ALL

The origins of psychedelic rock can be retraced to the mid-sixties, two decades after the discovery of LSD, with the drug's introduction to the public. As a matter of fact, even though it would be wrong to mechanically associate this genre to drug abuse, the influence of the new synthetic hallucinogen is undeniable.

Its inventor, Albert Hofmann, was a Swiss researcher who was investigating the properties of a fungus which grows on rye: ergot. Starting from medicinal traditions in which ergot was used since the 1500s to slow down the blood flow, Hofmann's experiments were concentrated on the synthesizing of lysergic acid, the active ingredient of ergot, in order to find a cure for migraine. After years of experimenting, Hofmann's 25th synthesis, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25), was produced and experimented in 1938, however, the experimentations revealed nothing of interest and the tests turned their focus on other molecules. Five years later, the scientist returned to LSD-25, feeling that he might have ignored or omitted something in his studies, and in 1943 he created a new synthesis. After a day of new studies and experiments, he started to feel dizzy, restless and confused, closed his lab and went home, unaware of the fact that he was about to experience the first documented acid trip in history. Once in his house, he started to see a stream of fantastic images and shapes with a fervent play of colours which interacted in kaleidoscopic manner with each other, a condition which endured a couple of hours. Once the effects faded, the scientist realized that they were probably induced by the substance which,

back in his lab, he had not handled with gloves. Some days later, Hofmann decided to try again, and drank a solution of the new LSD-25 batch in water. After some minutes, the scientist began to feel anxious and uneasy. Struck by a fit of dread, he took his bike and drove home, and even though he was pedalling furiously, he felt as if he was progressing at lethargic pace. The road he was driving on felt like it was constantly swelling and dropping, all objects he was passing by felt like obstacles thrown onto his course. Everything, from inanimate objects to other people in his surroundings assumed scary and surrealistic forms. This time, Hofmann was the protagonist of the first ever recorded bad trip in history. The next morning, after waking up feeling completely refreshed, he began the tests on his findings. His whole staff began to use the substance and record the effects. Soon it was assumed that LSD could be useful in psychotherapy and the tests on schizophrenics began: the drug was started to be offered to psychiatrists around the globe. With this as starting point, it was easy for the drug to become publicly available within the next few decades. In the 50s a limited number of poets, artists and musicians was no stranger to this substance anymore, and in the mid-60s the drug became much more readily available to the masses. It is also in the mid-60s that the first influences of psychedelic experience became apparent in the musical production. As a matter of fact, the impact of the drug can be found even in the creations of the three most influential bands of the time: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Beach Boys.

THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE OF THE BEACH BOYS

In his autobiography, Brian Wilson, the Beach Boys' lead singer, wrote that he took acid for the first time in 1965, and even though he rarely repeated the experience, he claimed that it completely changed the way he approached

music. The listening of songs became more palpable and complete. Sounds triggered bursts of colour (a phenomenon called synaesthesia, where visual reactions are triggered by a sound; a typical effect of the LSD drug) and he reached a mental state beyond his own consciousness. Wilson was twenty-four when the psychedelic experience and his own personal anxieties led him to write *Pet Sounds*, pairing up with songwriter Tony Asher to write lyrics for the tunes he had composed on the piano on his own, inspired by his feelings alone. The experience had triggered in Wilson an urge to look inside him and create a record about emotions, and not, as the Californian band was used to, about cars, girls or days at the beach. The result is an LP with a profoundly melancholic introspective attitude. Compare the following very frivolous text: an extract from the song "Surfer Girl" in the homonymous album released in 1963

*I have watched you on the shore
Standing by the ocean's roar
Do you love me do you surfer girl
Surfer girl surfer girl*

*We could ride the surf together
While our love would grow
In my Woody I would take you everywhere I go
So I say from me to you
I will make your dreams come true
Do you love me, do you surfer girl
Surfer girl my little surfer girl*

with the following extract from *That's not Me*, contained in the *Pet Sounds* album.

*I went through all kinds of changes
Took a look at myself and said that's not me
I miss my pad and the places I've known
And every night as I lay there alone I will dream*

and those who know Wilson's unfortunate story, exploited by his manager and father, will effortlessly recognize the links and references to his personal life; however it is easy for the listener to relate and identify with most of the lyrics on the record, despite the very intimate character of the songs. There is a newfound topic for the artist: feelings of melancholy and weariness of life. Perone (2013) suggests that the lyrics define the character by what he is, and not by who he is. In other words, it gives the impression "that the character's sense of self-identity is weaker than he might admit". Also the arrangements in the songs revealed traces of a new approach. Wilson decided to expand the borders of the band's routine and introduce guest players and orchestral musicians to the studio recording sessions, crafting complex arrangements which included intricate melodic strings, organ, flute, piano, percussion and even bicycle bells patterns, instrumental additions the band was not accustomed to before, carefully mixed in order to create tangled, diversified instrumental tracks, in which new unheard facets can be discovered even after several listens. Today, *Pet Sounds* counts as one of the greatest records of the time, but at first the album did not turn out to be the huge success everyone expected, especially when compared to the Beach Boys' previous records. Wilson's bandmates were not impressed with his new approach to songwriting, but most of all, they were deluded by his lyrics, preferring the old, tested, surfing-band style. The singer made up for it writing and recording the single *Good Vibrations*, which despite maintaining the newly experimented approach, featuring complex vocal harmonic arrangements and experimental synthesizers labelled "too modern" by record company executives, revealed itself to be immensely successful upon publishing, in 1966. However, after that, Wilson's life began its downfall: misfortunate collaborations and poor life choices, in addition to the psychological disorders he had developed in the

previous years and the speed and marijuana addiction relegated the lead singer to his house, where he often refused for days to leave his bed. The imaginative songwriter stepped aside, and his band took over, returning to the Californian beach-band sound they were so fond of. The Golden Age of the Beach Boys was over: the band became a shadow of its former self, and Wilson himself made only rare appearances with his bandmates, eventually embarking on a mildly successful solo career.

THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE OF THE ROLLING STONES

An even more marked psychedelic period can be found also in the Rolling Stones' discography. While Charlie Watts (drummer) and Bill Wyman (bassist), being part of the English jazz scene, were accustomed to the use of marijuana, the other band members were introduced to it only during their tours in America, in 1965, and Rolling Stones founder Brian Jones started to make use of LSD in the same year. It was the band's belief, as stated in numerous interviews, that the use of marijuana and acid revolutionized the perspectives, attitudes, and possibilities of countless musicians in the world, and this obviously applied also to their formation. Even though the main songwriters were Richards and Jagger, it was mostly thanks to Jones' new ideas, that the next record, *Aftermath*, released in 1966, contained fresh instrumentations with bizarre and exotic touches, such as sitar, marimba or dulcimer arrangements. The result is a record with the usual clear electric blues base, but with the presence of unusual, modern sounds, effect of Jones' hunger for novelty and innovation. The multi-instrumentalist constantly explored new sonorities, experimenting with synthesizers and picking up new instruments just for the sake of arranging one song in an unconventional way (It is said that Jones used to exercise for hours on the sitar only to put it on *Paint It, Black*. After that, he never picked it up

again.). Being the bad boys of rock, there had never been any effort put into the hiding of their drug habits. As a matter of fact, several song lyrics contain allusions to drug use, and their 1966 compilation was named *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)*, a clear innuendo to marijuana use. By 1967, even though it was the Beatles who were more openly making use of LSD, the Rolling Stones were labelled as drug addicts. Their eleventh album, *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, released in 1967, was harshly criticized and tagged as a failed attempt to copy The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band*. In addition to having the cover designed by the same artist, it contained strange imagery and bizarre sounds, just like the Beatles' record. The opening track, for instance, *Sing This All Together*, features an arrangement with stingy synths and hazy string arrangements written by John Paul Jones. Also the lyrics depict strange images, which remind of the typical effects of LSD.

*Pictures of us through the steamy haze
Picture of us painted in our place
Why don't we sing this song all together
Open our heads let the pictures come
And if we close all our eyes together
Then we will see where we all come from*

Also *She's a Rainbow* contains pictures of colour and dreamy situations. The song describes a lady who enchants everyone she meets with her looks and the colours she wears. Again, it is a quite uncharacteristic song. In some portions the strings are out of tune and in some other portions the backup choir sings childlike "la la la" .

*Have you seen her dressed in blue
See the sky in front of you
And her face is like a sail
Speck of white so fair and pale
Have you seen a lady fairer?
[...]*

*Have you seen her all in gold
Like a queen in days of old
She shoots colours all around
Like a sunset going down
Have you seen a lady fairer?*

Even though there is an undeniable influence of the psychedelic experience, the song could also be seen a manifesto of the Stones' main obsession: sex, as the lady protagonist of the song is said to "come in colours everywhere".

When, in the following year, *Beggars Banquet* came out, very little of the psychedelic influence had remained. The Rolling Stones too returned to their roots after a LSD inspired excursus and only rarely employed psychedelic sounds in their records again.

THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE OF THE BEATLES

One of the most memorable shifts towards psychedelic music, made by a mainstream band, however, is undoubtedly the deviation in style the Beatles experienced in the mid-sixties. For some time, the fab-four had escaped the stress of the incessant writing, recording and performing, imposed by their record label EMI, by smoking marijuana. As a matter of fact, after the release of *Help!* in august 1965, the English band was supposed to record a new album by December of the same year. For the first time, their innocent and impeccable image, meticulously shaped over the years, started to crumble relentlessly. When *Rubber Soul* came out, it did not take long for fans all over the world to realize that the Beatles were growing up, changing, and that the album was a turning point in the Beatles' career. Once again, the themes of the songs were more mature, and the rhythms more moderate than their past records. The simple drum patterns made way for more elaborate percussion tracks, with finger cymbals, maracas and tambourines. The instrumental arrangements

became more complex and intricate, the lyrics described more mature situations. Compare the lyrics written for the song *Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)*, with the best-selling Beatles single *I Want to Hold Your Hand*, released only two years earlier. The latter, despite being one of the band's signature compositions, is a very simple tune provided with extremely basic lyrics.

*Oh yeah I'll tell you something
I think you'll understand
When I say that something
I wanna hold your hand*

*I wanna hold your hand
I wanna hold your hand*

*Oh please say to me
You'll let me be your man
And please say to me
You'll let me hold your hand
Now let me hold your hand
I wanna hold your hand*

Norwegian Wood, in contrast, pictures a mature relationship, with all its issues and controversies. It is said to be the first ever rock song to feature a sitar in the arrangement, and Lennon is supposed to have written the song on an affair he had been having in those years without his wife knowing.

*I once had a girl, or should I say, she once had me...
She showed me her room, isn't it good, Norwegian wood?*

*She asked me to stay and she told me to sit anywhere,
So I looked around and I noticed there wasn't a chair.*

*I sat on a rug, biding my time, drinking her wine
We talked until two and then she said, "It's time for bed"*

*She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh.
I told her I didn't and crawled off to sleep in the bath*

*And when I awoke, I was alone, this bird had flown
So I lit a fire, isn't it good, Norwegian wood.*

The text is filled with symbolic imagery, mixed with very down-to-earth and realistic situations. It is not possible to tell to what extent the tale which is being told is true or symbolic, but this, on the one hand is a powerful device to result more cryptical in Lennon's admitting of having an extramarital relationship, on the other it can be viewed as a clear improvement in the usage of more sophisticated poetic devices, such as enigmatic metaphors or similes, by the songwriter, when compared to his past compositions. The lyric is composed by five couplets, each adding an important piece to the narration. There is a repetitive pattern in the structure of the lines, but no chorus in the song, only the repetition of "Norwegian Wood" in the first and last stanza, as if the only concern of the songwriter was to close the circle. As a matter of fact, the first stanza reveals that the precious wood the house of the lady in the song is made of is the characteristic which she cherishes most. The tongue-in-cheek implied ending of the lyric, is one in which the character, alone, lights a fire to keep himself warm using precious Norwegian wood from the furniture and the décor of the house, thus getting revenge on how he had been treated. The idea for the song came to Lennon in form of the first line "I once had a girl, or should I say, she once had me", powerful and unconventional words for a pop song, and definitely a sharp line to begin a song with. Paul McCartney then helped him develop the idea, but, as he stated, there was little effort in the process: "It wrote itself. Once you've got the great idea, they do tend to write themselves, providing you know how to write songs. So I picked it up at the second verse, it's a story." (Miles, 1998)

According to DeRogatis (2003, 43) the first great psychedelic song written by the Beatles comes in 1966, on the B side of the *Paperback Writer* single: *Rain*. On an obvious level, it appears like a song about the classic complaints about

the weather. Closer analysis reveals that it is not so. The verse/chorus form in the song is evident. There are four three-line-stanzas with the same structure: the first two lines always rhyme either perfectly or imperfectly and the third is a repetition of a four-syllable phrase. As the song progresses, the repeated closing line gets more and more intimate with the listener, addressing him personally and even calling for his attention, as if there was an important message in the song to be conveyed.

*If the rain comes they run and hide their heads
They might as well be dead
If the rain comes, if the rain comes*

*When the sun shines they slip into the shade
(When the sun shines down)
And sip their lemonade
(When the sun shines down)
When the sun shines, when the sun shines*

*Rain, I don't mind
Shine, the weather's fine*

*I can show you that when it starts to rain
(When the rain comes down)
Everything's the same
(When the rain comes down)
I can show you, I can show you*

*Rain, I don't mind
Shine, the weather's fine*

*Can you hear me that when it rains and shines
(When it rains and shines)
It's just a state of mind?
(When it rains and shines)
Can you hear me, can you hear me?*

DeRogatis compares the stumbling rhythm of the song, as well as its melodic line in constant expansion and contraction to the sense of timelessness the LSD drug creates. Moreover, he argues that for the writing of the lyrics Lennon might have been inspired by the reading of Alan Watts, his favourite philosopher. As a matter of fact, quoting Riley (2002), "[Watts] writes that reality is a spectrum of wavelengths, and our human senses limit us to receiving only five of them. [...]"

Everything beyond what we call "real" remains a vast illusion.". *Rain* can be considered a philosophical document, a paraphrase of Watt's thoughts into music. Rain or sunshine can be reduced to simply a state of mind. "Rain is as much about attitudes as it is about how nature strikes our senses". The whole song is filled with sharp images, of people running and hiding their head, but not merely from rain. Riley (2002) suggests that "they" in the Sixties implies also an "us", putting the focus on an establishment and its counterculture. "They" are running from what can be framed as a perceptive experience, and only the protagonists of the song, the enlightened counterculture, are able to see past the appearance ("I don't mind. The weather's fine."), and are willing to show the community how to do it ("I can show you that when it starts to rain/Everything's the same"). Some other critics, like DeRogatis (2006), state that there is a close link between the song and the psychedelic experience, since, when making use of LSD, it is hard to acknowledge even the most basic things, as, for example, whether it is raining or not, but there is little evidence to this assumption, since none of the band members went on a LSD trip before the release of the album.

After few unsuccessful attempts, Lennon had his very first major encounter with LSD a few months after the release of *Rubber Soul*. Influenced by this experience, he started working on a song he called "The Void", which would however later be named *Tomorrow Never Knows* (published in 1966 in the album *Revolver*), inspired by the most acclaimed "instruction manual" for the use of acid, a handbook written by Timothy Leary for those who wished to reach spiritual enlightenment through the use of psychedelics, which in turn contained many references to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, an ancient text with directions for a soul to reach heaven. Leary's book praises the drug and its

mind-expanding effects. In the song, many sections of the book are quoted identically. As a matter of fact, the words of the song are the words Leary himself uses in the book to guide the reader away from a bad trip towards a good trip. It appears as if the message of the song is the same message of the book: to convey values of transcendence from the material world, to escape from the mechanical, physical nature of time, to refuse and resist the western values that cherish material goods, and to preach a union with the spiritual realm. The song is composed by 7 four-line stanzas in which the latter two always repeat each other:

*Turn off your mind, relax
And float down stream
It is not dying
It is not dying*

*Lay down all thought
Surrender to the void
It is shining
It is shining*

Lennon's voice sounds both hypnotically close and remote over the hypnotic drum beat which constantly loops, creating a mesmerizing atmosphere, emphasized by backwards played guitar tracks and droning organs with unusual effects. *Tomorrow Never Knows* was the first track to be recorded for the *Revolver* album, and as such it is an evident display of the possibilities the recording process had in store for the band. In fact, *Revolver* appears to be spawn of a different approach to music: it was the Beatles' first purely studio creation, since recreating faithfully the psychedelic effects and the offbeat song structures live would have been impossible. Riley (2002) writes that the song "embraces an alternative eastern reality as though everything flowed from it. The ecstasy it describes deliberately contrasts the disillusion it follows.". Indeed, the song is the last one on the record, and it appears to be a resigned

withdrawal to the spiritual world, consequence and only solution to the cynic critique that appears before it on the record: the song *Taxman*. It is the first political Beatles composition to question the government. Even though it may appear as a simple rant, written by George Harrison to complain about the good share of money the state takes from his paycheck, its connection with *Tomorrow Never Knows* is almost undeniable, giving the text much more depth.

*Let me tell you how it will be
There's one for you, nineteen for me
'Cause I'm the taxman
Yeah, I'm the taxman*

*Should five percent appear too small
Be thankful I don't take it all
'Cause I'm the taxman
Yeah, I'm the taxman*

*(If you drive a car, car)
I'll tax the street
(If you try to sit, sit)
I'll tax your seat
(If you get too cold, cold)
I'll tax the heat
(If you take a walk, walk)
I'll tax your feet
(Taxman)*

In western culture, it is not hard to connect the idea of taxes with scam. Money in general is the symbol of corruption, the biggest threat for romance and meaningful connections "and the untapped galaxies of the mind are the only hope of deliverance from worldly evils." (Riley, 2002). It must also be noted that the song was probably inspired foremost by the application of a new tax applied to the higher income brackets imposed by Harold Wilson's labour Party government, which cashed in nineteen and a half shilling out of 20 for every pound. Harrison wrote the song, but it was Lennon who contributed with the sharpest lines of the lyric, such as:

*Now my advice for those who die
Declare the pennies on your eyes*

The song is a stinging and bitter critique, and the band was not afraid to drop names in the song, with shouts calling both "Ha Ha Mr. Wilson" and "Ha Ha Mr. Heath" (who were respectively prime minister and leader of the opposition in those years) in order not to appear biased (Ingham, 2005, 265).

Another noteworthy lyric from the same album is *Eleanor Rigby*, which contains social criticism on the isolation of many individuals in communities in which they are supposed to care for each other and hypocritically act as if they did so, such as the religious community Eleanor Rigby or Father McKenzie are part of. It is a story about loneliness with no happy ending, a lyric light years away from most past Beatles songs like, for example, *Love Me Do*, as Ingham (2005, 265) likes to point out. It is the darkest and most extraordinary of all Beatles compositions. There are three stanzas in the song: the first two introduce the characters describing their loneliness and isolation without the use of adjectives, but only by their actions, portraying eloquent, sorrowful situations.

*Eleanor Rigby, picks up the rice
In the church where a wedding has been
Lives in a dream
Waits at the window, wearing the face
That she keeps in a jar by the door
Who is it for?*

*All the lonely people
Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people
Where do they all belong?*

*Father McKenzie, writing the words
Of a sermon that no one will hear
No one comes near
Look at him working, darning his socks
In the night when there's nobody there
What does he care?*

*All the lonely people
Where do they all come from?*

*All the lonely people
Where do they all belong?*

The third verse makes the two characters meet in the worst possible way, in the grim setting of a funeral, in which McKenzie services at Rigby's funeral. Eleanor Rigby and Father McKenzie are strangers who, isolated from the world by age and neglect, are brought together only by the empty and impersonal ritual of the funeral. The chorus takes a break from the incessant rhythm of the verses and resembles an ode to all the lonely people, a tribute to all those who empathize with the characters of the song.

From the instrumental point of view, apart from the already discussed closing track of the album *Tomorrow Never Knows*, the most striking psychedelic influence can be found in the gliding guitars of *She Said, She Said*, and the extremely famous *Yellow Submarine*, which at times resembles a children's jingle. At this point, John Lennon had begun to make daily use of the LSD drug and the band seemed to slowly break apart, but the Fab Four still seemed to enjoy getting together in the recording studio to create new music. The following album, one of the Beatles' most famous and critically acclaimed records, reflects their engagement and follows closely the imprinting of the previous two LPs. In fact, even the fans who did not quite understand *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, inevitably came to terms with the band's 1967 eccentric outing: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band*.

Again according to DeRogatis (2006, 47), one of the main elements that made *Sgt. Pepper* so successful was its timing. As a matter of fact, it was published during the hippie protest of the "Summer of Love", when psychedelic drugs stopped being an element of a niche cultural movement and became a

serious concern for the media and society in general. The record was probably not as ground-breaking as the previous two, and it can be argued that even the poetic value of the lyrics were not quite at the same level, but it was playing on every radio station at any time, and the success spoiled the album by making it more widespread than it should have deserved.

The Beatles' idea was to mimic an old-time Salvation Army-type band, in the effort of detaching themselves once more from the classic Beatles image they had constructed years before, but on more practical terms, very few songs on the record matched the musical freedom the Beatles had reached in *Revolver*. Moreover, the band opened up a Pandora's Box of controversies with the song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, in which the media did not take long to find the acronym for LSD, and which depicts very strange, surrealistic images and features abrupt changes in rhythm and pace.

*Picture yourself in a boat on a river
With tangerine trees and marmalade skies
Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly
A girl with kaleidoscope eyes*

*Cellophane flowers of yellow and green
Towering over your head
Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes
And she's gone*

*Lucy in the sky with diamonds
Lucy in the sky with diamonds
Lucy in the sky with diamonds, ah*

*Follow her down to a bridge by a fountain
Where rocking horse people eat marshmallow pies
Everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers
That grow so incredibly high*

*Newspaper taxies appear on the shore
Waiting to take you away
Climb in the back with your head in the clouds
And you're gone*

*Lucy in the sky with diamonds
Lucy in the sky with diamonds
Lucy in the sky with diamonds, ah*

*Picture yourself in a train in a station
With plasticine porters with looking glass ties
Suddenly someone is there at the turnstile
The girl with kaleidoscope eyes*

The refrain appears only twice in the whole song, with its lullaby-like repetition of the line “Lucy in the sky with diamonds” which only adds to the unsettling tone of the song. Even from only looking at the text it is clear that there is an abrupt change in metric structure from the verse to the chorus, and the change is indeed swift and drastic as even the beat switches from a 3/4 to a 4/4 time signature. There are some rhymes here and there, but no pattern, as well as no coherence in metric scheme, rendering the experience of the song only the more confused and confusing. Lennon always denied the reference to drug use in this song, but his efforts in keeping a somewhat neat image of the Beatles were annihilated by his colleague Paul McCartney, who antagonized the press saying that LSD had opened up his eyes and brought him closer to God. Moreover, in 2004, McCartney confirmed in an interview that the song was indeed about LSD, and not, as Lennon stated, inspired by a drawing his son made.

The next album on the list, *Magical Mystery Tour*, was released in 1967, and presented itself as a rollicking record with extreme psychedelic influences. There is little space for denying the impact of LSD-induced sensations in the writing and recording of the record, mixed with the urge for thrilling and provoking the listener, ingredients which gave life to a series of inspired compositions on the one hand, and also bizarre, often even unsettling and absurd songs on the other. A good example for the former type of lyric might be *Strawberry Fields Forever*, based on John Lennon’s memories of playing near the Liverpool orphanage, which was close to his home as a child.

*Living is easy with eyes closed
Misunderstanding all you see
It's getting hard to be someone
But it all works out
It doesn't matter much to me*

*Let me take you down
Cause I'm going to Strawberry Fields
Nothing is real
And nothing to get hung about
Strawberry Fields forever*

In this critically acclaimed song, Lennon depicts a situation in which he finds himself thinking with the carefreeness and tranquillity of a child, and at the same time expresses his nostalgia for his childhood in Liverpool. All this wrapped up with clear psychedelic instrumental influences, which emphasize the idea of a hazy, distant memory, the blurred imagery typical of everyone's reminiscences of their childhood, presented in an almost impressionistic fashion. It can be quite safe to assert that, superficially speaking, the song advocates a desire to escape into childlike dreams: Ingham (2005, 267) defines it a touching Lennonian mix of nostalgia, egocentricity and insecurity. The language is indeed intentionally colloquial and insecure, the verses portray blurry images of complex reminiscences, while the chorus evokes a protected, infantile atmosphere. Other critics agree that, as a consequence of psychedelics, the song is not so much simply about nostalgia, but on profound inward reflection. The simple, almost stuttering language, is not merely an effort to appear childlike but a consequence of self-doubt and hallucinogenic sensations. As the song unfolds, the language seems to become more confused and awkward. The text cannot show it, but there are pauses every few words and they increase in density throughout the song. Surprisingly, the chorus never stutters and invites the listener not to care about things, since nothing is real and he is safe in the strawberry fields. However, whether the songwriter refers to

infantile memories, or “strawberry fields” is a code word for drugs, is still a mystery.

A good example for the nonsensical kind of song is *I Am the Walrus*, a song in which Lennon seems to come to terms with the madness which comes with the abuse of psychedelic drugs, with a weird instrumental arrangement and absurd lyrics which even border the grotesque. In a late interview (Sheff, 2010), Lennon even admitted of having written the greater part of the song lyrics while tripping on acid. When looking at the text, this is easy to believe.

*Sitting on a cornflake
Waiting for the van to come
Corporation T-shirt, stupid bloody Tuesday
Man you've been a naughty boy
You let your face grow long
I am the eggman
They are the eggmen
I am the walrus
Goo Goo G'joob*

*Mr. City policeman sitting
Pretty little policemen in a row
See how they fly like Lucy in the sky
See how they run*

*I'm crying
I'm crying, I'm crying, I'm crying
Yellow matter custard
Dripping from a dead dog's eye
Crabalocker fishwife
Pornographic priestess
Boy, you've been a naughty girl
You let your knickers down*

The song is a clear example of Lennon’s surrealistic genius. Despite the random lyrics, the song features great metric rigidity and precision. The main inspirations of the song were two, according to Ingham’s reading of interviews (2005, 276). From the musical point of view, it was the hearing of a siren while tripping on acid, which sparked the idea of a fluctuating, waving rhythm and sound. From the lyrical point of view, it was the receiving of a letter in which a young

elementary student wrote that his teacher lectured Beatles lyrics in English class. This fact induced Lennon to write a provocation to all those who analysed his song in academic fashion. It can be said that he perfectly hit the nail, as countless different interpretations for each of the song's lines can be found on books and on the internet, ranging from the quoting of Lewis Carroll (The Walrus and the Carpenter are two characters from a nonsensical poem by Carroll) through political and religious statements ("Elementary penguin singing Hare Krishna") to hints to Indian philosophy ("I am he/as you are he/as you are me/and we are all together"). Suppositions which can be true, but which can also be the perfect outcome of an ingeniously designed prank.

After that, as if there was a pattern to be followed, also the Beatles returned to their roots for the rest of their time together as a band. *The Beatles*, also known as "The White Album" came out in November 1968, and boasted 30 songs, the majority of which had been written in India, far from the pressures of western culture and from psychedelic drugs. As a result, the album (and also its successors) has only few songs which bear the psychedelic sparkle of the previous three, and the majority of the tracks are more similar to the first Beatles records than to the latter ones: after some years of experimenting, *The Beatles* just like the other two mainstream bands, pushed mostly by their record labels, carried out a drastic U-turn and returned to their roots -a choice much welcomed by most of their die-hard fans- but some reminiscences of their psychedelic past occasionally appear here and there.

In the history of all three of the above-mentioned bands, a recurrent pattern can be found. At first, after becoming famous, the recipe for their international success is followed to the letter for several years and album releases. After that, the urge for growing up, for developing into something more mature kicks in,

and all three bands experiment with new sounds, contents and styles. Even when ignoring what has been stated by band members in various interviews when asked about their relationship with the drug, it is impossible to state to what extent the LSD drug influenced this kind of development. However, it is quite safe to say that it played a fairly significant role for all three of the above-mentioned bands. As a matter of fact, even though the strive for a more sophisticated style or for the confronting of more complex themes can be attributed to a potential attempt of maturation, it has happened exactly when the bands were exposed to the drug for the first time. Moreover, the sound the bands found in the years after the discovery of the drug bears strong evidences of being influenced by the effects of the drug, such as long droning sounds or complex tapestries of intertwined instrumental arrangements. Today, the albums recorded and published in this phase count among the most important and influential records of all time. And even though the more tangible, pragmatic musical influences of the drug subside, the quest for the expression of less trivial and immature themes appears to remain.

BIRTH OF A GENRE

It has been shown how the three most influential bands of the time have been influenced by the psychedelic wave, have then however returned to their genre. Nonetheless, there are countless other artists and formations which were on the verge of international fame in the same years, and have built their career and fortune on this genre alone, reaching peaks of experimentation never attained before. One of the most outstanding examples is the rise to fame of a very special artist from Seattle, who pioneered the possibilities of sound-making on the electric guitar and came to global fame in a very short time, before prematurely passing away.

Jimi Hendrix picked up the guitar for the first time when he was thirteen years old. When he was playing, he could find comfort and solace from his very troubled home life. After dropping out of school and being discharged from the military for an injury he started playing as freelance side guitarist in the Chitlin' Circuit of the southern U.S., one of the few venues where African American artists were free to perform, and his first experience as a frontman came in 1966. It is not clear when and how Hendrix was exposed to the LSD drug for the first time, but it is quite safe to say that at this stage he most probably already had. Chas Chandler, bassist for the Animals, took Hendrix to London in September of the same year, introducing the American guitarist to the vibrant psychedelic rock scene. Soon after, he was joined by guitarist Noel Redding, who picked up the bass guitar, and jazz drummer Mitch Mitchell, to form the Jimi Hendrix Experience. Even though music stores all over the world are filled with countless different records bearing Jimi's name on the cover, only four albums were released during his lifetime. As a matter of fact, before choking to death in 1970, aged 27, Hendrix released only three studio albums and a live record. After his death, his record labels scraped together all the jams, studio experiments and demos they could get their hands on and published them, partly to ride the commercial tide followed by the artist's death, partly because leaving the multitude of the greatest-guitarist-of-all-time's left-behind material unpublished was perceived as a waste and a shame. This explains the multitude of posthumous records released in the following years, which somehow convey a sense of unfinished, unfamiliar and unpolished aftertaste. In fact, many of these arrangements treated Hendrix more like a solo guitarist than a songwriter, and every recorded left-behind note found place on the posthumous albums somehow, in the effort of minimizing the loss. But the critics know better. The albums that Hendrix had the possibility to look after and edit

show a very different approach to songwriting. The main target of his craft was mostly the creation of songs, atmospheres, stylistic syntheses, and not merely guitar solos. Even though Hendrix showed great talent as a songwriter, composer and even lyricist, his skills were still overshadowed by his incredible dexterity and pioneeristic techniques on the electric guitar and his charisma as a frontman. His songs existed to convey emotions and feelings through melodies, arrangements and lyrics, and not just as a musical carpet on which to solo. In his compositions, Hendrix was more keen on creating moods with his words and sounds than on impressing his listeners with his technical competence. In fact, it appears that his style is deeply influenced by the years he spent in America as a R&B sideman, which taught him that rhythm guitar is as important as the lead guitar, notion which compelled him to do both at once, another signature feature of his style. Moreover, he took advantage of a stockpile of effects and experimented with everything his time had to offer: distortion, fuzz, wah-wah, feedback controls, tape speed etc.

The result is a psychedelic sound in the truest sense of the word, with complex arrangements, unusual sonorities and visionary lyrics. However, albeit largely used by everyone, Hendrix himself always rejected the classification "psychedelic" for his creations. He saw it more as a mixture of Jazz, Blues and Rock which was constantly evolving.

His first record *Are You Experienced?* was released in 1967 immediately enjoying great critical and commercial success, and many consider it Hendrix's best recording ever. Apart from becoming a landmark in the history of music for its experimentations in sound, even the lyrics contain many of the influences which have been disclosed in the previous chapters. It needs to be said that the album, being Hendrix's first record, contains the first lyrics of a relatively

unexperienced songwriter, but many of the compositions contain a song text which can be regarded as a considerably more mature effort than, for example, the first Beatles or Beach Boys lyrics.

A good example for this might be the song *Manic Depression*, a song about a state of mind which could apply to a psychological disorder, but also to a more generic frustration or heartbreak, making the song more appealing to a large number of listeners. Written in triple metre, an uncommon time signature for any mainstream song, it presents a relentlessly unyielding rhythm, which only emphasizes the sense of helplessness Hendrix wants to convey through the words.

*Manic depression is searching my soul
I know what I want
But I just don't know, honey
How to go about getting it
[...]
Music sweet music
I wish I could caress caress caress
Manic depression is a frustrating mess*

*Well I think I'll go turn myself off and a go on down
All the way down
Really ain't no use in me hanging around
Oh, I gotta see you,*

*Music sweet music
I wish I could caress and a kiss kiss
Manic depression is a frustrating mess*

The first line of every verse has almost all syllables synchronized with the beat, underlined by a parallel progression of the guitar and bass tracks which closely follow the vocal melody, making the parts in which Hendrix stops singing and starts talking out of rhythm (another signature habit of his) all the more striking, rendering the general mood of the song on the one hand mechanical, on the other surprisingly more intimate and confession-like. The guitar solo starts off very

simple with few distorted bends, then evolves in a fuzzy multitude of barely distinguishable notes.

Then again, there are also examples of very controversial lyrics which are believed to contain references to the use of LSD. *Purple Haze*, for instance, is the opening track for the U.S. release for the album, as well as one of Hendrix's greatest hits. Just from the musical point of view, the song boasts very psychedelic overtones: the opening riff features a repeated guitar/bass unison interval of a flattened fifth, which can (Shapiro & Glebbeek, 1999) potentially sound very odd to the majority of listeners, and the guitar solos throughout the song, occasionally backed up by Hendrix's moans, take on dissonant and strange-sounding paths. Even though the lyrics may seem the description of an acid trip, Hendrix always denied the connection and stated that the words were inspired by a dream.

*Purple haze, all in my brain
Lately things they don't seem the same
Actin' funny, but I don't know why
Excuse me while I kiss the sky*

*Purple haze, all around
Don't know if I'm comin' up or down
Am I happy or in misery?
Whatever it is, that girl put a spell on me*

*Purple haze all in my eyes
Don't know if it's day or night
You got me blowin', blowin' my mind
Is it tomorrow, or just the end of time?*

There are three stanzas in the song, and no chorus. The structure is very clear and always respected, as the three stanzas are identical in structure and metric pattern, as well as in their basic rhyme scheme, which makes use of both perfect and imperfect rhymes, but never misses any instances. The verses are separated by guitar solos and all three begin with the hook of the song "Purple

Haze" which sets the tone for the passage about to come. The fondness for such simple structures, as well as the faithful respect for them is probably heirloom of Hendrix' years as R'n'B guitarist. From the lyrical point of view, however, the song is inspired and driving. Just like the majority of poetic texts, also this one is very open to interpretations, and the ultimate truth does not exist: as enthusiasts over the world got their hands on notes and drafts for the song lyrics, many of those bear little to no resemblance to the final version of the song. Hendrix himself gave many different answers in several interviews, stating, for example, that the purple haze of the song can also be viewed as the effects of falling in love (a thesis backed up by the line "Whatever it is, that girl put a spell on me"), or as the effects of a voodoo trap spell laid on him by a witch. In any case, even if the text really was drug-induced, admitting it would have meant a substantial fall from grace, therefore it never happened, and no-one will ever really know the truth behind the lyrics.

The same can be said about the strongly suggestive lyrics of *Are You Experienced?*, in which the American guitarist pioneers the use of backward played drum and guitar tracks, attaining an incredibly unusual effect, which makes the apparent drug-encouraging message only the more disturbing.

*If you can just get your mind together
Then come on across to me
We'll hold hands and then we'll watch the sun rise from the bottom of the
sea
But first*

*Are you experienced?
Have you ever been experienced?
Well, I have*

*I know, I know
You'll probably scream and cry
That your little world won't let you go
But who in your measly little world are trying to prove that
You're made out of gold and can't be sold?*

So, are you experienced?

*Have you ever been experienced?
Well, I have*

Ah, let me prove it to you

The song is written in basic verse/chorus structure, with two verses and two refrains, and the two verses differ considerably in structure, as they are mainly spoken. Many conjectures have been made about what Hendrix is proposing to be a guide for. Shapiro and Glebbeek (1990, 180), among others, suggest sexual ecstasy, altered states of consciousness, or simply the letting go of the daily grind of the measly world. However the connection to drug use is still one of the most preponderant ones. The moment in which Hendrix proposes to prove that he is experienced gives way to one of the most odd-sounding and psychedelic guitar solos of all-time, with several track portions played backward and grave melodic dissonances and arhythmiae, which might be a way of suggesting that he is proving his experience with psychedelics and its effects.

Axis: Bold as Love is Hendrix's second outing, published in December 1967 and featuring 13 new songs. It appears as though, even if the sound and the instrumental experimentations are of the same magnitude of the first album, there is a greater effort in much of the lyric-writing. The most famous song on the album, *Little Wing*, is a more easy-minded lyric about a girl, or better, an idealized life companion, a recurrent theme in Hendrix's work. Even though, apparently, it could be a trivial theme to write a song about, the imagery contained in the verses is imaginative and original; way beyond the usual efforts of a generic mainstream love song of the same decade.

*Well she's walking through the clouds
With a circus mind that's running round
Butterflies and zebras*

*And moonbeams and fairy tales
That's all she ever thinks about
Riding with the wind.*

*When I'm sad, she comes to me
With a thousand smiles, she gives to me free
It's alright she says it's alright
Take anything you want from me,
Anything.*

The author's affection to simple structures with no chorus re-emerges in this song. The two verses are written in identical structure and the metric respect is meticulous. The hook appears only in the final section of the song as it is almost hummed over the guitar solo. It is difficult to say whether the songwriter is referring to a guardian angel, or a girlfriend of his, or one of his relatives or carers. It could be all, and it could be none, this exactly made the lyrics so appealing to everyone upon release and signed its success. Hendrix liked to write lyrics which were very open to interpretation, he even used to say that he sees things in different ways than others, and when he writes them in a song, they obviously come across differently and could represent anything. (McDermott; Kramer; Cox, 1995, p142) Therefore, in Hendrix's vision, a well-written ballad does not necessarily coincide with a ballad which successfully conveyed the message it was written for, and leaving a lyric open for many different interpretations does by any means not make it a less valuable work of art. This might as well be quite true, since the song, with its signature riff and imaginative lyrics is among the most well-known and covered songs in the history of music.

The third album Hendrix wrote and released with his loyal companions was published in 1968. *Electric Ladyland* was Hendrix's longest record, featuring a total of 16 tracks, and was immensely successful upon publishing. It is also the

album in which the American guitarist displayed the incredible flexibility and wide variety of style at its best.

The album contains several covers, such as Bob Dylan's *All Along the Watchtower* or Earl King's *Let the Good Times Roll*, as well as hard-rock hit *Crosstown Traffic* and 15-minute-long electric blues piece *Voodoo Chile*.

An example for a precious lyric of rare introspection which confirms Hendrix as a versatile and valuable songwriter is the song *The Burning of the Midnight Lamp*:

*So here I sit to face
That same old fire place
Getting ready for the same old explosion
Going through my mind
And soon enough time will tell,
About the circus in the wishing well
And someone who will buy and sell for me
Someone to toll my bell*

*And I continue
To burn this old lamp*

The words appear to be carefully chosen for how they flow into each other. The verses of the song are presented like a stream of sounds which underline the resignation of the song while appearing to be uttered almost effortlessly. Hendrix admitted that he wrote the song driven by very personal and intimate emotions, starting from the feeling of isolation which assailed him while travelling and realizing that there was no place he could call home, the same feeling he described with the image of a man in a secluded house who burns the midnight lamp, a metaphor for a call to anyone who is willing to listen. Just like the songwriter, the image is one of a secluded man who works hard all day and into the night, hopelessly trapped in an overwhelming situation. Even the character's wishes are portrayed as being surrounded by serpents.

*Soon enough, time will tell
About the serpents in the wishing well*

As already said, Jimi Hendrix died in 1970 aged 27, choking on his own vomit. At the time he was working on his fourth album, which was published despite the artist's death: *The Cry of Love*. Despite containing much evidence of Hendrix's work and style, critics find evident traces of his absence in the mixing stage of the album. The premature death of the artist could not stop the record labels from taking advantage of everything the young talent had left behind.

THE MADCAP – PINK FLOYD'S RISE AND SYD BARRETT'S DOWNFALL

Pink Floyd, the legends of psychedelic rock, got together for their first concert in 1965. Architecture students Roger Waters, Nick Mason and Rick Wright, after having played in various unsuccessful R&B bands during their student years, finally teamed up with Syd Barrett, a 19-year-old painter, who named the newly formed band after his two idols: bluesmen Pink Anderson and Floyd Council.

Just like all other artistic attempts of young bands in London, Pink Floyd also played R&B in small venues for audiences of partying students. It was the time in which the Beatles were recording *Rubber Soul*, and, as already disclosed, popular music was undergoing a new kind of evolution towards an innovative sort of sophistication, and the influence can be traced even in the band's first artistic efforts. As a matter of fact, Pink Floyd can be regarded as being part of the third generation of rockers – the first being the Elvis and Buddy Holly generation and the second comprising, for example, The Beatles or The Rolling Stones. By the time this kind of small student bands in the mid-sixties started playing together, many artistic choices of other successful rockers in the world were readily available in the record stores, undeniably influencing the tastes of

musicians in England and in the world. As psychedelic rock blossomed in mainstream music, and LSD became more easily available, there were some bands ready to take the experimentation to the next level, and Pink Floyd was among the most relevant ones in this avant-garde movement. In 1966 the band started its first psychedelic experiments: songs became much longer than anything pop music had ever experienced before to make more space for droning atmospheres and experimentations with echoes and feedback effects. Critics like to state that Barrett's band was characterized by an approach to music which made them stand out from other similar student bands of the same period: they considered their music art, and did so from their earliest days. As the British psychedelic rock scene grew, the spotlight fell onto regular performances of Tomorrow, Soft Machine or Crazy World Of Arthur Brown, but the audience's all-time favourites appeared to be Pink Floyd. They soon signed a contract with EMI and produced their first single: *Arnold Layne*, which, though providing the audience with a peek onto the sounds Syd and his friends would have been exploring in the years to come, confined itself to the single format, being only barely 3 minutes long.

*Arnold Layne had a strange hobby
Collecting clothes, moonshine washing lines
They suit him fine*

*On the wall hung a tall mirror
Distorted view, see through, baby blue
He got it.*

*Oh Arnold Layne, it's not the same
It takes two to know, two to know, two to know, two to know
Why can't you see*

*Arnold Layne, Arnold Layne,
Arnold Layne*

*Now he's caught a nasty sort of person
They gave him time, doors bang, chain-gang
He hates it*

Arnold Layne, Arnold Layne

Arnold Layne
Arnold Layne
Don't do it again!

Since the first single, Barrett reveals himself immediately as a skilful storyteller. Starting from a trivial gossip learned from his own and Roger Waters' mothers, who told them that some clothes of girl students in their boarding house in Cambridge went missing from the clotheshorse, Barrett was able to create an eccentric character and a bizarre story. As Averame (2008) points out, even though it appears that the narrative models Barrett was mostly inspired by in terms of story were ones of linearity, typical of the early twentieth century, the narration is fragmentary and modern featuring a series of brief flashes. This irregularity might be heirloom of Barrett's passion for translated poems of French symbolists, who are famous for chaotic metrics. As the song unfolds, the atmospheres become more sinister and the story more disturbing, until its logical ending, in which Arnold is given time to think about his mistakes, mistakes which translate simply into an unconventional lifestyle. Touching upon the themes of identity and transvestitism, the song tells the story of a young man with the habit of stealing women's underwear from clotheslines. Some critics find the song judgmental, since it ends with Arnold being locked up in prison for his actions, scolded and told not to do it again. As a matter of fact, the chorus is cryptic and allusive: it is never clear on which side the songwriter stays, but the fact that Pink Floyd's band members with their clothing choices often looked just like Arnold, and the fact that Barrett sings the song's hook "*It takes two to know*" with much empathy, suggest that in reality the band sympathized with the protagonist of their composition.

In any case, the single was ultimately banned by the BBC, along with its B-side with the original title *Let's Roll Another One*, which many found to be a clear marijuana innuendo. The second, less provocative single, *See Emily Play* released in June 1967, was, musically speaking, just as effective as the previous, but the band admitted to feeling that they were not satisfied with the end product, and that they were bound to create music beyond the 3-minute pop-format. It was in this state of mind that the band went to Abbey Road studios to record the album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, Pink Floyd's acclaimed debut album.

Rich with suggestive instrumentals and experimental sounds, the album consists in a variety of hallucinatory atmospheres provided by sounds which not only the band, but also various professional engineers helped to craft. The opening track, for example, *Astronomy Domine*, opens up with radio static noise and a distorted voice reading out names of various planets, then fades into an evocative climate in which Barrett's voice describes an imaginative tour of the universe.

*Lime and limpid green, a second scene
A fight between the blue you once knew.
Floating down, the sound resounds
Around the icy waters underground.
Jupiter and Saturn, Oberon, Miranda
And Titania, Neptune, Titan.
Stars can frighten.*

*Blinding signs flap,
Flicker, flicker, flicker blam. Pow, pow.
Stairway scare Dan Dare who's there?
Lime and limpid green
The sounds surrounds the icy waters underground
Lime and limpid green
The sounds surrounds the icy waters underground.*

The musical progression is unusual and ever sound, including vocals, was processed with effects such as echo machines and distortions, elements which only underline the expressive, colourful imagery of the vocals. The enigmatic astronomic suggestion is underlined by manager Peter Jenner's heavily filtered vocal track, who reads excerpts from an astronomy handbook, resembling a radio transmission to or from the moon. Averame (2008) underlines how the language of the song, with its flow of images and onomatopoeias closely reminds of US pop art painters in the fifties or of comic books, pointing out how even Nick Mason once stated that *Astronomy Domine* is, in musical terms, very similar to what Roy Liechtenstein did with his canvases. The style is dry and acts merely through the juxtaposition of images. The images follow one another in a vertiginous sequence which unfolds like an actual space trip, in which the listener is hypnotized by the marvels that appear outside the windows as the lightning-fast spacecraft travels through them.

One of the album's most famous tracks is undoubtedly the closing track: *Bike*. In this song, an intense crescendo in which the lyric I entrusts his sweetheart with a variety of strange gifts:

*I've got a bike, you can ride it if you like.
It's got a basket, a bell that rings
And things to make it look good.
I'd give it to you if I could, but I borrowed it.*

*You're the kind of girl that fits in with my world.
I'll give you anything, everything if you want things.*

*I've got a cloak it's a bit of a joke.
There's a tear up the front. It's red and black.
I've had it for months.
If you think it could look good, then I guess it should.*

*You're the kind of girl that fits in with my world.
I'll give you anything, everything if you want things.*

*I know a mouse, and he hasn't got a house.
I don't know why I call him Gerald.
He's getting rather old, but he's a good mouse.*

*You're the kind of girl that fits in with my world.
I'll give you anything, everything if you want things.*

*I've got a clan of gingerbread men.
Here a man, there a man, lots of gingerbread men.
Take a couple if you wish. They're on the dish.*

*You're the kind of girl that fits in with my world.
I'll give you anything, everything if you want things.*

*I know a room full of musical tunes.
Some rhyme, some ching, most of them are clockwork.
Let's go into the other room and make them work.*

The song has a clear, linear verse/chorus structure, in which the five stanzas are all separated by the same chorus, but there is an open ending to it, since it is never disclosed whether the protagonist gets the girl or not. When directed to the mysterious room full of musical tunes the vocals are quickly engulfed by a profusion of sounds and effects which interrupt the conversation and leave the story hanging. The track is permeated with infantile amazement, with desperate, adult efforts to convince the outer world to merge with the inner and to construct an empathic relationship with the other. The bizarre, maniacal showing of toys and objects seems to be the lyric I's business card, the most accurate description of his own inner universe. The character shows and shows, and in his showing he is more and more defenseless, naked and candid, but at the same time this fact puts into evidence a clear detachment from reality. The words in this song are clues that appear like a premonition of the mental instability which is about to emerge, and still this can be regarded as a love song: the character is ready to share anything with the loved one, who seems to be his perfect fit, as he states in the chorus, and the fact that the whole song appears to be sung by a child, and children are usually very jealous of their toys, this is probably one of the most genuine and innocent love songs ever written.

In hindsight, it is clear that *The Piper* was Barrett's album. At the time, he was the band's driving force: eight songs out of eleven on the album were written by him, and he even chose the title of the record with a reference to a chapter in his favourite book: *The Wind in the Willows*. Even in their live performances Barrett liked to constantly focus the attention onto himself, with his exaggerated gestures and mirror-coated guitar. Pink Floyd was Barrett's band, and his mates knew it well. This explains their worry when they realized that their frontman was increasingly losing control over his life. As a matter of fact, a frail, undisciplined and naive young man, heaved into a world of effortlessly available sex and drugs makes a good candidate for an excess-induced downfall. Barrett had been no stranger to marijuana abuse since he was seventeen, and by the age of nineteen he was dropping acid on a daily basis. His bandmates witnessed as he showed increasingly concerning manic-depression symptoms and disturbing attitudes such as random laughs or sporadic blackouts in which he lost himself in a blank stare, along with various grave episodes which made those surrounding him seriously question his mental health. As Syd grew more and more unreliable and irresponsible, it became necessary for the band to have a ready replacement for lead guitar and vocals, so it was decided to make place in the band for David Gilmour, a good old friend of Barrett's, who soon took his place in live performances, while Barrett was told he could continue to contribute to the band's development in the writing process and the recording studio. Soon after, however, the band realized that keeping Barrett in the formation was not worth the effort, and decided to gradually estrange him from the project, in the effort of proving those wrong who assumed that Pink Floyd was strictly a Syd Barrett artistic project.

A Saucerful of Secrets (1968), Pink Floyd's second album, has still much of the ex-frontman's influence, and the repercussions are evident. Even though only one song on the record is a Barrett original, (and the guitar tracks have been recorded by both him and Gilmour) the whole album is permeated with his touch. Some songs, like *See Saw* and *Corporal Clegg*, written respectively by Wright and Waters, bear in structure and in length close resemblances with the typical pop song, but many factors closely remind the listener of Barrett's style, such as the dark and disturbing imagery (a feature that would accompany most Pink Floyd hits in time) or the quest for strange sounds and effects. According to Barrett's soon-to-be ex-bandmates the formation's most notable achievement in this record was the title track *A Saucerful of Secrets*, which opens up side two of the disc and is a twelve minute long instrumental characterized by plenty of experimentation, and which every bandmate helped to write, with the exception of Syd Barrett. As a matter of fact, his only contribution to the album, in terms of written songs, is *Jugband Blues*:

*It's awfully considerate of you to think of me here
And I'm much obliged to you for making it clear
That I'm not here.
And I never knew we could be so thick
And I never knew the moon could be so blue
And I'm grateful that you threw away my old shoes
And brought me here instead dressed in red
And I'm wondering who could be writing this song.*

*I don't care if the sun don't shine
And I don't care if nothing is mine
And I don't care if I'm nervous with you
I'll do my loving in the winter.*

*And the sea isn't green
And I love the queen
And what exactly is a dream
And what exactly is a joke.*

There is little space for denying the bitter nature of the lyrics, underlined by the apparent absence of a metric and rhythmic structure. Many consider this work Barrett's farewell to the rest of the band, having realized that his time among them is about to come to an end (a theory supported by the line "*And I'm much obliged to you for making it clear that I'm not here.*"). Others argue that the lyrics are an expression of the social estrangement Barrett was going through at the time. Averame (2008) points out that in those years Barrett was obsessed with his state of mental uneasiness, therefore the self-portrait he creates with this song is both a way of unburden himself and to exorcize what was happening to him. The track opens up with a pompous formal phrase, which is an effort to remark the solemnity of the line, and also its paradoxical contradiction: Barrett remarks his absence with his presence, and the sense of impossibility of the line is balanced by the lucid, sophisticated sentence itself. Rationality comes and goes throughout the song, but Barrett is coherent and awfully true to himself: the portrait is one of a man who is conscious of his illness and cannot do anything about it if not talk about it. A surreal paradox is present also in the second verse, in which the songwriter himself wonders who could be writing the song. The second stanza is a resigned surrender. Barrett does not care about anything anymore, an ill man who has no concern with what is happening outside of him or how he behaves towards his loved ones. Then there is the passing of the marching band, followed by the last stanza, the last display of madness of the song, in turn followed by a fade to silence, which marks the end of this confused, painful story. Either way, the musical progression of the song takes on disturbing paths, underlining the undeniably dark, sad message of the words, which appear to be uttered by a madman powerlessly spectating the relentless performance of a sinister and disquieting

marching band which fades away and reappears in a fashion which could be referred to as almost schizophrenic.

That was the moment when Syd Barrett parted from the rest of the band. Pink Floyd subsequently released a series of albums which were far from uninspired, but abused the same formula over and over. The approach the band found and applied to *A Saucerful of Secrets* was indiscriminately practiced on entire albums, resulting in abnormally long suites characterized by bizarre sounds and atmospheres, which, besides, were perfect candidates for becoming soundtracks, and the band composed several works for this purpose in the following years. Speaking of studio albums, however, the band took on a relatively monotonous path in its mid-years. *Ummagumma* (1969) is still one of the band's most anonymous albums, the first part of the album is a live record of one of the band's typical sets in those years, and the second a series of solo compositions of each bandmate. Even though the product was received relatively well by the public, the band itself never seemed to be fond of their creation. *Atom Heart Mother* (1970), best remembered for its very simple cover, featuring a shot of a cow standing on a field, contains Pink Floyd first orchestral experimentations and choral arrangements cured with help of composer Ron Geesin, who swiftly embraced the Band's overtly extreme approach to music. *Meddle* (1971), counts as a great group effort of the band, in which each member produced a great amount of lyrics. The result is a more close-knit record with a more linear approach to music in the songs as well as in the entirety of the album. In 1972 a concert film is released, featuring Pink Floyd playing a typical live set of theirs in a Roman amphitheatre in Pompeii for no audience. The performance is extraordinary, since the few members of the band manage to produce an incredible array of sounds and noises with

relatively antique instrumentation. Moreover, it appears an even more amazing deed when thinking that, starting from the early 80s the same formation would have needed the help of a huge team of technicians and sound engineers to achieve the same result. In the same year *Obscured by Clouds* is released: the last album before the greatest breakthrough in the band's history, the release which many consider the Floyd's greatest composition, which will be discussed further on.

As already stated, these mid-period albums can all be regarded as being the result of the same formula. For the joy of their fans Pink Floyd found a winning recipe for their songs while they still worked with Barrett and exploited it in the ears to come. DeRogatis (134) stresses that Barrett's influence can be found mostly in the importance Pink Floyd have always given to the songs, with their innovative and poetic value. However, lyrics apart, also the adopted musical style appears to be the logical continuation and evolution of a taste based on Barrett's artistic foundations. As a matter of fact, many fans, over the course of the years, had claimed that Pink Floyd songs replicate most of the sensations felt during an acid trip, but all band members always denied regular use of psychedelics; Waters himself admitted that he took the LSD drug only twice in his lifetime. The becoming symbols of the "acid generation" was of course an inheritance of the Syd Barrett era, strongly substantiated by the genre they played, but the band surfed on their image without giving into it and without giving much importance to the label society had given them. One of the reasons why they distanced themselves from drug abuse, may be the witnessing of the effects on their former frontman.

After the parting, Syd Barrett was not left alone. His managers stood by his side and organized recordings starting from May 1968, only a month after the official

announcement that put him out of the band, calling in Jerry Shirley, drummer for Humble Pie Willie Wilson and The Soft Machine. The recordings were often interrupted for various reasons and Barrett never seemed to be in stable psychological conditions, but a year later, when the recording resumed after a long pause, some of his former bandmates Waters and Gilmour, took over the production and even joined him to add some finishing touches. In January 1970 *The Madcap Laughs* is released. Even though the audience was expecting compositions about estrangement, deception and loneliness, an assumption only strengthened by the disturbing cover, depicting Barrett crouching near a vase in the middle of an empty room, the album is surprisingly upbeat and light-hearted. Sinister references to Barrett's state of mind are only sporadic, but when they appear, they are evident and disturbing. The acoustic love song *Terrapin* appears like an ordinary song about innocent love, however the guitars are often out of tune and there are several unsettling pauses throughout the song, mirroring the unstable states of mind schizophrenia often brings with it. Even the lyrics suggest that there is more obsession than order in the described relationship:

*I really love you and I mean you
The star above you, crystal blue
Well, oh baby, my hair's on end about you
I wouldn't see you and I love to
I fly above you, yes I do
Well, oh baby, my hair's on end about you*

*Floating, bumping, noses dodge a tooth, the fins aluminous
Fangs all 'round, the clown is dark, below the boulders hiding all
The sunlight's good for us
'Cause we're the fishes and all we do
The move about is all we do
Well, oh baby, my hair's on end about you*

*Floating, bumping, noses dodge a tooth, the fins aluminous
Fangs all 'round, the clown is dark, below the boulders hiding all
The sunlight's good for us
'Cause we're the fishes and all we do
The move about is all we do
Well, oh baby, my hair's on end about you*

*I really love you and I mean you
The star above you, crystal blue
Well, oh baby, my hair's on end about you*

There appears to be a verse/chorus structure, but it is not clear. Several portions of the song are repeated more than once, but it is difficult to identify a chorus. Here, Barrett tries to write a love song, but all he is able to do is to repeat the same sentences over and over, in the maniacal attempt to impress the loved one. The metaphors and imagery he uses are also not helpful in a potential seduction. Indeed, all the used images portray the couple isolated and detached from the world: first they are floating, then there are fangs all around, then they are depicted as fishes who only move about in their entire existence: it appears that Barrett's issues are evident even in his love songs.

Dark Globe is perhaps the most sinister composition of the album. Characterized by a chaotic, irrational instrumental track provided by a heavily shredded acoustic guitar which shows no intention of following a pattern, it resembles in style a ballad written by a singer-songwriter but unfolds itself as a painful two-minute-long plead for help. Barrett is inconsistent in his singing, accelerating and slowing down randomly as he howls pain-brimming words, forcing the guitar to adapt to his irrational, schizophrenic rhythmic patterns:

*Oh, where are you now?
Pussy willow that smiled on this leaf
When I was alone
You promised a stone from your heart*

*My head kissed the ground
I was half the way down treading the sand
Please, please lift a hand
I'm only a person whose armbands beat on his hands
Hang tall, won't you miss me?
Wouldn't you miss me at all?*

*The poppy bird's way
Swing twigs coffee brands around
Brandish her wand with a feathery tongue*

*My head kissed the ground
I was half the way down treading the sand
Please, please, please lift a hand
I'm only a person with Eskimo chain
I tattooed my brain all the way*

*Won't you miss me?
Wouldn't you miss me at all?*

There appears to be a chorus in the song, repeated twice with an alternate ending, and all other portions of the song are much shorter in length. Apart from the second and third line in the chorus, there is also a complete disregard of rhyme scheme, underlining the dark, grim, chaotic atmosphere of the lyric. In this song, the anguish is not only apparent, it is close. There is no crescendo in the song, Barrett's voice sounds squeaky and desperate from the first word, making the song a solid, continuous two-minute portrayal of pain and restlessness.

The album did not turn out to be a great success, but it was satisfactory. Barrett himself liked his work, but in a moderate fashion. Many fans were pleased, others very disappointed especially when considering that such a rough recording was produced by Waters and Gilmour. Barrett appeared on stage only once after his Pink Floyd period, in 1970 at the Kensington Olympia Station, but after performing very poorly the first few songs of the show, in which his vocals were not even amplified, he walked off the stage.

In any case the sales were strong enough to issue the recording of a second album, which began almost immediately, this time produced by Gilmour and Wright. Despite the many difficulties that the working with a fragile mind bears with it, the album *Barrett* was swiftly recorded and released in the same year,

featuring acoustic songs as well as more pop oriented compositions which bear very close resemblances, in style, to the first Pink Floyd single the one he had written years earlier: *Arnold Layne*. One of those is undoubtedly *Gigolo Aunt*, a carefree composition which gushes with positivity:

*Grooving around in a trench coat with a satin entrail
Seems to be all around - it's din - and the pale we pale
Jiving on down to the beach to see the blue and the grey
Seems to be all on, it's rosy, it's a beautiful day*

*Will you please keep on the track 'cause I almost want you back
'Cause I know what you are, you are a gigolo aunt
You're the gigolo aunt
Yes I know what you are, you are a gigolo aunt
You're the gigolo aunt*

*Heading on down with the light, the dust in your way
She was angrier there, than her water-shell mail
Life - to this love - to me, heading me - down to me, thunderbird shale
Seems to be all on, it's rosy, it's a beautiful day*

The sound in this song is more modern, polished. Despite showing no signs of improvement, Barrett's voice appears healthier to the listener and the abandoning of the extreme double-tracked vocal recording technique makes the voice sound closer and more human, but the song feels out of place on the album. The message that comes through is not one of recovery or positivity, but much rather a desperate attempt to appear normal. Moreover, the instrumental track of the song was not even produced by Barrett. He was merely given the composition to write the words for, therefore the credit for the song's positivity and carefreeness is not even Barrett's. When listening to the album, the discrepancy is evident, however, the lyrics show that Barrett's humour and skill with wordplay were still intact in the artist.

The darkest entries in this album are the songs *Dominoes* and *Rats*.

It is hard to figure out what *Dominoes* is about, but the words are unusually full of hope. It also gives the listener a peek into what the Floyd could have sounded like if Barrett remained in the formation:

*It's an idea, someday
In my tears, my dreams
Don't you want to see her proof?
Life that comes of no harm
You and I, you and I and dominoes, the day goes by...*

*You and I in place
Wasting time on dominoes
A day so dark, so warm
Life that comes of no harm
You and I and dominoes, time goes by...*

*Fireworks and heat, someday
Hold a shell, a stick or play
Overheard a lark today
Losing when my mind's astray
Don't you want to know with your pretty hair
Stretch your hand, glad feel,
In an echo for your way.*

It's an idea, someday...

*It's an idea, someday
In my tears, my dreams
Don't you want to see her proof?
Life that comes of no harm
you and I, you and I and dominoes, the day goes by...*

The pattern in Syd Barrett songs is that there is no pattern. Again, it is difficult to tell whether the structure of the lyric can be described in the verse/chorus fashion, since there are several repeated sections, and they are repeated randomly. The depicted images and atmospheres, however, are surprisingly peaceful. The song could be a prediction or a wish for his own future: a calm prospect in which he and his interlocutor, in a not so distant future, could be spending the days wasting away playing dominoes. Barrett's present, full of tears and dreams is strongly opposed to the future he envisions for himself, far from the spotlight, leading a simple life. The stanza in the middle of the song

even describes very ordinary situations, from which the author imagines to draw bliss through the presence of his interlocutor, it is the description of a need for simple pleasures, which were apparently absent in Barrett's life. The message that emerges is that the author ultimately only wants to turn away from the complications of his art and lead a simple life. It was his success and the music industry who led to his mental breakdown, and even after leaving *Pink Floyd* the business was still employing his work to make money. The lyric can be regarded as a veiled letter of resignation, contained in the last album Barrett ever recorded.

Rats, on the other hand, features paranoid and creepy imagery, depicting various delirious visions and senseless rants, which are the closest the album gets to the image that Barrett and his team used for the cover of the CD, a wall covered in insects. This is probably the most interesting, unconventional and experimental approach to lyric writing Barrett has ever adopted, and simultaneously the closest and most lifelike depiction of his state of mind in those years. Here, he seems to be uninterested in conveying a meaning through sentences, but tries to do so with mere words and sounds, succeeding in the intention of unsettling the listener without actually saying anything at all. It may be regarded as his own personal attempt of writing a stream of consciousness for music:

*Got it hit down
Spot knock inside a spider
Says: "That's love yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!"
"That's love yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!"
Says: "That's love - All know it
TV, teeth, feet, peace, feel it
"That's love yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!"
"That's love yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!"*

*Like the fall that brings me to
I like the fall that brings me to
I like the cord around sinew
I make a cord around sinew*

*Duck, the way to least is less
Tea craving of the metal west
'Ell tomorrow's rain and test
'Ell tomorrow's rain and test
Love an empty son and guess
Love an empty son and guess
Pimples dangerous and blessed*

*Heaving, arriving, tinkling
Mingling jets and statuettes
Seething wet we meeting fleck
Seething wet we meeting fleck
Lines and winds and crib and half
Each fair day I give you half
Of each fair day I give you half
I look into your eyes and you,
Flathe in the sun for you...*

*Bam, spastic, tactile engine
Heaving, crackle, slinky, dormy, roofy, wham
I'll have them, fried bloke
Broken jardy, cardy, smoocho, moocho, paki, pufftle
sploshette moxy, very smelly,
Cable, gable, splintra, channel
Top the seam he's taken off*

*Rats, rats lay down flat
We don't need you, we act like that
And if you think you're un-loved
Then we know about that...
Rats, rats, lay down flat!
Yes, yes, yes, yes, lay down flat!*

Barrett's passion for onomatopoeias returns, as well as the recurring unclear structure and random repetitions. The first part of the song is a discussion about love, in which the artist seems to lose himself in an attempt of describing the feeling. Afterwards, he seems to lose himself completely and hurls himself into what appears to be a random disturbing rant.

After the release of this album, Barrett cut most contacts with music. His studio sessions were almost immediately aborted and his artistic efforts were sporadic and not worthwhile. However, upon retiring from the scene, his fanbase blossomed, and even today there are thriving internet newsgroups who collect and discuss every scrap of music Barrett has left behind. To most, Barrett was

and still is a genius. Despite having his mind clouded by drugs, he was nevertheless able to take advantage and make big show of his talents: a gifted and imaginative guitarist with brilliant innate melodic sensitivity on the one hand, and a skilled poet on the other. When looking at his writings, it can be argued that most of his compositions, even those which at first glance seem more impenetrable, resemble more an outcome of attentive Joyce or Blake reading than the desultory muttering of a drug addict. It is impossible to determine in what manner and to what extent psychedelics influenced the work of Syd Barrett, but it is quite safe to state that his downfall depended mostly by the abuse of hallucinatory substances. The rest of the Floyd dedicated much of their subsequent work trying to understand and express what corrupted their friend, whether it was the drugs, or money, fame, or if it was simply madness which made him drop out of the society which, conversely, was easy for the rest of the band to fit into.

In 1971 Pink Floyd started to write their catchiest and probably most significant album, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, which was recorded in the following years and released in 1973, even though many of its songs were performed live also earlier. The band had been reworking themes they had already used, but had never quite interpreted as effectively as in this record providing them with outstanding guitar and synth solos, solid and inventive drumming and memorable vocals. There was a more pop—song approach in the writing of the music, since there are few remnants of the long instrumentals of the past. Moreover, Abbey Road's new, sophisticated 24-track tape recording machines turned out to be perfect for the clean recording of complex arrangements, providing an unmatched sound quality for the time. There is even space for a quartet of backing singers and some saxophone solos by Dick Parry, as well as

Clare Torry's memorable performance in the no-lyric vocal solo *The Great Gig in the Sky*. From the lyrical point of view, Waters outmatches his former self by leagues in his writing. Once again, DeRogatis (140) is not afraid to say that the album betters earlier concept albums, "Waters reveals himself as a romantic and a pessimist. He believes that the need to care for and be cared for by others is what makes life meaningful", even though interpersonal interactions are difficult or even impossible. Precisely this is the message of the album. The songs try to depict many of the factors that alienate human beings and make them estrange from one another, often giving rise to isolation and madness. Waters' lyrics are aided by a series of interviews the band conducted with people who responded unusual and controversial questions, such as "What do you think of death?".

Money is an upbeat track with a surprising odd time signature. It opens up with a loop of money related sound effects which will accompany the song until its end:

*Money, get away
Get a good job with more pay and you're okay
Money, it's a gas
Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash
New car, caviar, four star daydream
Think I'll buy me a football team*

*Money, get back
I'm all right Jack keep your hands off of my stack
Money, it's a hit
Don't give me that do goody good bullshit
I'm in the high-fidelity first class traveling set
And I think I need a Lear jet*

*Money, it's a crime
Share it fairly but don't take a slice of my pie
Money, so they say
Is the root of all evil today
But if you ask for a raise it's no surprise
That they're giving none away*

The song is composed of three stanzas which are identical in structure: the metric pattern is precise and faithfully respected, as every syllable must match the $\frac{3}{4}$ tempo signature of the song. The first and third line of every verse begins with the same high-pitched shouted word "Money" which clearly serves as hook. The song is rich with internal rhymes as, for instance, in every second line of each stanza, a feature which closely resembles the practice of the London East End rhyming slang, which is often associated with criminals and contributes to the comical tone of the song. The theme of money is confronted with sharp sarcasm and playfulness, and closer analysis of the lyric proves that it is true. Money is depicted as volatile, but also as closely connected to pleasure and enjoyment. Even the first few lines communicate that it is the easiest if not the only way to reach social acceptance. Averame (2008) even writes that lines like "Think I'll buy me a football team" were to be considered absurd hyperboles, since the purchase of a football team should have been impossible for a rockstar, however, Elton John proved them wrong few years later when he bought the Watford Football Club, giving the song somewhat of a prophetic overtone. The last stanza mocks the very common paradox of hypocrisy which encloses the idea of money: it is the root of all evil, but everyone is reluctant to let go of his goods. "So they say" is the key to understanding the irony of the conclusion: even the author is not able to admit that he agrees with the statement. The song gives a great sarcastic definition of greed, but it is interesting to notice how it also describes one of the possible reasons for Syd Barrett's alienation.

Intriguingly, the track that follows deals with incommunicability and isolation. *Us and Them* is the longest song of the album, with slow jazzy undertones perfect for hosting the memorable saxophone solos. At first glance, the lyrics also

appear light-hearted, but the calm, harmonious mood of the song can scarcely hide the uneasiness which lies at their roots. The bold part of the text is an excerpt from an interview with Roger Manifold, the band's roadie.

*Us and them
And after all we're only ordinary men.
Me and you
God only knows it's not what we would choose to do.*

*'Forward' he cried from the rear
And the front rank died.
The general is sat and the lines on the map
Move from side to side.*

*Black and blue
And who knows which is which and who is who.
Up and down
And in the end it's only round and round. And round.*

*'Haven't you heard it's a battle of words'
The poster bearer cried.
'Listen son' said the man with the gun,
'There's room for you inside.'*

Well I mean, they're gonna kill ya, so like, if you give 'em a quick sh...short, sharp shock, they don't do it again. Dig it? I mean he got off light, 'cause I coulda given 'im a thrashin' but I only hit him once. It's only the difference between right and wrong innit? I mean good manners don't cost nothing do they, eh?

*Down and out
It can't be helped but there's a lot of it about.
With, without.
And who'll deny it's what the fighting's all about?*

*Out of the way, it's a busy day
I've got things on my mind.
For want of the price of tea and a slice
The old man died.*

The first stanza sets the tone for the song without going into detail, but the second stanza abruptly changes the setting and brings the listener to a battlefield in the middle of the action, a stanza much opposed to the calm tones of the song, creating a strange effect. The "us" and the "them" assume a war-like meaning, but the two closing lines of the stanza reveal that the tides of

the massacre, as well as its motive, lie not in the hands of the soldiers, but the aseptic, cold decisions of an anonymous general. Every stanza begins with the juxtaposition of opposing factors: while the first begins with "us and them", the second and third with "black and blue" and "down and out". In them, Averame (2008) reads a dislocation of the lyric I, a portrayal of the confused identity crisis of all those who obey orders without knowing why. The boy assumes it is a battle of words, but the man with the gun knows better, and leads the poster bearer to safety, leaving him in his ingenuity. Following these premises, the song could be regarded as an anti-war manifesto, but some argue that there is more to it, and that war is only a metaphor. The songwriter composed a sort of elegy, in which he confronts the issue of the divisions that often emerge between people: the finding themselves divided by a barrier without knowing how they got there.

It would be wrong to mindlessly assume that these lyrics are about the band's ex-frontman and his past, however it would be equally wrong to deny every connection. It is quite safe to say that Barrett was very close to the other band members and powerlessly losing sight of a person who has been more than a friend is a difficult ordeal to endure. Therefore it would be quite expected for an artist to explore such significant experiences in his work. Even though, when speaking of this album, these are bound to remain conjectures, it is quite safe to say that the following album, *Wish You Were Here*, can be regarded as a tribute to their ex-bandmate.

As a matter of fact, after the release of *The Dark Side of the Moon*, the band had to cope with the difficult task of keeping up with the incredible quality of the record. The 1973 album had awarded the band with world fame, and the band became a money-making legend. But Pink Floyd reacted incredibly well

to the immense success, and delivered an album which did not disappoint the astonishingly high expectations. *Wish You Were Here* was recorded and released in 1975, at the end of the psychedelic decade which is object of this dissertation. Once again, the topic of most of the lyrics is the pointlessness of communication, and some even argue that there is a strong reference to the evils of the music industry and its false promises. *Have a Cigar* goes as follows:

*Come in here, dear boy, have a cigar.
You're gonna go far, fly high,
You're never gonna die,
You're gonna make it if you try;
They're gonna love you.
Well I've always had a deep respect,
And I mean that most sincerely.
The band is just fantastic,
that is really what I think.
Oh by the way, which one's Pink?*

*And did we tell you the name of the game, boy,
We call it Riding the Gravy Train.*

*We're just knocked out.
We heard about the sell-out.
You gotta get an album out.
You owe it to the people.
We're so happy we can hardly count.
Everybody else is just green,
Have you seen the chart?
It's a helluva start,
It could be made into a monster
If we all pull together as a team.*

*And did we tell you the name of the game, boy,
We call it Riding the Gravy Train.*

The song is composed by two long stanzas, and there is a refrain couplet at the end of each. The lyrics are a monologue of a record label manager who speaks to a mute artist in two different times: at the beginning of his career and upon discovering the high sales he made with his first outing. It depicts how artists are easily seduced, then deceived and exploited, and recent history had given the Floyd much material to prove their message right, such as the Brian

Wilson incident, or more closely, the Barrett affair, in which the mentally unstable songwriter was led to recording of two albums despite being severely challenged. The critique is bitter and sharp, but there is a certain degree of irony to the song which loosens up the atmosphere. It is not hard to imagine the tycoon which is the protagonist of *Money* sitting behind the desk, rattling off a variety of clichés and stereotyped phrases: empty flatteries which soon assume the material form of a cigar, another empty gesture which aims to seduce and put the freshly produced rockstar at ease. All these words and actions, however, can hardly hide the great lack of interest the producer has with regards to every human and artistic aspect of the musician. The ending of the second stanza, in which the producer remarks the fact that they are a team, is permeated with sinister irony: the seemingly brotherly phrase is uttered by a character with no interest whatsoever in values of teamwork and synergism and is moved only by greed. Moreover, the song was written in a low moment of the band, in which the members appeared to be more motivated by the squash matches between the studio sessions than the studio sessions themselves, with hardly any interest in the common artistic effort, but aiming only to please the record label.

The music industry is also referred to as a machine. In *Welcome to the Machine*, there is more sharp criticism in regard to the music industry, which is described as a money-making organization with no respect for artistic expression. The lyrics can be interpreted as a sad welcome the experienced band gives to a newcomer to the music business, unaware of the humiliating things to come.

*Welcome my son, welcome to the machine.
Where have you been?
It's alright we know where you've been.
You've been in the pipeline, filling in time,
Provided with toys and 'Scouting for Boys'.
You brought a guitar to punish your ma,*

*And you didn't like school, and you
Know you're nobody's fool,
So welcome to the machine.*

From this text it appears as though the songwriter also subtly addressed his criticism to the new wannabe musicians, who think they are special, but are roughly all the same, as the various teenage clichés of the musician's past in the first stanza show. Here, the focus is on the obscure and estranging mechanism which controls the life of a rockstar, in which the dreams of glory and of exclusivity are merely empty, serial, impersonal and prefabricated patterns. The first few lines immediately set the tone of the song: the voice is the one of a paternalistic omniscient interlocutor, which makes clear that the mechanism of the "machine" is hopelessly out of reach, that it follows a predestined pattern and that it has very old origins. The dream of glory in the music business is presented like a choice, but the truth is that it is the opposite: the protagonist of the song will undoubtedly be a link in the chain, like all his predecessors, and his visions of rebellion and nonconformity will be drowned in the sound of the cheering crowd which closes the curtains for the song.

The most famous track of the album is the catchy, folk-inspired title track; most critics, however, agree that the masterpiece of this album is *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, which is openly a tribute to their friend Syd Barrett, who is referred to as "painter, piper, prisoner and martyr". It is probably the most gripping of all the Pink Floyd suites, featuring captivating rock sections as well as elegant symphonic arrangements in its twenty-five minutes of duration, for a total of nine parts (most of which instrumental).

*Remember when you were young,
You shone like the sun.
Shine on you crazy diamond.
Now there's a look in your eyes,*

*Like black holes in the sky,
Shine on you crazy diamond.
You were caught on the crossfire
Of childhood and stardom,
Blown on the steel breeze.
Come on you target for faraway laughter,
Come on you stranger, you legend, you martyr, and shine!*

*You reached for the secret too soon,
You cried for the moon.
Shine on you crazy diamond.
Threatened by shadows at night,
And exposed in the light.
Shine on you crazy diamond.
Well you wore out your welcome
With random precision,
Rode on the steel breeze.
Come on you raver, you seer of visions,
Come on you painter, you piper, you prisoner, and shine!*

*Nobody knows where you are,
How near or how far.
Shine on you crazy diamond.
Pile on many more layers
And I'll be joining you there.
Shine on you crazy diamond.
And we'll bask in the shadow
Of yesterday's triumph,
And sail on the steel breeze.
Come on you boy child,
You winner and loser,
Come on you miner for truth and delusion, and shine!*

It is impossible to find a pattern in the structure of the lyrics, since the text stretches over several sections of the song and must match their rhythm. Barrett is compared to a black hole: a sun which collapsed shortly after shining the brightest of its existence, and is now only a vortex of emptiness and negative energy. The fourth and fifth line recount the time in which the band members helplessly witnessed how the magnetic look of Barrett's eyes was gradually being replaced by an empty stare. There is also a symbolic portrayal of the years the e-frontman spent in fame and glory, always looking somewhat out of place, like a stranger in a world that he cannot recognize despite his genius. He is symbolically represented by a crazy diamond, and there is an exhortation to

shine on, expression of, according to Averame (2008), a well-aware and tragic irony. Waters also probably implies that Barrett found the secret of creativity and reached for it too soon, but got burned by this very action and became victim of his own inner demons and shadows, who "threatened him at night", and exposed him to the (spot)light. "You wore out your welcome" can be regarded both as an admission of guilt and its cathartic opposite, as it is probably referred to the decision of putting him out of the band, a choice which had undoubtedly brought a fair deal of remorse. "Random precision" can be viewed as Waters' way of describing Barrett's instinctive genius, and "Painter" probably refers to Barrett's original vocation. The lyrics paint a romantic image of the fallen artist and his downfall. A notable artistic effort to give dignity to an artist that seemed to have fallen from grace in an excessive manner, in the eyes of the public, and a composition of great poetic value. Despite what had become of the former Floyd frontman, the band showed great affection and consideration for their former leader. Barrett even appeared in the studio during the recording sessions of the album, overweight and with shaved head and eyebrows, indulging in very odd behaviours. Even his friends struggled to recognize him, as he assisted the recording of the vocals of a song that was about him. Only after 45 minutes, Wright stated in an interview for *Source* (Kendall, 1984), they realized who that "huge, bald, fat guy" was, who had been silently walking around the studio without even speaking to his old friends.

Since then the band and its former leader have hardly crossed their paths again. Until 2006, when he passed away, Barrett has rarely been seen on public occasions and the romantic image all fans are likely to have of him in his last years are of an aged artist and hermit, who sits alone in his house, pondering on

his life and on how he opened the doors of perception when he was young. But it is more likely that he spent them occupied in the little diversions ordinary retired people are used to, maybe occasionally painting, or strumming some notes surrounded by his guitar collection.

PROGRESSIVE ROCK COLLABORATIONS: PETER SINFIELD AND KING CRIMSON

Experimentation after experimentation, the newly found complexity in the writing and arranging of songs starting from the mid-sixties took on several different paths. Especially in Britain, musicians seemed to go on a quest for original, different approaches to rock music, leading to various, disparate, and quite surprising results. In a dissertation about the poetic value of song lyrics, the worthiest of mention among these genres is undoubtedly the progressive branch of the rock tree. Several musicians in Britain felt like it was necessary to take advantage of the psychedelic wave, which was increasing credibility and artistic depth in rock music, and take the experimentation to a higher level. As a matter of fact, critics believe that the roots of progressive rock lie in the first psychedelic albums of the *Beatles* or the *Beach Boys*, such as *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* or *Pet Sounds*, which pioneered the ideas of lyrical unity, complexity and sound innovation, and which demonstrated that a well-constructed LP could be regarded as more valuable than a single, from the artistic point of view. Prog-Rock brings these ideas to the extreme, with the objective of shedding new light on the genre and display it as richer, more respected and valuable than ever before, appealing even for the highest spheres of society. On the practical point of view, prog bands discarded the ideas of pop-like brevity, simplicity and danceable rhythm of classic rock, opting for a greater sophistication in the rhythmic, harmonic, structural and

lyrical structure and performance, inspired by both jazz and classical music, but with virtually no stylistic boundaries. Sections of the same song vary drastically in their form and are often joined together by protracted instrumental bridges, resulting in extended compositions which closely resembled classical suites and not rarely reached exaggerated durations. Unusual instruments were often added to the formation, and musicians in general were extremely skilled in order to be able to perform the complicated arrangements of the songs, which often featured rapid instrumentations, odd time signatures and swift changes in rhythm and key.

These characteristics were a consequence of good intentions, however, despite the motives, the genre never reached the mainstream market, limiting itself to the fruition a relatively narrow public. Critics often scolded progressive bands for being too pompous, pretentious and overcomplicated in their artistic efforts, and for having lost the simple, celebrated appeal rock had been famous for. This strive for assertion in their own "new" art is not a novelty: DeRogatis (2006, 170) suggests that most psychedelic and progressive rock enthusiasts and musicians were "upper-middle-class kids who discovered rock, drugs and the London nightlife and dropped out of college and art school." The achievement of their musical idols in those years starting from the release of *Rubber Soul* showed them how they could craft art which was just as serious as the art they had been studying, but with modern music giving them the possibility to express their artistic pulsations through a channel they felt more connection with, without giving up on the degrading social picture of a school dropout. Throughout his book *Listening to the Future: The time of progressive rock, 1968-1978* Bill Martin seems to be able to identify the five characteristics of prog, as summarized by DeRogatis (2006, 170): 1) It is visionary and

experimental. 2) It is played, at least in part, on instruments typically associated with rock. 3) It is made by musicians who have consummate instrumental and compositional skills. 4) At its core it is a very English phenomenon. 5) It is expressive of some longstanding romantic and prophetic aspects of British culture, which could explain the strive for originality, authenticity and personal expression found in the work of most prog bands.

When speaking of lyrical quality, progressive rock is worthy of mention because of the different approach to the writing of the words. As a matter of fact, the ideals that led musicians to the composing musical creations of supposedly higher aesthetic value, had repercussions also on the writing of the song lyrics, which, obviously, had to match the instrumentals with their artistic power: Prog songwriters discarded most themes which were common to mainstream music and songs directed to a young audience such as love, rebellion, partying, violence or sex, and turned to more complicated themes such as elaborate social criticism or awareness of nature. But most importantly it was not uncommon for a band to collaborate with a poet or professional lyricist. Lyricist Keith Reid worked with English band *Procol Harum*, writing the lyrics for every song in the band's history or Betty Thatcher is the pen behind most of London-based *Renaissance's* lyrics. The most acclaimed amongst these collaborations is surely the one between the early *King Crimson* and poet Peter Sinfield, and the roots of this collaboration can be traced back to the very origins of the band. Before *King Crimson* there was only *The Giles, Giles and Fripp* trio, which included three of *King Crimson's* founding members: Robert Fripp and the Giles brothers Michael and Peter. After spending few months composing mildly successful music in 1967, the trio decided to extend the boundaries of their formation and include Ian Mc Donald and Judy Dyble. It was in this context of

renovation that McDonald decided to bring with him Sinfield, who was part of a fairly unsuccessful band, but attracted much attention with his texts. The band started working on their first album and released *In the Court of the Crimson King* in 1969. Both the album's and the band's name can be traced back to the first song Sinfield had written with the band: *The Court of the Crimson King*:

*The rusted chains of prison moons
Are shattered by the sun.
I walk a road, horizons change
The tournament's begun.
The purple piper plays his tune,
The choirs softly sing;
Three lullabies in an ancient tongue,
For the court of the crimson king.*

*The keeper of the city keys
Puts shutters on the dreams.
I wait outside the pilgrim's door
With insufficient schemes.
The black queen chants the funeral march,
The cracked brass bells will ring;
To summon back the fire witch
To the court of the crimson king.*

*The gardener plants an evergreen
Whilst trampling on a flower.
I chase the wind of a prison ship,
To taste the sweet and sour.
The pattern juggler lifts his hand;
The orchestra begin;
As slowly turns the grinding wheel
In the court of the crimson king.*

*On soft grey mornings widows cry,
The wise men share a joke.
I run to grasp divining signs
To satisfy the hoax.
The yellow jester does not play
But gently pulls the strings
And smiles as the puppets dance
In the court of the crimson king.*

Even though the verse-chorus form is not common in progressive rock songs, this composition is characterized four stanzas with the same structure, performed with different intensity. All are equal in length 8 lines, and end with what could be regarded as the refrain and hook of the song, which gives it its title. It can be

argued that the true hook of the song, however, is the peculiar mellotron and guitar riff which recurs in the entirety of the song. There is a long instrumental section called *The Return of the Witch* which divides the verses and stretches the song to more than nine minutes in length. Even starting from this first composition it was clear that Sinfield was very skilled with the use of sounds. Apart from his great interest in the creation of new synthesizer sounds, the writer's fondness of playing with the sounds of language is evident, as the alliterations (such as *the purple piper plays*, line 5) and the competently crafted rhymes show. Each word appears to have been carefully chosen for the effect of its sound on the listener, and their skilfully organized order renders the metric rhythm of the lyric pressing and upbeat. This approach can be found on all tracks of the album, however, worthy of mention is the opening track *21st Century Schizoid Man* which counts as one of the band's most successful songs to date:

*Cat's foot iron claw
Neuro-surgeons scream for more
At paranoia's poison door.
Twenty-first century schizoid man.*

*Blood rack barbed wire
Politicians' funeral pyre
Innocents raped with napalm fire
Twenty-first century schizoid man.*

*Death seed blind man's greed
Poets' starving children bleed
Nothing he's got he really needs
Twenty-first century schizoid man.*

The structure of the song bears resemblances with the above-mentioned closing track of the album *The Court of the Crimson King*. The stanzas are only three and are composed by four lines each, however, the closing line of every stanza is always the same, and it is the line which gives the track its title. Every

stanza bears the same structure and there is a pattern also in the presentation of the images: The first line, composed by mono- and disyllables, always depicts two fairly hazy pictures, and the words appear to have been chosen not merely for their meaning, but for their hard sounds. The second and third (Keeling, 2000) rhythmically less intense lines can be regarded like somewhat of a focal adjustment as more clarity is brought to the situations before culminating in the sharp, judgemental line "*21st Century Schizoid Man*". The song paints a handful of disturbing images in which many have recognized strong references to the Vietnam War (e.g.: *Politicians' funeral pyre/Innocents raped with napalm fire*). "Schizoid" refers to a personality disorder that causes those who suffer from it to become apathic and disconnected, and to isolate themselves in their own imaginary world, distant from all that is real. The writing of a song with sharp social criticism using the term "schizoid", therefore referring to mental illness, was a significant provocative gesture. The hazy nature of the verses, along with the reference to a century that had not started yet, reminds greatly of prophecies: divine messages communicated to the people by a prophet. Ambiguity and indistinctness were the most relevant characteristics of such messages, and Sinfield appears to act like a modern-time prophet and compose his own prediction of the future. A future where the horrors of war appear to have deprived human beings from their innocence and sanity. Later during a 1969 live concert, the band openly admitted that the song was dedicated to Spiro Agnew, former US vice president, rendering the critique more directed and acute.

Sinfield had always been a specialist in using baroque, surreal imagery, therefore he was the perfect fit for a progressive rock band, which relied on such style for the writing of their songs. Critics believe that it was precisely this

album which brought prog to success and started the avalanche which would have grown in the following years. *In the Court of the Crimson King* is still one of the most influential records, with its poetic lyrics and symphonic arrangements which somehow never felt pretentious or out of place. The collaboration with Sinfield was a very productive one, and the band noticed and took advantage of it immediately, releasing three albums in the following two years: *In the Wake of Poseidon*, *Lizard* and *Islands*.

The band's entire history is filled with drastic changes in line-up and personnel, with exception of guitarist Robert Fripp, heart and soul of the band. While musicians and singers shifted and replaced each other, Fripp and Sinfield worked hard together on the writing of the songs, and did so denying most interventions of other artists in the composing stage of the albums' productions. After *Islands*, however, even Sinfield turned away from King Crimson, and lyricist and guitarist Richard Palmer-James took his place.

In the Wake of Poseidon was received well by fans and critics alike. Despite the first changes in the band's personnel it retained the style of the debut record, but with increased sound quality. Once again, Peter Sinfield's contribution is evident and precious. The mythical reference of the album title serves as symbol for the issues in his present he addresses. Paraphrasing Green (2000), Keeling (2000) states that "Peter Sinfield's lyrics, and cover concept, work on multiple levels of meaning which are involved in the title, 'In the Wake of Poseidon'. First, on the mythical level, following Zeus's and Poseidon's action in the killing of Kronos who was intent on killing his children, peace ensued in the Olympian kingdom. Secondly, the mythical dimension is brought up-to-date with the protest from the 1960's sub-culture about Vietnam, and the reaction of the preceding generation, sometimes violent, to this outcry." Keeling suggests

that Sinfield is linking the ancient mythical dimension with his recent past, making expert use of complicated symbolism. Positioned on the album's beginning, middle and end are three sections of the song *Peace*, which guide the listener through the album, providing a sort of fil rouge. At first glance, the main theme appears to be the natural desire for peace inside every human being, often hard to find. As a matter of fact, the last section contains a paraphrase from the bible:

*Searching for me
You look everywhere
Except beside you
Searching for you
You look everywhere
But not inside you*

However, the considerations on the topic of peace stretch much further than that. Green and Keeling (2000) have found the themes of equilibrium and reconciling "between logic and emotion of Logos and Eros". As a matter of fact, on a more personal level, when an artist creates he is said to be forced into a situation in which his thinking and feeling (Logos and Eros) must be reconciled with each other. Some critics even noticed a reference to the Taoist concept of *Dao*, dynamic principle expressed by the famous symbol in which the yin (shadow, femininity) and the yang (light, masculinity) merge to form a circle, each containing a piece -the origin- of the other, suggesting that all differences and contradictions can be solved with the encounter of the opposites. The first occurrence of the song, in the album's opening, is sung in a counter-tenor register, which can be interpreted as the feminine in the masculine. Other instances in which the opposites are united can be:

*Peace is the love
Of a foe as a friend
[...]*

*Peace is a man, whose breadth
Is the dawn
Peace is a dawn
On a day without end
Peace is the end, like death
Of the war*

This interplay between yin and yang can be found also in the most acclaimed of all lyrics in the album, *Cadence and Cascade*. The delicate and dreamy undertones provide a perfect background for the story of two groupies, Cadence and Cascade, who appear to have a relationship with rockstar Jade. (Sinfield will dedicate another song to groupies, *Ladies of the Road*, in the album *Islands*).

*Cadence and Cascade
Kept a man named Jade;
Cool in the shade
While his audience played.
Purred, whispered, "Spend us too:
We only serve for you".*

*Sliding mystified
On the wine of the tide
Stared pale-eyed
As his veil fell aside.
Sad paper courtesan
They found him just a man.*

*Caravan hotel
Where the sequin spell fell
Custom of the game.
Cadence oiled in love
Licked his velvet gloved hand
Cascade kissed his name.*

*Sad paper courtesan
They knew him just a man.*

When compared to other King Crimson songs, *Cadence and Cascade* is simple and straightforward. There is an absence of refrains, which makes the text look like a poem written for the page. The instrumentation is uncomplicated and the time signature in plain 4/4, characteristics which compensate the previous track

Pictures of a City and its hard, loud tones, as well as complicated structure. There is no refrain in this song but a pattern in the rhyme scheme and the overall rhythm can be found. Apart from the closing lines, each stanza begins with a rhyming couplet, and in the first two verses all other lines rhyme as well. The absence of the same scheme in the last stanza amplifies the sense of disillusion that grows throughout the song. Green (2000) has argued that the song is a symbol for the loss of the sacred dimension with regard to sex,, but there is more to the song than that. Sinfield had always been fond of allegories, and his choice for the names of the protagonists of the song is surely not a random one. In musical terms, a cadence is a musical punctuation marking, which signifies "close" or "climax". Cascade evokes the image of flowing or falling water. The two concepts meet onto the object of their desire: Jade, symbolic for the light green stone that in Chinese alchemy has been emblem of the Philosopher's Stone. In other terms, the two almost ethereal, fluid, erotic female figures are united onto the symbol of the hard rock, allegory of manhood and virility, tempering its hardness and smoothing its surface. But, once again, perfect harmony is only achieved with the merging of the opposites: Cadence is regular rhythm, Logos, thought, Yang. Cascade is uncontrolled energy, chaos, Eros, Yin.

Lizard appeared in 1970, and unveiled itself immediately as a very jazz-oriented record. Again it was recorded by an almost wholly different personnel, but kept the two usual artists as composers. Upon release, the album got mixed reviews, and even Robert Fripp when asked about a retrospective on his work, reviles the album sharply. Worthy of mention is the opening track, *Cirkus*.

*Night: her sable dome scattered with diamonds,
Fused my dust from a light year,
Squeezed me to her breast, sowed me with carbon,
Strung my warp across time.*

*Gave me each horse, sunrise and graveyard,
Told me only I was her;
Bid ne face the east closed me in questions
Built the sky for my dawn*

*Cleaned my feet of mud, followed the empty
Zebra ride to the Cirkus,
Past a painted cage, spoke to the paybox
Glove which wrote on my tongue
Pushed me down a slide to the arena,
Megaphonium fanfare
In his cloak of words strode the ringmaster
Bid me join the parade*

*"Worship!" cried the clown. "I'm a T.V.
Making bandsmen go clockwork,
See the slinky seal Cirkus policeman,
Bareback ladies have fish."
Strongmen by his feet, plate-spinning statesman,
Acrobatically juggling
Bids his tamers go quiet the tumblers
Lest the mirror stop turning*

*Elephants forgot, force-fed on stale chalk,
Ate the floors of their cages.
Strongmen lost their hair, paybox collapsed and
Lions sharpened their teeth.
Gloves raced round the ring, stallions stampeded
Pandemonium seesaw
I ran for the door, ringmaster shouted,
"All the fun of the Cirkus!"*

The song is composed by four equally long verses, each introduced by an instrumental part. Even though the author played with many recurrent sounds, there is no apparent rhyme scheme or metric regularity. There is no chorus or hook to the song either, nor is there any potential chorus material. Instead, the song appears to palpitate: every stanza rises to a climax and creates tension, only to deflate in the instrumental part and rise again in the next stanza, creating a sense of pulsation through the song until its cacophonous ending. The rise is evident in the intensity of the performance, but upon closer inspection even the metric rhythm of the lines appears to reflect the ascent, favouring more delineated words and sharper sounds as the verse unfolds. It is a powerful track, and Keeling (2000) regards it as a track about equilibrium,

and, as a matter of fact, many images in the stanzas (especially when approaching the chaotic climax of the song: the ending) convey a sense of a dangerous, fragile balance, like “Strongmen by his feet, plate spinning statesman, /Acrobatically juggling” or “paybox collapsed and /Lions sharpened their teeth.”. This idea of balance is further underlined by its structure, which, Keeling says, is “a musical metaphor: the idea of the circus, included in Peter Sinfield’s words, is further conveyed by the bipartite/symmetrical structural see-saw, which balances on the fulcrum of the still centre. More than that many of the musical motives seem to have symmetry as their basis, as well as rising and falling motion, which closely unifies the music with the words even further.”.

Islands was released in 1971, and was recorded while touring, getting less attention than its predecessors and receiving mixed reviews upon release. Of the six songs on the record, only four are with lyrics, and three of them are about women: *Formentera Lady*, a dark love story in which several critics have recognized parallelisms with epic poems such as the *Odyssey*, *The Letters*, a melodramatic tale of betrayal, in which a wife learns of her husband’s disloyalties, and her subsequent death is portrayed like a martyrdom full of baroque metaphors, and *Ladies of the Road*, ironic portrayal of encounters with groupies, rich with sexual innuendos and metaphors, in which closer inspection reveals a growing disgust with regards to the described dissolute lifestyle.

The other lyric, which is also the title track of the album, is probably the most memorable of the whole record. *Islands* is the last track of the album and surprises the listener with its dreamy undertones and remarkable poetic approach. The imagery is impressive, and the use of metaphors noteworthy: the

morning mist is described as “dawn’s bride veil” and the sky as “heaven’s sea”.
Islands can be interpreted in many ways, but the message which is most strongly conveyed appears to be one of hope. With his words, Sinfield seems to try to assert that there is no hopelessness in isolation, and that there is no turning away from sharing.

*Earth, stream and tree encircled by sea
Waves sweep the sand from my island.
My sunsets fade.
Field and glade wait only for rain
Grain after grain love erodes my
High weathered walls which fend off the tide
Cradle the wind
to my island.*

*Gaunt granite climbs where gulls wheel and glide
Mournfully glide o’er my island.
My dawn bride’s veil, damp and pale,
Dissolves in the sun.
Love’s web is spun - cats prowl, mice run
Wreath the snatch-hand briars where owls know my eyes
Violet skies
Touch my island,
Touch me.*

*Beneath the wind turned wave
Infinite peace
Islands join hands
’Neathe heaven’s sea.*

*Dark harbour quays like fingers of stone
Hungrily reach from my island.
Clutch sailor’s words - pearls and gourds
Are strewn on my shore.
Equal in love, bound in circles.
Earth, stream and tree return to the sea
Waves sweep sand from my island,
from me.*

Here, Sinfield seems to borrow and expand John Donne’s metaphor from the text *Meditation XVII* (Donne, 1624), which sets off with the famous line “No Man is an Island”, and in which the author, close to his death, appears to make a last call for communion and unity, suggesting that every citizen of the world should learn from the misfortunes and hardships of others to learn how to make

life better for all, and thus be better prepared for one's own death. The metaphor Donne uses for me, the island, is reworked in this song. Every individual is compared to an island, isolated and alone, looking at the world with detachment and passiveness like separated entities. However, the barriers man creates (walls, cliffs, briars) are inevitably penetrated by what cannot be seen or stopped (winds, tides, sailor's words) and comes from other islands, other people. Moreover, Sinfield appears to suggest how everyone is provided with all that is needed to reach others (harbour quays, islands join hands). What initially is metaphorically described as desperate loneliness gradually acquires hope and positivity. The much feared erosion of the high weathered walls in the first stanza becomes the sweeping of the sand in the last, sand which is lost in the mare magnum of giving, of sharing, as the coasts of the lyric I's island are enriched with pearls and gourds, precious gifts from not-so-foreign-anymore lands.

After the release of *Islands*, however, Fripp appeared to have grown tired of Sinfield's style, his baroque imagery and cryptic word choice, and started despising his writing. Moreover, the many sexual references in the album had given start to many polemics, and the guitarist did not need that sort of trouble in his band. Once more, Fripp acted like an undiscussed monarch, and after months of strained relationship he let Sinfield go. After that, in 1972, Fripp started to work with other record labels and continued his work as lyricist, writing songs for Roxy Music, PFM, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Celine Dion and even releasing a solo album. In more recent history, Sinfield turned to pure poems, and started writing Haikus, form of Japanese poetry, an endeavour in which he, when contemplating the past and the vibrant words of the artist, is not hard to imagine.

CONCLUSION

There is no real conclusion to this dissertation. It was only one among the many attempts to shed some well-deserved light onto song lyrics as an academic topic; it is not the first, and will certainly not be the last. However, it falls like a drop in a bucket, whereas it should fall like a drop in the ocean.

The objective of this dissertation was not to provide insight on the social context and consequences of psychedelics and psychedelic-induced music, which, however relevant, were not the subject of this writing. It was the demonstrating and unveiling of sensations, emotions pictures and situations translated into sounds and words, which were without a doubt worthy to be written about. In truth, in this essay it has been psychedelic rock, but there are countless artists and genres which have enriched the poetic panorama with their contribution, in sounds and lyrics, and which should be more widely contemplated and analysed.

Both the art of poetry and the art of music are supported by an enormous amount of theory, constantly updated year after year, but it is only a relatively insignificant portion of this bibliography which treats song lyrics as poetry and which studies and analyses words written for a song in the way poems written for the page are studied. Schools and universities have rarely treated the music of the last century with the attention depth and interest it deserves.

From the stylistic point of view, this lack of relevance is almost inexplicable. When speaking of the study of literature, it is useless to deny the existence of a need of understanding and explaining what is, essentially, beauty. Poetry is analysed and explained in every possible way to students of all ages and has

attracted countless academics and enthusiasts over the centuries who have concentrated on the message and on the language of poems, in the effort of understanding and explaining the beauty in them. Artists who equally make skilful use of words, convey equally relevant messages and have equal if not greater success on the public than the poets that are commonly studied, do not find space on schoolbooks only because their words were set to music.

Moreover especially in the last century, social movements and important collective ideologies were supported by extensive influential discography. Works of art which fought for ideas and became symbols of movements and historic events. Even the studying of history is incomplete with no mention of the music of the time. For example when speaking of the Vietnam War, Literature classes (rightfully) discuss Adrian Mitchell's *To Whom it May Concern*, but approach Lennon's *Give Peace a Chance* only rarely or marginally.

Middleton (1990, 4) may provide an explanation for this phenomenon in the very first pages of *Studying Popular Music*. Influential music of the 20th century can with little doubt be regarded as "popular", and as such, there are some issues to deal with. Middleton argues that "popular" has *to do with the vulgus, the common people, and to describe something as "popular" may then have the (depreciatory) implication that it is inferior or designed to suit low tastes*. There is no denying that such statement is often held true but it would be equally wrong to assume that it is always the case, and history has often proven this point. The term came across for the first time in the eighteenth century, and it was used to describe the music of the bourgeois market. When something was labelled as "popular", it meant that it was good and worthy of note. It was only later, in the 19th century, that the term began to define something traditional, or as a synonym of "peasant" or "national". In the 20th century the

term "folk" took over this meaning and "popular" became the word to describe music with the following characteristics: Music of an inferior type, that is not classifiable as "art" or "folk" or anything else, that is associated with a particular social group (usually with young people) and that is spread by mass-media in the mass market. There is no interest in academic field for analysing with serious intent what is commonly regarded as belonging to a low-education public. To a certain extent this is comprehensible but most fail to realize that it is wrong to generalize. Assuming that a song which reaches great success owes his breakthrough to the ignorance of its public is reductive and almost insulting with regard to countless songwriters of past and present, and, of course, to society in general.

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