Hybridization and Its Meanings in the Catalan Musical Tradition

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Abstract

One of the most interesting subjects related to research on hybridization in music is the study of its semantic implications in a given socio-cultural context. It is clear that hybridization, in one way or another, is an inherent process in all kinds of music. For this reason it is important not only to observe the origins and development of this phenomenon, but also to pay due attention to what hybridization refers to on the emic level, i.e. hybridization as a bearer of meanings, elucidating which meanings are associated by social agents to these kinds of processes. This article focuses on this important question and presents some general reflections on the meanings of hybridization through concrete examples from the Catalan musical tradition. Discussion will be restricted to the ethnicity-semantics axis. For this reason, the examples of the Catalan musical tradition that are taken into account belong to those musical streams that have explicitly conferred ethnic value to it.

1 Introduction

Undoubtedly hybridization constitutes an inherent process musical creation. It would be very difficult to understand the dynamics of musical manifestations without taking into account the processes of adoption of musical elements belonging to different stylistic origins. After all, as Eliane Daphy wrote, the intrinsic value of music "lies in its capacity for blending, for mixing different elements which are taken from here and there".  

1 "réside dans sa capacité à mixer, à mélanger différents éléments empruntés ici et là."
In the most general sense of the term, hybridization refers to the adoption by one concrete musical stream of musical elements that come from other streams. These elements are merged in such a way as to become a constituent part of the stream that has assimilated them. Taking this into account it is therefore clear that when we refer to hybridization, we do not mean the use of quotations, parodies or cases of musical borrowing which only seek a certain coloring through the assimilation of clearly odd musical elements, such is the case with as exoticism. When we speak of hybridization, what we think of first is the assimilation of elements of a formal kind. However as one might infer this often implies processes of transformation in the semantic and functional spheres as well.

It is also important to take into account that if our first statement is true, i.e. that hybridization is an inherent process in music, it would be wrong to think of hybridization or crossbreeding as only occurring in certain kinds of music. As Antoine Hennion wrote:

There is a danger in associating crossbreeding with popular music, understanding the first as an exclusive attribute of the second. And instead of analyzing, it strengthens a division between art and popular music in terms of opposing categories borrowed from a copious stock of mythical themes. Crossbreeding stands in opposition to purity [...] ².

The statement made by Hennion is, doubtless correct. But his statement is a reaction to the fact that in reality the idea of hybridization or its equivalent, crossbreeding (in Neo-Latin languages crossbreeding -mestizaje, métissage, etc- is more usual than hybridization in colloquial speech), has a restricted social use regarding the kinds of music to which it is applied. Generally, we do not speak of

(Pétionnet and Daphy, 1985: 29)

² "Il y a un danger à associer métissage et musique populaire. C'est de faire du premier un attribut exclusif de la seconde. Et, au lieu d'analyser, de renforcer un partage entre musique savante et musique populaire qui emprunte ses oppositions à un abondant réservoir de thèmes mythiques. Au
mestizo music in relation to the music of Kurt Weill, Gershwin or Philip Glass. Hence, it can be thought that in spite of the fact that hybridization processes are inherent in musical practice, the social perception of mestizo does not refer to any kind of hybridization. This fact then leads to the issue of perception. Socially, some cases of hybridization will be perceived of as mestizo music, while in other cases, people will walk on tiptoe when referring to this reality. At most, they will speak of influences. This is a similar problem which anthropologists face when dealing with the social uses of the controversial term race. Social justification for the use of the concept of race does not lie in the genetic dimension, but in the perception people have of other groups as somatically different. That is why anthropologists also speak of social race.

Without going deeply into this question at this point, we can at least recognize the existence of the paradox, in that the idea of mestizo is not socially applied to any kind of music, and that to speak of hybridization implies something which goes much further than the problematic which surrounds the merging or fusion of merely formal elements. Hence, we must enter the complex world of meanings. There is general agreement that hybridization not only implies the inclusion of new formal elements which come from a different musical style, but that, for the public, these new elements are clearly recognizable in terms of their different origins. These new elements imply not only a shock or contrast on the formal level but also on the semantic one. It may also be interesting to pose the question of why it is that on some occasions this semantic contrast does not achieve sufficient visibility for social agents to speak of hybridization, in spite of the evidence of merging processes taking place on the formal level.

métissage s'oppose la pureté [...]”. (Hennion, 1985: 15)
Also it seem curious that we give such importance to hybridization in music (although restricted to a certain kinds of music). In fact, the hybridization phenomenon appears in every kind of cultural manifestation. We find it in culinary habits, clothing, the culture of leisure, etc. Nevertheless, it is precisely in music where people speak most about hybridization. Why do we speak so often of hybrid music but we scarcely remark on the same phenomenon in our cooking practices? Culinary or clothing habits can also possess identity traits. We speak of regional or national dishes and dress, for instance, but never to the same degree as we do about music. This leads directly to the important semantic implications of the musical hybridization processes. It also provokes us to consider the social relevance of the concept of "cultures" in an ideological ethnocratic sense. To give social importance to hybridization processes implies in some manner to pay tribute to the ideologies of culture. This does not mean, however, that we ought not to pay attention to this phenomenon, precisely because it reflects ideas with complete social relevance. However, we should take into account that:

1.) We stand in a terrain clearly marked by ideology. That is why, at the analytic level, we need to understand hybridization in the most neutral manner possible, for instance, in terms of interaction among cultural frames (Martí, 2001) rather than only in terms of interaction among cultures.

2.) Our research on the phenomenon of hybridization should be broadened and enriched to investigate its ideological components.

The aim of this paper is to present some general reflections about hybridization through some examples from the Catalan musical tradition. These reflections could be, in principle, applicable to musical traditions of other geographical areas. I will understand “hybridization” -as already said- not from the
starting point of the ethnocratic idea of culture, but from the point of view of the much more general and neutral term of cultural frames.  

Obviously, in the musical sphere, hybridization has been strongly reinforced through current globalization processes as well as through the high degree of development and improvement in the technological means of musical creation and reproduction. If, within these globalization processes, it is undeniable that the hybridization phenomenon helps to weaken identities, the opposite may be true as well. In some cases, hybridization can also assume the function of strengthening identities, as will be seen throughout this paper.

From a strictly technical point of view, hybridization processes obviously presuppose different levels of cognition and volition by social agents. But when we speak of an explicit social use, it is clear that are faced with a creative element that is fully conscious and volitional; and it is especially in these cases when we must not forget to take into account the semantic implications of these concrete formal traits which are the object of acculturation or hybridization. These semantic implications are precisely what justify these processes to social agents: i.e. the musician who stands in a certain musical stream adopts formal elements which are strange to this tradition because of the ideas which are associated with these elements, or he does so merely for aesthetic reasons: because it sounds good and/or because of suitability to certain social values. This element of signification can be of the most diverse nature: it can mean progress, prestige, classicism, etc. In this paper, I will restrict my interest to the ethnicity-semantic axis. For this reason, the examples of the Catalan musical tradition that I have chosen belong to those musical streams which, to a greater or lesser degree, have had ethnicity value conferred on them, in
particular the sardana and the movement of the Nova Cançó (Catalan New Song). These two musical genres constitute clear examples of music with ethnicity value insofar as Catalan reality is concerned. The legacy of folk music is, without any doubt, the field that most easily lends itself to the representation of ethnicity. The sardana, a choreographic-musical genre of rural origins but with an important urban character, largely owes the success of its diffusion and implantation throughout the Catalan area, to its connotations of ethnicity. The Nova Cançó, a movement that arose at the beginning of the 60's in the difficult times of Franco, was an important vehicle for the assertion of social and political claims. Certainly one of the chief claims it made at that time was on behalf of Catalan culture, persecuted by the Regime. From a literary and musical point of view, Nova Cançó owes very much to the French Chanson, to artists like Jacques Brel, Léo Ferré, Georges Brassens or Boris Vian. As distinct from the field of folk music and also generally from the sardana, the Nova Cançó is a type of song written by a known song-writer. As a genre it tries to be up to date in terms of musical and literary manifestations. From its beginnings, the Nova Cançó has been understood as something which goes much further than merely aesthetic aims: it pursues clear social and political aims as well.

As the title of this paper indicates, its content focuses on hybridization as a conveyer of meanings. I will analyze three different ways in which hybridization is manifested in the Catalan social arena: hybridization as rejection, masked hybridization and hybridization which is fully accepted and practiced because of its semantic implications.

2 Hybridization as Rejection

3 Regarding this issue see Martí, 2002.
If, as a whole, the hybridization process implies the presence of semantic elements as well as merely formal elements, we may suppose that hybridization can be the object not only of desire but also of rejection. The history of the sardana offers us an interesting example in this sense. In my previous research (Martí, 1994), I have already pointed out the fact that precisely at the moment when the sardana was acquiring traits associated with ethnicity, we find the first negative critiques of the hybridization processes that appear in the natural development of this dance.

When the current sardana first emerged in the middle of the 19th century, it was only one dance among many that were fashionable at that time in the countryside, such as the polka, waltz, Scottish dance, fox-trot, mazurka, paso dobles, etc. In keeping with the sardana's character as a popular dance, the musicians ensured that fashionable musical elements such as new rhythms and melodies, taken, for instance, from the Italian opera or Spanish zarzuela, were incorporated. So began an incipient logical hybridization process of the sardana.

This incipient hybridization process would be radically curtailed when the sardana spread throughout Barcelona and Catalonia, becoming a "national dance". At the end of the 19th century, we hear the first criticisms of the formal development of the music accompanying the sardana. Despite the fact that the polka rhythms and borrowings from Italian opera had provoked applause from the audience in earlier days, now any such foreign influences on the music were regarded as an outrage to the aesthetic of the sardana and its music. On the occasion of a cobla performance at a city festival in Barcelona in 1871, for instance, a chronicler sharply criticized the French and Italian influences that appeared in the music: "Is there no one who could rescue the sardana from the outrage which threatens it?" (Quoted in Capmany,
This change in social perception had important consequences on the formal level: the new compositions of sardana music had to remain true to the formal structures of the tradition as well as to musical scholarship. It was forbidden to use polka, paso doble or jazz rhythms; melodies with "exotic characters" or from the zarzuela were also banned. The institutions dedicated to the dissemination and preservation of the sardana and its music required musicians to correctly follow the rules of harmony and counterpoint, and they constantly reminded dancers and musicians alike that the sardana had to retain its ethnic spirit. This conservatism was reflected not only in the formal structures of the musical composition, but also in the choreography of the dance and in the formation of the musical bands. These were required, by the end of the last century, to always have the same instrumentation; and from that point on, they specialized only in Catalan ethnic music. Occasional tentative attempts at innovation in the cobla music or in the choreography of the sardana were always met with opposition; and musicians and dancers have never been able, up to the present time, to overcome such resistance. In this way, the incipient hybridization processes of the sardana were brought to a standstill.

Hybridization is associated with innovation, something very important for any kind of music that seeks to be popular. But in the case of the sardana, this semantic trait clearly clashed with the value of traditionalism, something that became increasingly important in terms of the developing ethnicizing process of the sardana. Therefore the natural process of hybridization had to be rejected.
When people believe in the concept "authenticity", which is usually considered synonymous with genuineness and purity of forms, it is not surprising that hybridization is seen as corruptive and, therefore, as a potential danger for the preservation of musical tradition. This does not mean that people do not appeal to hybridization, in the most technical sense of the term, when the elements incorporated do not carry a semantic load which enters into conflict with a given musical stream. In the introductory lines of this paper, I said that it is worth raising the question of all those cases in which the semantic collision accompanying the process of hybridization do not acquire sufficient visibility for social agents to speak of métissage.

We can find a clear case in the practices of folklorism. One of the traits that defines folklorism is precisely the mixing of different realities: the reality of the product, in this case the musical one, a traditional kind stemming from a historical context of a rural and pre-industrial nature, and the reality which belongs to current society. In the folklorized musical product, it is normal that aesthetic codes derived from oral tradition blend with codes which belong to the field of art music or to new codes which have been created within the dynamic of folklorism.

In this way cultural manifestations of a traditional kind undergo mutations on the formal, semantic and functional levels when they become the object of folklorism; and these mutations can be considered as the result of a transcultural sort of process that happens within different subsystems belonging to the same or different societies (Martí, 1996: 83). Consider as an illustration the cultural frame of the pre-industrial society, which bequeathed well-defined cultural manifestations to us such
as dances and song repertoire. Consider, too, the new cultural frame which selectively assumes this legacy, and which modifies it in a manner convenient for adapting these cultural manifestations to its own reality.

Through a process of folklorization, this traditional kind of legacy experiences, in addition to the clear semantic and functional changes it undergoes, morphological modifications which may be more or less important. These changes obey the criteria of simplification, an increment of complexity, of picturesqueness (the exaggeration of traits which are considered as typical), as well as "polishing " (the elimination in the tradition of all that which people consider anti-aesthetic or unpleasant, and the trend of pursuing technical perfection). This metamorphic process can easily lead to the situation where the resulting folkloristic product differs markedly from its original source, a fact which does not go unnoticed by many folklore specialists.

In such transformations, we have an obvious case of hybridization. Speaking of the processes of change which the music of Asian countries are undergoing because of Western influences, Alain Danielou, spoke of harmonization and polyphony as the more well-known manifestations of hybridization in music which in essence is monodic and homophonic (Danielou, 1971: 55). But it is not necessary to fall back on the contact between two such different cultural ambits as the West and the East in order to observe this sort of hybridization. It is also found within the Catalan society when, in the context of folkloristic displays, people harmonize songs that were always handled in a monodic way; when people harmonize modal tunes according to the criteria of modern tonality; when musical pieces are performed by instrumental groups which in reality emerged or belong to cultural frames that are different from the strict tradition.
The current practices of Catalan folk music offer obvious examples of this phenomenon. We need only observe, for example, the performances of traditional dances, which are no longer danced in a folk context but are performed for folkloristic shows. Well-known dances such as the ball pla, are usually accompanied by the cobla, the characteristic instrumental group for sardana. The cobla, as we know it today, assumed its present configuration in the second half of the 19th century, and was definitively consolidated at the beginning of the 20th century. Dance tunes, which in former times (when this tradition was really alive) were performed simply with the instruments which people had at hand and generally with a very limited number of musicians, are executed today with the loud volume and high-timbred character of the cobla: a musical band with twelve instruments and which generally implies a harmonic construction belonging to the art music tradition.

Most esbarts (Catalan folk dance groups) try to present the dances they perform with a minimum of historical accuracy, but nobody cares about the fact that these dances are accompanied by a group of instruments which are not the original ones, given that the current cobla configuration is not more than a century old. In this way, there are harmonic and tonal innovations which can be considered as the result of a hybridization process among different musical streams. Perhaps what is seen here can be considered as a low level case of hybridization. However, we can also speak of it as a form of hybridization which is easily accepted because its semantic implications do not clash with what people can understand as the Catalan character of these musical pieces.

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\(^4\) See, for instance, Martí, 1996: 80-81
4 Hybridization as Regeneration

If it seems logical that hybridization is rejected or ignored in the case of musical forms which are defined through their conservatism; at the same time, it does not mean that on some occasions people cannot explicitly decide on hybridization when the decline of a particular musical expression evokes a fear of its extinction. In this case hybridization should be spoken of as a regeneration option precisely because of its innovative potential.

In the field of folk-music, a concern for conservation is readily observed precisely because of the meanings socially ascribed to it. The musical repertoires of folk music acquire an intrinsic importance. That is why people speak of recovery or of regeneration when the social relevance of folk music weakens. Sometimes people can fall back on hybridization processes in the name of this regeneration, although it does not always exclude conflict precisely because the discourses about purity and authenticity are of particular importance in these kinds of repertoires. These processes are perhaps rather rare, but they can also happen. Their existence suggests one of the functions which we can assign to hybridization: regeneration.

The case of sardana constitutes a good example. Sardanism has made a symbol of the dance, and every symbol is condemned to become frozen. This fixed state is reflected in every one of the different manifestations of the dance. All attempts at innovation fail because of the sacredness of the symbolic object. This is true of in the choreography, music, instrumentation, kind of performances, titles of sardanas, etc. If, however, the sardana maintains its symbolic ethnic load, which is evidently important for Catalan society, its future as a living dance is in danger because of the
difficulties of adapting it to social changes. Interestingly, we can observe recent attempts to rescue the popularity of the *sardana* through the process of hybridization. It was in the nineties when the musician Santi Arisa and the cobla "Els Montgrins" invented the "sardanova" (the new *sardana*). They presented new *sardanas* with jazz and Caribbean rhythms, and with an altered instrumentation merging the traditional *cobla* instruments with new ones such as saxophones, electric guitars, etc. In addition they offered these new *sardanas* not only in the traditional performance places of the sardana but also in modern discotheques. This innovation however, satisfied neither most young people, who were interested in the new trends of popular music nor the regular audience of the classical *sardana*, who could not identify with the result of this hybridization.

Within the field of the folk music itself, we can also sometimes find attempts at regeneration through hybridization. For instance, during the *Festa Major* (the main local festival) of Vilafranca del Penedès, a region near Barcelona, folk dances are usually performed, with the *balls de l’àliga* (eagle dances) being the most important. These are dances which are centered on a big eagle figure carried by the dancers. The *balls de l’àliga* are composed of several short folk dances but in the last few years the organizers of the event have incorporated new choreography into the dances in which the eagle dances to twist and rock music rhythms. These new dances are much livelier than the traditional ones because the higher degree of skill demanded of the dancer is more obviously displayed. The level of difficulty of this modern hybrid version of the eagle dance is even further increased by the dancer’s having to carry

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5 The eagle is a symbolic figure which makes its appearance in Catalonia in the Middle Ages in religious popular performances. Many different Catalan localities have maintained their custom of the eagle dances, especially on the occasion of the celebration of the Corpus Christi festival as well as the main local festival.
a heavy eagle figure. In this case we can not speak of a strict hybridization in the musical sphere, because each of the different musical styles that is choreographed maintains its own personality. However, we can speak of hybridization in the performance, given that music of different character and origin are added to a whole set of dances of a traditional kind within an event which also proclaims its traditionalism. Throughout this daring innovation, what is evidently intended is to increase the public's interest in the performance.

Although the case of the balls de l’àliga of Vilafranca del Penedès is interesting, it is also logical to suppose that it constitutes a case which is not usual. In this example as well as in the sardanova, we observe the deliberate use of hybridization in order to regenerate a musical field that is already by definition and its own characteristics, extremely conservative. Precisely because of this, it would be very difficult for these hybridization processes to take hold. Within the field of the sardana in general we cannot speak of a fully successful hybridization, first because the social acceptance of these attempts is quite limited, and second, we cannot say that what constitutes the main body of the sardana world has been affected through these innovation processes. The sardanova constitutes a small bastion with an independent, or it could be said, parallel life in relation to the sardanistic core.
5 Hybridization as a Positive Value: Hybridization as Innovation

Given that hybridization is not only a fusion of the different musical elements on the morphological level but also implies meanings which depend on the specific musical stream at issue, this process inherent to the musical practice will be hindered or perhaps fostered according to whether its meanings clash with or fit the characteristics of the specific musical style as well as with the specific social moment. In the fields of folk music and the sardana, fields whose predominant values do not lie in modernity but in traditionalism, it is easy to imagine that hybridization processes will lack the necessary complicity to be fostered or that they may even cause open animosity. However other examples can be found in any socio-cultural sphere. In flamenco, the purists’ reaction of opposition to innovation processes is due to the value assigned to tradition. I have already mentioned the work of A. Danielou, which focuses on eastern music. In this case, the rejection of the hybridization process to which this music is exposed is also clearly associated with the loss in ethnic genuineness that such processes may imply.

Something different happens with musical forms where traditionalism does not constitute an important reference point. Instead, these kinds of music opt for modernity as a value not only as something positive but even as a defining trait. This is the case of popular music in general. In recent decades, especially, it is easy to observe how musical métissage is explicitly celebrated in this area of music. This attitude is, of course, in keeping with the postmodernist sensibility of avoiding essentialism and the veneration of authenticity.

Innovation is the positive trait most often associated with hybridization. This trait is extremely important in all those types of music that do not have traditionalism
as their principal defining characteristic. But besides the value of innovation, the hybridization of a particular musical stream must also be explained, on many occasions, through other sets of values associated with those types of music whose morphological metamorphosis elements have been adapted. For instance, Alain Danielou, referring to the evolution of Chinese music at the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, writes: "In fact, words such as 'harmony' and 'polyphony' have become slogans with the value of synonyms for evolved, civilized music"\(^6\).

In terms of music that has acquired an ethnicity value for Catalan culture, interesting hybridization processes are found in the sphere of the *Nova Cançó* -not in its first stage but when the *Nova Cançó* is less "new" and so must search for new expressive codes in order not to lose current importance. In the case of the *Nova Cançó*, we have a musical style which has never renounced its modernity. That is why a necessary condition for its maintenance throughout the years is, precisely, the adoption of innovations of different kinds. Hybridization is one of these mechanisms.

A clear case of the adoption of hybridization can be seen in one of the most important representatives of the *Nova Cançó*, Maria del Mar Bonet from Mallorca. The evolution of this singer is indicative of the gradual change of sensitivity in Catalan society regarding the issue of *métissage*. In the beginning of her career, the songs of Maria del Mar Bonet were clearly influenced by folk song. This was reflected in the title of her first recording, "Cançons de Menorca" (1967). She also briefly collaborated with *Grup de Folk*, a well-known folk music group in Catalonia at the time. During the 70's, the main part of her repertoire consisted of her own settings of poems, mainly of Catalan authors. In addition, she included songs of folk origin or composed according

\(^6\) "En fait les mots 'harmonie', 'polyphonie' sont devenus des slogans qui se veulent synonymes de musique évoluée, civilisée" (Danielou, 1971:57).
to traditional patterns. In the 80's Maria del Mar Bonet became more and more interested in the music of the South Mediterranean and Greece. She traveled to Tunisia, collaborated with Tunisian musicians, and published a recording ("Anells d'aigua", 1985) in which some of her songs consisted of themes of North African origin. Her interest in the Mediterranean area is also reflected in her frequent collaborations with Greek musicians and in her repertoire based on Greek themes.

Although the case of Maria del Mar Bonet is perhaps the most obvious example of hybridization within the movement of the Nova Cançó, it is not the only one. The idea of métissage is also found in the musical trajectory of other singers such as Toti Soler in attraction to flamenco; or Marina Rossell with her incorporation of musical styles stemming from the Caribbean and Mediterranean areas into her work.

The current social situation of the Catalan musical scene is very favorable to hybridization processes. In addition to the fact that these processes are aesthetic choices of interest, they are in tune with a way of thinking which positively values the métissage as the best form for preparing for a future society shaped by globalization and migratory processes. The movement of Nova Cançó has not done more than join forces with or even be in some way a forerunner of a whole set of attitudes which musically opt clearly for métissage. Besides the representatives of the Nova Cançó already mentioned, Catalan popular music does not exactly lack groups with clearly hybrid repertoires and names which very often also directly allude to métissage: this is the case, for instance, of the group Mesclat ("mixed") whose repertoire which is characterized by a hybridization between folk and rock. Pomada (the name alludes to a popular alcoholic drink in which a variety of ingredients are mixed) is a group that performs pieces of different origin, such as: techno-folk, cumbia, cajun, scratches, hip-
hop folk, etc. Another especially popular group is Dusminguet. This group, created in the middle of the 90's, is currently one of the Catalan groups with the greatest broadest outreach. They have incorporated North African musical elements in their repertoire and the members of this group have even recorded in Xaouen (which is located in the Moroccan Rif) collaborating with local musicians. People speak of Dusminguet as "mestissatge mediterrani" ("Mediterranean métissage") (Cruz, 1999).

The current importance of this musical sensibility clearly predisposed toward hybridization can also be seen in the Mercat de Música Viva de Vic ("Market for live music in Vic"), one of the main events of the Catalan popular musical scene. In the year 2000, it was the site for the meeting of the European Forum Worldwide Music Festival. According to the artistic director of the fair, "World music and métissage are gaining ground compared to rock". This is also clearly stated in the policies of the event:

In the sphere of the World Music we have chosen a more mestizo and modern way rather than groups which do more anthropological work.

Returning to the Nova Cançó, although strictly speaking, musical hybridization is not always present in the work of all the contemporary representatives of this movement, in one way or another most pay lip service to the celebration of métissage. Joan Manel Serrat, for instance, presents himself as an "hijo del mestizaje cultural catalán" ("son of the Catalan cultural métissage"):

[Joan Manel Serrat] is the most successful example of cultural métissage from Catalonia at the current time, his father, Catalan and an anarchist; his mother,

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7 See, for instance, her recording Y rodará el mundo (2000).
8 Interview with Carles Sala on the occasion of the 12 edition of the Mercat de Música viva de Ví, «Enderock» 60, 2000, Suplement (unnumbered pages)
9 "En l’òrbita de les músiques del món, nosaltres hem optat per una via més mestissa i moderna, i no pels grups que fan un treball més antropològic" (Cruz, 2001)
Aragonese. He is left wing embracing all projects involving solidarity and progress.\

And in one of his most important recent recitals (Germanies) Lluís Llach, the Nova Cançó representative with the greatest commitment to Catalan nationalism, wanted to sing with the well-known Cuban singer, Lucrecia, who is living in Barcelona. In the words of the organizers of this recital: "While the singing of Llach symbolized the present, Lucrecia was a symbol for the future: the integration of cultures."\

Without any doubt, the idea of métissage is currently fashionable on the Catalan popular culture scene. This is seen not only in musical practice but also in the opinions expressed by street culture researchers. For instance, in a recently published article, Bienve Moya, a highly knowledgeable researcher into Catalan popular culture, spoke of the socially beneficial cultural métissage which has been produced in traditional cultural practice of recent years (Moya, 2001: 7). In this article, Bienve Moya makes frequent allusions to the positive values of métissage. Moreover he does not avoid criticizing the fundamentalist tendencies of some immigrants in certain cultural associations or certain circles within the sphere of Catalan traditional culture (Moya, 2001: 10) that demonstrate essentialist, conservative tendencies. He ends the article saying:

And above all, we must realize that métissage is only possible when it springs from forms which are alive, spontaneous, dynamic and socially prestigious; never from an essentialist will, from more or less biased interests, but through universalistic needs and volition.

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10 "[Joan Manel Serrat] Es el modelo de mestizaje cultural más acabado que ha dado la Cataluña actual: padre catalán y anarquista, madre aragonesa, él, hombre de izquierdas que abraza todos los proyectos solidarios y de progreso." (Díaz: 2001)

11 "Llach va interpretar el cant al present. La cantant Lucrecia simbolitzava el futur: el de la integració de les cultures." (Blay, 2000: 53)

12 "I, per damunt de tot, cal tenir en compte que el mestissatge només és possible a partir de formes vives, espontànies, dinàmiques i amb prestigi social, mai a partir de voluntats essencialistes, mai a partir de conveniències, més o menys interessades, sinó a través de necessitats i voluntats universalistes." (Moya, 2001: 12)
The increasingly frequent examples of musical hybridization are due, in large measure to an increased social sensitivity to and celebration of the mestizo. In Catalonia, especially from the decade of the 90's, the word *mestissatge*—with clearly positive connotations—appears in publicity and commentary about concerts. The enthusiasm is displayed with an unprecedented intensity. Hybridization constitutes a logical process of musical change, and it is also always indicative of a given social situation. Today, hybridization is clearly recognized as a trait of modernity.

6 When Hybridization takes on Ethnicity Connotations

Musical hybridization may serve an idea, the idea of *métissage*. Yet, this does not mean that we should always speak of a more or less fortuitous *métissage*. Sometimes what is pursued is the ideal of a determined cultural space which, while transcending the limited borders of a small country, in our case Catalonia, does not lack some ethnicity connotations. *Mediterraneanness* is precisely that idea which permits the crossing of these narrow territorial borders without the loss of certain identity traits. The Mediterranean, which is expressed by some singers in the form of musical hybridization and in others simply as an ideal or reference point, already possesses an undeniable importance in the Catalan popular music scene of the final decades of the 20th century. Also, here we find a paradigmatic example in the case of Maria del Mar Bonet. In this Mallorcan singer we observe the very conscious adoption of hybridization not only as an innovation as has already been discussed but also as a vehicle of the idea of Mediterraneanness.
Very frequently, Maria del Mar Bonet has been called the "Gran dama de la cançó mediterrània" ("Grande Dame of Mediterranean song")\textsuperscript{13}. On the occasion of her collaboration with Mikis Theodorakis, Maria del Mar Bonet demonstrated her interest in "learning as much as possible about the music of the whole Mediterranean area: of Greeks, Italians, Turks, Tunisians, Moroccans... Because it is a way to esteem their culture in which I'm very interested. I would like to learn their songs, show respect and demonstrate that here too we belong to this cultural Mediterranean so beautiful and with so much \textit{métissage}, like in Mallorca [...]\textsuperscript{14}.

This Mallorcan singer speaks not only of \textit{métissage} but also of the common roots shared by the Mediterranean people:

...one of my aims has always been to gradually get to know all Mediterranean songs. I'm aware that I will never know all the songs, and nor would I if I were to live seven lives, but I'll try to do it, because when I began to perform songs of Mallorca and Menorca I realized that there were many common roots in a lot of songs which I have listened to, not only in the Mediterranean that is near but also farther and farther away\textsuperscript{15}.

In 1982, Maria del Mar Bonet recorded \textit{Cançons de la nostra Mediterrània} with the Valencian group \textit{Al Tall}, whose members, speaking about the \textit{Països Catalans} (Catalan speaking geographical area), stated that

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\textsuperscript{13} Cfr.http://www.publicacions.bcn.es/bmm/53/ct_cronica.htm. [Stand: 2001]. It seems revealing that in many articles of the press which refer to the activities of this singer, there seems to be an obligatory reference to the \textit{Mediterraneanness} from her music. See, for instance: \textit{Maria del Mar Bonet: el alma mediterránea se convirtió en voz} (Villena, 1982: 20-21); \textit{Maria del Mar Bonet canta al Mediterráneo en Madrid} (Torres, 1982: 34); \textit{Marina Rossell y Maria del Mar Bonet trajeron los aromas del Mediterráneo} (Parra, 1983: 21); \textit{Maria del Mar Bonet. La Mediterrània mestiza} (Vilarnau, 1999: 18-25).

\textsuperscript{14} "aprender el que jo pugui amb la música de tota la Mediterrània: grecs, italians, turcs, tunisencs, marroquins... Perquè és la manera d'estimar la seva cultura, que m'interessa profundament. Aprendre les seves cançons i respectar-les, i demostrar que aquí també formam part d'aquesta Mediterrània cultural tan bella i amb tants mestissatges com hi ha hagut a Mallorca [...]". (Quoted in Manresa, 1992: 112)

\textsuperscript{15} "una de les meves pretensions de sempre és conèixer a poc a poc totes les cançons de la Mediterrània, ja sé que totes no les podré conèixer mai, ni que visqués set vides, però ho intentaré sempre, perquè en començar cantant cançons de Mallorca i de Menorca em vaig adonar que hi havia arrels comunes en moltes cançons que he anat escoltant, no només a la nostra més pròxima Mediterrània, sinó també més i més enllà". Text found in the program of a Bonet's Recital
... we must take into account not only this geographical framework, because if the ambit of our language is the Països Catalans, the ambit of our musical language is the wide Mediterranean\textsuperscript{16}.

The recording \textit{Cançons de la nostra Mediterrània} is considered as a "treball d'afirmació de mediterraneïtat i de Països Catalans" ("a work of affirming Mediterraneanness and the Països Catalans") (Manresa, 1992: 72). Once people speak in this way about identity, it is easy progress to the assertion of claims. At the moment, such remarks appear to be restricted to a critique of the lack of attention given to Mediterranean music in the media, which are clearly dominated by Anglo-Saxon products:

Is it that Greece, Tunisia, Italy, Turkey have nothing which can break this almost exclusively Anglo-American presence?\textsuperscript{17}

Lluís Llach and Marina Rosell, for instance, also often include repertoire or allusions to this idealized Mediterranean. Reflecting a similar attitude, Joan Manel Serrat called one of his best known recordings: \textit{Mediterràneo}. It has been said that Catalonia stands with its back to Spain and its face towards the sea, towards the Mediterranean. This may also be observed in the evolution of the singers of the \textit{Nova Cançó}.

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which had taken place in Barcelona, in 1992. (Quoted in Manresa, 1992: 113)
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{16} "I no sols ens hem de referir a aquest marc geogràfic [el territorio de lengua catalana], perquè així com l'àmbit del nostre idioma és el dels Països Catalans, l'àmbit del nostre llenguatge musical és l'ampla Mediterrània". (Quoted in Manresa, 1992: 70)

\textsuperscript{17} "És que Grècia, Tunísia, Itàlia, Turquia... no tenen res que pugui trencar aquesta gairebé única presència anglo-americana?". Words said by Maria del Mar Bonet at the public presentation of the recording \textit{Anells d'Aigua} (1985) which she produced in collaboration with the \textit{Ensemble de Musique Traditionelle} of Tunisia. (Quoted in Manresa, 1992: 117)
Hybridization as Transgression

We have seen that in the realm of Catalan music, hybridization can mean, technically, somewhat more than innovation. Hybridization can also transmit the idea of Mediterraneanness. However there is also another idea which, although perhaps less relevant, should be taken into account: hybridization as transgression. There is no doubt that the fact that Toti Soler, one of the representatives of the *Nova Cançó*, incorporated elements from flamenco into his particular style at the beginning of the 80's constituted a certain transgression. In spite of the fact that the Catalan social sensitivity towards flamenco has now changed to a certain degree, this style of musical has traditionally had negative connotations for a large part of Catalan society. This is largely due to the *Spanishness* that has always been ascribed to flamenco. Although this phenomenon was expressed in a very pronounced manner during the Franco Regime, in fact, it was present earlier. That a representative of the *Nova Cançó* a form aligned with Catalanism, dared to enter the flamenco world must have seemed amazing. We should not forget the strong commitment of the *Nova Cançó* to the Catalan culture and language. Considering this, the fact that some of the members of the movement also chose at a certain point to sing in Spanish and not only in Catalan (as in the case of Joan Manel Serrat, Guillermina Motta or Núria Feliu) it is hardly surprising that these artists were attacked by other singers and followers who felt betrayed.

Some years after the innovative move towards flamenco by Toti Soler, singers such as Maria del Mar Bonet, Marina Rosell or Lluís Llach, also showed signs, in their performance, of the increasing social acceptance of flamenco in Catalonia. While hybridization may not always be observed in the technical sense of the concept in their music, these artists have

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18 Already in the 19th century, the main arguments against flamenco in Catalonia were the licentious character which people ascribed to performances as well the danger involved for the local cultural identity. Such were, of course, commonly brandished arguments against many more musical and dance streams which came from abroad. But the animosity against flamenco by some part of Catalan society grew as flamenco -especially throughout the 20th century- was more and more identified with Spanishness. (Martí, 1996: 184-185; See also: Cobo, 2000)
openly collaborated with flamenco singers or dancers. The result is that flamenco is seen today in a much more positive light than it was two decades ago, but it still does not always find a receptive audience. For example, even Marina Rossell, who collaborated with the Catalanian-born flamenco singer Mayte Martin to give a recital described as an "exemple de mestisatge cultural" ("example of cultural métissage")\(^{19}\), felt obliged to emphasize the fact that "flamenco is from Catalonia like the music of Frederic Mompou" (Mompou is a well-known Catalan composer)\(^{20}\). Lluís Llach has not made attempts to hybridize his music with flamenco elements but it is also very revealing that he felt the need to justify the recital which he gave with the flamenco dancer Cristina Hoyos before his fans. Hoyos had choreographed several dances to music by Llach, who performed them himself on stage\(^{21}\). In a press conference before the performance, Lluís Llach said:

> If a fan accuses me of being unfaithful, this means that s/he has not followed me well. I am nationalistic, in a sense that stems from respect and openness toward all that comes from elsewhere. We are speaking of two cultures [Catalan and Andalusian] which mingled centuries ago and which, in this last century, have done so in an impressive way [...]\(^{22}\).

It should also be noted that the inclusion of musical elements from the Maghrebi world by Maria del Mar Bonet in her song repertoire aroused some suspicion among her fans. That there is prejudice in Spain against the Arab culture of North Africa is well-known, and Catalonia is by no means an exception. But the strong resolve of the Mallorcan singer to incorporate these hybridization elements into her music, which she has justified by arguing that Mallorcan culture also has a lot of African influence throughout its history, and that this

\(^{19}\)Garcia-Soler, 1996: 214 It was the recital given in the 90's *Encontre de què* (Cfr. Garcia-Soler, 1996: 214)  

\(^{20}\)"el flamenc és tan música d'aquí com la de Frederic Mompou". (Quoted in García-Soler, 1996: 214).  

\(^{21}\)Festival del Milenio, Barcelona, 2000.  

\(^{22}\)"Si algun seguidor meu em titlla d'infidel és que no m'ha seguit bé. Jo sóc nacionalista, sempre des del respecte i l'obertura a tot el que ve de fora. Estem parlant de dues cultures que s'estan barrejant des de fa segles i en aquest últim ho han fet d'una manera épatant". [http://www.fut.es/~mvc/lluisllach/destacat4.htm](http://www.fut.es/~mvc/lluisllach/destacat4.htm) [Stand: 2001]. (Quoted in Martínez, 2001).
culture is important to Mediterraneanness, has resulted in the complete acceptance and indubitable success of her musical aesthetic.

8 Conclusions

This paper has emphasized the fact that hybridization presupposes innovation. The fact that a musical stream incorporates new aesthetic codes through hybridization obviously implies a new image for that music. This mechanism assures the presence of a progressive element which is so important for every kind of music which does not regard itself as conservative. Nevertheless, we have to distinguish this trait from the attitude that regards métissage as a positive value. It is not exactly the same. This attitude can be take as an innovation in itself when it arises in a milieu in which the implicit or explicit values of stylistic purity and authenticity have been predominant up to that moment. However this attitude obviously loses its innovative character after a certain time. In the current Catalan popular music scene, the idea of métissage is a flag that is being flown today; and although the ideational basis supporting it points to its social relevance, it is hardly surprising that the label is gradually losing its appeal. In the musical sphere, it is not surprising that people reject certain labels because they do not imply modernity any more. This happens, for instance, with the ascription New Age. At the present time many musicians renounce this title; although from the stylistic point of view, such musical creations can still be considered as New Age music. The métissage flag, too, has recently begun to show this trend. The members of the Catalan music group Dusminguet, for instance, although they are still considered champions of métissage, are clearly uncomfortable with this label: "They absolutely do not like to be labeled as a mestizo group" a journalist who interviewed
them wrote recently. This does not mean that they renounce hybridization, given that this stylistic quality is, in fact, integral to their music. But they generalize this fact through statements like:

Nowadays it is true that métissage is in fashion but perhaps the question is: which music is not the product of contact between diverse cultures, that is to say, mestizo? In a living expression that is in constant motion like music, purity is a fallacy.

In this paper I have outlined different attitudes towards hybridization. We observed, for example, the explicit rejection of hybridization in the case of the sardana when it was in a phase of consolidation as a musical and ethnic referent for Catalanness. We also noted the mixing of expressive codes drawn from oral tradition and from academic music in the phenomenon of folklorism; in this case, the presence of hybridization was not explicitly recognized because this recognition was not socially relevant. And lastly we observed the acceptance of hybridization because of various connotations it implied (innovation, Mediterraneanness, transgression). In all these cases, we find a direct relationship between strictly musical practices -the merging or rejection of mixing different stylistic codes- with concrete meanings that have special relevance for the semantic ethnicity axis.

Hybridization turns out to be attractive not only because of its innovation implications but also because of the semantic connotation which goes further. In its origins the Nova Cançó represented not only an aesthetic choice but also a social commitment against all that the Franco dictatorship stood for. The situation in Spain during the decades of democracy has changed, but people do not think this is a reason for the movement of the Nova Cançó to renounce its social commitment. Nowadays, an important focus of this social commitment is problems associated with immigration, such as xenophobia, the integration or the socially unfair situation of immigrants. In the words of Marina Rossell, for instance:

23 "Del que no volen sentir parlar perquè els patina a la pell és de l'etiqueta de grup mestís". (Tous, 2000: 24)

24 "Ara resulta que això del mestissatge és el que es porta i potser la pregunta és: quina música no és fruit de diverses cultures, o sigui, mestissa? La puresa en una expressió viva i en constant moviment com la música és una fal·làcia." (Tous, 2000: 24)
Xenophobia is the most important international conflict of this century, but the heterogeneous human landscape is sentenced to get along together; if not, then chaos, catastrophe will follow.

At the margin of the *Nova Cançó movement*, again recall the group *Dusminguet* that justified one of the reasons for their approaching to music of the Maghreb in the following way:

In Garriga [group's locality] there have been Moroccans for a long time, and their culture has always interested us. We understand, in part, our going to Morocco in order to record as a form of deference. Immigrants are in Catalonia, so we also want to know their country and their people.

All these examples point to musical hybridization as something more than a mere aesthetic option: it is a stylistic choice which stands in complete correspondence with the current social sensitivity towards a disturbing problem. It is a choice which in any case is always considered by the social players as something that goes far beyond fashion; as something that -as I already emphasized at the beginning of this paper- is even integral to the musical practice. In words of the singer Marina Rossell: "no culture has evolved without hybridization".

References


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25 "La xenofobia es el conflicto internacional más importante de este siglo, pero el paisaje heterogéneo humano está condenado a entenderse; de lo contrario, desembocará el caos, la catástrofe". (Mejia, 1994).

26 "A la Garriga hi ha marroquins des de fa anys, i la seva cultura sempre ens ha interessat. El fet d'anar a gravar al Marroc l'entenem, en part, com una deferència. Si els immigrants estan a Catalunya, a nosaltres també ens venia de gust conèixer el seu país i la seva gent". (Quoted in Sputnik, 2000: 17).

27 "Ninguna cultura ha evolucionado sin el mestizaje". (Mejia, 1994). See also the statement in this sense of the group *Dusminguet* which was reproduced in footnote 24 of this paper.


