

# Pop-rock, Musical Cosmopolitanism and Embodied Musical Knowledge

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## ABSTRACT

This article suggests that, after over half a century during which successive generations of fans in countries around the world have embraced multiple local and global genres and styles of pop-rock music, individuals in many countries have become equipped with sonic-musical knowledge that enables them to immediately, spontaneously and intuitively decipher amplified, electric, electronic and manipulated musical soundscapes. Possession of this type of corporeal knowledge, and its routine embodiment by individuals across many different parts of the world amounts to a mundane manifestation of current culture, or rather a commonplace musical cosmopolitanism. As it unfolds, this article discusses the notion of musical cosmopolitanism and the meaning of pop-rock as an aesthetic culture. It also develops a classification of music-related knowledge into three major categories – discursive, musical and sonic knowledge – before focusing on the third type.

Keywords: pop-rock, cosmopolitanism, culture, globalization, embodied knowledge

## SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

Listening, almost anywhere in the world, to signature tunes of television news-shows, to non-diegetic music in films, to music in commercials for consumer goods, to background music in shopping malls or waiting rooms, and in general to functional music of all types, one realizes that their sonic vocabulary largely consists by now, two decades into the 21st century, of a massive proportion of electric, electronic and digitally manipulated sonorities. Fuzzed-up and distorted electric guitars for conveying drama, jangling or chiming electric guitars for cheerfulness, soaring synthesizers for depicting futurism, electronic beats for transmitting energetic motion, are just a handful and most obvious uses of such sounds. In addition, the musical environment of most countries is saturated with sounds of local, indigenous or Anglo-American pop-rock, overwhelmingly based on this type of

sonorities. This ubiquitous presence of amplified, electric, electronic and manipulated musical sonorities testifies that individuals around the world are equipped with the cultural knowledge that enables immediate, spontaneous and intuitive deciphering of such sonorities. Individuals are familiar with them and with their conventional affective meanings. Possession of this type of corporal knowledge, and its routine enactment by individuals in many different parts of the world amounts to a mundane manifestation of current cultural, or in this particular regard, musical cosmopolitanism in everyday life.

In this article I suggest that such knowledge, such familiarity, is the outcome of the long process in which pop-rock music was localized and indigenized to become a legitimate and self-evident routine presence in musical cultures of countries all over

the world. Put differently, the article proposes that beyond any history of genres, styles, musical works, scenes and subcultures, a major historical impact of pop-rock on musical culture around the world, and on contemporary global culture in general, consists of the global diffusion of familiarity with, and knowledge of a musical vocabulary, an idiom, consisting of amplified, electric, electronic and manipulated sonorities. The article points to pop-rock as a cultural realm, an aesthetic culture, that weaves into one complex whole the macro topic of cosmopolitanism, the physical "thingness" of music, and the micro level of bodily knowledge. It points to a possible sociological perspective on cultural globalization, centered around the sociology of the senses. The article draws on and combines elements from previous work (Regev 2013, 2019, 2020).

I begin with some words on the concept of *cultural and musical cosmopolitanism*. I then proceed to discuss the notion of pop-rock music and its global diffusion, before delving into the topics of embodied musical knowledge and pop-rock.

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## MUSICAL COSMOPOLITANISM

The term musical *cosmopolitanism* relates to the re-configuration, or permutation of diversity in world popular music, resulting from intensified cultural globalization and expressive isomorphism since mid 20th century. I should stress that my understanding of *cultural cosmopolitanism* is essentially sociological. That is, it refers to, and aims to depict the empirical cultural reality of our times. It does not follow the line of thought where the idea of cosmopolitanism is focused on political and moral issues and is understood primarily, if not exclusively, in idealistic terms (see Inglis, 2014, on these two meanings of cosmopolitanism). In this regard, the term musical cosmopolitanism depicts a musical world order characterized by increased similarities between musical cultures the world around, while at the same time preserving variance, diversity, and a strong sense of uniqueness and singularity among national, ethnic

and other forms of musical cultures. We may talk in this regard about increased musical overlap, or significant surge in the proportions of common musical ground shared by nations, ethnic groups or any other forms of collective identity – as well as individuals. This overlap, or common cultural ground, stems from countless amounts of creative techniques, expressive means, stylistic elements, affective meanings and evaluative criteria that circulate worldwide through cultural industries and "old" or "new" media of all types. It becomes a musical-cultural reality when all of these are shaped at both the global and local levels into musical works, genres, styles and trends. Put differently, and as already pointed out by Turino (2000) and Stokes (2004), musical cosmopolitanism refers to a situation in which national, ethnic and local musical cultures, while retaining features of native and indigenous traditions and a sense of singularity, are fully entangled in one world musical culture. It results from the volitional or enforced openness of musicians and fans to globally circulating musical materials alien to their own native traditions, and the assimilation of such materials into local, national and ethnic musical cultures.

The notion of alien musical elements deserves some elaboration. Cultural cosmopolitanism is often identified with openness to unfamiliar materials originating in remote countries, nations and ethnicities. Indeed, alien musical elements could be those identified as originating in specific ethnic or national entities other than one's own, signifying "otherness" (Tagg 2012). Openness to, and domestication of such materials is certainly one major component of musical cosmopolitanism. But alien cultural materials can also be those perceived as part of a universal modernity, detached from any particular ethnicity or culture, yet "foreign" to most traditional cultures on earth. Such cultural materials circulate worldwide and are localized and indigenized into cultures to which they arrive from the "outside." The role of cultural materials perceived as constituents of universal modernity is crucial in the formation of current cultural cosmopolitanism. In the case of popular music, the sonic vocabularies, as well as actual genres, styles and

works of pop-rock are perceived by fans and musicians all over the world, since mid 20th century, as the musical expression of a universal modernity. Their assimilation into local, national and ethnic musical cultures is a key element in contemporary musical cosmopolitanism. Before turning to a discussion of pop-rock, however, some words about the sociological logic of cultural cosmopolitanism, in which music plays a significant role.

One way to think about cultural globalization as a constant process leading up to, and resulting in cultural cosmopolitanism, is to portray it as a global socio-cultural market of life-style identities, taking lead from Bourdieu's notions of distinction, fields and the homology between these two (Bourdieu 1984, 1993). On the demand side of this market, variables like demography, class inequality, diversification of education and professions, identity politics in the realms of gender and ethnicity, as well as additional social variables join to structurally and recurrently split national societies into multiple groupings, all seeking to express and practice their contemporary socio-cultural sense of local or translocal singularity and distinction. On the supply side of this market stand the products of global fields of cultural production (including thereby the cultural industries), all organized around impulses for constant aesthetic innovation. Driven either by variants of the ideology of "pure creativity" or by "commercial" interests (or any combinations of both), global fields of cultural production constantly produce fashions, trends and fads of life-style and consumption practices, presented as exciting new forefronts of modernity. In the case of music, musicians and other music professionals (including critics and journalists) develop an explorative interest in new and contemporary stylistic trends and musical idioms as a way to participate in the innovative expressive frontiers of their field. This interest propels them to engage in production of local variants of such trends, sometimes hybridizing them with indigenous genres, so that national fields of popular music are rendered sub-fields of global ones.

These two aspects of the market reinforce and feed on each other to create, in accelerated speed, recurrent life-style groupings and multiple life-style fractions within and across national settings, differentiated from each other by boundaries materialized through taste preferences and cultural practices, and ranging from clearly demarcated ones to nuanced differences. These are groupings that cultivate tastes for "the new and innovative." They also nurture interests in having "their own" national, local or ethnic variants of stylistic trends that signify contemporariness and modernity. In the case of music, the work of musicians and music professional, in which indigenous musical elements interweave with pop-rock to modernize local musical cultures, caters to the status and distinction interests of pop-rock fans. Jointly, these types of producers and consumers become the agents who generate, innovate, create and recreate an endless series of styles, genres (including sub-styles and sub genres), scenes and fan subcultures, thus maintaining musical cosmopolitanism in national societies across the globe.

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## POP-ROCK

This is the point where I should say a few words about what do I mean by "pop-rock music." Pop-rock is not a musical genre, nor a musical style. It designates a global aesthetic framework, a musical culture that includes a wide range of styles, genres and related phenomena across nations, ethnic groups and countries. The elements that interconnect all styles and genres of pop-rock music are primarily their creative technologies – electric and electronic instruments, sound manipulation equipment of all types (in recording studios or as accessories to instruments) and amplification. Also typical is the use of certain techniques of supposedly untrained vocal delivery, mostly those signifying immediacy of expression and spontaneity (one should note, in this regard, that the perceived pristine sounds of most acoustic or so-called "unplugged" variants of pop-rock are also products of studio treatments). For pop-rock musicians, the technologies of sonic

expression are creative tools for generating sonic textures that cannot be produced otherwise (Wicke 1990; Gracyk 1996; Zak 2001; Zagorski Thomas 2014).

In pop-rock, the technologically saturated creativity is targeted towards the sonic materiality of a recorded product as the musical artwork, a product to be listened to via loudspeakers or earphones. From the angle of meaning and aesthetic value, pop-rock is organized around a genealogical narrative, a lineage of inter-connected styles and genres whose discourse points to a mythical beginning in the mid 1950s and an initial formative period in the 1960s and 1970s. Pop-rock is most frequently referred to as either rock or pop music, where the first refers to the more "rougher" and the latter to the more "lighter" forms of this musical culture. However, there is an abundance of musical works and musicians that can be easily classified under both labels, leading to much vagueness about the difference and overlap between them. The hyphenated form pop-rock therefore stands as an umbrella term that resolves the widespread ambiguity regarding the difference and the overlap between pop and rock.

Paraphrasing Knorr Cetina's notion of epistemic culture (2007), we may think of pop-rock as an aesthetic culture. The aesthetic culture of pop-rock may be envisaged as a cluster of practices, arrangements, and mechanisms bound together by affinity and historical coincidence which, in the area of artistic and professional expertise of late modern popular music, make up how we experience, evaluate, and sense the world of objects that conventionally belong to the form of musical art known as pop and rock music, and what we know about it. The aesthetic culture of pop-rock is a culture of creating and warranting criteria of evaluation, modes of worshipping, cognitive and emotional dispositions pertaining to a certain world of musical objects.

The aesthetic musical culture of pop-rock emerged in the United States in the mid 1950s and expanded during the next half century to become the major global popular music culture. The history of pop-

rock tends to be narrated as an unfolding lineage of styles and genres, organized around a symbolic divide between earlier periods and the "rock era" (Cateforis 2006). All styles and genres of pop-rock are characterized in such narrations as developments, mutations, and expansions derived from the original style of rock'n'roll and then from the successive styles that developed from it. The period of approximately twenty-five years, from the mid 1950s to around 1980, is in this regard the formative era of pop-rock, during which its major idioms and genres have been explored and defined, including thereby the formation of its essential, overwhelmingly Anglo-American "classic" canon of musical works (mostly albums) and musicians (either as individual artists or as bands). By early twenty-first century, the stylistic genealogy of pop-rock includes – or has included – genres, styles, forms, periods, fashions, trends, and fads of music known by names such as hard rock, alternative rock, punk, progressive rock, power pop, soul, funk, disco, dance, house, techno, hip-hop, heavy metal, extreme metal, reggae, country rock, folk rock, psychedelic rock, singer-songwriters, and notably, pop – as well as many more (some of these genres, most notably hip-hop and metal, have evolved into cultural entities sub-divided into multiple styles. Still, for all their autonomy, such genres retain the basic elements that make them part of the pop-rock framework).

Since the 1970s (and earlier in some countries), however, the musical culture of pop-rock has been increasingly adopted and indigenized in countries all over the world, to the point of becoming in many of them the major popular music culture. In line with the logic of the socio-cultural market of life-style identities outlined above, pop-rock styles and genres have functioned over the years as suppliers of aesthetic languages and packages of meaning around which consecutive generations of teenagers and young adults all over the world have defined their late modern sense of particularity, of distinction.

A major aspect of the aesthetic culture of pop-rock music is that due to its reliance on technology, and its appeal to youth cultures through an ideology

that combines rebellion, hedonism and artistic exploration, it has been globally institutionalized as a signifier of universal modernity in the field of popular music, facilitating its embrace by musicians and fans alike. Consecutive generations of musicians and fans in many parts of the world have insisted since the 1960s on indigenizing it as a project of modernizing and updating local musical traditions, as a cultural strategy for joining and participating in what such musicians and fans believed, and still believe, are the constantly evolving creative frontiers of innovation in popular music. By the end of the 20th century, pop-rock music became an integral element of local, national and ethnic musical cultures in many, if not most countries in the world (Regev 2013). Either in their Anglo-American dominant version, or as local variants, much of the pop-rock phenomena thrive in countries around the world, where they are augmented by various labels that refer to indigenous and national variants. A partial list includes *Anadolu rock* (Turkey), *yéyé* (1960s France), *(electric)-soukous* (Congo), *desert blues* (Mali and Niger), Algerian *pop-raï*, *Afro-pop*, *Afro-beat*, *J-pop* (for Japan), *K-pop* (for South Korea), *Cantopop*, and many other uses of nation names as adjectives, i.e. *Ruski rock*, *hip-hop Italiano*, *rock indo* (Indonesia) as well as numerous others. Pop-rock in Latin America and Spanish speaking countries is a particularly salient example in this regard. Tags such as *rock nacional* (in Argentina and Brazil) and *rock en español* (Latin America and Spain) cover a highly diversified universe of pop-rock genres and styles, that "pasó de ser considerado una expresión cultural ajena a convertirse en el eje de promoción regional de unificación al romper las barreras nacionales erigidas durante el siglo XX" (Valdéz and Urióstegui 2015, p. 191. See also García Peinazo 2019; Viñuela Suárez 2019).

It is also important to note that although pop-rock is very broad in terms of stylistic range, when considered globally, as a cosmopolitan musical culture, it cannot be understood as synonym for popular music (as is often the case especially in the English speaking world). In countries where indigenous traditions of modern popular music preceded pop-rock music (for

example, in Latin America), and have persisted along with it, the whole range of pop-rock styles and genres is typically regarded as an art world and aesthetic culture distinct from other forms and aesthetic idioms of popular music. On the other hand, musicians working within various such genres of indigenous popular music have adopted and implemented over the years in increasing measure creative elements, techniques and sonorities associated primarily with pop-rock. These include electric guitars and synthesizers, electronic beats, constructed studio sounds of overdubs and other sonic textures, insertions of sampled sounds, electronic or amplified manipulation of vocal delivery, as well the overall sound of typical pop-rock ensembles. While some of these sonorities have been experimented and explored in various cultural contexts, they were given global, widespread stylistic and generic shape mostly within the aesthetic culture of pop-rock. We may talk in this regard about the pop-rockization of popular music as a global process, in which the aesthetic logic of pop-rock has permeated by various forms of popular music throughout the world and adopted by their practitioners.

There are by now numerous studies that point to the global proliferation of styles and genres associated with pop-rock, and how they affected cultural life in national societies in countries in various parts of the world. Some recent studies include work on pop-rock in countries and regions such as China (de Kloet 2010), Spain (Val Ripoles 2017; Val Ripolles, Noya, and Pérez-Colman 2014; Martínez and Fouce 2014, Mora and Viñuela 2013), Italy (Fabbri and Plastino 2014; Varriale 2015, 2016), France (Looseley 2003), Turkey (Karahasanolu and Skoog 2009), Brazil, Argentina and Latin America in general (Magaldi 1999; Pacini Hernandez, L'Hoeste and Zolov 2004; Ulhôa, Azevedo and Trotta 2015) Mali (Skinner 2015), Japan (Minamida 2014), Soviet Russia (Yurchak 2003), and Portugal (Guerra 2016).

Additional work has been done on specific styles and genres such as hip-hop in Indonesia (Bodden 2005) or Japan (Condry 2006); electronic dance music in



Hong-Kong (Chew 2010), France (Birgby 2003) or India (Saldanha 2002); punk in Bali (Baulch 2007), in China (Xiao 2018), in Spain and Mexico (O'Connor 2004) or in multiple countries (Dunn 2016); chart pop in Japan (Mōri 2009) and South Korea (Shin 2009); and metal all over the planet (Wallach, Berger and Greene 2011). The above are all but a sample of work on pop-rock phenomena covered by sociological and cultural research that hardly leaves a doubt about the global presence and impact of pop-rock aesthetic culture. The overwhelming majority, if not all of these studies, focus on topics such as the historical emergence of styles by tracing careers of musicians and bands, on generational cohorts and their musical tastes, on phenomena such as scenes and subcultures relating to specific genres, on various aspects of the music industry, and on struggles by the cultural mediators of pop-rock to gain artistic respectability and national legitimacy. Pointing to isomorphic processes in the worldwide proliferation of pop-rock genres and related phenomena, these studies, as a whole, provide firm evidence about the cosmopolitan nature of pop-rock. However, beyond the diffusion and proliferation of pop-rock genres and styles, and pop-rock related phenomena such as youth and fan cultures, a major impact of pop-rock on music culture of the world revolves around musical knowledge, and particularly the transformation of embodied musical knowledge.

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## MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE

Musical knowledge, in the sense of cultural information stored and inscribed in the bodies (including thereby the minds) of individual human beings, and enacted through bodily motion, sensory and affective experience, or simply through talk about music, consists of three basic layers. I refer to them as discursive knowledge, musical familiarity and sonic knowledge.

The first two layers are in the sphere of declarative culture, consisting of "knowledge-that." That is, knowledge that allows a person to identify something

and relate to it verbally by name or proper term. The third layer is in the sphere of non-declarative culture, consisting of "knowledge-how." This is mostly a form of hard to verbalize tacit knowledge, existing as a disposition in body and mind, affording intuitive action and comprehension in everyday life (Lizardo 2017, 2012)

### Discursive knowledge

This layer of knowledge is informative in essence. Or rather, it is a "database" type of knowledge about songs, genres, genealogies of styles and periods, and some additional details or items. It most often consists also of acquaintance with the institutionalized evaluative hierarchies of pop-rock in general, or of a specific genre. That is, knowledge about which bands and musicians are the sanctified master artists, and which musical works are the masterpieces of pop-rock and of its specific styles. This layer of knowledge is discursive and cognitive by nature. One can obtain it by reading texts, listening to lectures or talks, or through conversation.

In the case of this type of pop-rock knowledge, we may point to the global acquaintance of individuals around the world with names such as Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Michael Jackson, Madonna, or Bob Marley, to name the most obvious. Individuals may also be acquainted with titles of songs and albums by these and many other musicians who enjoyed global success. Familiarity with names of pop and rock musicians and their songs has become an element of trivia, of "general knowledge" that modern individuals have about the contemporary world (just like knowing the names of prominent political leaders or movie stars). It is also probable to assume that phrases like "heavy metal," "disco" or "reggae" are well known to people around the world as tags for pop-rock genres. Individuals might also be familiar with the appraisal of Bob Dylan as one of the most important figures of pop-rock, or with bands such as Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple being major purveyors of heavy metal. At a slightly narrower level of expertise or connoisseurship, we may point also to some widespread knowledge about pop-rock musicians from specific

genres, or from countries other than the US and UK. One recent notable example is acquaintance with the notion of *K-pop* and with its leading bands or successful songs. Other specialized fans may be familiar with the phenomenon of "desert blues", played by Tuareg bands and musicians from Sahara countries (Mali, Niger) such as Tinariwen and Bombino.

### Musical Familiarity

Another layer of knowledge consists of acquaintance with musical works, with their actual sounds. This type of knowledge is affective and experiential, and is closely connected to auditory memory. The only way to obtain it is by listening to musical works, usually more than once, until acquiring a sort of cognitive and affective ownership of it, gaining thereby familiarity that allows one to say that he or she knows, enjoys and likes (or dislikes) a musical piece. Once such knowledge is acquired, an individual is able to identify a specific musical work, and anticipate its continuity when it starts playing. Such knowledge also affords humming a work. I should stress that in the case of pop-rock, being "the art of recording," such knowledge pertains not only to melody lines or rhythmic progression, but to actual sonorities as performed on the specific canonized recording of a given work. For example, knowledge of the song "While my Guitar Gently Weeps" by the Beatles incorporates a detailed acquaintance with the exact sound and melodic progression of the guitar solo in the recording of the song that appeared on the *White Album*, release by the band in 1968. In a similar vein, individuals in different parts of the world most probably store in their auditory memory the lines and sounds of Michael Jackson's "Beat it," Madonna's "Like a Prayer," "Hotel California" by the Eagles, "Could you be Loved" by Bob Marley and many other songs. Knowledge of canonical works of national pop-rock can be added here in the context of given national or regional settings. For example, since the early 2000s, songs by the likes of Alejandro Sanz or Andrés Calamaro are known to individuals across the Spanish speaking world, while songs by the likes of Cui Jian or Faye Wong are known to millions in China and East Asia.

In other words, worldwide circulation of pop-rock music for more than half a century has rendered these two layers of pop-rock related musical knowledge global in scope. Countless individuals in the world, across countries and regions, share them. They are familiar with a large repertoire of musical works, and they typically know their names, as well as those of the musicians that perform them. It is however a third layer of musical knowledge that I want to focus on as the major manifestation of musical cosmopolitanism.

### Sonic Knowledge

This third layer of musical knowledge is also experiential and affective, but consists of a rather basic form of acquaintance and familiarity with forms of musical sound, with sonorities – not necessarily with specific musical works. At its most essential form, we might say that this type of knowledge allows making the distinction between musical sounds and noise, or between musical and non musical sounds.

More typically, it is a form of internalized knowledge, enacted almost unwillingly upon hearing musical sounds, prompting the decoding of sound as musical idiom. While not necessarily entailing recognition of specific musical works, enactments of this layer of musical knowledge are nothing but routine, intuitive deciphering of affective meanings as these are evoked by familiar musical sonorities. This is indeed the type of musical knowledge targeted by all kinds of functional pieces of music such as signature tunes of television programs, non-diegetic music in film, advertisements and certain forms of background music. In other words, this layer consists of internalized acquaintance with familiar musical idioms, accepted as elements of the routine and mundane cultural environment, where a person feels culturally at home. On the other hand, it is also a form of musical knowledge that allows a person to identify certain sonorities as musical idioms alien to her or his own sense of cultural home.

When encountering new sonorities, this form of musical knowledge "can cause listeners to experi-



ence their bodies in new ways” (McClary 1991: 25), because it has the potential to “structure things as styles of consciousness, ideas, or mode of embodiment” (DeNora 2003: 47). At the individual level, this potential is sometimes fulfilled simply by listening for the first time to certain musical works. But when new, alien musical textures are encountered and domesticated into the sonic environment of a given social entity, where such textures were previously unknown; when substantial amount of members of this social entity absorb such new musical idioms and sonorities into their taste and auditory memory, this type of musical knowledge has the potential of heralding cultural change. Once encountered and absorbed into a music culture and personal taste of large sectors in a given community, such knowledge has the potential to usher in new modes of individual and collective experiences, alter the physical reality of public spaces, and in general affect cultural performance at the individual and collective levels.

And this is indeed one of the major cultural consequences of the global diffusion of pop-rock genres and of pop-rockization in general. Pop-rock genres and styles – by introducing new sonorities, sound patterns, and textures generated through electric and electronic instruments, sound manipulation technologies and amplification, and due to their enormous range of dissemination – acted as agents of cultural change at the material, physical levels of human bodies and urban spaces.

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### POP-ROCK AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE

For all the genres and styles related to the notion of pop-rock, it seems then, in retrospect, that one major cultural thrust brought about by this musical realm consists of its palette of typical sonorities, its vocabulary of typical tones and timbres. Regardless of specific youth subcultures, scenes or other forms of fan culture, the accumulated effect of pop-rock music in the successive presence of its styles, genres, albums and songs in their Anglo-American form, but

especially in their localized and indigenized forms, has been to naturalize into the cultural environment of countries all over the world the electric, electronic, manipulated and amplified sonorities associated with it. Put differently, and in a rather grandiose statement perhaps, I would say that following more than half a century during which pop-rock music became a prominent musical culture of late modernity, and in terms of socio-cultural history of music, we live in what might be called the age of electro-electronic-manipulated-amplified musical sonorities. Being the major cultural realm, or aesthetic culture, in which these sonorities have been explored, formulated, defined, given stylistic and generic shape, as well as globally disseminated, indigenized and legitimized for the purpose of expressing various forms and types of generational, life-style, ethnic, national and other forms of collective identity in many parts of the world, pop-rock music has acted in this regard as a major agent of cultural change in a deep meaning of altering styles of consciousness and modes of embodiment.

Either as active fans or as passive listeners exposed to music in media channels and all over the cultural public sphere, individuals in most parts of the world have been engaged with pop-rock sonorities, with the physical “thing-ness” of pop-rock music, for over fifty years now. Absorbing these sounds and their connoted meanings into their auditory memory, the bodies of successive generations of individuals across the world came to be equipped with musical knowledge pertaining to the sonorities of pop-rock. Individuals in all parts of the world became capable of deciphering, routinely and intuitively, conventional meanings connoted by musical phrases, or *musèmes* stacks and strings, to use Tagg’s vocabulary (2012), of electric guitars and synthesizers, electronic beats, constructed studio sounds of overdubs and other sonic textures, insertions of sampled sounds, electronic or amplified manipulation of vocal delivery, and the overall sound of pop-rock ensembles.

The cultural transformation encapsulated in the sonic vocabulary of pop-rock therefore means, at the individual level, an alteration of the corpore-

ality through which memberships in nations or ethnicities are performed in everyday life. With the growth of sectors within national societies who adopted national pop-rock styles as the music that expresses and symbolizes their sense of local, domestic, national identity; and with the sonorities of pop-rock becoming evermore ubiquitous and omnipresent all over the public cultural sphere, the bodily experience and routine cultural performance of national identity as a mundane sense of simply being culturally at home in a given territory has been transformed. It became a performance based on enactments of bodily dispositions that afford experiences of cultural domesticity through sonic vocabularies that are at one and the same time native and imported, indigenous and alien, local but also shared by numerous other cultural settings across the world. Put differently, once bodies of individuals across the world came to identify and experience their sense of cultural home, as this is mediated through musical sound, with the sonic vocabularies of pop-rock, they became aesthetic cosmopolitans.

Consider these following four types of sonic expression, all emitted by electric guitars: Short or extended solos, especially as explored and formulated in the context of the form known as "rock ballad," as expressions of emotional elevation and transcendence; Syncopated riffs, that is, short chords separated by a second or less of silence, most prominently associated with the genres of soul, funk and disco, that came to signify a sense of rhythmic energy, or "groove"; A slightly distorted but mostly pleasant-sounding chord progression often referred to as "chiming" or "jangling" electric guitar that conveys a feeling of joy or energetic warmth; and finally, the fuzz and distortion effects, most often used to deliver a sense of drama or to signify rage. One may add here typical phrases of distorted electric organs, "other-worldly" synthesizer sounds and many more. Each of these forms has gained widespread global cultural currency for transmitting their connoted meanings. They can be found in abundance in many pop-rock songs in all languages and cultures, as well as in film

scores or filmed advertisements. Their prevalence in and across national and ethnic settings testifies to the widespread presence of capabilities for deciphering them in bodies of individuals in such cultural locations.

These phrases are but a tiny sample of the rich and diverse repertoire of musical phrases that originated in the aesthetic culture of pop-rock and gained worldwide currency for signifying a whole range of moods and emotions. The global ubiquitous presence of these phrases testifies that pop-rock musical knowledge is stored in cultural bodies across the world, shared by individuals in numerous national and ethnic settings, enacted routinely for performing mundane, everyday experiences of being culturally at home.

In other words, with the auditory perceptual schemes of individuals all over the world becoming accustomed to the distorted sounds of electric guitars and to the indefinable timbres of electronic music; with the tones and timbres of pop-rock being absorbed into the canonical auditory knowledge of listeners across the world; with the sonic phrases of pop-rock becoming familiar and recognizable as musical elements by listeners in most local cultures, ethnic group, and nations; when all the above became elements in the cultural performance of contemporary musical localism of nations, we may assert that the embodied sonic knowledge of pop-rock music inscribed in listeners around the world affords them a sense of being local and translocal at one and the same time, rendering them musical cosmopolitans.

As Frith asserts, music "gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it" (1996: 272). Indeed, membership in a given national or ethnic formation is one way of being in the world often articulated and made sense of through music. Furthermore, the articulation of ethnicity and nationality through music greatly nurtures the mutual sense of otherness between such formations. Thus, incorporations of elements from musics of the non-Western world (see Manuel 1988 for this term), conceived as the "other" of Western music, have been typi-

cally discussed along notions of power relations and dominance (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000). But this sharp sense of mutual otherness has been eroded with the global diffusion of pop-rock knowledge. It has been reduced and shrunk, as the proportion of shared musico-aesthetic perceptions has grown and expanded. And this is the core of musical-aesthetic cosmopolitanism – the shriveling and withering of cultural otherness expressed in music. Not its disap-

pearance, but its mutation into something always familiar, never fully alien or strange. Listening to girl groups from South Korea, to hip-hop from Indonesia, to flamenco-tinged rock from Spain, and to a female or male rock auteur from any country, pop-rock fans anywhere in the world will always encounter in each of the above some electric and electronic sounds, vocal techniques, and musical phrases familiar from their very own national music.



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