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CONTENTS

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From Figurative Painting to Painting of Substance – The Concept of an Artist

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Abstract

This article aims at a brief analysis of the artistic processes in Bulgaria during the discussed decades, and it is also an attempt to pinpoint the stages in the work of the artist Petar Dochev (1935-2005) in the respective period. The stages and the changes in his work are not considered as an end in itself, but on the one hand as a part of the dynamics in the Bulgarian fine arts, and on the other – as an artistic practice which is fundamental to the work of some contemporary Bulgarian artists and, which further develops the experience of the abstract and informal art in Bulgaria. The main problem in the text is also provoked by the fact that the trends in the contemporary Bulgarian painting (from the mid-90s to present day) draw our attention more and more to objects of the so-called "conceptual" painting and other forms of visual arts (video art, digital arts, conceptual art, etc.), while there are still no deeper studies of the informal and the abstract.

Keywords: abstract, informal, Bulgarian art, painting, experiment.

1. Introduction

The dynamically changing visual environment and the active use of various forms of communication with the audience, sometimes causes ambiguity and doubt about the quality of a certain work of art and its message. The timeline discussed in this text – from the 1960s to the beginning of the 21 century, is far from the problems and the current state of art, but it is the reason for them. There are many books dedicated to the contemporary Bulgarian art – its development and transformations, the desire and the realization of "catching up" to the Western European art. However, the important here is not the outlining of a practice that has evolved regardless of the limited parameters - conceptual, ideological, socio-cultural or technological. Petar Dochev is an artist whose strong but unobtrusive presence creates a lasting tendency in the contemporary Bulgarian painting. As a student he leaves the academy disagreeing with and refusing to adapt to the strict academicism. His personal and professional predicaments take him to the Kremikovtzi factory, where he starts working as a slogan and poster artist. In this industrial giant, Dochev develops his technology and paintings with a new iconographic system. In the mid-70s, he leaves this place and devotes himself to his personal work and experiment. He spends the last twenty years of his life (1985-2005), in his birthplace in the village of Lesidren, where he paints some of the innovative and contemporary works in the Bulgarian art.

Over the decades, the painting in Bulgaria has a different status: from a place of honor in the exhibitions with large-scale figurative compositions with labor as subject matter in the

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1960s, through elite salons and exhibitions for experts and collectors. The democratic environment largely creates the illusion of change, but in this freedom there emerge artists and "works" with controversial qualities and taste; nowadays the painting exhibitions are ignored and not widely publicized, which is why the very young artists, instead of unflinching enthusiasm, have doubts about their work. The monographic approach is intended to prove clearly that despite the wide open and dynamic cultural environment, the focus on painting as media and art, has not been shifted. The topic is specific and concrete, and in this sense there is well used chronological analysis of the time, and parallel to that of an artistic practice, making the thesis clearer and constructive.

2. Psychological portrait of the man

When discussing the figurative/visual art, we need to recall the role of the sociocultural context – the social, political and cultural environment, shaping the trends in the Bulgarian art – in particular the painting. The 1960s are controversial and interesting period in the Bulgarian art – because, on the one hand, it strives for something new, related to the rejection of the former academicism and thematics, and on the other, it can hardly ignore the model imposed during the previous decade. Until then we could see large-format multi-figure compositions dealing with production themes – workers in workshops and factories, marching in festive procession, or portraits of political leaders. The purpose of this political "cultural program" is the art to be close to the people (accessible and understandable) and to illustrate the beautiful and smiling working day. So change is difficult for both the artists and the audience. The painting has the ambition to deal not only with a new understanding of plasticity, color and shape, but also to be a work of art that reflects different trends, and an individual author's approach. The narrow understanding of the figure and the subject matter also changes, and the foundations of that trinity of "time, place and action", which until now has been decisive for the works of art, have gradually changed. Obviously, the changes in the early 1960s are a long and gradual process. The resorting to the folklore and the traditions by this particular generation of artists has a positive effect on art, and is a part of the attempt to "justify" the formalism. In this attempt the Bulgarian art starts to get close to some models of the Western art, albeit from much earlier years.

2.1

These years coincide with the first artistic stage of Petar Dochev, and this is the time when he participates in group exhibitions with his first works. The first paintings by P. Dochev are also executed with the typical for the 1960s subject matter and stylistics – portraits and figural compositions from Kremikovtzi. The interesting in his works, however, is that he does not imply "the ideas of the new time", instead, he saturates his canvases, seals the states presented in them and overlaps the meaning embedded in them, through compositional and plastic solutions, outside the generally accepted framework. Normally, the figurative compositions depicting labor themes, are filled with the obligatory optimistic spirit, the characters (always positive), are very often reminiscent of the characters of the compositions of the socialist realism. Unlike them, Dochev's approach carries something different, as he deliberately deviates from the usual for this kind of paintings. His attempt to make a general psychological dissection of the character type, and to unite it around a state that goes beyond a particular portrait and without any details, is remarkable. The focus here is on the psychological "study" of the group. The comments on the artist's paintings from this period are united by the view that they undoubtedly have qualities, both in purely artistic terms and as "documentary" of the time. The critical texts on his canvases from this period (though contradictive), mark his innovative approach to the depiction of the labor as subject, and the creation of a new "iconography" in the figure painting. The monumentality, the plastic and psychological generalizations, the innovative style that becomes a distinctive feature

of his works, are all qualities that always help us to recognize his figurative compositions, and give him a special place in understanding and the rationalization of this subject.

3. The industrial theme – a zone of experiment

What can be noted as a specific feature of the next decade, is related to the stylistic diversity (photorealism, naivism, primitivism, etc.), and to a line in the Bulgarian fine art, which finds its rather vague terminological formulation in the so-called associative-metaphorical painting. At that time, art tries to break the system of realism and to bring something new (locally). The new trends, however, are labeled as poor assimilation of the foreign experience, and are often rejected and unaccepted, because of their departure from the artistic conventions regulated in the past practice. Despite the fact that in the course of the discussions a number of world artists are mentioned as probable models of impact on our artists, in practice the Bulgarian art continues to develop in a relative isolation from the world tendencies and the current interest.

3.1

At the end of the 1960s and 1970s, although hardly chosen by the authors because of its unfriendliness, severity and coldness, the industrial landscape takes a solid position. This genre is probably preferred because of the relative freedom and distance from the thematic picture. The difference in the case of Petar Dochev is that he is able to distance himself from the expectations associated with such a landscape, and to make a contemporary work, beyond the usual documentary and the political pathos of the idea that "new life is being built". It is this artist who builds up a strong state for the industrial site. Petar Dochev's work from this period is related to the tendency to estheticize and psychologize the industrial painting, an occasion for plastic search and experimentation – for a distant study of the specific object. Many critical analyzes note the artist's interesting approach and his consistency in bringing up a separate line in this genre. Dochev does not paint landscapes from life, but creates paintings without any relation to the time and space, in which he designs numerous scaffoldings or machines, painted in close-up. The conditional use of the from-life, is an approach to an innovative method of work and an interesting technique, which he uses here (and later in his abstract compositions) – blending oil paint with graphite – graphite grey powder, which is waste material from the Kremikovtzi plant. Added in the paint or in pure form, this filler gives volume, density and structure to the works. Starting gradually with the "from life" painting, Petar Dochev starts experimenting with the accumulation of the painting material, with the display of monochromatic color values, with the conditional marking of terrains and the use of light as a meaningful accent. From the initially generalized and monumental presentation of the nature with the particular psychological and philosophical suggestion, the artist comes to paintings, where the main point is not the subject matter and the form, but the play with the plastic components and the construction of a new author concept.

4. The abstract as a problem

The processes in the Bulgarian fine art in the 1980s are particularly dynamic and diverse. In addition to the overcoming of the associative-metaphorical anachronistic way of thinking in the fine arts, a special moment in the specificity of the Bulgarian art scene from the period, for example, is the emergence of the so-called unconventional forms. The accent in painting is the concept of "abstract", with which many individual art practices are associated. Often, however, this non-figurativeness is not perceived by the artists as a follow-up to the form and related to the analysis of color, matter, or gesture, but it is rather seen as a random combination of stains, colors and techniques. (This vagueness is also sensed in the titles often

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given to some of the abstract paintings from the period, for example: *Cosmos, Mood, Dream, Music* ...). In the painting of the 1980s, several parallel artistic and plastic lines are categorically identified, which in the critical texts are often recognized as stylistic "diversity". Tendencies towards expressiveness, abstraction, or hyperrealism are increasingly emerging. Later, this interest is largely justified by the artist's desire for freedom in the use of the means of expression, as he has long been trapped between his own needs and thematic frames.

4.1

In his paintings from the 1980s Petar Dochev, fully in line with his personal creative and research interests, gradually transforms the constructivist forms from the industrial motifs into solid, material and generalized compositions with color accents. With the departure from the gray industrial area, the artist turns his look at the city, the earth, and the nature, but if in the past the distance to the object was shortened so the industrial can dominate over the poetic, now we look through a bird's eye – there is no specificity and detail. The free association makes the viewer link these canvases to his landscapes from previous years, but they could be a completely abstract composition, in which the silhouette of the specific is lost. This idea of the impact of the material and the use of its physical qualities for the transmission of a specific suggestion in the absence of a concrete reality, is a problem that Dochev deals with permanently

For Petar Dochev the interest in the abstract does not come suddenly, as a result of the influence of a common artistic process. In his individual artistic stages, this is a long and deliberately provoked and rationalized act of his overall painting system, and author's method. The abstraction is not only a modern and interesting concept, but an idea that unites the spiritual philosophy of art and life, and that is precisely how Dochev understands it. An example of this are the paintings that he begins to make in the mid-1990s.

5. Paintings – Icons

The perception of the painting (after the political changes of 1989 and the specifics of the visual of the period) starts to change and expand its significance in the context of the time, and the contemporary criticism more and more strives to conceive and analyze such concepts and categories as "conceptual painting" , "informal", "post-painting", etc.

It becomes clear that in the Bulgarian art the 1990s are a time of free, parallel coexistence of the varieties of the abstract painting, surrealism, photorealism, and neo-expressionism, as very often their techniques intertwine in the same work, or in the works of the same author, the reason for which is perhaps also the lack of conceptual clarity. The experiments of some artists with different materials, bases, and fillers (ash, dry pigment, sand, graphite, resin, etc.) in order to achieve a greater sensitivity and suggestion, are associated with the informal art. What is observed as a trend in the Bulgarian art, is in fact and in its own way, a "late" version of the informal, in which the "native" is deeply embedded, and moreover, it occurs at a time when the influence of the painting itself is very much disputed by artists and critics. It is important to clarify that all of these artistic practices, styles and categories are of a local nature (they are inherently related to the place, the time and the sociocultural context), different than the Western European art.

5.1

Over the last few years, many authors became interested in the large-scale monochrome painting, which also attempts to change the "status" of the visual art and the painting

in general. These canvases seem to bring back the understanding of it, as something elitist, and distinguish it from the standard notion of the decorative and "fine" art. In the *informal* the white, the black, only a single color or media are enough to make painting. The accents in this type of works are the reflected light, the texture, the relief of the black, as well as its halftones, its transparency or depth. Building the texture, in the sense of a material form and a space on the canvas (or on other media), depends on the choice of material. Very often the specific plastic and technological characteristics of the material predetermine the idea of the author, in other times the conceptual message precedes and directs the choice of means for its realization.

The abandoning of the specific imagery, the accent on the texture, the structure and the demand for a pure sensuality, gives us grounds to consider the paintings of Petar Dochev as a serious experience in the *informal* in Bulgaria.

The artistic search of the artist is consistent and follow the natural rationalization of a timely visual direction. By reducing the various plastic techniques in his work, he achieves a synthesis of the form that distinguishes his paintings from everything he has done so far, and provokes our perceptions. His specific way of using the line and the color, dating back from his industrial landscapes, and later with the distancing from the construction and bringing closer the plans in his terrains, are most definitely among the most significant innovations in the Bulgarian contemporary painting.

At the height of the debates "pro and against the painting", Dochev makes his graphite works – totally abstract forms, in which the bearer of the idea is only the material. The plastic synthesis in his work and his constant experiment with the variations of these gray-black "shapes" become his personal style, which is fundamental for one line in the contemporary Bulgarian painting from the end of the 1990's to the beginning of XXI century. The dynamics or the confusion of the artistic processes in Bulgaria at the end of XX century testifies to a number of artists, who originally start with the classical painting, and who at some point in their career realize their ideas through the unconventional language, and vice versa, some artists who have tried the tempting territory of the unconventional forms, at some point return to the resources of the fine arts. At the beginning of XXI century, the categories of contemporary, avant-garde, abstract, innovative, etc., are much more thoroughly analyzed and explained by artists and critics, and of course this leads to concentration and conceptual clarity about the artists' practices.

6. Conclusion

As early as the time of his thematic compositions, Petar Dochev fits only in terms of genre, but not emotionally, in the requirement for ideological commitment in the presentation of the subject. Later on, starting from the conditional form of the industrial constructions, he builds paintings that are new, not because the environment that serves him as object has new appearance, but because he creates a different reality, recreated through innovations in the use of the language of painting. At a later stage he abandons the monochrome works, but he is only briefly lured by the color, only to rediscovers the brilliance of the solid graphite surface. And although at the end of the 1990s, P. Dochev is not a young artist, he is open to the new and the unknown, always ready to experiment, search and discover. Usually such need is not typical for artists with already established plastic concept, except for the cases when the concept demands this, and when it is associated with specific rationalization of the means. In the works of Petar Dochev, however, the experiment is in the deep meaning and the philosophy of the work. From the late 1990s to the last, anniversary exhibition in 2004, he makes large-format compositions (200x200m.), with graphite (and resin) on a wooden panel, others with graphite, foil and paint, and the last ones only with gold pigment. This "state" of the painting – its highly material surface – often calls not only for decoding of its semantic layers, but also to be felt and touched, understood not only visually but also sensitively. The painting, which focuses primarily on the substance, is actually perceived as

something "immaterial", a world of the transcendental, the spiritual, the existential, and its surface is "read" as a substance-idea. The last golden paintings are not only "icons of the spiritual", but an ending of a conceptual system, to which Dochev aspires over the years, and which is a qualitatively new stage for the contemporary Bulgarian painting. Dochev's language becomes even more laconic and strong, making it universal. Without ambition and claim for plastic discovery, the author perceives his work as an expression of the spiritual side in art, and entirely devoted to that, he reaches the synthesis in which the laconic means of expression have a strong effect and profound meaning.

7. Biographical notes

Petar Dochev was born on 6 October 1934 in the village of Lesidren, Bulgaria.

1959 – Leaves the Academy of Art in Sofia.

From 1959 to 1975 he works as chief artist of Kremikovtzi Metallurgical Works.

1970 – First solo exhibition in Kremikovtzi.

Participation in collective exhibitions – 1973 Szczecin, Poland; Paris, France; Moscow, Russia; 1978- Bologna, Italy; Belgrade, Serbia; 1980- Athens, Greece; Berlin, Germany; Havana, Cuba; Bucharest, Romania; 1983 – Algeria, Tunisia and Kuwait; 1990- Brussels, Belgium;

2001 – *Layers* – Irida Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria.

2003 – *(R)evolution* - curatorial project of Irida Gallery, Sofia.

2004 – *Achroma* – curatorial project, Sofia.

2005 – International Biennial of Contemporary Art Prague, Czech Republic.

2005 – Exhibition *Earth*, Circle + Gallery, Sofia.

1975 – Leaves Kremikovtsi and works as freelancer. The same year, he attends a workshop at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, and has the opportunity to meet the great French painter Pierre Soulages. Later, the Spain's cultural attaché, who owns about 30 paintings by Dochev, helps the artist to meet with the great Spanish artist Antoni Tàpies in Madrid.

1978 – Petar Dochev builds his small studio in the village of Lesidren, but continues to live in Sofia.

After 1966 he actively participates in collective and solo exhibitions, as well as international participations. In the late 1980s, for seven years, the artist does not show and exhibit his works in exhibitions, the reason for this is the commercialization, mediocrity and the replacement of values, while he perceives his work as an expression of the spiritual and the sublime in man. In the mid-1990s, after the rehabilitation of the large-format painting and the change in the status of the painting, the interest in his art makes him among the significant national and international projects for contemporary art. Between 1985 and 2005 he lives and works in his home village Lesidren. He dies in 2005.
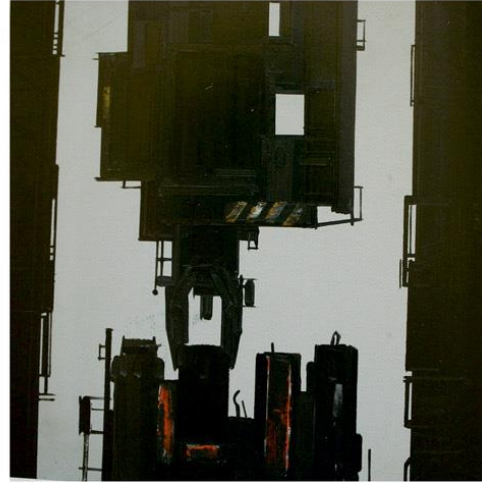
Composition, mixed media, graphite on plywood, 200x200, 2002 - detail Kremikovtsi Metallurgical Complex, oil on canvas, 130x130, 1970's

Dochev's Studio in Lesidren Shape, mixed media, silver, plywood, 100x100, 2000

Transformed Land, oil on canvas, 70x140, 1983
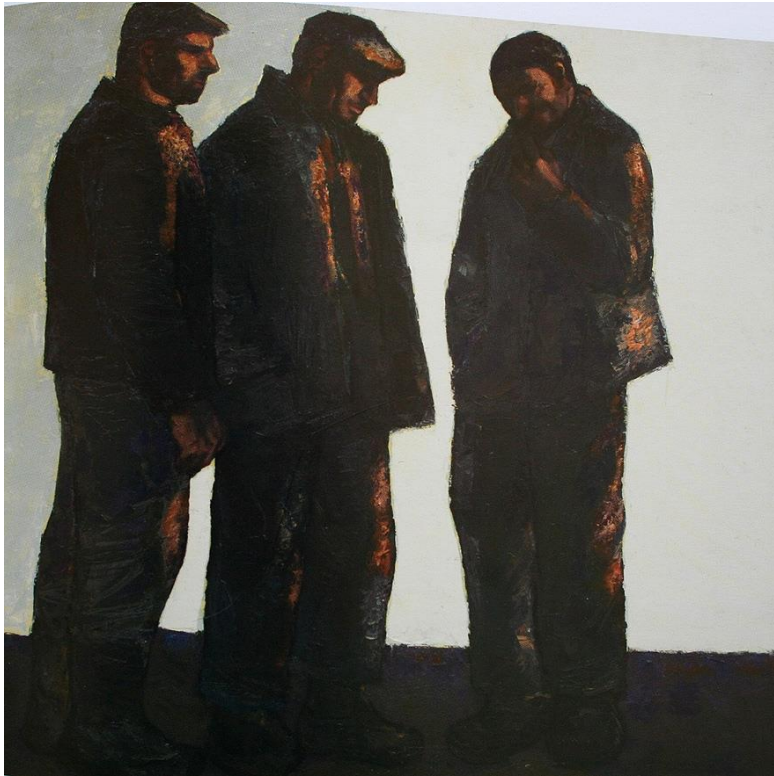
Metallurgical Workers, oil on canvas, 1960's

Tryptich, mixed media, gold, plywood, 100x150, 2004

Summary

The Bulgarian art from the 1960s through the 1990s, is quite dynamic and diverse in terms of trends and individual practices. At the beginning of this period there was a "relaxation" and abandoning of the established normative rules in the construction of the painting. Perhaps then there is a most direct and strong connection between the sociopolitical and cultural environment, and the fundamental change is there only seemingly. The decades to come also bring

confusion, the reason for which is, on the one hand the suggestion of freedom and new directions and, on the other, the legacy of the past in terms of ideology and mindset. The article *From the figurative to the painting of the substance – the concept of an artist*, outlines chronologically, in parallel to the sociocultural changes in the artistic life, the interesting, innovative practice of a contemporary Bulgarian artist – Petar Dochev (1934-2005). Regardless of the traditions, the normative rules and the academicism, the artist even then searches and demonstrates a way to circumvent them, and to direct his work towards modernity and unconventional methods in painting – plastic and technological. The article follows the stages in the trends of the Bulgarian fine art of the respective decade, as well as the gradual and rationalized change in the concept of the painting of the artist P. Dochev.

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Spectacular Orientalism: Finding the Human in Puccini's *Turandot*

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Abstract

Giacomo Puccini's final opera, *Turandot* (1926), remained unfinished at his death, and is often read as a merely orientalist opera in the guise of his *Madama Butterfly*. I argue, however, that the unnerving search for the human element felt to be missing from the work, suggests a deeper reflection on the state of a devastated Italy in the aftermath of World War I. *Turandot*'s fragmented self-foregrounds the performativity of gender and, ultimately, of the human itself. The libretto's concern with empty characters whose masks hide a terrifying nothingness, as well as the plot point that shows the character of Liù tortured gratuitously on stage, reinforce the idea that, faced with the rise of fascism, the spectacle presented by this opera reveals a disturbing fascination with the alienation of the human, which had dire implications for the value of humanity that would pave the way for another deadly world conflict.

Keywords: Puccini, Turandot, spectacular orientalism, human alienation.

1. Introduction

It has often been stated that Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot* (1926) offers a belated echo of the tradition of grand opera. There have been multiple narrative and operatic renditions of the story of the cruel Chinese princess who decapitates her suitors when they fail to answer her questions correctly. At the height of his celebrity, Puccini left his famous version unfinished at his death in 1924. The work was precariously finished by Franco Alfano, and premiered in Milan two years later. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1994a) criticizes Verdi's *Aida* as a colonialist fantasy that fetishizes the exotic. Layered with references to the *One Thousand and One Nights* and based more directly on French and Italian tales, *Turandot*'s multiple transformations into different media similarly respond to this orientalist impulse at the dawn of a Europe shaken to its core by the devastation of World War I. The opera can be read as one extreme view of the orientalized woman: beautiful, barbaric, unattainable, which presents the spectator with a radical alterity; an Orient that, conquered by love, can be rendered innocuous. As reception for the opera shows, however, the main character's ultimate transformation remains unconvincing. Turandot's fragmented, discontinuous self, foregrounds the performativity of gender and, ultimately, of the human itself. In the wake of World War I, and faced with the rise of fascism, the spectacle presented by this opera also seems to reveal a disturbing fascination with the alienation of the human, which had dire implications for the value of humanity that would pave the way for another deadly armed conflict.

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1.1 A Swan Song with troubling political connections

By the time the tale of Turandot reached its definitive operatic form under Puccini's conception, it had undergone several transformations. The libretto was a collaborative effort by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, who had based their story on Carlo Gozzi's *La fiaba cinese teatrale tragicomica* (1762), as well as on the German adaptation of Schiller's *Turandot, Prinzessin von China: Ein tragikomisches Märchen* (1802), in an Italian translation by Andrea Maffei.

The earliest version of the story was from 1710, written by François Pétis de la Croix, and called *Histoire du Prince Calaf et de la Princesse de Chine*, presumably a Persian counterpart to the *One Thousand and One Nights*. Pétis de la Croix's narrative, which he claimed to be a translation from the original collection, introduced three enigmas offered by the princess and Calaf's name riddle. Adami and Simoni eliminated most of the secondary elements of these tales, condensing the action into three acts and maintaining the symbolism of the number three, notably for the riddles and the masks.

Before being taken over by Puccini, the legend had already inspired other composers, including Carl Maria von Weber's incidental music for Schiller's play in 1809. Other notable precursors to Puccini were Antonio Bazzini, Puccini's teacher at the Milan Conservatory, who created *Turanda* (1867), and Ferruccio Busoni, who in 1917 made the first 20th century version of the opera. Busoni would die four months before Puccini, in 1924, making Turandot a swan song for both.

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) was at the height of his international fame when he started the composition of *Turandot*. Considered to be the only heir to Verdi, his work at the beginning of the twentieth century appeared as the last vestige of genuinely romantic music, and had little to do with the experimental music that had emerged since Debussy and Stravinsky. Since 1910, and after the poor reception of *Il Trittico*, Puccini had been looking for a new opera topic, and came upon *Turandot* as a departure from his usual subject matters. Set in imperial China, the opera concerns the fearful princess Turandot, daughter of Emperor Altoum, who has decreed that she will only marry the noble suitor who correctly answers her three riddles. Any mistaken response signifies death, which has given her an understandably unapproachable aura. Prince Calaf solves the puzzles but decides to conquer her heart as well. Despite the fearfully sadistic protagonist, Puccini wrote to long-time collaborator Giuseppi Adami (1974: 274), "the opera will be not only original but *moving"*, signaling that he was looking to create an opera in the usual sentimental vein in which he felt most comfortable working.

The heyday of the Romantic exotic opera was over, however, and Puccini was working within a different context to that in which he had created *Madama Butterfly*. For Berger (2005: 76), Puccini's "sense of disappointment in *Trittico*'s fortunes mirrored the malaise of Italy after the war," which had resulted in "Six hundred thousand dead soldiers, many, many more maimed and wounded, unemployment, Communist agitation, strikes" for what turned out to be "A slightly better-looking map of Italy". Indeed, the large discontented crowds in *Turandot* reveal a tense political climate within the opera. DiGaetani (2001: 60) further speculates that given emperor Altoum and Turandot's tyrannical rule, young Prince Calaf appears as a Mussolini-type leader to offer salvation and guidance to the people.

Much has been written about Puccini's relationship to early Mussolini, and though critics attribute an initial attraction to the political figure, it was undoubtedly tinged by the composer's egotistical aspirations. As Osborne (1982: 246) recounts, Puccini "was delighted when Mussolini made him a Senator [in 1922]: perhaps he thought it put him on the same level as Verdi, who had been elected to the first Italian Parliament in 1861". "What do you think of Mussolini?" Puccini wrote to Adami, "I hope he will prove to be the man we need. Good luck to him if he will cleanse and give a little peace to our country!" (1974: 300). Puccini would not live to see the

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devastating consequences of his political affiliation, but the rather chilling rhetoric used in his statement remains deeply disturbing to contemporary readers in the aftermath of World War II. Puccini accepted an honorary membership to the Fascist Party and sought an audience with Mussolini, but by 1924, feeling the imminence of his death, or at least realizing that his health was rapidly deteriorating, he became focused on the composition of his opera, leaving aside any political aspirations (Osborne, 1982: 247). The political context of Italy is nonetheless essential to understand some of the alarming warnings that this opera raises almost unintentionally. In this, the orientalist topic stemming from Romanticism becomes even more perversely opportunistic in that it explores the machine-like human at the safe remove of an orientalist spectacle.

1.2 *Post-Romantic orientalist spectacle*

The orientalist fascination in opera had developed strongly as imperial conflicts arose and the colonial subjects became an important mirror image against which to calibrate and define the European self, especially during the nineteenth century. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1994b) demonstrates that Europe's construction of the Orient as a mysterious and duplicitous "other" functioned as a means of stabilizing and affirming the identity and cultural centrality of the imperial power. The "other", as a "sort of surrogate and even underground self" (1994b: 3) acts as a site where self-projects its fears and desires. During the latter nineteenth century, operas on exotic topics became immensely popular. Egypt saw the premiere of Verdi's *Aida* in 1871, a few years later, Bizet would stage his controversial *Carmen* (1875), which upset family values with its seductive appeal, and towards the end of the century, Puccini would imagine Japan in his *Madama Butterfly*. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1994a: 131-132) comments on the neutralizing effect of the opera *Aida*, which for him portrays several ways in which Western society managed to ignore the unpleasant aspects of the colonial encounter: such as "a self-forgetting delight in the use of power—the power to observe, rule, hold, and profit from distant territories and people . . . the idea of Western salvation and redemption through its 'civilizing mission.'. . . [and] the exotic [that] replaces the impress of power with the blandishments of curiosity". As many critics have noted, Puccini's *Turandot* works in a similarly provocative manner. For Berger, "Performances of Turandot are always an event" that is "better left to the power horses"; if it is not as frequently performed as other Puccini operas, it is simply because it "requires grand resources" (2005: 269). Thus, the politics of the production are already embedded in the opera even before one considers the actual content of the performance. *Turandot* is an opera of excess, part of the 19th century tradition of spectacle. As Berger drolly puts it, it "is simply impossible to overdo this opera, although many have tried" (2005: 268)—and a quick search for images of productions for the opera amply proves his point.

In the 19th century, women were represented in two lights: the virgin and the whore, the saint and the predator. In Puccini's opera, Turandot appears as the perverse, castrating *femme fatale*, while Liù takes on the role of chaste virgin. For Arnesen (2009),

> Puccini's heroines early on developed three conflicting urges in respect to their tenor lovers: the urge to dominate them, to love them, and to redeem them. His heroines expressed these urges more and more intensely as Puccini aged, to such a point that by the time he began composing *Turandot*, it was impossible for all three urges to be contained in one character. (p. 257)

The solution for *Turandot* was to split both the soprano and the tenor characters into two people: Liù and Timur, and Turandot and Calaf—two sets of powerful females and imperiled males (*Ibid.*: 257).

In her book *The Asian Mystique*, Sheridan Prasso (2005) argues that the West has constructed stereotypical figures of Eastern women, which she classifies into Dragon Ladies and Geisha Girls—Madama Butterfly being the epitome of the latter orientalist fantasy. In this

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Japanese character, it is the kimono and other geisha accoutrements that form part of the iconic exhibition of Japanese femininity, so that clothing builds the character from the outside, as visual fetishism. Turandot, in turn, is the perfect Dragon Lady, with her image also largely focused on surface ornaments—of special note is her fantastically elaborate headdress, which in the Ricordi poster commissioned for the opera premiere, appears as bookended by double dragon heads. There does not seem to be any historical foundation for this prop, which has taken a life of its own to become central to the Turandot look; the more extravagant, the more it seems to capture the spirit of the character—another indication of the general excess expected in the opera.

Many are the scholars who have attempted to track and isolate the musical *chinoiserie* on display in the opera, which Puccini both borrowed and invented. In his attempt to create this legendary Peking, the composer gathered documentation on instruments and ancient Chinese themes. According to Ashbrook & Powers (1991), Puccini drew from only two sources for "authentic" Chinese tunes: one was the music box belonging to Baron Fassini, consul of Italy in China. The other was the booklet *Chinese Music* by J. A. van Aalst (Shanghai, 1884: 94-95), a manuscript kept by the British Museum. Part of this creative orientalizing of the opera included the use of the pentatonic scale, as opposed to the more traditional diatonic scale of seven tones, which provoked an uncanny, estranging effect.

With *Turandot*, Puccini aspired to create a work of epic proportions, and his use of the music in the grand scale seems closer to the style of Wagner. By setting the action in a remote China, Puccini minimized the realistic effect and heightened the mythical one. DiGaetani notes that the similarity between Turandot's awakening and Brunhilde's, in the last act of *Siegfried*, was not coincidental, since Wagner had been much on the composer's mind during his last years (2001: 63). However, the emotional zeal that Wagner had with the subject matter, eluded the Italian composer, who even by his own melancholic tendencies, was more than usually pessimistic about his efforts. In December 1922, he wrote to Adami: "I have tried again and again to write the music for the introductory scene of Act II, and cannot. I don't feel comfortable in China" (1974: 302).

In fact, the setting, which felt so inorganic to Puccini, often seems incidental for critics who conceive of the opera as dealing with universal symbols. For Arnesen, "*Turandot* is a retelling of the Regeneration Myth, which celebrates the endless cycle of life" (2009: 256). Berger states, in similarly grandiose terms, that the duet between Turandot and Calaf "can encapsulate . . . all the hostility that has ever existed between Man and Woman in both their fleshly and cosmic dimensions" (2005: 281). For Berger, it was the very ambitiousness of this Male vs. Female conflict that proved difficult to resolve in a couple of hours, particularly since Puccini insisted on solving it "on his own human terms (as opposed to Wagner's very philosophical exploration of the mystical union of opposites in *Tristan and Isolda*)" (*Ibid*.: 77-78).

For Ashbrook and Powers (1991: 13), "Turandot is a 'number' opera in the Great Tradition of Italian Romantic *melodrama*—or rather, during the course of its long genesis it gradually became one". There are several "reminiscence themes" that tie musical events to recurring characters or events—although not as cohesively united as the Wagnerian *Leitmotif*—but the fact that the opera remained unfinished and unrevised by Puccini, makes it seem as if "the formal seams are often stitched over" (*Ibid*.: 14). The effect is that of a mosaic, a pastiche, rather than a unified work. As such, perhaps the historic and political context becomes even more relevant in understanding the opera as a failed mythological creation that reveals instead the complex throbs of a convulsed country.

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2. Finding the human in Princess Turandot

When crafting his plot, Puccini rejected archetypical characters in favor of a search for psychological characterization, and told Simoni that he wanted a Turandot seen through the modern mind (Cao, 2004: 7). Indeed, he and his librettists came up with the reasoning behind the Princess' cruel behavior, which is not attributed to her feminine pride, but to the trauma of rape and treason committed against her ancestress Lo-u-ling.

Vocally, the character of Turandot, "written for a soprano of Wagnerian proportions" (Berger, 2005: 268), was a departure from his typical heroines, who usually carried the sincerity, humanity, and sentiment that were the key Italian qualities of his music. Puccini's task was tricky: he needed to make Turandot distant and extraordinary in the first part of the opera, and then convince the audience that by the end she has a change of heart; that she has fallen in love.

The main obstacle that had to be overcome was Turandot's frigidity, of which Puccini was all too aware since it was unlike any woman he had created before. To Simoni he wrote early on: "we must heighten Turandot's amorous passion, which has suffocated for so long beneath the ashes of her great pride" (as cited in Ashbrook & Powers, 1991: 56-57). The answers to the enigmas: hope, blood, and Turandot's name show this attempt to heighten the passionate side of the role— Busoni's version, for instance, had taken a more philosophical approach with the following answers to the riddles: human intelligence, habit, and art.

The aria "In questa reggia" [In this palace], designed to give psychological depth to the character, offers the backstory of the rape of Turandot's ancestress, to explain why she beheads her suitors, but it is also an excuse used by the Princess to remain unmarried. Significantly, when Calaf correctly answers the riddles, she begs her father to spare her, with a despair that belies more than just wounded pride: "Ah, no! Tua figlia è sacra! / Non puoi donarmi a lui come una schiava / morente di vergogna!" [Ah, no! Your daughter is sacred! / You can't give me to him like a slave / to die of shame], and then addresses the Prince in anguish: "Non sarò tua! No, no, non sarò tua! / Non voglio, non voglio!" [I will not be yours! No, no, I will not be yours! / I don't want to, I don't want to!] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 49). Turandot's moving words indicate a general distaste for the subservient status of married women, which speak to the impact that the first wave feminist movement had had, even in Italy. Turandot's desire to retain her vestal purity, like that of a priestess of her own state, can also be read as queer, resisting a heteronormative tradition whereby the princess is awaiting her knight in shining armor to sweep her off her feet. Another way to read her reasoning is founded on stereotypical notions of the East as possessing infinite patience and a long memory—even for matters of revenge. Following the orientalist cliché, Turandot is presented as ageless and eternal.

Puccini made an interesting choice to set up the character. Instead of having her first be heard and then seen, Turandot is first seen and only much later gets to sing. This underlies the idea that Turandot becomes an object of speculation in its double meaning: an enigma and a visual fetish. Illuminated by a ray of light, she appears as inaccessible and sacred. Significantly, Calaf falls in love with this vision. Though moments ago he had cursed her, her appearance—in which she imperiously makes a gesture to execute the Prince of Persia, makes Calaf exclaim: "O divina bellezza, o meraviglia, / o sogno!" [O divine beauty, o marvel / o dream!] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 19). The attraction is thus placed along the Eros/Thanatos dichotomy, holding within it a fascination for death—that of others and of himself. To his credit, however superficial, Calaf's love is at least based on an actual body on stage. The heroes of Busoni and Mozart—in *The Magic Flute*—both fall in love with portraits.

Turandot's change of heart is also within the tradition of folk and fairy tales. Like Sleeping Beauty, she is released by a kiss. Or, reversing genders, it is Beauty's love that frees the Beast. More actively contributing to the atmosphere of the opera is the morbidly erotic Salomé, which Puccini also found an attractive character. Like Salomé, Turandot is referred to as pure; a

virgin associated to the night. The crowd establishes a parallel between the bloody moon and the ruthless princess: "O esangue, o squallida! / . . . O amante smunta dei morti! / Come aspettano il tuo funereo lume i cimiteri! / Ecco laggiù un barlume!... / Dilaga in cielo la sua luce smorta" [O bloodless, o terrible one / O gaunt lover of the dead! / How the cemeteries await your funereal lights! / Over there a glimmer is spreading its deathly light in the sky] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 17). In Wilde's *Salomé* (1904), the moon plays a vital role as a symbolic representation of the subconscious, irrational fears and desires. The moon portrays the female cycle of madness associated with Salomé's disturbing danger in particular: "Ah! Look at the moon! . . . She has become red as blood!" (p. 62). Salomé's request for Iokanaan's head is sinister because it is made almost playfully, as if by a child who is not fully aware of her powers of seduction. Although Turandot is aware of her power, like Salomé, she retains a child-like aura that tinges her dreadful requests with innocence. The "Moo-Lee-Vha" theme, taken from the music box, is first enunciated by the choir of children, but is traditionally linked to Turandot. The Princess appears on the balcony of the royal palace, while the chorus repeats "Principessa!" to the same notes they had cried out in their previous climax, summoning the executioner. Symbolically, the innocence of the tune in the angelical voices of the children is tainted with bloodlust, in the same way that Turandot wishes to remain childlike, refusing to embrace the erotic implications of becoming a woman. In Huysmans's *À Rebours*, the decadent antihero Des Esseintes sees symbolist painter Gustave Moureau's pictures of Salomé, and describes her as the "symbolic incarnation of world-old vice"; "a great Beast of the Apocalypse, indifferent, irresponsible, insensible, poisoning" (chap. 5); a character that represents the *fin de siècle* decadence and death wish. Although composed in the 20th century, the spirit of *Turandot* is still tied to the sensibilities of the previous century, and it is not difficult to read in it a similar anxiousness to the one that *Salomé* portrays regarding the outcome of the struggle between the old generation and the new one, which is particularly significant in the context of the Italian post-war.

One of Puccini's significant changes was to make all the action take place in exterior settings. This made him particularly sensitive to lighting issues, for which he included detailed instructions in his libretto. Setting the scene outside also meant that, as in *Aida*—which Puccini surely had in mind—, the set designs would be imposing, and present archetypes of order and power. Within this symbolic realm, Turandot is the nocturnal force, while Calaf is clearly associated with the sun. The dawn at the end of the opera brings saving love for Turandot: "È l'alba! È l'alba! / E amor, e amor nasce col sole!" [It is dawn! It is dawn! / It is love, and love is born with the sun!] (Adami and Simoni, 2004: 65), cries an exultant Calaf upon Turandot's transformation. The heavy-handed symbolism is reminiscent of the binary light-darkness imagery of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, in which the evil Queen of the Night is vanquished by Sarastro, the wise, sun-drenched high priest.

Interestingly, in stage productions, *Turandot* consistently departs from this male-female dichotomy by presenting the main character as a rather masculine figure or, at the very least, one with androgynous qualities. This contrasts both with Calaf's softer features, and with the feminized body of the Prince of Persia, who raises tender ecstasy in the crowd: "come è dolce il suo volto!" [What a sweet face he has!] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 19). More radically, one might argue that the Prince of Persia is a figure that is unequivocally human, while Turandot's cold, and initially mute demeanor, suggests a remote inhumanity.

Turandot sings for the first time after 250 pages of score, with expectations having built throughout the first half of the opera. Her breaking of the silence begins with a recitative, then an arioso, which slowly takes on a more lyrical dimension. Her extended intervention, however, is still devoid of the characteristically Puccinian melodic line, which audiences could not help but perceive as a sign of her inhumanity.

The trouble is that, given that Turandot is the title character, the lack of passion pervades the whole of the opera as a center of reference that remains empty. The composer

expressed his uneasiness repeatedly to Adami: "I am afraid that Turandot will never be finished. It is impossible to work like this. When the fever abates it ends by disappearing, and without fever there is no creation" (1974: 278).

Puccini remained dissatisfied with his librettists' drafts for the final act. They still had not finished the final text in the autumn of 1924 when his throat cancer was discovered. In early November, he underwent surgery, and on the 29th, died of a heart attack, leaving his work unfinished. His final notes on the score famously read "Poi Tristano" [Then, Tristan]—a reference to his hope of having the love duet aspire to the level of Wagner.

Puccini described the great duet that was to end the opera as the encounter of "two almost superhuman beings [which] descend through love to the level of mankind" (Adami, 1974: 321), from which we can gather that Calaf is understood to be Turandot's masculine double. His singing, however, is more conventionally lyrical—as can be seen in what is perhaps the oddest section of the opera, the famous "Nessun dorma" [No one must sleep] aria, which exemplifies the old-fashioned "number opera" of the work, but is also his saving grace as a humanizing element. Turandot has no equivalent to this, although her final aria—composed by Alfano, and often cut— is supposed to present just this transitional vehicle of psychological development. Although Calaf shows himself as incorruptible and does not give in to the minister's supplications and bribes— thus matching Turandot's purity—he is also unmoved by the spilled blood of previous suitors and of Liù herself. Both Calaf and Turandot wield this purity as part of their integrity, but the fact that the preservation of their bodies comes at the price of Liù's death and the severed heads of suitors, has unsettling implications. The purity of race, the cult of the strong, and the dispensability of weaker human life for transcendental motives—like the love of an ideal—was already an important aspect of futurist art at the time and would become more prevalent in Mussolini's agenda as a way of exalting the wounded pride of Italy.

On the day of Puccini's death, Mussolini issued a statement on behalf of the Italian government: "I wish to remind you in this moment that a few months ago this renowned musician requested admission to the National Fascist Party. He wished to express with this gesture his adherence to a movement which is being discussed, which is being disputed, which is disputable, but which is the only living thing today in Italy" (Osborne, 1982: 250). The notion that the Fascist Party was the only living thing in Italy, is troublingly insightful in light of the issues brought up by the opera of the survival of the strongest. The result of Puccini's death was that the opera took on a symbolic relevance beyond any the composer might have intended.

Toscanini, with whom Puccini had left things on a bad note, felt compelled to take it upon himself to arrange for the premiere of the opera, and finally requested the respected but unremarkable composer Franco Alfano to finish the work. The highly anticipated premiere was attended by the best of the elite and no expenses were spared for the production. Mussolini refrained from attending the event only because the staunchly anti-Fascist Toscanini refused to conduct the Fascist hymn in his honor (Wilson, 2007: 193). The night of the premiere, at La Scala de Milan, two years after Puccini's death, Toscanini, who was conducting, lowered the baton after Liù's death to address audience: "Here concludes the work of the maestro. Here he died." Alfano's ending was only played at the second performance. In contrast with the disastrous reception of *Butterfly*, "the Turandot premiere was characterised by a reverential, quasi-religious mood," in which critics did not really focus on the music, but rather on the composer's legacy (Wilson, 2007: 194).

It is of course idle speculation to think what the composer might have written had he been able to finish the opera. As Berger states: "One thing is clear: the transformation that Puccini wanted, with Turandot becoming an actual human being, never happens" (2005: 287)—and in this respect critics unanimously agree.

3. Empty masks in *Turandot*

As Wilson succinctly puts it, "Rather than bearing his soul, as the critics expected him to do in his final opera, Puccini seemed to have concealed genuine feeling behind a number of deceitful masks" (2007: 203). The whole opera was sometimes perceived as purely ornamental, a criticism that had already been aimed at *Madama Butterfly*.

The motif of masks was literally present in the opera through the use of *commedia dell'arte* characters. Gozzi's play had reverted to this Italian tradition and included the familiar clowns in legendary China, a device that Puccini decided to keep, replacing the Venetian characters with three Chinese ministers, Ping, Pong and Pang—a percussive onomatopoeia of bland racist connotations. Despite the obvious stereotypes, Puccini seems to have conceived them as characters who would "introduce a touch of our life and, above all, of sincerity" (Adami, 1974: 272). In the long line of critics who desperately try to locate the human element in the opera, Berger (2005: 268) states that the trio "ironically, form the most human core of the work".

On a smaller scale, the masques of the opera can be seen as a Greek chorus, commenting on the action and offering a point of connection with the audience. The three advisors, who are presumably comic figures, appear unmoved and mocking towards Liù, but upon her death, Pong exclaims: "Svegliato s'è qui dentro il vecchio ordigno, / il cuore, e mi tormenta!" [This old mechanism, the heart, has awoken inside me, and is tormenting me!] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 62). The metaphor intriguingly presents Pong as a machine, initially devoid of human emotions. The suggestion is that Pong—and presumably all the masks—are somehow alien to humanity, or have become so through their job, that asks them to retain critical distance from peers.

In what turns out to be a more insightful remark than the advisors might have intended, Pang and Ping tell Calaf in Act I, "Turandot non esiste! . . . Non esiste che il Niente, / nel quale ti annulli!" [Turandot does not exist! . . . Only the Nothingness exists / in which you annihilate yourself!] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 27). What is supposed to be a philosophical quip of vaguely Taoist implications is in fact deadly accurate in the context of the opera, as critics unfailingly point out. Vittorio Gui asks: "How can one think of taking a character as grotesque and absurdly fictitious seriously? . . . As a ludicrous symbol of female frigidity, combined with physical beauty, she might have existed; as a living woman, never" (as cited in Wilson, 2007: 212).

Wilson's interesting study on modernism in Puccini explores the idea that the composer might have been consciously experimenting in his use of a "mechanical" Turandot, since marionette-like figures were omnipresent in the late 1910s and early 1920s in Europe. The theory expounding the superiority of the marionette over the actor had been famously portrayed in Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater* (1992), which had ironically proposed in 1810 that "Grace appears purest in that human form which has either no consciousness or an infinite one, that is, in a puppet or a god" (p. 244). The concept of the union between man and machine lay at the heart of the Futurist aesthetic and, although at odds with Puccini's own artistic inclinations, must have been felt in the artistic atmosphere of the time—as well as in the political one, given Mussolini's fascination with machines. The use of puppet-like figures was a way to draw attention to the illusory nature of performativity in order to express modernist preoccupations such as "the falseness of contemporary society, the perceived loss of the individual in the modern faceless crowed, the implications of a post-Nietzschean godless world and (in Italy at least) concern about the 'machinations' of an increasingly autocratic state" (Wilson, 2007: 205-206).

Indeed, one of the elements that is still relevant in performances of *Turandot* is the way in which the main character is actualized to foreground the performativity of its identity, especially in terms of gender. Turandot's larger than life persona is reinforced in her costume: extremely long fingernails, extravagant headdress, and the layers of makeup used to make the usually Western leads into Asian women. Often, the effect is of an uncanny mask; the pronounced

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features seem parodic and make the performer look like a drag-queen, an effect that is ubiquitous in the campy look of this role. Turandot becomes otherworldly; a flashy ornamental item for the empire that men wish to acquire—and the costume choices usually make it impossible to believe in her as a human character, such is the strength of her decorative façade.

4. Liù, the scapegoat for humanity

The fact that Liù garners all the sympathy of the opera, as contemporary commentators unfailingly noticed, has repeatedly been used as the main reason for the opera's failure. The problem that arose was that of continuing the opera after Liù's "little, mangled body . . . disappeared behind the scenes," as Gaetano Cesari described at the premiere of the work (Osborne, 1982: 263). Liù's death is by no means exceptional, and follows the line of the traditional Asian scapegoats, most famously Puccini's own Madama Butterfly; the difference is that Liù is not supposed to be the protagonist, but her death effectively signals the end of the opera's heart—as well as the end of Puccini's conception of the opera.

Pétis de la Croix's original tale included the character of Adelmuc, Turandot's slave, who is in love with Calaf and divulges his name out of jealousy. But after the princess saves Calaf, the slave kills herself. In Gozzi, the rival is called Adelpa, an ancient princess turned slave. When she tries to kills herself, Calaf manages to hinder her, and once freed by Turandot, she goes back to her throne. Puccini was familiar with both versions, and even though he did not incorporate these plot points, as a character, Liù seems equally pervaded by death: when Calaf asks her who she is, her submissive response, which effaces her identity, "Nulla sono... una schiava, mio Signore," [I'm no one... a slave, my Lord], is interrupted by the chorus which, sharpening the stone for the executioner, chants "Gira la cote!" [Turn the whetstone!] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 15). Ironically, it is not Liù who best fits this description of being "no one," but rather Turandot herself, as bearer of a mask.

It is Puccini's original touch of harmonizing the pentatonic with the classical scale in Liù's first aria, "Signore ascolta" [My Lord, listen], which has been pinpointed by some critics as establishing "Liù as the most genuine human being in the opera" (Berger, 2005: 276). The general perception of contemporary critics was that, up to Liù's death, Puccini had remained true to himself.

Interestingly, Liù is not devoid of criticism, and has also been viewed as a puppet of feigned sentimentality, of which modernist artists were increasingly contemptuous, given that by the 1920s, this sentiment occupied an uneasy position in Italian theatre as part of the Fascist cultural policy to appeal to the "irrational instincts of the masses" (Wilson, 2007: 217). Wilson thus argues that Liù might have been "created especially to indulge Puccini's most sentimental and anachronistic side" (*Ibid.*: 218). If one examines Liù's gratuitous torture scene that takes place on stage, the argument could be taken one step further.

Although torture was not unfamiliar in the Puccini canon—Tosca must listen to the extended and painful cross-examination of her beloved Mario off stage—the violence to Liù's body is even more gruesome, since it happens in plain sight of viewers. The breach of traditional decorum might reveal how much public sensibilities had altered or hardened at the explicit horrors of World War I. Given the usually stylized deaths in opera, and the fruitless resolution of this torture, one might argue that Puccini seems to reveal a somewhat fetishistic delight in torture. Berger emphasizes that "nearly all the commentators have complained that the onstage torture of Liù was totally unnecessary, and they're right" (2005: 285). For Puccini, torture seems to have functioned as a mechanism to drive home the emotional power of the story, as he wrote to Adami: "I think Liù must be sacrificed to some sorrow, but I don't see how to do this unless we make her

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die under torture. And why not? Her death could help to soften the heart of the Princess…" (1974: 300).

In her study on torture, Elaine Scarry (1985: 31) examines the relationship between pain and death, stating that "The two are the most intense forms of negation, the purest expressions of the anti-human, of annihilation, of total aversiveness, though one is an absence and the other a felt presence". Liù will experience both in close consecutive order. Discussing the relationship between pain and interrogation, Scarry maintains that "the translation of pain into power is ultimately a transformation of body into voice, a transformation arising in part out of the dissonance of the two, in part out of the consonance of the two" (*Ibid.*: 45). In Liù's case, the power of the voice is absolute, since she is required to sing her confession. Ultimately, however, she remains silent and it is her body carried off stage that gives the emotional power to the scene.

The breadth that torture tries to reach by means of one act is explained by Scarry as follows: "In torture, the individual stands for 'individuals'" (*Ibid.*: 62). Much like the Prince of Persia represents the body of many suitors, Liù represents the agony and discontent of the whole crowd: even if she stands in opposition to them, she is the scapegoat for the anger that Turandot directs at the people.

Both Liù and Turandot acquire supernatural qualities in the eyes of the crowd. The people of "Pekino" are terrified of Turandot—"L'insonne non perdona!" [The sleepless one does not forgive] (Adami & Simoni, 2004: 55)—Turandot is thus a sort of vampiric creature that does not follow normal human biological cycles. Similarly, upon hearing Timur's threat of how "l'anima offesa si vendicherà!" [the offended spirit will seek revenge!], the people are filled with the superstitious fear that, as Arnesen puts it, "Liù, having died unjustly, might return as a vampire, and prey upon them" (2009: 277). If Liù, who represents humanity, sacrifices herself for Turandot to transform her, then she represents a redeeming figure, but if Turandot fails to be transformed, then it is humanity itself that has perished at the altar of this empty figure. On stage, there is no other human left and the fear that emerges is that humanity can only come back as a revenant. At a structural level, the opera can be described in a similar way, since it comes to life again as an echo from a dead past, stitched together post mortem. The fact that the opera that marks the end of the great tradition ironically has no ending, is symbolically appropriate as a vampiric figure who cannot be properly laid to rest.

5. Conclusions

One contemporary reviewer wrote—in what turned out to be a typical response to the opera—that "more than a character, [Turandot] is a mask underneath which one feels emptiness and inconsistency" (Antonio Capri, as cited in Wilson, 2007: 196). For Wilson, the hostile reception towards Turandot "can be viewed as encapsulating their anxieties about the social and aesthetic implication of the apparent decline of the human in a machine age" (*Ibid.*: 196).

The lurking aporetic gap of the opera seems to me one of the reasons why so many contemporary productions have felt free to reconceptualize it. Setting it as a sadomasochistic dungeon—with Turandot as an androgynous figure in black with whip-like strands standing on her head, as in the design by Nikolaus Lehnhoff for the Amsterdam Opera in 2001—or contextualizing it as a Japanese anime, like at Berlin Staatsoper in 2003, current productions like to take risks. If *Madama Butterfly* productions tend to consistently respect the original Japanese setting, *Turandot* versions go out of their way to be outrageous and excessive, perhaps to fill that void felt by the lack of emotional center.

It quickly becomes clear that, in an attempt to create a figure of orientalized enticements, Puccini tapped into a crucial contemporary anxiety. The imperial aspirations of the golden age of colonial empire seemed outdated, and Puccini himself was unable to summon its

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ghost. Although the fascination with the oriental would persist in the 20th century—which partly explains the success of the Ballet Russes, for instance—the straightforward oriental fantasy was no longer sustainable. The concept of what was the human and how it was to be defined, on the other hand, was of the utmost relevance, especially after the human loss in WWI and the cleansing racial concerns of Fascist regimes.

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Music and Environment: From Artistic Creation to the Environmental Sensitization and Action – A Circular Model

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, music is an integral part of everyday life and has been an important factor in education, expression, and influence since antiquity. The ultimate goal of our research was to explore the current relationship of artists with the environment, the influences they receive, and whether projects with similar content can sensitize listeners to environmental issues. The majority of Greek artists believe that the relationship between music and the environment is still strong, although it seems to be waning year after year. The living environment is a source of inspiration for creation and they believe that songs, combined with some factors, can sensitize the world and lead it to adopt appropriate behaviors and actions in the context of sustainable development. This has the effect of forming a circular environmental feedback model through the artists, their works and the listeners.

Keywords: music, environment, artistic creation, environmental sensitization.

1. Introduction

1.1 *The position of music in Ancient Greece*

In ancient Greece, they believed that the gift of music was of divine origin and that it was a gift of the Muses to the people (Neubecker, 1986). Moreover, teaching music was one of the three basic lessons of youth education and it was of significant importance to qualify for someone educated or not (Kaimakis, 2005). It is no coincidence, the multitude of philosophers who dealt with the native value of music and studied its effect on humans (Sxiza, 2008). Plato, typically, believed in the power of music and claimed that it is divided into good and bad, according to the moral elements it contains. So, with the same ease, it could be either beneficial or dangerous, for the smooth functioning of society, but also of the state in general (Kaimakis, 2005; Garofalo, 2010). In addition, Pythagoras believed that music had healing properties and claimed that the universe works with the same harmony as music (Bowie, 2009).

1.2 *The "power" of music*

German composer Richard Wagner said that *"when the power of words end, the power of music begins"* (in Sakellaridis, 2012: 66). Both music and song is information that, under certain conditions, can become the person's property, influence him or even change his behavior (Abercrombie, 2000).

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The view of the British ethnomusicologist and social anthropologist John Blacking (in Holst, 2014: 23) is that it is not good enough for a composer just to write good music but the music must be composed to unite people. Music composer Mikis Theodorakis says that music can change a whole society (*Ibid.*) and the music critic Simon Frith (in Small, 2010: 322) wonders concluding that since a branded artist brings enthusiasm to fans, why not have an influence on them too? Besides, the phenomenon is often observed, whenever something convulsed the global public opinion and needs a rallying of the world to cope with the difficulties, music and its representatives are the ideal solution for promoting the goal, since artists have a lot of influence because of their recognizability. Something similar can also be used in the spread of volunteering (Bıçakçı, 2013).

A typical example is rock music from the '50s to '80s, managed to bridge the differences and bring people together. Many wonderful songs have helped publicize and publicly express the problems of society such as war, oppression of the peoples, racism, gender equality, as well as the liberalization of views on some "taboo" issues, such as sexuality or treatment of AIDS patients (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). The socio-religious restrictions that existed until then, received a powerful blow from the artists where they freed their messages through the lyrics of their songs. The gathering of their listeners around the global problems was such that, they were able to overturn political and social issues (Small, 2010).

On the white social canvas, which the musician creates, the artistic expression is helped by the experiences, the worries, and concerns of the creator. Guitarist B. B. King reports that any emotion he felt, he tried capturing in the music he played on his guitar, so, he tries to make his guitar sing for him and to convey those feelings to the listeners (Justin & Timmers, 2010).

Generally, music can shape the public opinion and lead people to be sensitized, resistant, demonstrative, and even press politicians to find solutions to various social problems. All this was expressed through the songs that were written and called "protest songs" as they were heard in demonstrations and organized gatherings (Grigoriou, 2011).

For Small (2010), an artist, a song must be written to be able to influence the listener and not just be a simple presentation by the musician or singer. After all, through a song, a special relationship of interaction and messages are created between the musician and the listener, a desirable relationship, because a good musical song can cause various emotional states to the listener.

1.3 *Music, psychology and emotion*

Music and songs can meet the needs of composers and listeners to express their thoughts and feelings (Juslin & Laukka, 2003). The relationship between music and emotion can be divided into three different forms of manifestation: representation, expression and causing emotions (Tsetsos, 2012). Besides, according to Bowie (2009), music is another form of emotional expression.

In general, music has the ability to convey, create and "awaken" emotions to the listener (Sloboda & Juslin, 2010). To what percentage someone will be influenced depends on many parameters such as education, personality, temperament, social environment, cultural environment, even by the music or the song which someone listens to. This may be due to the particular features of each kind of music and depending on how it affects certain aspects of the psychosomatic existence of people.

Research has shown that the effects of music are more positive than negative. Most people feel relaxed entertained, and have fun, while a small percentage states that listening to

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music makes them feel anxious, aggressive and irritated (Zentner & Eerola, 2010).

Factors that have an effect on psychology, apart from gender, age and educational level, include a multitude of variables, such as the physical state as well as various factors like expectations, sensitivity, positive or negative memories in relation to music, etc. Furthermore, how music influences psychology depends on the emotional state of the person at the time of listening. That's why the same piece can cause diametrically different emotions. Lastly, another factor that influences psychology is the physical environment such as if it is live or recorded music, where the listener is and his position at the moment, the season, etc. (Scherer & Zentner, 2001).

1.4 *Music and education for the environment*

In environmental education, it has been prevailed that it is better approached through emotions and generally through art because it engages the learners creatively during the learning process. For example, in the context of an environmental education program, music would be a driving force for students' interest in acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as lead them to the manifestation and activation of their creativity (Papavasileiou, 2011).

Music as an art has the power and can have a decisive and catalytic role in the emotional cultivation and sensitization of students on environmental issues (Sakellaridis, 2012). In most cases, when music is a teaching tool it can be used to maintain or increase student interest in a subject, gives a powerful motive for a teacher to speak in the classroom about the real world and is an important source of historical and geographic information which is provided through the lyrics (Ramsay, 2002). That's why the music in the teaching process must be pleasant and satisfy the interests and needs of the students (Dervisis, 1998).

The kind of music that has praised the beauty of the environment and its value in life is the folk song, as it often contains elements of nature. Through the folk song, the unknown creator "testifies" his concerns, shows respect and his need for the harmonious coexistence between people and nature. The fact that more people have come in contact with folk song and tradition, this informal experiential learning form of environmental education, makes an ideal way of contributing to the environmental awareness in the local communities and with the appropriate information and motivation can lead them to become volunteers or even act as independent teams for the protection of the local natural environment (Papavasileiou, 2011).

1.5 *Artistic inspiration and environment*

For many artists, the environment is a source of inspiration and creativity, and that's why environmental problems do not leave them untouched, instead, demonstrate their sensitivity in practice, either in their works or in their statements (interviews, announcements in social media, concerts). Therefore, it's logical to be easier for them to reach out and mobilize the listeners' feelings about such issues (Polychroniadou-Prinou, 2003). In the past, many well-known artists such as Michael Jackson, Cat Stevens, David Bowie, and many bands such as REM, U2, Pink Floyd, Radiohead, have played songs explicit for the protection of the environment, climate change, etc.

As Aggelikopoulos says (2010), listening to the songs of every season, we can perceive the dominant tendencies, as well as the "worries" of the creators. A lot of artists create works for mobilizing public opinion. Having shaped their own personal attitude and sensitivity to an issue, they influence other people to adopt similar behaviors (Zisis, 2009).

In the case of a beautiful place, when this image is accompanied by an attractive composition, the whole performance is experienced and printed with greater intensity in the

memory. In this situation, music, which is an independent stimulus, generates euphoria and generally positive emotions, resulting in the environment where the event takes place, becoming more accessible, intimate and ultimately beloved (Kokkinaki, 2006).

The influence of music, in addition to everything else, is also mental. How many times has a synthesis helped us think about a solution to our problems or relax us from the stress of everyday life (Cook & Dibben, 2010)? All this shows that it is linked to the person's feelings and mood (Hesmondhalgh, 2013), although it is not sure that it will affect all listeners in the same way (Sloboda & Juslin, 2010).

The process of completing a song or composition consists of two parts: the inspiration and creativity. Inspiration is the element that will affect the artist and will push him into the desire to write what he sees, hears, and feels, in the music and the lyrics. While creativity is the ability of the artist to be able to perform in a unique and original way so the listeners will be able to make it their own. In fact, the artist experiences this in his own imaginary world. There he creates and expresses himself, without this meaning that his world is a perfect world. Besides, he has the "ease" to constantly change his world and improve it (Sakellaridis, 2012).

Creators, no matter how lonely they are or seem to be, are members of a society in which they participate, collaborate, exchange opinions in open discussions, react, dispute and conflict. But they are receptive and let their imagination go free to create whenever and whatever they want (Xanthakou et al., 2015), and this can trigger someone else to create something even better. In this magical world of creation, which has no beginning and end, there is a chaotic and ongoing interactive relationship between the artists and the environment.

1.6 Music and environment: A "dependent" relationship that is worn out as years go by

In today's age, music is everywhere and connected to all the moments of our daily lives (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Listening to the radio in the car as we go to work, at any store to buy a product, when we relax while watching TV or when having fun at a bar or concert. The reactions to musical stimuli diversify from person to person and depend on factors such as the personality, level of knowledge, culture and personal music experiences of each listener (Sloboda & Juslin, 2010).

For Small (2010) it is important both what the artist chooses to create and what the people choose to hear. This explains the reason for the separation of different kinds of music and the "identities" that the listener accepts or not. Every participation in a musical act expresses a need to manifest where someone belongs or wants to belong, that is to state the relationships that he wants and which are ideal for him. According to Hesmondhalgh (2013), people are now communicating through this art. There are various "music societies", without borders, ready to welcome anyone who wants to express themselves and communicate through music.

The human relation to music is twofold: as an object of viewing the musical work to the listener through the creator-performer and as an object of identifying the listener with the musical work, mainly in behavioral matters, which also depends on the psychology of the listener at the specific time (Polychroniadou-Prinou, 2003).

Today, art and especially music does not have the meaning and function it once had. The huge and global commercialization, coupled with the evolution of technology and especially the internet, has the effect of writing simple songs or music compositions, without a creative mood for projects that raise public awareness of a social problem (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Small's view (2010) is that the relationship has changed, from consent it has been converted to dominant. For producers, in the broad sense of the term, music, and song are "products" that if used

appropriately will bring them more profit (North & Hargreaves, 2010).

Concerning the role of the media nowadays, many of them, using music and its psychological impact on viewers, are "constructing" a reality seeking to manipulate the population. The so-called "objective information" leads to social apathy and social "blindness" from the real problems, which most of them are directly related to the environment. In fact, the media has become a "weapon" of propaganda by those who exploit the planet and music has become the fancy garb of messages "buy everything, because you have the need for them" and "sleep peaceful because everything is going well" (Grigoriou, 2011).

As far as environmental issues, the majority of the media presents humans as the ruler of nature, on the contrary, nature is presented as an enemy of humanity and as something that restricts and in many cases threatens people's life. As a result, humanity is turning to anthropocentric perceptions and decisions, while its universal attitude is to address the general environmental problems with apathy. Exceptions to the rule include some media that, through broadcasts and documentaries, promote the value and beauty of the environment (Zisis, 2009).

In fact, the relationship between music, human and the environment has changed. It has become more neutral and indifferent. The fact that music is everywhere, has influenced people to stop listening if they don't want to (Papazaris, 1999) and of course, music has lost its social identity, its value and its important place in society.

2. Method

2.1 *Research tool*

As a research tool, we used the semi-structured interview, to allow us flexibility in supplementary questions formulated based on specific guidelines cited in the literature. (Robson, 2010).

The method of purposeful sampling was selected for practical and financial reasons. Given the sampling method, the results of the study cannot be generalized, which however are not in the pursuit of qualitative methods in general. The interviews were conducted in Rhodes, Greece, from June to September 2016.

The research was based on the idea that music as an art can contribute to the achievement of the environmental education goals and was conducted in order to register the views of artists on the relationship between the environment and their creative expression and whether environmental awareness among the listeners is achieved through the artworks.

Our main research questions were:

(1) What is the relationship between artists and the environment and how does it affect their psychology and their work?
(2) Do artists believe that there can be environmental sensitization of the world with the music and songs?

1.2 *Participants*

The research sample consists of twenty-three (23) Greek artists who are professionals in the field of music. Their average age is 41 years, with the youngest participant being twenty-one (21) years old and the oldest sixty-nine (69) years old.

The relationship of the majority of participants with music is multifaceted. Many of them have many capacities and capabilities, such as to be a musician and performer at the same

time. In the same way, many are occupied in more than one kind of music. So, in the whole sample, twenty (20) are musicians, fifteen (15) are performers, twelve (12) are composers and ten (10) are lyricists. Correspondingly, the kind of music which they are dealing with, are: nine (9) with rock music, six (6) with traditional music, five (5) with folk music, four (4) with artistic singing, four (4) with rembetiko, three (3) with pop music, three (3) with jazz music, three (3) with heavy metal music, three (3) with classical music, two (2) with blues music, two (2) with ethnic music, one (1) with electronic music and one (1) with Byzantine music.

3. Results

3.1 *Relationship between music and environment*

Most artists believe that there is a strong and enduring relationship (73.9%) between music and the environment, expressed musically or lyrically through songs. In their view, they support that attitudes and values are promoted: *"Music and art, in general, are holistically linked to the environment. Targeted music actions promote the acquisition of appropriate attitudes and values regarding the importance and protection of the environment"* (Interviewee 1), that the emotional connection of the audience with the environment is strengthened: *"As a global language, it can diffuse to everyone and raise awareness of the environmental problems"* (Int. 2), *"Through music, anybody can spread a message and raise awareness of some situations"* (Int. 10), *"Singing is one of the best ways to raise awareness of environmental issues"* (Int. 17), that it is an interactive relationship: *"The environment-human relationship has been and will remain a dynamic balance"* (Int. 23), *"A musician who respects his music, has to respect the place he lives in. Also, music has lost its natural origins and its magic"* (Int. 3), that is an inspiration for creation: *"The environment is a great inspiration for music, it acts decisively on what sounds we will need to play and what lyrics we will want to sing"* (Int. 11), *"Many of the works we see are inspired by natural phenomena or the environment"* (Int. 19), that it manifests through certain kinds of music: *"Important songs have been written [in rock music] that show that there is awareness"* (Int. 6), *"There is a connection with the traditional song. People lived in the countryside and what they saw is what they were sang"* (Int. 14), *"Folk music has praised nature more than any other kind of music"* (Int. 15).

On the contrary, about one in four participants (26.1%) thinks that there is no relationship today: *"There is no relationship at this time. There was a time in the '60s and' 70s, where there was generally a great love for nature which has been expressed through music"* (Int. 7), *"I don't think there are enough songs that deal with the environment and its problems"* (Int. 8).

The views of the concerned artists on what should or what they would want to change in the relationship between music and the environment, highlight the need for environmental organizations to become more active: *"Organizations should showcase music that will affect the world. Pictures combined with music"* (Int. 12) and the voluntary effort on the part of the artists: *"Those of us who will participate at a concert to raise awareness unfortunately are very few. However, there could be more artists"* (Int. 17).

3.2 *The environment as a source of inspiration for artists*

After analyzing the artists' responses, the majority of them responded that the environment is a source of inspiration to create (78.3%), while only 21.7% answered negatively.

As to the ways in which they are affected by the environment, several interviewees referred to the natural and anthropogenic environment: *"I work with images"* (Int. 3 & Int. 5), *"There is a creator's need to be in a [beautiful] place to write or compose"* (Int. 4), *"In my mind*

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I picture the tree, the flower, the mountain" (Int. 8), *"The concept of the environment is very broad. People and different places are sources of inspiration"* (Int. 2), *"Your source of inspiration differs when you write in the city, at the mountainside or in a forest. Not that you produce a different quality but your motivation is your surrounding"* (Int. 6), *"In order to be creative, you are stimulated by nature and the things you experience"* (Int. 7).

There were opinions from interviewees who stated that their living environment, creates the appropriate mental state and they translate it into creativity: *"It is the mental and physical condition that brings you to the environment"* (Int. 11), *"Inspiration is like opening a door and communicating with God, where God is nature and we are one"* (Int. 16), *"It gives you seeds so you can plant a tree"* (Int. 17), *"With peacefulness and calmness"* (Int. 19), *"Sometimes I can be somewhere and the whole scene is amazing… you feel awe in front of nature and the vibrations of the space"* (Int. 22).

Interviewees who had a positive response and would like to create or participate in a song for environmental sensitization were slightly more (56.5%) than those who were negative (43.5%).

As for the artists who responded affirmatively, have already done so in the past: *"I could rewrite. Fantastic things can be written about it [the environment]"* (Int. 12), *"Yes, I interpret it in every opportunity that comes across in the course of my career"* (Int. 23) and some have expressed a willingness to write a song about the environment or to participate in the composition: *"I could. Either way, when I compose, I'm not composing for the environment but composing from the environment"* (Int. 18), *"I would be happy to participate in a composition"* (Int. 19). For some interviewers the idea of writing a song about the environment, see it as an opportunity to get a message across to the people: *"We have to first compose a song to unite the artists, in order to send the message"* (Int. 17).

On the contrary, artists who were negative to create or even participate in such acts expressed the view that they don't write or participate in "targeted" songs, as they described them: *"I was never positive about targeted songs"* (Int. 3), *"The truth is, I never write targeted"* (Int. 20).

However, there was also one artist who mentioned the factors that worked negatively against him in making his work go public: *"I have written a song about the environment and it was not approved by the record company probably because it wouldn't sell… maybe, if I were well known, they wouldn't even bother at all…"* (Int. 12).

3.3 *Sensitization through music*

Regarding the question whether songs or compositions can lead the world to environmental awareness about environmental problems, 60.9% of the respondents answered yes, 34.8% answered negatively and only 4.3% did not answer the question.

Of the participants who responded negatively, that is, those who do not believe that one can acquisition environmental consciousness through music or song (34.8%), most note the human factor, education, and generally behavior: *"If he does not make an individual effort in his living space, then what can we say that he will do? Behavior in the environment begins with each person individually"* (Int. 3), *"I think that environmental awakening is not the primary goal for the people who attend concerts"* (Int. 7), *"From the artists' point of view who write these kinds of songs, yes, there is. But there is no effect"* (Int. 8), *"Unfortunately, the world's sensitization no longer depends on the composer"* (Int. 12), *"If a Greek does not live in an area which is being threatened to become a landfill, he doesn't care"* (Int. 13), *"I don't think that people depend on songs in order to become environmentally sensitized"* (Int. 14), *"If used alongside*

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verbal and image content, then yes, it can play an important role. One song, on its own, cannot sensitize you" (Int. 18).

On the other hand the artists who answered that music can make people more aware (60.9%), cited environmental issues: *"Their view on environmental problems is affected, and are encouraged to actively participate in addressing them"* (Int. 1), *"Songs make a problem known with the hope to entice a group of people to do something about it or to protect it"* (Int. 4), *"[influences] Indirectly, through the lyrics and mainly locally. To bring the listener a little bit into the status of the creator, in his day-to-day life"* (Int. 22), *"I have been involved in musical performances and children's books that raise children's sensitization on air pollution, the sea and the protection of forests and rivers"* (Int. 23). Several interviewees referred to the power of music, which can motivate people in all directions, and therefore the environmental sensitization, *"Depending on how the soundtrack is positioned, if properly positioned, it will also make you fall in love with the environment"* (Int. 9), *"I truly believe in the role of art... a song makes our day beautiful, it makes us love, respect... our environment, our space... it is a power that helps at all levels"* (Int. 11). Views were also recorded regarding the role of music in the educational process: *"A remarkably eco-friendly song can serve educational purposes"* (Int. 2), and the impact of music on the emotional world of people: *"Music has an emotional impact on people, it creates an atmosphere to bring people closer to a purpose... to convey a message either through lyrics or even in sterile speech"* (Int. 21).

3.3.1 *Songs with environmental content and audience ages*

Artists were asked to try to determine the ages of listeners who listen to songs or music compositions with environmental content. The interviewees' views were quite diverse and extensive. Responses were categorized for convenient reasons and the results (percentages) of the listeners' ages that listen to songs with environmental content are presented below (Figure 1):

1) (0-6 age): Newborn-age
2) (7-12 age): Childhood
3) (13-18 age): Adolescence
4) (19-30 age): Young people
5) (31-50 age): Adults
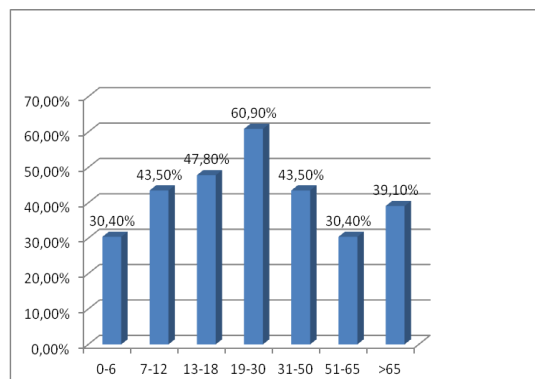6) (51-64 age): Middle-aged
7) (>65 age): Elders

Figure 1. Percentage of listeners to songs with environmental content

Specifically, some artists responded that age does not play a role when listening to

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songs or compositions with environmental content, *"Everyone could listen to a song about the environment"* (Int. 9), *"It has nothing to do with age, but with people's culture"* (Int. 11), *"Age doesn't matter. The issue is not who listens but who is really paying attention to the message the artist wants to get across"* (Int. 20).

Some believe the proper age is infancy and childhood: *"We need to let children know about these issues. A little song could work in the right direction"* (Int. 21), *"Children's songs are geared towards education. They talk about the environment, behavior, respect… I think that they are at the right age to learn about appropriate environmental behavior"* (Int. 12). Most artists mentioned that people in their teens and youth are the ones who mostly listen to such creations: *"Such issues are often dealt with by a student because they have the luxury of time"* (Int. 19), *"15-25 years old. I see a lot of kids starting to get emotionally attached to the environment"* (Int. 17), *"Those who actually realize and essentially address the issue, I think are ages 25-45"* (Int. 6), *"After the age of 20, young kids who want to get into production only find a dead end"* (Int. 16), *"25-35. Are the ages that still have no responsibilities"* (Int. 8), *"25-35. These ages are best suited to raise awareness of the issue. They have the responsibility within them"* (Int. 10), *"30-50. They become more aware and understand a problem exactly as they should"* (Int. 4). Views were also recorded that consider middle-aged and older people as those who listen to songs about the environment more than other categories, *"It's certain that if a Beatles song was heard from someone born in the 40's it would trigger memories and even get them excited"*.

There were 13% of respondents who answered that no one listens to songs or music compositions with environmental content, mainly because they think there are no such songs: *"Is there anyone who wants to hear songs specifically about the environment? I think people want to hear specific kinds of songs… if there are any environmental issues included in them, okay…"* (Int. 14).

3.4 *Influence of musical works and volunteering*

Only 13% of respondents say that their psychology is not affected when listening to a song or musical composition about the environment. 43.5% state that if they are affected depends on a variety of factors and the same percentage (43.5%) is affected in different ways.

As for the artists who stated that their psychology is influenced when listening to creations with environmental content (43.5%), most consider them to be emotionally affected: *"I am affected cognitively and emotionally"* (Int. 1), *"I'm glad to hear such efforts"* (Int. 3), *"All artists have antennas that are a little more sensitive… we experience things a little differently, we deeply grieve…"* (Int. 16), *"Sometimes with sadness about the change of ecology in places that are described in some songs, other times with joy and delight for music and songs that celebrate the beauty of the environment"* (Int. 23). Some artists are psychologically influenced by listening to environmental content songs, *"It will guide me… I have been greatly influenced by music and shows"* (Int. 12), *"I'm trying to be at the place which the song describes. I would try to imagine the whole scene"* (Int. 14). However, one interviewer argued that the change of the psychological state when listening to music with environmental content is temporary, *"Psychology is affected, but it's only for a moment, it is temporary"* (Int. 9).

Many interviewers are emotionally affected by songs and music compositions; however, some conditions are necessary. A key prerequisite is the quality of the music and the interpretation, *"It depends. If I hear something beautiful, it will make me enjoy it. On the contrary, if the song is depressing, it will ruin my psychology and make me sad"* (Int. 4), *"My psychology is influenced by the part of the music. If the music annoys me, I may not even hear the song. If it touches me musically, it will make me more aware"* (Int. 5), *"It depends on how the artist will interpret it… if it triggers my imagination, I'll be excited and I'll get up from the chair"* (Int. 17), *"I don't know if it will affect me*

positively or negatively... if the track has a musical interest, it will spark my interest and I will like it" (Int.18), *"It depends on the composition and how successful it will be in making me aware... Maybe I will be sensitized but the message which is trying to get through will not become my lifestyle or it may change the way I think about specific issues"* (Int. 19), *"It depends, if the music is not good, I'll ignore it... the process hurts me psychologically and it causes me a feeling of nostalgia because I forget myself in the urban environment"* (Int. 21), *"I think it has a lot to do with the creator, if he sounds convincing and if he can convey it"* (Int. 22). Also, for some artists to be influenced emotionally find that the message theme of the song is important: *"It has to do with the person who writes the song and if he takes it seriously"* (Int. 7), *"It will be less important to me, If I am already suspicious that the song is targeting on environmental issues"* (Int. 11).

However, there were artists who said that they are not affected emotionally if they listened to a song or a musical composition, *"I'll be very honest... we think about it at the time we hear it and then we forget it"* (Int. 8), *"The difficulty for most musicians is that we have a lot of things to look at in a song... it's hard to say that it touched me"* (Int. 20).

Many artists believe that listening to a song or music composition with environmental content could lead to voluntary action, and most of them, consider it as an obligation: *"Of course it could. Revolutionary music, against the system, takes people and classifies them against the system. You can do anything with music as long as you have a target and a purpose"* (Int. 12), *"Wherever I am called, I will go. I'm trying to do something, at least"* (Int. 17), *"Of course it can sensitize me. But the fanaticism is dangerous... because you can act effectively but you are not impartial"* (Int. 20), *"We have a debt to fight for the common good and a wakeup call... to save whatever we can and enjoy the gift of life"* (Int. 15).

Some interviewers are negative on the thought of volunteering and this is attributed to a variety of factors. Some have mentioned that once they are involved in music, they have to be able to offer from this position: *"Whenever I am called to help, I've done many times and I'm glad. I think my help is mainly through my music and my lyrics... I help some people in my own way"* (Int. 3), *"We have a debt through our music to open people's souls"* (Int. 16), *"I believe that as an artist, my role is to be wherever they are calling me"* (Int. 6). Some participants responded that by listening to songs or music compositions they felt that it was not enough to be motivated and to be led to volunteer: *"It's a bit difficult for me to suddenly change because I heard a song about the environment and to start saying that I'm going to be in an organization to do something about the environment"* (Int. 9), *"I can't all of a sudden become another person because I hear a song"* (Int. 10), *"It's difficult to happen with just one song. A person needs to be persuaded to get to the point of actively volunteering"* (Int. 19), *"I feel it's difficult to make it happen, to be sensitized on environmental issues because of a song. It can work, it can help... just a few..."* (Int. 21).

Finally, there were views of artists who did not exclude the possibility of volunteering by listening to a song or a musical composition, but there were some prerequisites for doing so: *"...if I feel the need to serve exclusively in this field, then I'd fight for it"* (Int. 6), *"If the track is affecting me emotionally, maybe I could join an organization"* (Int. 8), *"Probably. It cannot just be out of nowhere. There has to be an inner preparation first for everyone"* (Int. 22).

4. Discussion – Conclusions

Today's citizens must realize their cultural identity, otherwise, they will not be able to keep it intact, preserve it and pass it on to future generations (Papavasileiou, 2015). In this context, in the battle for the promotion of Environmental Education, art, beyond its involvement in the environmental movement, it must become part of it (Flogaitis, 2009), because a human reacts to art's stimuli, it fills his imagination, makes him dream of a better and more beautiful world, as well as, becoming more creative. At the same time, through music, listeners are

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emotionally and psychologically connected to areas of natural beauty and mobilized to protect and preserve them whenever needed.

According to Mikis Theodorakis (in Sakellaridis, 2012), the musician is influenced by his day-to-day life and the social events which he attributes to his work. Small (2010) believes that music experiences can broaden the public's understanding on certain issues and make them see the world from a different perspective.

Music and songs have changed societies, uniting people with common visions and ideals. Something similar has been done with the environment. Artists are inspired by the environment, the elements of nature and through their personal experiences. Many songs have been written with ecological content, songs of protest or even indignation. There are global but also local examples where music has contributed to changes, ranging from perceptions and social stereotypes, to even political overturns of both legislation and political philosophy.

The environment is a place of inspiration and expression for artists and accordingly affects their psychological mood. In song and music we understand the stimuli that the artist receives from the environment, as well as the emotions he feels through this interaction. So, it goes without saying that these feelings are "channeled" to the listeners and make them feel the same (Sloboda & Juslin, 2010). That's where the power and value of music can be seen. That is exactly what Plato meant when he said that music can do both good and bad in a society. Because, besides everything else, music also has moral values (Kaimakis, 2005).

In his latest interview, Russian composer, pianist and orchestra director Sergei Rachmaninov, had mentioned: *"My incessant desire to compose music is an intrinsic urge to express my emotions, such as speaking to express my thoughts… Study the masterpieces of the great composers and you will find every aspect of their personality and their environment in music… Time can change the techniques used in music, but it will never change the mission of music…"* (in Diamanti, 2017).

The aesthetic of a musician is definitely related to the aesthetics of the environment, after all, the environment is the artist's "muse". Obviously, the alteration of the natural environment is the one that affects them the most, because it's something they experience every day (Kyriazakos et al., 2018).

The results of our research show that the majority of artists believe there is a profound and significant relationship between the environment, music and songs, but it has been declining over the decades. The environment is an important influence and creates the right conditions for artists to feel the need to express themselves through their work. They also believe that music and songs have the power to direct people towards environmental sensitization, with the ultimate goal of actively engaging citizens in solving these problems. On this basis, they state that they are more aware and responsible because of their social status and recognition. The emotional state of artists is either affected positively or negatively when listening to songs or music with environmental content, but a significant proportion, mostly pays attention to the quality of the song, musically and interpretively. Lastly, the volunteering part does not excite all artists. Although many interviewees feel that they have to offer physically, some believe that it is better to offer through music and songs.

Studying the relationship between music and the environment-creator-listener triangle, we observe that there is an interaction and interdependent relationship. The environment directly or indirectly affects humans (creator or listener) and people correspond either by praising the beauty of the environment (if it is a creator) or by trying to preserve that beauty (listener). The music and lyrics, as well as their representatives (creators-artists) as communicators with the "receiver", are the three main pillars that can contribute to this purpose,

in raising public awareness. In a simple four-step schematic illustration we could analyze it as follows:
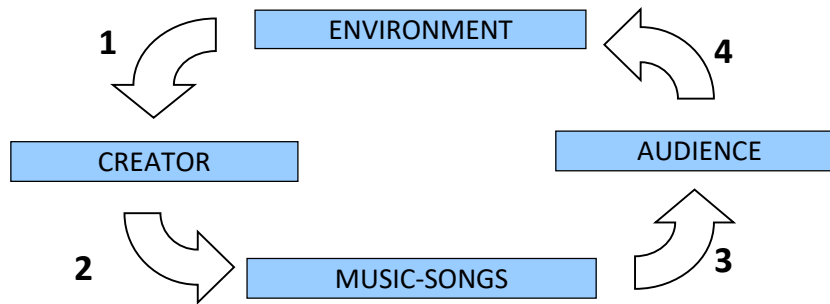
(1) The environment (**dynamic environment**) is the inspiration for the artist (**environmentally dependent creators**);

(2) The artist creates his works (musical compositions, songs) with environmental content (**musical variables**);

(3) Final projects (musical compositions, songs) are promoted to the public (**musically dependent targets**);

(4) Listeners are being sensitized to environmental issues and are active in protecting and resolving problems (**new dynamic environment**).

For relationship #1: every creator is affected differently by the environment. Basically, in any environment (in the broad meaning of the term) its interaction with a creator, two cases may apply: a. the environment to be "neutral", that is to say, the environment experienced by the artist is completely indifferent and therefore useless, non-creative and b. the environment to be "creative", that is, to influence the psycho-synthesis of the artist-creator, positively or negatively, which can be directly or indirectly led to the creation. Many times, this environment works the least but additively to it. How quickly the artist will be affected depends on many factors, such as how strong the emotions which arise in the artist are from his experiential relationship and observation, his earlier experiences and the need for expression (creation). On the contrary, time (as duration) plays no role at all. The artist can create a complete piece of work by photographing a moment in the environment or observing it for years.

For relationships #2 and #3, a major role is played by the result of the previous relationship (creation until it reaches the listener): A song is subject to change many times before its journey reaches the audience (goal). The creator can redefine his work, depending on the response. Usually, before its final form, it goes through a "pilot" test, that is, exposes the result to small target groups such as friends, demos, music producers, etc. If the result does not satisfy the artist, then he abandons it or, he redefines his work. If the result has a positive impact (public reception) then he proceeds to output (production).

For the relationship #4: The difficulty lies in convincing listeners about the purpose of the project, in this case, to make the world more sensitive to the environment. The listener as the receiver filters the project's message-information, which affects him or not accordingly. Decisive factors of the outcomes effort is the corresponding environment in which the listener receives the information, the situation in which he is in, the additional influences he receives from related projects, experiences or relationships with other social groups.

Although the relationships in the diagram above are simplified, confessedly "convincing" the world is a difficult doing part and is dependent on many factors. In many cases,

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the involvement of the creator with statements or active participation, can help and contribute. It would be a big mistake to say that change came exclusively from music, but we cannot exclude its involvement in social influence for decision-making and action. The desired situation results in a "new" dynamic environment, repeatedly following a spiral relationship.

In conclusion, arts such as poetry, dance, and music need to play a leading role in education. They contribute to raising awareness and creating responsible and active citizens who love the environment, respect it and work to protect and preserve it, so they can deliver it, possibly even better, to future generations, thereby meeting the species' intergenerational needs. Music has the power to bring together individuals and make a collective change, for a society with principles and values in the interests of present and future generations. What we really need are new perceptions and solutions that ensure sustainability in a new world of values (Tzaberis et al., 2014).

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