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Echoes of a Generation:

A Multimodal Analysis on Grunge as A Means of Cultural
Expression in Pearl Jam's and Timoria's Music

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*“Qualcosa di mio lo lascerò
in questo mio tempo”*

A mio nonno Bruno

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ABSTRACT

In both the USA and Italy, the 1990s have been an ambiguous decade in terms of politics, society and culture: on the one hand, the decade was characterized by the rise of the Internet, new musical genres, and cultural trends; on the other hand, following the prosperous 1980s, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of Cold War, the new decade began with economic instability, political upheaval, corruption scandals, and episodes of violence and terrorism, all of which contributed to a widespread sense of uncertainty. This restless atmosphere greatly affected the younger generation, the so-called Generation X (Klosterman, 2022: 9), who started feeling disillusioned and disconnected from the society they lived in. Struggling with alienation and lack of motivation, younger people felt abandoned by society. In response, the powerful but short-lasting grunge movement emerged (Chaney, 2024): originating in Seattle, the genre quickly became a global phenomenon that gave voice to the angst and confusion of a generation adrift.

The present study focuses on the multimodal critical discourse analysis of the musical output from two pivotal bands in grunge movement: Pearl Jam from the USA and Timoria from Italy. By analyzing their work, the aim of the research is to reveal the bands' commitment to articulate the struggles of their contemporaries. This study makes use of two different methodological approaches to analyze two different kinds of materials: Norman Fairclough's (1995, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis framework will be applied to the analysis of the lyrics of Pearl Jam's song "Even Flow" and Timoria's song "Senza vento", while Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault's (2006) framework for Phasal Analysis will be employed to examine the music videos for Pearl Jam's "Jeremy" and Timoria's "Sangue impazzito". Through these analyses, the thesis highlights how these songs and music videos represent the grunge genre, as they provide a harsh criticism on social inequalities and serve as a voice of the worries and anxieties of 'Gen-Xers'.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest civilizations, music has always been a quintessential part of human life. This art form has changed and evolved in time, reflecting the vast spectrum of human experiences and emotions “from the earliest forms of vocal expression to the complex symphonies and digital compositions of the present day” (<https://medium.com/@creativeflexee/brief-records-of-tune-from-origins-to-the-present-day-4fc337ab3750>). Nowadays, not only is music a “necessary part of our routine”, but is also a powerful and effective medium through which language and culture is taught, as it impacts fashion, encourages human connections, “creates controversy and progressive positivity” and helps shaping identities and personalities (Ford, 2020). Additionally, music proves to have an impact on human emotions and wellness, as neurological studies show that “music improves the body’s immune system and reduces stress”, “reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol”, and can “help patients dealing with pain, depression and possibly even Alzheimer’s disease” (Novotney, 2013).

One of the most significant aspects regarding music, however, is its ability to convey cultural expression. In fact, throughout the years, music has always been a powerful mouthpiece for social, political, and cultural situations, issues and changes, articulating voices of generations – especially the younger ones – who tried to spread their message by reflecting and responding to the challenges of their time (<https://www.couturemedia.ca/from-protests-to-popularity-the-enduring-influence-of-music-on-culture-and-society/>). In the 1960s, for example, music served as a mighty vehicle for artists to “address [...] the social and political issues of the day”, as the decade saw the rise of “several important protest movements” such as the anti-Vietnam War Movement, the Civil Rights Movement and Women’s Liberation Movement (Bliss, 2023); to cite an emblematic song to represent each movement, the first one is epitomized by Bob Dylan’s 1963 folk belter “Masters of War”, the second one by James Brown’s 1968 anthem for Black Power “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud)”, and the third one by Aretha Franklin’s 1967 feminist symbol song “Respect” (*ibid.*).

Another example is constituted by the 1980s that saw the birth of new music genres such as new wave, punk rock and hip hop, which “became the voices of the disenfranchised youth” and “for marginalized communities” (https://newretro.net/blogs/main/the-impact-of-80s-music-on-political-movements?srsId=AfmBOopEXdnhiGJ__At2bwG4TbxHiIM1oReqLbQiEuZ03-t69L3VnS_H): punk artists like The Ramones, The Clash and Sex Pistols “used their music to challenge the status quo and advocate for social justice”, new wave groups such as Depeche Mode and The Smiths used “catchy and often danceable tunes” to “address[...] issues such as governmental oppression and societal alienation”, and hip hop stars like Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five “didn’t shy away from discussing poverty, police brutality and systemic racism” (*ibid.*).

The important role of music as a representative of the worries and feelings of the younger generations also continued in the following decade, the 1990s. Worldwide, this decade was characterized by an intense ambivalence: on the one hand, the end of the Cold War, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, ushered in a period of apparent “respite”, characterized by “relative peace and prosperity, free of the geopolitical, existential angst that came before and since” (Freedland, 2017). As a matter of fact, the 1990s were the time when the European Union was born, the USA elected a Democratic President after a 12-year-long period of Republican administration, apartheid ended in South Africa and Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed peace agreements, all of which created a widespread sense of calm (Latini, 2019). What is more, the 1990s were also marked by the birth of the technological era thanks to the introduction of the World Wide Web (Klosterman, 2022: 139); on the other hand however, the 1990s initiated a time of political unrest, economic instability and unexpected threats that contradicted the alleged optimistic and peaceful time: in fact, war persisted in states like Iraq, Kuwait and the Balkans (Freedland, 2017), the African state of Rwanda was left scarred by a horrific genocide that was ignored by other nations (*ibid.*) and Italy witnessed a time of political scandal and corruption that went down in history as *Tangentopoli* (<https://www.ilpost.it/2022/02/17/tangentopoli-personaggi/>), together with some of the most terrible acts of organized crime that saw the death of noteworthy figures such as magistrates Paolo Borsellino and Giovanni Falcone (Ferro, 2021). This stream of spreading violence did not spare even the major

global powers like the USA, which witnessed the birth of international and domestic terrorism during two horrific events, namely the 1993 World Trade Center attack and the 1995 Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing (Klosterman, 2022: 73-75; 249-251).

As a consequence, this dualism that characterized the decade was also expressed musically. From one perspective, there was the “carefree and fun explosion” of the “never fail[ing] to sell” pop, a lighthearted genre that tried to distract its listeners from a harsher reality by celebrating amusement and escapism with fun tunes, such as those by Backstreet Boys, NSYNC, Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and The Spice Girls (<https://www.soundoflife.com/blogs/mixtape/90s-music-trends>); from the other perspective, there was grunge, “a movement of the disillusioned and cynical” (*ibid.*) that “delved into themes of alienation, disillusionment, and social commentary” through the music of bands such as Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains and Soundgarden (Chaney, 2024).

The present thesis focuses on this latter genre and its outputs, trying to frame grunge as a means of socio-cultural expression that embodies the angst and disenchantment of the 1990s’ younger generation, namely the so-called Generation X (Klosterman, 2022: 9). In particular, the study focuses on the work of two essential bands that belong to the grunge genre, that are Pearl Jam and Timoria. These two bands are, respectively, American and Italian, and both of them have been extremely influential in their own musical scene: while the formers were one of the “Big 4” of grunge, in other words, the pioneers of the genre, together with Alice in Chains, Nirvana and Soundgarden (Baran, 2020), the latter were those who demonstrated that alternative rock, including grunge, could be sung and be successful also in Italian, paving the way for other Italian bands to emerge (Pedrini, 2018: 22). Through their work, the two bands have put into music the worries and uncertainty of their contemporaries, analyzing the societies they lived in with a critical eye and creating pieces of art that have gone down in history as anthems of a lost generation: examples of the bands’ music creations are Pearl Jam’s “Even Flow” and “Jeremy”, two songs taken from their debut album “Ten” that, respectively, criticize the issue of homelessness and the one of gun violence (Rietmulder, 2018; Dotto, 2014), and Timoria’s “Senza vento” and “Sangue impazzito”, two songs taken from the band’s

fourth album “Viaggio senza vento” that, respectively, focus on the younger people’s rebellion against a dull society and on a social criticism regarding the stigma drug addicts and, in general, youngsters receive (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021). This thesis will analyze these four sources, particularly the lyrics for “Even Flow” and “Senza vento” and the videos for “Jeremy” and “Sangue impazzito”: the aim is to uncover how the two bands address social and cultural issues in both written and visual ways, offering critical insights on social inequalities. By doing so, the study will highlight the significance of grunge not merely as a musical genre, but as a broader and powerful socio-cultural movement and medium of free expression.

Several studies have already explored the topic of grunge music in general and its contribution in socio-cultural expression. Much of the existing literature focuses on the historical and cultural aspects of grunge, detailing its rise and fall, its mainstream appeal, its impact on fashion, and its roots in the punk movement (Grossman, 1996; Prato, 2009; Edgerton Stafford, 2018; Yarm, 2011). Scholar Catherine Strong (2016) framed grunge as “the music that defined ‘Generation X’”, analyzing its “relationship between media, memory and music fans” and highlighting its power in voicing the struggles of the younger people at the time, who were “asking questions about their place in the world and the way society is organized”. In addition, Strong (2011) shed light on a less recognized and almost forgotten side of grunge music, the one produced by female groups and performers such as Courtney Love, wife of Nirvana’s singer Kurt Cobain. Maxim W. Furek (2008) took a different approach, contextualizing grunge within a darker context by examining its psychological and sociological dimensions, together with those of the goth movement, and suggesting that these genres played a role in the deaths of several personalities such as Andrew Wood, Kurt Cobain and River Phoenix. As for Pearl Jam, most academic attention has been devoted to the band’s history, lyrics and the philosophical aspects of their music (Moretti and Villa, 2016; Dotto, 2014; Marino and Schembari, 2021). Timoria, on the other hand, has received less scholarly focus, as the only in-depth analysis of the band is found in a study that explores the meaning of the songs included in their fourth album, “Viaggio senza vento” (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021); however, former guitarist Omar Pedrini has often mentioned the band in two additional books, his own 2018 book and the one co-authored with Federico Scarioni in 2017.

Regarding the selected material, the four songs have received limited bibliographic attention. The song “Even Flow” has been discussed mainly in terms of its origins and general topic (Clay, 1991; Dotto, 2014; Moretti and Villa, 2016; Rietmulder, 2018), with sources attributing the song as a key factor in solidifying Pearl Jam’s reputation as more than just “one-hit grunge rock wonders” (<https://www.allmusic.com/song/even-flow-mt0003618485>). Regarding “Jeremy”, research has not only been conducted on the song’s underlying context and meaning (Dotto, 2014; Uitti, 2023) but also on its music video (Grierson, 2022; Hyden, 2022), which has been object of scandal after its publication due to the subject addressed and, for this reason, has led to make further considerations on how it could have possibly influenced school shooters (Wenger, 2016). As for the two songs by Timoria, “Senza vento” has been described as a manifesto of the Italian grunge scene and as a cry for a hopeless generation (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021: 16-17), “who dreams and screams its desire for freedom”¹ (D’Onofrio, 2022), and “Sangue impazzito” has been characterized as a “prayer” (from Italian “*preghiera*”, Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021: 24), and a “poetic” grunge “ballad” (from Italian “*poetica*” and “*ballata*”, D’Onofrio, 2022).

Despite these descriptions, previous studies have largely overlooked a more critical analysis of the lyrics of “Even Flow” and “Senza vento”, as well as a visual interpretation of the images portrayed in the “Jeremy” and “Sangue impazzito” music videos. For this reason, the present study seeks to fill that gap by applying two multimodal critical frameworks to analyze these sources and discover every nuance of the two bands’ criticism against social issues and disparities. In particular, the present examination makes use of Fairclough’s (1995, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis framework in order to analyze the lyrics for “Even Flow” and “Sangue impazzito” and Baldry and Thibault’s (2006) framework for Phasal Analysis to dissect and interpret the “Jeremy” and “Sangue impazzito” videos, which will also be visually dissected and provided in the form of tables following the scholars’ Multimodal Transcription technique.

The current thesis is organized in Six Chapters. **Chapter One** provides an overview of the historical and political events, as well as socio-cultural highlights with

¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*che sogna e urla la sua voglia di libertà*”.

a specific focus on music, that marked the USA and Italy in the 1990s, providing the necessary context for understanding the material examined later. **Chapter Two and Three** consist of an in-depth description of the two bands under analysis, Pearl Jam in the former and Timoria in the latter, outlining the groups' histories, discographies and song themes, popularity, and their production of merchandise that focused on social issues. **Chapter Four** delves into the description of the specific material analyzed in this study and of the chosen methodology of analysis, also providing the criteria used for their selection. **Chapter Five and Six** present the results of the multimodal analyses conducted on the chosen material, respectively the ones following the Critical Discourse Analysis in the former and those following the Phasal Analysis in the latter, then including a Discussion section at the end of each Chapter. Finally, some **Conclusions** will be drawn, with a remark on the limitations of the study and some suggestions for further studies.

Another relevant Section included in this thesis is the Appendix, which is divided into three subsections, namely A, B, and C. Firstly, Appendix A contains an exclusive interview with former Timoria guitarist, singer and songwriter Omar Pedrini, whom I had the incredible opportunity to interview on July 19th this year: during the interview, Omar revealed information regarding the social and musical environment of the Italian 1990s, the challenges young musicians like Timoria had to face during the time, the coming of grunge in Italy and its impact on their music, and some curiosities about the “Sangue impazzito” music video, the cover of “Viaggio senza vento”, and regarding merchandise. Secondly, Appendix B includes the Multimodal Transcription Tables of the two videos analyzed in Chapter Six, together with a list of abbreviations and symbols used in the dissection of the videos. Finally, the lyrics of the songs analyzed in Chapter Five and those of the songs analyzed as videos in Chapter Six are reported in Appendix C.

CHAPTER ONE

A Historical and Socio-Cultural Overview of the 1990s in the USA and in Italy

When reflecting upon the 1990s, what comes to mind is a general sense of change. The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th, 1989, and the end of the Cold War had triggered a chain of positive events that, indeed, have changed the current worldwide situation, as Latini (2019) wrote:

In 1990 Germany was reunified after forty years and Margaret Thatcher resigned; in 1991 the Soviet Union fell; in 1992 the Maastricht Treaty sanctioned the birth of the European Union and Bill Clinton, the first Democratic U.S. president in 12 years, was elected; between 1990 and 1994 Nelson Mandela was liberated and apartheid ended in South Africa, in 1993 the peace agreements between Israel and Palestine took place in Oslo, and Italy experienced the *Mani Pulite* inquest and the end of the First Republic².

Overall, although conflict situations such as the Persian Gulf War or the Rwandan Civil War and genocide scarred some countries, this decade is remembered as relatively calm and full of progress, especially from a socio-technological point of view thanks to the new means of connectivity: in fact, the coming of the World Wide Web paved the way to a new era of faster and always-at-hand information and communication, heralding the dawn of the information age (Klosterman, 2022: 139). Culturally, it was the time when grunge and hip-hop dictated fashion, following the idles of the time such as Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Tupac and Notorious B.I.G. (*ibid.*, 33-52), when at the cinemas one could see “Titanic”, “La Vita È Bella” and the new Star Wars movie “The Phantom Menace” (*ibid.*, 233; 243; Zoppello, 2024), and when shows such as “Seinfeld”, “Friends” and “Dawson’s Creek” kept companies in the evening (Igoe and Wong, 2024; Sirtori, 2024).

² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *nel 1990 la Germania riunita dopo quarant'anni, le dimissioni di Margaret Thatcher; nel 1991 la dissoluzione dell'Unione sovietica; nel 1992 il Trattato di Maastricht che sanciva la nascita dell'Unione Europea e l'elezione di Bill Clinton, primo presidente statunitense Democratico dopo 12 anni; tra il 1990 e il 1994 la liberazione di Nelson Mandela e la fine dell'apartheid in Sud Africa, gli accordi di pace a Oslo tra Israele e Palestina nel 1993, e in Italia la stagione di Mani Pulite e la fine della Prima Repubblica.*

The present Chapter provides an outline in terms of historical and political events and socio-cultural highlights, with particular attention to musical production, of the last decade of the twentieth century, more specifically, in the USA and in Italy. This will serve as the basis to know in which contexts the materials that will be later analyzed have been produced.

1.1 The American Landscape of the '90s: Political Shifts, Global Challenges and Cultural Impact

1.1.1 From Bush and Clinton Presidencies to the Terrorist Threat: The American Political Situation

In the 1990s, two men belonging to the two different parties succeeded each other in the presidency of the United States: first, from 1989 to 1993 came Republican George H. W. Bush, then Democrat Bill Clinton won two terms in office, making his presidency last from 1993 to 2001 (<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-presidents-timeline>).

During the Bush administration, two major domestic legislation acts were ratified, the former being the 1990 Disability Act, “which forbade discrimination based on disability in employment, public accommodations, and transportation”, and the latter being the 1990 Clean Air Act, which “focused on three aspects of clean air [, namely] reducing urban smog, curbing acid rain, and eliminating industrial emissions of toxic chemicals” (Knott, 2023a). Nevertheless, what the 41st President is mostly remembered for is what he did for the American foreign affairs, including bringing America to the end of the Cold War (Knott, 2023b). This was a period of “insane antagonism” between the USA and the Soviet Union that started after the end of World War II in 1945, “with the division of Germany and the establishment of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe”, and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Mason, 1996: ix). What happened during this period of tension was a “dangerous struggle for supremacy between two superpowers” (Blakemore, 2022) that were trying to outdo each other in several branches, such as in the nuclear weaponry primacy or in the dominance of the space race, that never actually turned into an open warfare, and for this reason it was given the connotation of ‘cold’. George H. W. Bush was the last President to be involved in the Cold War, given that he was sworn in in the same year

in which the Berlin Wall fell. What Bush managed to achieve during this last period was an improvement in relations with the soon-to-retire Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, as Knott (2023b) states:

In a December 1989 summit between Bush and Gorbachev in Malta, the two leaders discussed arms reductions and strengthening their relations. At a summit in Washington, D.C., in June 1990, the two men signed a broad arms reduction agreement in which the United States and Soviet Union consented to decreasing their nuclear arsenals. Bush and his secretary of state, James Baker, worked hard to establish a meaningful relationship with Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet foreign minister. By most accounts, they were very successful in redefining relations with the Soviet Union in a post-Cold War environment. [...] The efforts of Bush, Gorbachev, Baker, and Shevardnadze achieved results in improving U.S.-Soviet relations in ways that would have been unthinkable ten years earlier.

Notwithstanding President Bush's achievements, his actions were criticized for being far too concessive and far too open to compromise with the communist leader, stressing the American President's lack of overture to the President of Russia, who would soon oversee "much of Russia's transition away from Communism" (*ibid.*).

Another contribution that George H. W. Bush made as far as foreign affairs are concerned was the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi troops during the Persian Gulf War. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait on August 2nd, 1990, "violated international laws", so Bush administration set up an opposition team to protect and stop the offensive, together with Arab countries (Knott, 2023b). After President Bush's definition of the four principles of the Operation Desert Shield – "the immediate and complete withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait; the restoration of the legitimate Kuwaiti government; the stability and security of the Middle East; and the protection of Americans abroad" (*ibid.*) – and the United Nations Security Council's intervention with Resolution 660, "which condemned the invasion and demanded that Iraq withdraw 'immediately and unconditionally'" (*ibid.*), seeing that there were no changes to the situation, in November 1990 the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 670, which allowed states to make Iraq withdraw by January 15th, 1991, with all means necessary (*ibid.*). However, this did not happen; on January 17th,

1991, President Bush began with Operation Desert Storm, which consisted of “massive air strikes” on Iraq and ended in less than two months with the Iraqi ceasefire on March 3rd (*ibid.*). On the one hand, this operation resulted in being “the largest military action since the Vietnam War without getting bogged down or suffering high casualties” and, thus, helped boost the American militaries’ spirit and enthusiasm; on the other hand, President Bush was criticized for winning an almost meaningless battle, given that President Hussein was not ousted from office, to which charges, however, Bush replied that it never was his intention to remove Hussein of his power (*ibid.*).

In year 1992, William Jefferson Clinton (also known as Bill) defeated the Bush administration and became the 42nd President of the United States. Despite his successes and his political competences, which made him “presid[e] over the greatest level of economic prosperity since the early 1960s” (Riley, 2023c), President Clinton did not escape scandals and setbacks, as well as impeachments (such as the one following an assumed affair with 22-year-old White House intern Monica Lewinsky, Klosterman, 2022: 283) and succeeded partially in fulfilling his campaign promises as far as domestic affairs are concerned. His major failure in this field was the inability to grant “affordable health care insurance for every American”, which was an issue he particularly cared about (Riley, 2023a). If this reform, known as the Health Care Reform (*ibid.*), had been realized, it would have become one of the most important ones in American history and politics, forever changing America's position as the only industrialized state without public healthcare (*ibid.*). What is more, achieving such a reform could have bolstered the economy and secured political support for the Democratic Party “for at least another generation” (*ibid.*).

Basically, Clinton made a mistake when he appointed his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, to lead a task force given the responsibility of developing the program (Riley, 2023a). This was due to a number of reasons: first, her appointment was viewed as a break from tradition, placing her “in a position of being a major policy and political power”, which led to criticism; second, her methods, such as working in secrecy with subject matter experts and excluding Congress, further complicated the effort; and third, internal administration disputes regarding the plan's scope, costs, and political viability further hampered progress and, ultimately, contributed to the failure of the initiative (*ibid.*).

On the foreign policy front, Clinton, especially at the beginning of his term, encountered several challenges in a post-Cold War world, which often put him in a position of inability or ill-preparation on the matter, as in the cases of Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti (Riley, 2023b): in the first case, after former President Bush had sent American troops in the eastern Africa country in order to stop famine and after the situation had turned into a “bloody military struggle”, the Clinton administration was obliged to withdraw its forces in 1994, as they resulted in being “not properly equipped for the mission” (*ibid.*); the second case regarded a “vast killing spree” that happened in April 1994 in the central Africa state between two tribes, Hutus and Tutsis, in which “800,000 Tutsi and their defenders were murdered” and in which President Clinton was strongly criticized for “for not acting quickly and decisively to stop the violent deaths of Rwandans” (*ibid.*); finally, as for the third case, on October 1993 President Clinton resulted in being unable to remove from dictatorial power Haitian leader Raoul Cédras, causing a more skilled former President Jimmy Carter to take matters into his own hands and opt for better negotiations (*ibid.*).

Notwithstanding these first unsuccessful experiences, President Clinton “achieved some notable accomplishments in foreign affairs”: indeed, he developed “a new approach to international affairs” that was named the “doctrine of enlargement”, whose aim was to “embrace free trade, multilateral peacekeeping efforts and international alliances, and a commitment to intervene in world crisis situations when practical [...] and morally defensible” (*ibid.*). Then, he had two major trade agreements approved, that are the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement (also known as NAFTA), that “gradually eliminated most tariffs and other trade barriers on products and services passing between the United States, Canada, and Mexico”, creating “a free-trade bloc among the three largest countries of North America” (Bondarenko, 2024), and a 1994 revision of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (also known as GATT), whose intention was to “minimiz[e] barriers to international trade by eliminating or reducing quotas, tariffs, and subsidies” in order to “boost economic recovery after World War II” (Majaski, 2024). Finally, Clinton, together with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (or NATO), made moves to stop “Serbian atrocities against Bosnian civilians”, by bombing “Bosnian Serb positions” and ending the fight with the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, and end the “ethnic

cleansing' of Albanians in the Kosovo region" by occupying and stabilizing the region as peacekeepers in year 1999 (Riley, 2023b).

The examination of the two American presidencies of the 1990s has revealed how the decade in this nation has been marked by important economic and political change. However, the 1990s also laid the groundwork for some challenges that would define the upcoming 21st-century global landscape, including the tragic rise of terrorism in the Western world. In this decade, the USA have witnessed two shocking attacks, namely the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 1995 Oklahoma City explosion (Klosterman, 2022: 73-75; 249-251).

On February 26th, 1993, a bomb was detonated in the parking garage below the World Trade Center Towers, killing six people including a pregnant woman and injuring more than a thousand (Klosterman, 2022: 73). The bomb was hidden inside a rented van "carrying more than 1,300 pounds of urea nitrate", was "driven into the parking garage of the North Tower in lower Manhattan" and was "detonated with a twenty-foot fuse" (*ibid.*). Six people were apprehended and convicted, namely Mohammad Salameh, Mahmoud Abouhalima, Ahmed Ajaj, Nidal Ayyad, the driver of the van Eyad Ismoil, and the "ringleader" Ramzi Yousef, who revealed that his plan was to make the two towers collapse into one another by damaging the foundations, causing the North Tower to topple the South Tower (Peltz, 2023). Yousef's dreadful plot failed for the moment, but was not forgotten, because years later on September 11th, 2001, the terrorist organization Al Qaeda would succeed in destroying the Twin Towers also thanks to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who, unsurprisingly, was Yousef's uncle (Klosterman, 2022: 73-74). For this last reason, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was considered to be "a footnote to the 2001 attack that worked" (*ibid.*, 75) and highlighted the growing threat of international terrorism even against the most fortified nations, such as the US.

What shocked the most, however, was that terrorist attacks could also come from domestic extremists. As a matter of fact, on the morning of April 19th, 1995, a rented Ryder truck "contain[ing] 5,000 pounds of explosive material" exploded in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, "obliterat[ing] the government building's front façade and caus[ing] half of the mid-rise structure to instantly collapse" (Klosterman, 2022: 249). The *modus operandi* was similar to what

had happened two years earlier at the World Trade Center, given that in both cases rented trucks were involved, but here the aftermath has been more devastating: 168 people lost their life to the explosion, as well as 19 children that were “in the facility’s day care center”, and several hundred more were injured (*ibid.*). What was also different from the previous terrorist attack was that the crime was perpetrated by a twenty-six-year-old decorated American Gulf war veteran and security guard with anti-government sentiments named Timothy McVeigh, who was helped by two other men, Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier, who were also convicted (*ibid.*, 249-250). What shocked the most about McVeigh was that, “until his execution in 2001, he spoke of his attack with cogent, clinical language, sometimes writing essays that compared his act of domestic terrorism to memorable military assaults by sovereign nations” and never showed signs of remorse (*ibid.*). For these gruesome reasons, McVeigh has long been regarded as “the worst domestic terrorist in US history, self-motivated by personal animosity towards the government” (*ibid.*, 251).

In conclusion, the USA of the 1990s has proven to be a mighty political and economic power, with a strong spirit of negotiation and relation managing with the other countries of the world. However, the 1993 and 1995 episodes of terrorist bombings have exposed vulnerabilities in the national security measures, hence highlighting the necessity of developing stronger anti-violence policies and further law enforcements – such as the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, that was developed after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing “to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, provide for an effective death penalty, and for other purposes” (Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, 1996) – in order to face this new frontier of fear.

1.1.2. The American Socio-Cultural Environment 1990s: between Influences in Worldwide Pop Culture and Generational Disenchantment

When it comes to the socio-cultural impact, the United States of the 1990s was the most significant player. Its technological, musical, television, and cinema products had a significant impact on the global scene and helped to create historically significant works of art that still to our day are considered cult.

As far as movies are concerned, the decade saw the birth of Quentin Tarantino,

who “became the most important filmmaker in the 1990s by making movies exclusively designed for his own idiosyncratic pleasure”, making his debut in movie theaters in 1992 with “Reservoir Dogs” and two years later with “Pulp Fiction” (Klosterman, 2022: 113, 119). What is revolutionary about these movies is the concept of the movie itself, which, as according to Klosterman, was now supposed to be “the nonfictional representation of a life that only exists within the mind of the filmmaker, [...] not transposable with life itself” and “demanded to be seen as isolated and nontransferable” (*ibid.*, 114, 121). This new idea of movies also influenced other directors, making the 90s “a fertile period for the self-indulgent genius and [...] for high-gloss unconventional film”, such as Danny Boyle’s “Trainspotting”, Christopher Nolan’s “Memento” and Charlie Kaufman’s “Being John Malkovich” (*ibid.*, 121). Apart from these independent movies, the 1990s were also the decade in which blockbusters such as 1993 adventure movie “Jurassic Park”, the award-winning 1994 touching comedy “Forrest Gump” and 1997 romantic tragedy “Titanic” or 1999 epic “Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace” broke office box records and enthralled viewers everywhere, and movies like “She’s All That”, “Clueless” and “10 Things I Hate About You” gave rise to the teen movie genre (<https://www.yellowbrick.co/blog/music/unveiling-the-nostalgic-charm-of-1990s-pop-culture>).

Another slice of entertainment that further developed and was made iconic in the 1990s were TV series. The number of television shows that were airing at the time, some of which have since turned into genuine cultural sensations, becomes apparent while reading the article by Katherine J. Igoe and Olivia Truffaut-Wong (2024): among those mentioned, there are “Seinfeld”, “Friends”, “Beverly Hills 90210”, “The X-Files”, “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air”, “Sex and the City”, “Twin Peaks”, “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and “Dawson’s Creek”, which, with their unforgettable theme songs, bright prose, endearing characters and relatable stories have, indeed, become cultural reference points. What is more, the decade saw the rise of animated tv-series as well, such as “The Simpsons”, “Daria”, “Beavis and Butthead”, “South Park”, and “Futurama”, which “pushed boundaries and challenged societal norms” (<https://www.yellowbrick.co/blog/music/unveiling-the-nostalgic-charm-of-1990s-pop-culture>).

The 1990s were also the decade when major technological advancements were made. In 1989, a British scientist working at CERN named Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web (or WWW), whose basic idea “was to merge the evolving technologies of computers, data networks and hypertext into a powerful and easy to use global information system” (<https://home.cern/science/computing/birth-web/short-history-web>). After only being usable on CERN computers, the WWW software was released and made publicly accessible later in 1991, forever changing the story of internet, as now anyone who was not just a scientist or a researcher could access in this new information platform. The spread of the World Wide Web was even more facilitated by the introduction of browsers, the first of which was Mosaic. It was developed in 1993 by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois and offered a “friendly window-based interaction” (*ibid.*) in that users could “see words and pictures on the same page [...] and navigate using scrollbars and clickable links” (<https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/invention-of-the-internet>). 1995 became “a critical year for elementary operations of the internet” given the birth of interfaces such as Craigslist, “an alternative to classified advertising that would go on to inadvertently annihilate the American newspaper industry” (Klosterman, 2022: 139) and AltaVista. This latter website was a forerunner to Google, given that it was “a searchable text database with a simple interface” (*ibid.*, 146), but had limitations, as Klosterman reports:

If someone typed the word “bear” into the search box, they’d get a list of web pages that included the word *bear*. But this was only valuable to a person who wanted random bear information, potentially encompassing omnivorous animals roaming Alaska, the professional football team in Chicago, and husky gay men with facial hair. It was impressive without being helpful (*ibid.*).

Then, Google came, and changed the rules of the game. Its story began, again, in 1995, when Larry Page was visiting Stanford University, guided by Sergey Brin, who was already enrolled at the university. Initially, the two young men did not get along well, but the following year they started working on a research engine that would algorithmically rank web pages in the WWW. This was the birth of Backrub, which later would be renamed Google after a play of words from the mathematical term

‘googol’, which is “the number 1 followed by 100 zeros” and a perfect physical rendition of Larry and Sergey’s mission, that is, to “organize information globally and make it universally accessible and useful” (<https://about.google/our-story/>). Indeed, nowadays, when googling something, the first page that appears is to be considered the most reliable one, or the one that gives the most information on the matter, while the ones following are not to be fully trusted or do not come from accredited sources. After catching the interest of Silicon Valley investors, Google was formally founded in 1998 and became a real company, named Google Inc. As it expanded, more employees joined, a sales staff was formed, and the firm, eventually, became one of the largest and most famous in the world (*ibid.*).

From a socio-cultural perspective, however, music was arguably the most influential aspect of the American artistic production of the 1990s: the decade saw the birth, the rise, the evolution and the mainstreaming of many genres, such as hip-hop or the enduring rock and pop, whose representatives are still regarded as undisputed idols nowadays. Regarding hip-hop, Eminem rose to success as being “the first white rapper to change the aesthetic parameters of the genre, [with a] linguistic virtuosity [...] that transcended [...] his skin color” (Klosterman, 2022: 308), Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre and N.W.A. became pioneers of the gangster rap subgenre, and rivalries between East Coast and West Coast scenes added to the general frame, resulting in the death of the most famous exponents, respectively The Notorious B.I.G and Tupac Shakur (<https://www.yellowbrick.co/blog/music/exploring-1990s-music-trends-a-nostalgic-journey>). In those years, then, pop music exploded thanks to boybands such as Backstreet Boys and NSYNC, who “captured the hearts of millions with their catchy tunes and synchronized dance moves” and to solo artists like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, who “embraced their sexuality and promoted a message of empowerment” (*ibid.*). Finally, bands like Foo Fighters, Green Day and Blink-182 “brought a more accessible and melodic sound to the alternative rock scene”, and artists like Daft Punk and The Prodigy became representatives of the electronic music world scene, gaining popularity everywhere (*ibid.*).

A particular genre, however, particularly defined the American musical scene of the decade – and is also central to the topic of this thesis – and that genre is grunge. Also called Seattle Sound from the geographical area from which it generated and then

expanded elsewhere, this genre started to emerge in the latter part of the eighties and had its peak in the early 1990s, because of the publication of some albums that have become its quintessence: in 1990 Mother Love Bone published their only album “Apple” and Alice in Chains debuted with “Facelift”, in year 1991 three iconic grunge bands released their masterpieces – Nirvana’s “Nevermind”, Pearl Jam’s “Ten” and Soundgarden’s “Badmotorfinger” – and some of their members paid tribute to the Mother Love Bone singer Andrew Wood with the project “Temple of the Dog”, in 1992 Alice in Chains returned with “Dirt” and Stone Temple Pilots released “Core” (Browne et al., 2019). The term ‘grunge’ derives from the slang term ‘grungy’, which means ‘dirty’, ‘filthy’, and recalls something impure, unclean, distorted: as a matter of fact, the genre consists of a mixture of punk rock, of hardcore punk, and of the sound of some bands from the seventies belonging to the heavy metal wave, such as Black Sabbath or Led Zeppelin, as well as a little inspiration from folk rock singing-songwriting such as Neil Young, resulting in a type of music that was loud in order to express rebellion against society, together with “guitar distortion, anguished vocals and heartfelt, angst-ridden lyrics” (<https://www.britannica.com/art/grunge-music>). The uniqueness of this music genre is that, due to its themes and sound, it has given voice to the worries and angst of the younger generation of the time, namely Generation X. To this label belonged “those born between 1966 and 1981” – although there are discrepancies on the actual start and end dates – hence, those preceded by Baby Boomers and followed by Millennials, or Generation Y (Klosterman, 2022: 9). What this generation was particularly concerned with was the crumbling of traditional institutions, such as family, working life and wealth, as Gross and Scott (1990) state:

While the baby boomers had a placid childhood in the 1950s, which helped them inspire them to start their revolution, today’s [...] generation grew up in a time of drugs, divorce and economic strain. [...]. A prime characteristic of today’s young adults is their desire to avoid risk, pain and rapid change. They feel paralyzed by the social problems they see as their inheritance: racial strife, homelessness, AIDS, fractured families and federal deficits (*ibid.*, 16).

Growing up in a time of economic crisis, political difficulties and tumultuous social changes as in the Seventies and early Eighties, the Gen Xers developed hostile feelings

against the government, resulting in general disillusionment and disquietude, which even brought to the use of drugs in order to further dissociate from reality. Furthermore, the fragmentation of more and more families as a result of the rising divorce rate as experienced in the above period further contributed to those feelings of uncertainty, depleting the emotional support youngsters would receive from parents and relatives. As a consequence, artists belonging to this generation voiced their concern, which sometimes transformed into cynicism as a form of coping mechanism, and created songs that would become anthems for people who shared their sentiments: Gen Xers started to relate to bands such as Nirvana, with their “Oh well, whatever, nevermind” life philosophy, i.e. facing life with apathy as a result of their inner skepticism against institutions as epitomized by their song “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (Klosterman, 2022: 40), or Pearl Jam, whose 1991 album “Ten” covers a multitude of topics such as homelessness, parent loss, violence, rage and solitude, to which listeners could connect (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 39-43). Grunge music listeners also started copying their favorite artists’ way of dressing, choosing to wear checkered flannel jackets (which were very commonly used in the area due to the large presence of lumberjacks), oversized cardigans, worn out or ripped jeans and Vans or Dr. Martens boots as a rejection of “mainstream and mall culture”, something that came right from the Eighties (Chokrane, 2023). Therefore, grunge became “the soundtrack of the early nineties”, speaking up for the disillusioned and lousy Generation X; however, it was “a positive until it became a negative” (Klosterman, 2022: 45). Indeed, the very artists who initiated the movement and fought against being mainstream and against all the worries and social issues were overwhelmed by them, sooner or later, crowning grunge as “the most morbid genre in pop history” (*ibid.*, 47): the frontman of Mother Love Bone, Andrew Wood, died from a heroin overdose a few months before the publication of their first album, “Apple”, on March 19th, 1990; Nirvana’s lead singer Kurt Cobain committed suicide on April 5th, 1994, apparently unable to bear the success its band was achieving and had already achieved; Layne Staley, the singer of Alice in Chains, died from drug overdose exactly eight years later, losing his battle against heroin addiction; on December 3rd, 2015, the lead singer of Stone Temple Pilots Scott Weiland was found dead “on his tour bus”; finally, after “a sold-out concert earlier that day”, on May 18th, 2017, Chris Cornell, the frontman of Soundgarden and Audioslave,

committed suicide by hanging.

In essence, the United States had an almost unmatched socio-cultural influence in the 1990s, shaping trends through advancements in technology, evolutions in music, television programming, and cinematic masterpieces. In addition to the World Wide Web's introduction, which completely changed communication and information accessibility, the decade saw the emergence and ascent of renowned directors, as well as the expansion of television into a major stage for cultural storytelling. Music then, especially the short living but deeply heartfelt grunge, became Generation X's principal means of expression, reflecting their disillusionment and frustration while simultaneously influencing youngsters worldwide. Despite the often-tragic fates of many of its leading figures, the legacy of the 1990s remains undoubtedly enduring, having left an indelible mark on the arts, technology, and societal attitudes, whose evolution is still to be seen in contemporary times.

1.2 Italy's 1990s Narrative: Bribery, Mafia and Cultural Rebirth

1.2.1 Scandals, Political Transformations and Mafia Battles: Italy's Transition from the First to the Second Republic

Throughout the 1990s, Italy experienced a period of significant political upheaval and change, marked by corruption scandals, the dissolution of traditional parties, and the country's transition from the First to the Second Republic. The three Italian Republic Presidents – Francesco Cossiga, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, and Carlo Azeglio Ciampi – were instrumental in steering the nation through the turbulent seas of political and institutional change during this pivotal decade. With their distinct visions and styles, each of them contributed to the development of modern Italy's history.

The majority of the events that marked Italian history and politics of the 1990s have happened during the Scalfaro presidency, which lasted from 1992 to 1999. The other two presidencies have touched the decade by just a couple of years, given that Cossiga was President from 1985 to 1992 and Ciampi from 1999 to 2006, so in comparison to the second one they are rather marginal (<https://presidenti.quirinale.it>). What can be said in summary about these two presidencies is that with Cossiga there was a beginning of disintegration of the traditional political parties as a result of a general immobility of the Italian political system, unable to take a political turn in the

face of changes due to the fall of the Berlin Wall (<https://archivio.quirinale.it/aspr/presidente/biografia/francesco-cossiga#n>), while Ciampi led Italy into European integration, making it part of the eurozone and abandoning the lira in favor of the euro, hence achieving the goals of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (<https://presidenti.quirinale.it/page/10/cia-biografia.html>).

The first major event of the decade consisted of a scandal that went down in history as *Tangentopoli*. After the end of the Cold War, Italy underwent a serious political crisis that derived from a contrast between the Christian Democracy party (in Italian, *Democrazia Cristiana* or *DC*), a Western-style party, and its historical enemy, the Italian Communist Party (in Italian, *Partito Comunista Italiano* or *PCI*), the Eastern-style party. The crisis, however, did not only depend on a historically based conflict between parties, but also on internal causes, namely the degeneration of political life and the corruption phenomena. The word *Tangentopoli* basically means ‘the city of bribes’ – i.e., illicit sums of money paid to public administrators by party officials in exchange for the awarding of contracts by public agencies – and was coined by the *La Repubblica* newspaper’s special correspondent Piero Colaprico in order to refer to a series of judicial investigations on corruption cases that involved, at the beginning, only the city of Milan, but later also almost every party of the time and a good slice of national businesses (<https://www.ilpost.it/2022/02/17/tangentopoli-personaggi/>). This phenomenon started on February 17th, 1992, with the arrest of Mario Chiesa, a member of the Italian Socialist Party (in Italian, *Partito Socialista Italiano* or *PSI*) and President of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio nursing home for the elderly, who was discovered by the *Carabinieri* while embezzling a bribe of seven million lira (*ibid.*). This bribe was given to him by an entrepreneur from Brianza named Luca Magni who, tired Chiesa’s constant demand of money, reported him to the law enforcements and had him arrested also thanks to the help of magistrate Antonio Di Pietro (*ibid.*). Following several concatenations of accusations, even made by Chiesa himself, the investigation – which also got the name of *Mani Pulite* (‘clean hands’, lit.) following the “initials of the code names used by *Carabinieri* commander Zuliani and Di Pietro during radio communications”³ (*ibid.*) – widens, and Di Pietro creates, in

³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*iniziali dei nomi in codice usati dal comandante dei Carabinieri Zuliani e da Di Pietro durante le comunicazioni via radio*”.

Milan, a pool of magistrates dedicated to the arrests of corrupts, among which there were not only big businessmen, but also smaller business owners, as well as several members and leaders of the *DC* and the *PSI* parties. The consequences of *Mani Pulite*, which ended in 1994, were more than 4000 arrests, a general mistrust in institutions, several resignations and, finally, a transformation of the political landscape. What happened, indeed, was that the old parties dissolved, imploded, or just changed their names, creating a new political environment; together with this, the year 1994 saw the rise to politics of Silvio Berlusconi, “at the time wealthy businessman who owned, among other things, the Milan soccer team and the Fininvest company, with which he controlled many private television networks”⁴ who founded the *Forza Italia* party (*ibid.*); finally, in year 1993 the Italian Parliament passed a new election law, that provided for a shift from a proportional system, which meant an “allocation of seats in proportion to the number of votes obtained by individual lists” to a majoritarian system, which meant an “allocation of seats in a higher amount to the party that obtained the majority of votes”, in order to “have a clear winner of the elections and to grant more governability of the country”⁵ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmQfS1tb5HA>, minutes 6:15-7:07). All these changes in the Italian political scene prompted, in the journalistic field, to talk about a transition from the First Italian Republic, that started in year 1943, to the Second Italian Republic, as the article in the *Il Post* newspaper comments:

Tangentopoli was such an obvious caesura, a "before and after" moment, that it was interpreted as a transition between two Republics, despite the fact that there was never any reform of the institutional set-up as there was in France (where there were five Republics). Instead, the Republic in Italy remained the same, yet after 1992 politics changed so radically, from the ruling class to the parties themselves, that it seemed like another one⁶ (<https://www.ilpost.it/2022/02/17/tangentopoli-personaggi/>).

⁴ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*all’epoca ricco imprenditore proprietario tra le altre cose della squadra di calcio del Milan e della società Fininvest, con cui controllava molte reti televisive private*”.

⁵ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*assegnazione dei seggi in proporzione ai voti ottenuti dalle singole liste*” / “*assegnazione dei seggi in quantità superiore al partito che aveva ottenuto la maggioranza dei voti*” / “*avere un vincitore netto alle elezioni e garantire più governabilità al paese*”.

⁶ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Tangentopoli fu una cesura così evidente, un momento “prima e dopo”, che fu interpretato come un passaggio tra due Repubbliche, nonostante non*

Tangentopoli, however, was not the only challenge the Italian magistrature had to face during the 1990s: indeed, this time of corruption and political decay also allowed criminal organizations like the Mafia to grow in power, adding to the already unstable public order. The fight against Mafia in Italy has distant roots, but after the 1982 murder of General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, who was killed in Palermo by the *Cosa nostra* organization, further legal moves were made to try to control it, such as introducing the crime of mafia association and opening a maxi-trial in Palermo in 1986 that “would impose 19 life sentences and 2665 years in prison on more than three hundred people”⁷ (<https://www.raicultura.it/storia/articoli/2019/01/LItalia-della-Repubblica---La-lotta-alla-mafia-4a8a4c27-5683-4dc4-aa5e-1ed14de3659a.html>). However, this was just the beginning of what would have happened during the 1990s: de facto, the decade, especially in years 1992 and 1993, saw the death of several politicians, magistrates and law enforcement members, as well as innocent civilians, that dedicated their lives to protection against the underworld.

“You have not killed them: their ideas keep walking on our legs”⁸. This is the translation of a famous slogan related to the story of magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, who not only shared much of their lives, dedicating them, together, to the fight against the Mafia, but also a tragic aftermath, since the very criminals they had spent years trying to apprehend killed them both in year 1992, only a few months apart. Both born in 1939 just eight months away from each other, Falcone and Borsellino lived in the same neighborhood, the Arabic quarter Kalsa in Palermo, Sicily, and grew up together as children. What is more, they attended the same high school, a *liceo classico*, and they even both graduated in law with honors (Ferro, 2021). Then, the two men started working in Palermo, and both started to tackle Mafia cases from the very beginning of their career, which highlighted their abilities on the matter, especially Falcone’s, who “accompanied [his] inquiry with banking and corporate

ci fosse mai stata nessuna riforma dell’assetto istituzionale come invece avvenne in Francia (dove di Repubbliche ce ne sono state cinque). La Repubblica in Italia rimase invece sempre la stessa, eppure dopo il 1992 la politica cambiò in modo così radicale, dalla classe dirigente ai partiti stessi, che sembrò un’altra.

⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*comminerà 19 ergastoli e 2665 anni di carcere a più di trecento persone*”.

⁸ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*Non li avete uccisi: le loro idee camminano sulle nostre gambe*”.

investigations, an innovative method of research that proved most effective”⁹ (*ibid.*). After realizing that the Mafia situation in Sicily was rapidly changing and becoming a never-ending bloodbath, due to the constant murders perpetrated by the associates of the *Cosa nostra* absolute boss Salvatore “Totò” Riina, the Palermo Education Office chief Antonio Caponnetto, together with Falcone, Borsellino and other attorneys founded an anti-Mafia pool, in order to “fractionalize the individuals’ risks and to have a unified view of the Mafia phenomenon”¹⁰ (*ibid.*). The activities of the pool were initially extremely successful, and between 1984 and 1985, thanks to the cooperation of former mobster Tommaso Buscetta, 366 arrest warrants were issued and from February 10th, 1986, to December 16th, 1987, the previously mentioned maxi-trial took place, and Totò Riina was defeated and sentenced to life in prison. Even so, Riina was thirsty for revenge against whomever had not granted his impunity, such as the politician and mayor of Palermo Salvo Lima, who was killed at the Mondello beach on March 12th, 1992, and the two judges Falcone and Borsellino. Their fate is recounted as follows by journalist Luigi Ferro in the *Focus.it* newspaper:

Suddenly, all hell breaks loose. On a hot Saturday in May, at 5:56 p.m., an explosion rips through the highway connecting Punta Raisi airport to Palermo, near the exit for Capaci: 5 quintals of TNT destroy one hundred meters of asphalt and literally send armored cars flying. Giovanni Falcone [...] dies. It is May 23rd, 1992. [...] His, as some turncoats have recounted, was a death that had been planned for some time but anticipated with an "incredible haste." Because Totò Riina had said, "You have to climb over a wall," and that wall was Paolo Borsellino. [...] On July 13th, disconsolate, [Borsellino] declared, "I know the TNT has arrived for me." To his wife Agnese he said, "The Mafia will kill me when others decide". [...] On July 19th, it was very hot in Palermo. The magistrate decided to visit his mother on Via D'Amelio. Two minutes before 5 p.m., the explosion of the car bomb that killed him and five escort men was heard throughout Palermo. "It's all over," was Antonino Caponnetto's comment¹¹.

⁹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*accompagnò l'istruttoria con indagini bancarie e societarie; un metodo di indagine innovativo che si rivelò efficacissimo*”.

¹⁰ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*frazionare i rischi dei singoli e avere una visione unitaria del fenomeno mafioso*”.

¹¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Improvvisamente, l'inferno. In un caldo sabato di maggio, alle 17:56, un'esplosione squarcia l'autostrada che collega l'aeroporto di Punta Raisi a Palermo, nei pressi dell'uscita per Capaci: 5 quintali di tritolo distruggono cento metri di asfalto e fanno letteralmente volare le auto blindate. Muore Giovanni Falcone [...]. È il 23 maggio 1992. La sua,*

During the Capaci and Via D'Amelio disasters not only did the two magistrates tragically die, but also members of the escort and civilians did: together with Giovanni Falcone died his second wife, Francesca Morvillo, and three escort men, Rocco Di Cillo, Antonio Montinaro and Vito Schifani, while with Paolo Borsellino died five escort agents, four men – Antonio Catalano, Walter Eddie Cosina, Vincenzo Li Muli and Claudio Traina – and one woman, Emanuela Loi (*ibid.*). Due to their extreme brutality and the significance of the victims' deaths, these two killings remarkably shocked public opinion and signaled a turning point in the battle against the Mafia.

Regardless, other atrocities quickly followed the Capaci and Via D'Amelio massacres, thereby appointing the former two as merely the beginning of the numerous bloodbaths the Italian Mafia committed in the 1990s: in years 1993 and 1994, Riina and other *Cosa nostra* members, among which the infamous Bernardo Provenzano and Matteo Messina Denaro, adopted a slaughter strategy that aimed at damaging also public institutions and State symbols, in order to further intimidate the government and civil society. On May 14th, 1993, journalist and public figure Maurizio Costanzo, together with wife Maria De Filippi, was almost killed in a car bomb assassination attempt in Rome, precisely in Via Fauro – which, instead, injured 24 people – because according to *Cosa nostra* he was “responsible for [bearing] an anti-mafia information”¹² (Mira, 2023). A few nights later, exactly between May 26th and 27th, a car bomb explodes next to the Uffizi Museum in Florence, in Via dei Georgofili, killing five people including a 9-year-old child and a 50-day-old baby and damaging several works of art and historical buildings (*ibid.*). Then again, the evening and night of July 26th-27th saw three different car bomb explosions, two of which in Rome – in front of the San Giovanni in Laterano Cathedral and the San Giorgio al Velabro Church, luckily no one died but 22 people were injured – and one in Milan – in Via Palestro, in which five people died, including three firefighters, one police officer and

come hanno raccontato alcuni pentiti, era una morte programmata da tempo, ma anticipata con una "premura incredibile". Perché Totò Riina aveva detto «Bisogna scavalcare un muro», e quel muro era Paolo Borsellino. [...] Il 13 luglio, sconcolato, dichiarò: «So che è arrivato il tritolo per me». Alla moglie Agnese disse: «La mafia mi ucciderà quando gli altri lo decideranno». [...] Il 19 luglio faceva molto caldo a Palermo. Il magistrato decise di andare a trovare la madre in via D'Amelio. Due minuti prima delle 17, l'esplosione dell'autobomba che uccise lui e 5 uomini della scorta si sentì in tutta Palermo. «È tutto finito», fu il commento di Antonino Caponnetto.

¹² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “responsabile di [possedere] un'informazione antimafia”.

a Moroccan homeless man who was sleeping on a bench (*ibid.*). Among these episodes, luckily, there was an unsuccessful attack attempt, again in Rome, on January 23rd, 1994: another car bomb was supposed to detonate at the exit of the Stadio Olimpico, where the Rome-Udinese football match was being played and where a Carabinieri garrison was on public order duty; however, a malfunction of the remote control that was supposed to activate the device did not allow the plan to succeed, although the trail of the suspension of the action was not totally discarded (*ibid.*).

In summary, the 1990s for Italy have been a difficult time in terms of politics and of social security. Sure enough, the Italian judiciary system was faced with episodes of political corruption, such as in the case of *Tangentopoli*, and with episodes of unprecedented violence, such as those that occurred during the Sicilian Mafia's two-year massacre period. In spite of everything, the legacy of the decade testifies to the fortitude and tenacity of those who overcame these obstacles and enabled the reshaping of the political system, as well as to a strong sense of solidarity and support for the institutions, ushering in a new era in Italian history that continues to this day.

1.2.2 From Economic Hardship to Artistic Flourish: 1990s Italy's Socio-Cultural Framework

As the political situation showed, Italy in the 1990s underwent a challenging period, due to several factors. Socially speaking, this was no different: a great period of wealth during the Eighties, due to an economic growth that positively impacted the social and working life – as to be seen during the so-called 'Milano da bere' phenomenon, intended as "the Milanese social life in the '80s", so "that of an avant-garde class of hard-working, dynamic yuppies devoted to competition and social climbing"¹³ (Minonzio, 2019) – was followed by a time of economic fallout, especially after the *Tangentopoli* scandal and the fall of the First Republic, as unemployment rate and public debt began to increase because it was "no longer supported by high growth as in the 'economic boom' and prosperity days of earlier years"¹⁴ (Macchioni, 2022). What arises from this situation is therefore a feeling of disappointment, especially

¹³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: "*la vita sociale milanese negli anni '80*" / "*quella di una classe all'avanguardia, di yuppies laboriosi e dinamici, devoti alla competizione e alla scalata sociale*".

¹⁴ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: "*non era più sostenuto da una crescita alta come ai tempi del "boom economico" e del benessere degli anni precedenti*".

among younger people, because they recognized that what the Eighties had built in terms of economic stability was just an illusion, a fleeting moment in time that was gone too soon and they were not able to fully grasp, as Pedrini reminded:

The 1980s were the years of happiness, of joy, there was this great economic bubble, the ‘Milano da bere’ phenomenon, the wealth, the stock market – every young adult wanted to become a yuppie, hence they wanted to work in the stock market, in banking, in finance – it was, in a nutshell, the decade of finance. The 1990s, on the other hand, were the years of the great disillusionment, as everything collapsed, world poverty returned, we realized that credit cards actually made us spend money we didn’t have, so this great disenchanted decade was born. This is when punk and its nihilism re-exploded, so all ideals were gone in 1990s, and we were faced with a generation that was just struggling to save itself.¹⁵

It is readily apparent that the disenchantment felt by Italian youngsters in the 1990s can be perfectly superimposable with the feeling of angst and frustration perceived by peers in the United States during the same period, indicating that the Gen X dismay was a worldwide occurrence. Once again, as was the case in the US, Italian artists decided to become spokespeople for the sadness and letdown of their own generation, especially inspired by the newborn grunge genre: in addition to embracing the heritage of Italian punk and new-wave bands like CCCP, Litfiba and Diaframma, during the early 90s Italian bands like Afterhours, Timoria, Ritmo Tribale, Verdena and Karma began incorporating Nirvana’s, Alice in Chains’, Pearl Jam’s or Soundgarden’s style into their music, both in terms of lyrics (which, this time, were written in Italian) and of sound, making themselves the leading exponents of the Italian grunge scene (*ibid.*). What is more, the grunge style also impacted their looks, once again as a form of protest against the way Eighties bands used to dress, i.e. with designer clothes or in an exaggeratedly pompous manner – take as an example bands such as Mötley Crüe, Poison or Guns N’ Roses, with their backcombed hair and tight leather pants. Similarly, Italian bands started wearing worn-out clothes, combat boots or sneakers, copying the American grunge bands’ onstage attire, or even went back to a more

¹⁵ For reference, see the “July 19th, 2024, Omar Pedrini interview” in the Appendix A Section.

Seventies look, taking inspiration from bands such as The Ramones, who used to wear jeans and leather jackets (*ibid.*). Therefore, the grunge scene that was unfolding simultaneously in America strongly impacted the Italian musical production of the 1990s as well: besides embracing the aesthetic, Italian artists infused their music with themes of alienation, introspection, and social critique, with the addition of text-writing in Italian in order to be fully understood by audiences, hence deeply resonating with the youth who felt misled and deceived from society and mainstream culture that had its roots in the flourishing and flamboyant Eighties. Luckily, on this side of the ocean the grunge movement did not reap victims, although members of some bands have admitted to drug use and subsequent rehabs, like Ritmo Tribale's singer Stefano Rampoldi, also known as Edda, who has been a heroin addict for six years (Bongiorno, 2022), or lead guitarist from Timoria Omar Pedrini, who reveals to have been in a community for drug addicts for a year¹⁶.

Aside from the more cynical and disillusioned grunge scene, the Italian music scene in the 1990s was rather thriving. During this period, Vasco Rossi and Zucchero confirmed themselves as giants of Italian music, as well as already-mentioned bands like Litfiba and CSI, the group formed after the breakup of CCCP, and new stars were born, like Luciano Ligabue (Grazioli, 2013). Then, the decade was also the time of pop teen-stars like Luca Carboni, Biagio Antonacci, Raf, Marco Masini, Gianluca Grignani and Alex Britti, but, arguably, those who obtained greater success as they “dominated the scene from late 1980s to early 2000s” were Eros Ramazzotti and Lorenzo Cherubini, also known as Jovanotti (*ibid.*). The 90s were also the decade in which a rap scene began to emerge, with artists like Frankie Hi Nrg, Fabri Fibra, Neffa and groups like Articolo 31 (<https://www.esquire.com/it/cultura/musica/a41640031/rap-italiano-anni-90/>). As for other bands, the most famous pop band of the decade were 883, which created “songs that became anthems for very young people”¹⁷ and whose singer, Max Pezzali, would later in the early 2000s start a solo career (Grazioli, 2013), whereas groups like Marlene Kuntz, Negrita, Prozac+, Subsonica and Bluvertigo belonged to a more underground music environment (Barbato, 2020).

¹⁶ See the “July 19th, 2024, Omar Pedrini interview” in the Appendix A Section.

¹⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*canzoni diventate immediatamente inni dei giovanissimi*”.

Music, however, was not the only cultural element that further developed in the 1990s. The decade, indeed, gave rise to renowned TV shows and series, some of which are still on air nowadays, that have played a great role in the creation of Italian pop culture of the time. What Italian people enjoyed the most watching on TV were variety shows, like “Fantastico” or “Domenica In”, which had been on air since the 1970s and the latter of which is still airing, quiz shows like “La Ruota della Fortuna”, talk shows like the “Maurizio Costanzo Show” – which starred the journalist who escaped the Mafia bombing on May 14th, 1993 –, the fun program “Paperissima”, known still nowadays “for its comical clips”, and the “now historic but ever-present investigative satirical news program”¹⁸ “Striscia La Notizia” (Di Franco, 2024). On the TV series front, the Italian audience was entertained by American series as well, which were aired on the Mediaset group channels like Canale 5 and Italia 1: the best-known and appreciated American series at the time were “Walker, Texas Ranger”, “Everybody Loves Raymond”, “Dawson’s Creek”, “The Nanny” or “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” (Sirtori, 2024); some series such as “Beverly Hills 90210” or “Picket Fences” – which in Italian was translated into “La Famiglia Brock” – became popular also because they addressed particular topics such as “drugs, AIDS, sexuality, alcoholism, [...] abortion, homosexuality, polygamy and pedophilia”¹⁹, something uncommon before then (*ibid.*). Speaking of Italian TV series, the most famous ones at the time were “Un medico in famiglia”, “Un posto al sole”, “Il Commissario Montalbano” and “Don Matteo” (<https://www.cinescuola.it/storia/storia-della-fiction-seriale/la-serialità-italiana/>), the last two of which still continue to this day. Unfortunately, other series like “Amico mio”, “Il Maresciallo Rocca” and “Caro maestro”, despite being above average, have somewhat “fallen into oblivion”²⁰ (Sirtori, 2024).

When it comes to the big screen, Italy in the 1990s was not comparable to the USA in terms of production of cult movies like “Titanic” or “Jurassic Park”. Actually, the decade was a very complex one for the Italian cinematic industry, given that there are “very few masterpieces to remember”, and it was generally “a decade of

¹⁸ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*per le sue clip comiche*” / “*ormai storico ma sempre attuale Tg satirico*”.

¹⁹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*droga, AIDS, sessualità, alcolismo, [...] aborto, omosessualità, poligamia e pedofilia*”.

²⁰ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*caduti nel dimenticatoio*”.

handover”²¹, given that many directors were already well-known in the Eighties or even in the Seventies and they were able to prove themselves by starring promising actors in their new movies: these few cinematic accomplishments include “Il té nel deserto” and “Io ballo da sola” by Bernardo Bertolucci, “Il grande cocomero” by Francesca Archibugi, “Il ladro di bambini” and “Lamerica” by Gianni Amelio, “Ovosodo” by Paolo Virzì and “Caro diario” by Nanni Moretti (https://www.ondacinema.it/speciali/scheda/speciale_classifiche_migliori_film_italiani_anni_90.html). However, there is one movie produced in that decade that was particularly appreciated worldwide, and that movie is the 1997 “La Vita è Bella” by Roberto Benigni, translated into English in “Life is Beautiful”. The movie, that addresses the sensitive topic of the Holocaust and of the racial laws in Italy during the Nazi-fascist regime and featured Benigni as the main protagonist (Zoppello, 2024), obtained great success during the 71st Academy Awards Ceremony, in which it was awarded three prizes, namely Best Leading Actor to Benigni, Best Foreign Language Film and Best Original Dramatic Score (<https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1999>). What is more, the most memorable element of that day was Sophia Loren’s impassioned announcement of Benigni’s win, “And the Oscar goes to... Roberto!”, which turned the occasion into a truly iconic one (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cTR6fk8frs>, minutes 0:00-0:08).

To sum up, the 1990s in Italy were a rather ambivalent decade from the socio-cultural point of view. On the one hand, the economic fallout, the remnants of the fleeting prosperity of the Eighties and those of the political scandals generated a widespread sense of disappointment among the youth of the time, namely Generation X, which was mirrored in their American counterparts, who were afraid that all social problems should fall on their shoulders and that their responsibility was to restore society to the ordinary. Inspired by and sharing the American simultaneous situation, Italian Gen X artists started to poignantly express their hopelessness through a newborn genre of music, namely grunge, which became the main means of expression of the generational discomfort and disillusionment. On the other hand, despite these challenges and the general letdown, the cultural scene flourished: first, the music

²¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*pochissimi capolavori da ricordare*” / “*un decennio di passaggio*”.

industry saw the rise of influential bands and musicians, who defined the decade with their own new sound and aesthetics; second, television thrived, offering long-standing variety shows that captivated audiences, alongside American imported series that enriched the cultural landscape; finally, although not matching blockbuster outputs of the US, on the cinematic front Italy produced noteworthy pictures that earned international recognition, becoming enduring symbols of the Italian artistry.

CHAPTER TWO

Pearl Jam: The USA Representatives of Grunge

The present Chapter describes the first band taken as a case study, namely Pearl Jam, in terms of band history and members (in Section 2.1), albums released and topics of the songs (in Section 2.2), fame (in Section 2.3) and of other information concerning the band's non-musical material (in Section 2.4). The band was formed in Seattle, Washington in 1990 within the grunge movement, and became one of the most influential American bands of the decade. Unlike other grunge bands though, Pearl Jam has endured and thrived over time: in fact, the band has never split, no member died, and their appeal has lasted strongly for more than thirty years (Klosterman, 2022: 47n). From the beginning of their career, Pearl Jam have always been able to distinguish themselves thanks to their eye-opening lyrics, raw vocals and immediate sound (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/pearl-jam-mn0000037730#biography>), becoming one of the key bands in the grunge explosion, together with Nirvana, Alice in Chains and Soundgarden. Despite this, like any other grunge band, the issue of success and popularity has always been extremely antagonizing to them – they have indeed “refus[ed] to make music videos, turn[ed] down TV appearances, su[ed] Ticketmaster [and] not liv[ed] the ‘rock star life’” – but, willing or not, they “went on to be remembered as the biggest US rock band of the ‘90s” (Penderwick, 2022).

2.1 Origins of the Band and Members

The roots of Pearl Jam go back to 1984, year in which the band Green River was founded, “arguably the first Seattle grunge band” (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/green-river-mn0000799771#biography>). Its initial members were singer Mark Arm, guitarists Steve Turner and Stone Gossard, drummer Alex Vincent, and bassist Jeff Ament, but after the release of their debut EP, “Come On Down”, Turner left the band, and was replaced with Bruce Fairweather. Green River, however, was not destined to last long: indeed, they were able to publish two more works, the second EP “Dry as a Bone” and their only studio album “Rehab Doll”, before tearing apart due to “intra-band tensions [concerning] commercialism” (*ibid.*). After the group disbanded, Mark Arm reunited with Steve Turner and founded a

punkier band named Mudhoney, which is still active nowadays, while Jeff Ament, Stone Gossard and Bruce Fairweather, together with drummer Gred Gilmore, formed in 1987 “the glammier” Mother Love Bone (*ibid.*). This new group was captained by a flamboyant and charismatic frontman named Andrew Wood, who was “the complete opposite of the prototypical Seattle frontman as he patterned his look and vocal style after such renowned frontmen as Freddie Mercury [from Queen], Paul Stanley [from Kiss] and Marc Bolan [from Tyrannosaurus Rex]” (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/mother-love-bone-mn0000502269#biography>), but maintained a sound that was “tougher and more rooted in classic rock than their soon-to-be disposable glam contemporaries” (*ibid.*). Again, like Green River, even Mother Love Bone had a very short career, but for a different and more tragic reason: after the release of their EP “Shine” in 1989, the band received attention and was expected to achieve tremendous success, but on March 16th, 1990, Wood was found unresponsive in his bed after a heroin overdose, and eventually died three days later, which later resulted in the dissolution of the group, at the same time as the issue of their only studio album, “Apple”, in the fall of 1990 (*ibid.*).

Not wanting to abandon the music career, Ament and Gossard started playing with another guitarist called Mike McCready and, together with Soundgarden’s drummer Matt Cameron, they recorded an instrumental demo that consisted of five songs, “Dollar Short”, “Aegyptian Crave”, “E Ballad”, “Richard E” and “Troubled Times” (Letkemann, n.d). At this point, these instrumentals needed some lyrics, and thanks to Red Hot Chili Peppers’ drummer Jack Irons, friend of Ament and Gossard’s, the demo tape reached a 25-year-old San Diego surfer called Eddie Vedder, born in Evanston, Illinois, also a friend of Irons’ and singer in a band called Bad Radio, who decided to reply by redubbing the songs and sending them back to Ament and Gossard. The result was a three-song music tape that was renamed “Momma-Son”, “a poignant variation on the term ‘mamasan’, inspired [...] by a line in The Clash’s “Straight to Hell”, [...] a loose rendering of the Japanese for a maternal figure”, which truly fits for a “trilogy about the crimes of a fatherless son”: the three songs, indeed, according to Eddie Vedder, were connected, which made the demo a mini-rock opera, a sort of mini concept album that dealt with a son who has never met his father (as recounted in “Dollar Short”, which became “Alive”), who then becomes a serial killer (as

narrated in “Once”, the new name for “Aegyptian Crave”) and finally gets imprisoned (as told in the new version “Troubled Times”, “Footsteps”) (*ibid.*). Before sending the tape by mail, Vedder decided to personalize the cassette with some information regarding himself, forever leaving his mark on it: originally, the cassette tape was a Merle Haggard compilation that was called “Greatest Hits of the 80s”, which was then recorded over with the three previously-mentioned songs, and Vedder erased all the information belonging to the former work except for the writing “a friend from California” on the upper part, over which he scribbled “For Stone + Jeff” with a black permanent marker on the top, and except for the letters that spelled his name, “E D D I E”, on the lower part, as Figure 1 shows.



Figure 1: the original “Momma-Son” tape that was mailed by Vedder to Gossard and Ament. Source: <https://www.revolutioncomeandgone.com/articles/11/momma-son-and-the-making-of-pearl-jam.php>.

As soon as the tape arrived in Stone and Jeff’s hands, they realized Eddie was the singer they were looking for: in Cameron Crowe’s documentary about the band, “Pearl Jam Twenty”, Ament reveals that Eddie Vedder’s voice “blew [his] mind” and made him wonder whether a person with such a voice could be real (minutes 14:12-14:25). So, the band invited Vedder to Seattle in order to meet and start making music together. Then, a drummer was needed, given that Jack Irons could not join the new band because of his involvement with other projects, so drummer Dave Krusen was hired after a short audition, and so the first lineup was complete (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/pearl-jam-mn0000037730#biography>).

Initially, the band took the name Mookie Blaylock, in reference to the then-active NBA player on the New Jersey Nets, but after some first concerts, their first

tour with Alice in Chains in 1991, in which they did an opening act, and after Epic Records offered them a contract, they were obliged to change the name due to reasons of commerciality (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqzR5iDqSoU>, minutes 5:31-6:39). Thus, they chose the name Pearl Jam. The reason behind this choice is rather bizarre: in a 1992 interview, Eddie Vedder explained that he had a great-grandmother whose name was Pearl, who “was a one-time married to an Indian chief”, and “in a wonderful crossing of cultures, she integrated some of his [culture] into some of hers”, creating an “hallucinogenic jam”, namely “Pearl’s Jam”, that combined “peyote and preserves” (*ibid.*, minutes 7:00-7:22). Later on, in a 2006 Rolling Stone interview, Vedder admitted that this story was totally fake – although he really had a great-grandmother named Pearl – and then Jeff Ament and Mike McCready went on explaining the real story behind the name, being that Ament, while the band was “brainstorming in a Seattle restaurant to come up with something, anything, to replace the original name”, thought of ‘pearl’, while ‘jam’ was inspired by Neil Young’s custom to extend his songs by improvising for fifteen or twenty more minutes, hence ‘jamming’ (Hiatt, 2006).

As for the band members, Pearl Jam’s lineup has stayed constant since the group’s founding, except for the position of the drummer, who has had multiple changes in the early period. The first drummer, Dave Krusen, left the band in 1991, after completing the recording of the debut album “Ten”, due to personal problems of the time which led him to check in rehabilitation for alcoholism (Greene, 1993). His place was taken by Matt Chamberlain, a Texas-born drummer whom the members already used to know, but his permanence in the band was rather short, given that he only occupied the place for only a few weeks, because he was offered to join the studio band of the famous TV program Saturday Night Live, which he accepted. Before leaving, Chamberlain suggested that a friend of his named Dave Abbruzzese, a fellow Dallas citizen, should take his place, so Abbruzzese was hired and played the rest of the “Ten” presentation tour dates and assisted to the publication of the album (*ibid.*). In addition, with him Pearl Jam performed the famous 1992 MTV Unplugged concert and recorded the two following studio albums, the 1993 “Vs.” and the 1994 “Vitalogy”. However, Abbruzzese was fired in 1994, four months before the issue of “Vitalogy”, because of some personal conflicts with the members of the band,

including his disagreement to the band's fight against the ticket vendor agency Ticketmaster, which was considered to be gouging Pearl Jam fans into buying tickets with an overly priced service charge (Weisbard et al., 2001). At this point, the band hired Jack Irons, the one that brought them together and Vedder's long-time friend, to substitute Abbruzzese. With them, Irons recorded some more songs for "Vitalogy", two more albums, namely 1996 "No Code" and 1998 "Yield" and even participated, together with other members of the band, to Neil Young's 1995 album "Mirror Ball". Then, before the Yield Tour, Irons left the band because "he had difficulty on tour putting out the energy for the length of shows [Pearl Jam] were doing", something that, according to Vedder, "really hurt [him]" (*ibid.*). The one who eventually happened to become Pearl Jam's ultimate drummer was Matt Cameron, who recorded the drum part for the demo "Momma-Son" and recently experienced the disbandment of his band, Soundgarden. Cameron was engaged in Pearl Jam's Yield Tour after Irons' exit, initially just on a temporary basis but then he became the band's longest serving and permanent skins-man. On the band's reception of him, Cameron commented:

The guys made me feel real welcome and it wasn't a struggle to get it musically, but my style was a little bit different, I think, than what they were used to. And they've been through so many different drummers, I don't even know if they knew what they wanted. So, I just kind of played the way I played and then eventually we kind of figured out what worked best for the band. [...] It's always kind of different when you come into a situation where the band's established and their music was written before you arrived. So, you have to play according to that framework and sometimes it's more pleasurable to know you were a part of the whole process to get that song started. So, that's just more satisfying as a musician and a band member (Slowikowski, 2003).

Except from fixed members (see Figure 2), the band sometimes involves other musicians for concerts and other sessions. Currently, the band's touring/session musicians are Kenneth "Boom" Gaspar, who plays the organ, the piano and the keyboards, and Josh Klinghoffer, a former member of Red Hot Chili Peppers and poly-instrumentalist (Villa, 2021).



Figure 2: Pearl Jam members. From the left: Mike McCready, Matt Cameron, Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Stone Gossard. Source: <https://pearljam.com/band>.

2.2 Discography and Themes

With more than thirty years of experience, the band boasts a discography of twelve studio albums, twenty-three live albums, three compilation albums (the 2003 “Lost Dogs”, the 2004 “Rearviewmirror” and the 2011 “Pearl Jam Twenty”), forty-eight singles, and several official bootlegs, namely the official recordings of their concerts worldwide (<https://pearljam.com/music>).

The band officially debuted in 1991 with their first album, “Ten”, whose title is, once again, a tribute to NBA player Mookie Blaylock, given that his jersey number was 10 (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 39). This first album, which contained the newly-recorded editions of the “Momma-Son” songs, namely “Alive” and “Once” – “Footsteps” was not included in this album but became a B-side on the “Jeremy” single, a song included in “Ten”, and was included in “Lost Dogs”, the 2003 30-track collection of B-sides, so anything that did not make the final cut and has not been published in an official album (<https://www.allmusic.com/album/lost-dogs-rarities-and-b-sides-mw0000320957>) – also featured an unreleased readaptation of Stone Gossard’s “E-Ballad”, also included in the original demo tape, which became “Black” (*ibid.*, 40). The result was an eleven-track album that became one of the most influential ones in the history of rock music: according to Moretti and Villa (2016: 39), “Ten” “does not pale in comparison to the masterpieces of bands such as Led Zeppelin

and the Rolling Stones”²². “Ten” is also a very socially oriented album because of the topics of its songs, which concern different social issues that vary from homelessness (“Even Flow”) to childhood trauma (“Alive”), from suicide by gun violence (“Jeremy”) to marginalization (“Why Go”), passing through drug use, homicide and rape (“Deep”), without excluding some moments of introspection and philosophical thought (“Garden” and “Black”) as well as personal topics like parent loss (“Release”) (*ibid.*, 39-43). In this sense, the album speaks to everybody, making itself a true mouthpiece for Generation X, also in comparison with contemporary productions from other bands, again according to Moretti and Villa (2016: 43):

If Alice in Chains with their first album “Facelift” speak of depression and disillusionment, if Soundgarden with their pseudo “macho” hard rock of “Badmotorfinger” – released the same year as “Ten” – perhaps don't quite get in touch with the kids of the Nineties, if Nirvana with their masterpiece “Nevermind” explore the deepest abysses of individual despair, Pearl Jam’s scream in “Ten” addresses in the same language everyone indiscriminately, be they outcasts, misfits, losers or broken hearts²³.

The same strand of social criticism continues in the band’s second studio work released in 1993, “Vs.”. The title itself represents a contrast of the band to something, whether it be society, success (an issue many grunge bands went against), or the recording world in general, something Stone Gossard confirmed in an interview with Rolling Stone:

For me, that title represented a lot of struggles that you go through trying to make a record. Your own independence – your own soul – versus everybody else's. In this band, and I think in rock in general, the art of compromise is almost as important as the art of individual expression. You might have five great artists in the band, but if they can't

²² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “non sfigura al cospetto dei capolavori di band come Led Zeppelin e Rolling Stones”.

²³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Se gli Alice in Chains con il loro primo album “Facelift” parlano di depressione e disillusione, se i Soundgarden con il loro pseudo hard rock “macho” di “Badmotorfinger” – uscito lo stesso anno di “Ten” – forse non entrano in del tutto in contatto con i ragazzi degli anni novanta, se i Nirvana con il capolavoro “Nevermind” esplorano gli abissi più profondi della disperazione individuale, l'urlo dei Pearl Jam di “Ten” si rivolge nello stesso linguaggio a tutti indistintamente, siano essi emarginati, disadattati, perdenti o cuori infranti.*

compromise and work together, you don't have a great band (Crowe, 1993).

“Vs.” is an album made of twelve tracks, which tackle with social, political and personal topics: for example, “Daughter” talks about child abuse, about a girl whose learning disabilities are not accepted and understood by her parents, “Glorified G” criticizes gun culture and the machismo derived from the possession of weapons, “W.M.A” was inspired by a true story of policemen hassling a black friend of Vedder’s – the name of the song itself is an acronym for ‘White Male American’ or ‘White Male Armed’ – and “Blood” is an angry scream against media and popularity (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 72-74). Once again, Pearl Jam reveal themselves as great spokespeople of social issue in the grunge scene, given the variety of topics their songs cover to which many listeners could relate.

Pearl Jam’s sense of rage against society turns into fear and discomfort in the third album, the 1994 “Vitalogy”, described as “the most nihilistic, dense album in the band’s production, packed with black clouds and bad omens”²⁴ (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 107). This fourteen-track studio album, indeed, reveals the band’s inner demons of the time, basically addressing topics such as privacy violation and the media’s obsession of labeling Vedder as a rockstar, which made him feel mad and in danger for his mental health – particularly in the songs “Not for You”, “Pry, To”, “Corduroy” and “Satan’s Bed”. The album also includes experimentations, like the final track “Hey Foxymophandlemama, That’s Me”, which is the result of the juxtaposition of looped recordings from patients of a psychiatric hospital, or “Bugs”, a song in which Vedder plays an accordion found at a thrift shop and improvises an hallucinating text full of angst, which recalls Franz Kafka’s “Metamorphosis” in that the character becomes an insect; there are also three deeply heartfelt and personal ballads, “Nothingman”, “Better Man” and “Immortality”, which, respectively, deal with the topic of incommunicability between people, with the one of an abusive relationship and with the fact of coming to terms with life even when lacking the strength, which is actually the sense of the whole album (*ibid.*, 107-115).

After this gloomy and alienating issue, Pearl Jam come back in 1996 with “No

²⁴ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*il disco più nichilista, denso di nuvole nere e di cattivi presagi della produzione della band*”.

Code”, “a multifaceted album, dense with reflexivity, spiritual tension and that finally manages to flow toward the listener a sonic magma of positivity”²⁵ (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 146). Like the previous one, this album presents a multitude of genres (from hardcore and punk in “Hail, Hail”, “Habit” or “Lukin”, going through tribal sounds such as in “In My Tree” and “Who You Are” and ballads as in “Off He Goes”, to a pseudo-lullaby “Around the Bend”), as well as experimentations and spoken words (“I’m Open”), but, unlike “Vitalogy”, it addresses more mature topics such as introspection, questioning the highest systems, and reflections upon life in general (*ibid.*, 147-152). According to Stephen Thomas Erlewine, this album is Pearl Jam’s “most human” work, in that “where on previous albums [Vedder’s] rage was virtually all-consuming, [here] he has embraced an unspecified region as a way to ease his troubles” (<https://www.allmusic.com/album/no-code-mw0000185938>). In “No Code” there is even a song written and sung by Stone Gossard, “Mankind”, which has a more pop-rock appeal.

In 1998, after the more unconventional and contemplative parenthesis of “No Code”, Pearl Jam release their fifth studio work, “Yield”. This album presents a more rock-oriented sound, without totally excluding spoken word songs (like “Push Me, Pull Me”) and more experimental ones (like “Red Dot”, graphically rendered as “●”); in terms of the topics of the song, this album is, like the previous one, more oriented towards more positive and contemplative issues, together with a more calm and uncaring view of life: to take some songs as example, “No Way” is about people trying to live life in a more calm way, “quit[ting] trying to prove something”, “Given to Fly” concerns “rising above anybody’s comments about what you do and still giving your love away”, and “In Hiding” is about “taking a fast from life” (Moon, 1998). What is more, several songs on this album were inspired by books and literary works, namely “The Master and Margarita” by Mikhail Bulgakov (for the song “Pilate”, as the scene where Pontius Pilate is with his dog is mentioned), “Ishmael” by Daniel Quinn (for “Do the Evolution”, as the book is a conversation between a man and a monkey, in which topics as modern civilization and global catastrophes are addressed) and some quotes by Charles Bukowski (for “In Hiding”, a song about disappearing from society

²⁵ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*un album dalle mille sfaccettature, denso di riflessività, di tensione spirituale e che finalmente riesce a far confluire verso l’ascoltatore un magma sonoro di positività*”.

for a while) (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 174-177).

Then, darker moods and tones return in the 2000 album “Binaural”, Pearl Jam’s sixth studio work. It was also a dark time for the members of the band themselves, like for Mike McCready, who was recently diagnosed with Crohn’s disease and received treatment for addiction, and for Eddie Vedder, who experienced a form of writer’s block (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 210-217). The style of “Binaural” is well-described by Moretti and Villa (*ibid.*, 218), who comment that:

This record best summarizes what has been the band's direction in recent years: musical experimentation, the alternation of ballads [, like “Nothing As It Seems”, “Light Years” or “Parting Ways”] and songs with a more traditional rock sound [, like “Breakerfall”, “God’s Dice” or “Evacuation”], the increasing reflexivity of the lyrics, following a path already traced with “No Code” and “Yield”, but sanctioned by an increased awareness of themselves and the world around them. The days of “Ten” are long gone. The desire to explore new paths is a symptom of artistic and personal maturity, as well as of the great cohesion of a band that has managed to emerge unscathed from the cauldron that the media for years labeled grunge²⁶.

What then makes “Binaural” distinctive is the way it was recorded, namely using the homonymous recording technique: using two high-quality and fidelity microphones placed inside a dummy head to simulate the ears, the sound becomes evenly distributed and equalized, then altered to sound as close to how a listener would perceive it as possible (*ibid.*, 210). In this way, the album’s sound reflects and creates the perfect soundscape for its introspective and somber lyrics, which, once again, address several topics, such as love (“Light Years”, “Thin Air” and “Parting Ways”), change (“Evacuation”), injustice (“Grievance”), drugs (“Of The Girl”), violence (“Rival”) and war (“Insignificance”) (*ibid.*, 211-216).

Even darker and gloomier is “Riot Act”, Pearl Jam’s seventh album, issued in

²⁶ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Questo disco sintetizza al meglio quella che negli ultimi anni è stata la direzione del gruppo: la sperimentazione musicale, l'alternanza di ballate e canzoni dal suono rock più tradizionale, la sempre maggiore riflessività dei testi, seguendo un percorso tracciato già con “No Code” e “Yield” ma sancito qui da un'accresciuta consapevolezza di loro stessi e del mondo circostante. Sono ormai lontani i tempi di “Ten”. La voglia di esplorare nuove strade è sintomo di maturità artistica e personale, nonché di grande coesione di una band che è riuscita a uscire indenne dal calderone che i media hanno per anni etichettato come grunge.*

2002. According to Moretti and Villa (2016: 268-269), the album is the band's raw answer to darker times, to "demons far more difficult to face, such as devastating grief over death as experienced in one's own skin and a sense of frustration over the evolution of American society"²⁷. As a matter of fact, the band experienced, apart from the death of friends such as Alice in Chains singer Layne Staley and Ramones bassist DeeDee Ramone, both of which happened in 2002, a tragic event at the Roskilde Festival, on June 30th, 2000, when a crowd crush killed nine people, aged between seventeen and twenty-six, and injured twenty-six more (*ibid.*, 223). This event particularly scarred the band, who decided to pay tribute to the victim by dedicating them two songs from "Riot Act", namely "Love Boat Captain" (which contains the verse "lost nine friends we'll never know / two years ago today") and "Arc", a sort of one-minute prayer made of pained vocalizations; then, as previously mentioned, "Riot Act" also concerns politics, containing three songs that address, respectively, George H. W. Bush's politics ("Bu\$hleaguer"), political greed ("Green Disease") and fake supremacy ("1/2 Full"). Aside from these two topics, this album also addresses existential matters (as in "I Am Mine", "Love Boat Captain" and "Cropduster"), finding the light at the end of a tunnel ("Thumbing My Way"), and despair ("All or None"), and even contains more experimental tracks such as "Help Help" and "You Are" (*ibid.*, 262-267).

At the end of the tunnel there is, in fact, light: Pearl Jam returned in 2006 with an energetic eighth album, "Pearl Jam" – even that, given the cover depicting an avocado on a blue background, fans tenderly refer to it as "the Avocado" album (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 315n) – "a sharply focused set of impassioned hard rock" (<https://www.allmusic.com/album/pearl-jam-mw0000776561>). After many experimental and sometimes darksome productions, Pearl Jam's sound returned, as noted by some critics, similar to the early publications: even according to Stone Gossard, the record "feels like a coming together again in terms of accepting [the band's] natural strengths and also incorporating the best of [their] experiments" (Cohen, 2006). "Pearl Jam" is a very direct and aggressive album, which puts into song current socio-political problems in the United States – such as warfare in Iraq (in

²⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: "*demoni ben più difficili da affrontare come il dolore devastante per la morte vissuta sulla propria pelle e il senso di frustrazione per l'andamento della società americana*".

“World War Suicide” and “Army Reserve”), alcohol use (in “Severed Hand”), religious organizations (in “Marker in the Sand”), poverty and job loss (in “Unemployable”) – and even personal themes, such as the loss of Johnny Ramone (celebrated in “Come Back”) the naming another hero, The Who’s Pete Townshend (in “Gone”) and the acceptance of one’s past (“Inside Job”), in both a more rock sound and in a more ballad style (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 308-313). A fun curiosity regarding this album is that one of the songs, “Big Wave”, was included in the soundtrack of “Surf’s Up”, a cartoon about the vicissitudes of surfer penguins.

Even more positive and upbeat is the 2009 “Backspacer”, the band’s ninth album. With its eleven tracks that last no more than four minutes, this is the band’s shortest album, also in terms of production times, given that it only took two weeks to complete (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 370; 373). Eddie Vedder explained that it was also thanks to more positive times and more positive influences that he managed to create such cheerful lyrics, including the election of Barack Obama to the US presidency following almost ten years of the despised Bush administration (*ibid.*, 372). The songs included in “Backspacer” do not particularly concern or criticize political or social issue, instead they lightheartedly recount some stories using a pop-rock sound, such as being at home and listening to some music (“Got Some”), about trying to stop fixing others (“The Fixer”), about a boy falling in love with a girl (“Johnny Guitar”), surfing to forget about negative thoughts (“Amongst the Waves”), or just loving music in general (“Supersonic”); additionally, there are three slower songs, like “Just Breathe”, “Speed of Sound” and the final “The End”, which create a mellower atmosphere amidst the more rock-oriented sound (*ibid.*, 368-372). All in all, “Backspacer” is, according to Stephen Thomas Erlewine, “a party record for Pearl Jam”, a sort of liberation from past demons and negative experiences concerning popularity:

Pearl Jam battled their success for so long, intent on whittling their audience down to the devout, that it often felt like a chore to keep pace with the band because no matter the merit of the records, they always felt like heavy lifting, but that's no longer the case: here, as on the self-titled 2006 album, it sounds as if they enjoy being in a band, intoxicated by the noise they make. [...] And if 18 years is a long, long wait for a band to finally throw a party, it's also true that, prior to “Backspacer”, Pearl Jam wouldn't or couldn't have made music this unfettered, unapologetically assured, casual, and, yes,

fun (<https://www.allmusic.com/album/mw0000823355>).

This trajectory of high-energy rock and reflective ballads continued in the band's tenth album, the 2013 "Lightning Bolt". In this album more serious themes return, and lyrics do not conceal explicit references to the issues addressed: for example, "Mind Your Manners" is a "bitter invective against the hypocrisy of organized religions²⁸", "My Father's Son" reflects on the fact that everything we are is, in good and bad, something inherited from our parents, and it is something we struggle to eradicate from our personality, "Sirens" ponders about the fragility of life and the fear of the unknown, "Infallible" addresses the decline of society, and "Pendulum" is a philosophical thought on the mysteries of life and death (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 412-414). Generally, the album is a reflection of the many facets of life and death, a sort of concept album on the matter, something confirmed by Stone Gossard in a Billboard interview in 2013:

As a band, we're all at an age now where there's a lot of reflection going on. [At] 40-something, almost 50-something, you're looking at life through your kids' eyes, through the filter of relationships that are 20 or 30 years long, through the filter of your parents getting older and the passing of friends and relatives-relationships and all that they encompass, the difficulties of them and the sacrifices you make in them and also the joy they bring you (Letkemann, 2013).

Hence, the tenth studio work is an eye-opening celebration of life in a way only Pearl Jam can do, embracing "the classic rock mantle [and] accentuating the big riffs and bigger emotions", as well as "enjoying the deep-rooted, nery arena rock that is uniquely their own" (<https://www.allmusic.com/album/lightning-bolt-mw0002563197>).

Seven years later Pearl Jam release "Gigaton", their eleventh album, which, according to John Paul Bullock (2020), is an album that "has a little something for everyone" and is a "complex, dynamic album full of earnest emotion and subtle humor". The album, indeed, takes inspiration from both previous albums like "No

²⁸ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: "aspra invettiva contro l'ipocrisia delle religioni organizzate".

Code”, “Yield” or “Riot Act”, even “Ten”, but also from giants of the past like Led Zeppelin or “’70s hard rock swagger [bands]” (*ibid.*). As for the songs, like in previous records there is a mixture of loud and soft: examples for the former category are “Who Ever Said”, “Superblood Wolfmoon” or “Quick Escape”, while for the latter category are “Dance of the Clairvoyants” – which has a “2000s dance-punk” style (*ibid.*) –, “Alright”, “Retrograde” and “River Cross”. As far as the song themes are concerned, “Gigaton” is often “fuelled by a feeling of burning indignation” (Garner, 2020): a couple of songs, namely “Quick Escape” and “Seven O’Clock” address political issues, particularly the Trump administration, with phrases such as “The lengths we had to go to then find a place Trump hadn’t fu**ed up yet” in the former or “Sitting Bulls**t as our own sitting president” in the latter (*ibid.*); then, “Retrograde” is a “slow burning meditation on climate change” (*ibid.*), an issue that even gave the name to the album, given that the gigaton is a “measurement of mass equal to one billion tons” and “estimates suggest that Antarctica is losing between 92 and 159 gigatons of ice per year” (Kielty, 2020); finally, “Comes Then Goes” is a soft ballad concerning the end of a friendship, and the final track “River Cross” is a disapproval against the government, which “Thrives on discontent”, and acts like a “sweet caress of reason applied to a word that has become a blur of untruth and fear” (Garner, 2020). With “Gigaton”, Pearl Jam returned to the subject of politics and society after years of pause, making it the way they do best, putting it to music.

Finally, the band’s most recent work is “Dark Matter”, which came out in April this year – 2024. After almost 35 years of career, the members have aged and have no more interest in exorcising their demons but are also “unlikely to stray from their chosen path”: the record is “streamlined and purposeful”, and never “overstay[s] its welcome on either the ballads or rockers” (<https://www.allmusic.com/album/dark-matter-mw0004218181>). What is more, even in this album “there is something here for every strain of Pearl Jam fan”, given that the album mixes, again, “high-flying arena rock” songs, like “Scared of Fear”, “React, Respond”, the title track “Dark Matter” and “Running”, and “rough, strummy power ballads” like “Wreckage”, “Upper Hand” or “Something Special” (Enos, 2024). The songs in this album do not address particular topics, but are rather to be “understood as a collection [...] detailing innocence lost and wisdom gained”, in a miscellany of themes that vary from

“indignant rage” on “Dark Matter” to “reconciliation” on “Got To Give”; then, “Something Special” is Eddie Vedder’s dedication to his daughters, Olivia and Harper, “Waiting for Stevie” talks about a woman finding shelter in live music, and “Won’t Tell” has a very cryptic meaning (Garner, 2024). This album is a great comeback for the band, and even though many critics disagree with Eddie Vedder’s assumption that this is “[Pearl Jam’s] best work” (see Garner, 2024; Iannini, 2024; Schonfeld, 2024), “Dark Matter” is still a dignified publication that keeps older and wiser Pearl Jam’s heads held high.

In conclusion, Pearl Jam's more-than-thirty-years-long discography is a demonstration of their ongoing impact and creative development. A dynamic interplay between personal introspection and broader social critique is captured in the band's musical journey, which spans from the primal grunge of “Ten” to the political works of recent years such as “Riot Act” or “Gigaton”, passing through more experimental issues like “No Code”. Pearl Jam's place as a key player in the history of rock music has, in fact, been solidified by their capacity to develop and adapt while preserving their unique sound in all their works.

2.3 Popularity

At first, becoming popular was an intimidating topic for Pearl Jam members, particularly for Eddie Vedder, who was given the position of frontman and representative of the group. In an interview with Cameron Crowe in 1993, Vedder explained that the fact of actually being famous hindered his sleep, which was already an issue of his, saying: “Never have [I slept], and now I really don't. I have that spasm thing. I wake up and go, 'Aaarrgh.' I'll get up and start pacing. I'll walk through a room, and the TV's on and my face is on, and I start to freak out” (Crowe, 1993). This fear of selling out, of becoming someone who craves commercial success, or a victim of it, was what most grunge singers had in common, but being in bands that unquestionably became famous and began selling millions and millions of albums – Nirvana’s “Nevermind” sold 10 million copies and Pearl Jam’s “Ten” outsold the former by three million copies (Klosterman, 2022: 41) – made popularity inevitable, and in this way the issue with that was paradoxical. Then, it was a matter of handling success: while Nirvana’s Kurt Cobain became overwhelmed by success and decided

to take his own life by “injecting a massive dose of heroin and sho[oting] himself in the head with a shotgun” (*ibid.*, 46), Pearl Jam “spent the rest of the [1990s] doing everything they could to mitigate the enormity of their fame”, for example by “stop[ping] making music videos”, “deliberately record[ing] nonaccessible album tracks” and “rarely gave interviews”, justifying themselves on the grounds that Vedder was “not the kind of person who wanted to be ‘validated by the press, and through public opinion’” (*ibid.*, 44). This, whoever, was just a phase: growing up, meaning after the grungier productions in the first three albums, the members started familiarizing with fame, which even mirrored in a more aware and mature lyrics-writing as can be seen in albums such as “No Code” or “Binaural”, and even Vedder in 1996 became more at ease with himself being famous, commenting that “all in all it’s nice, [he is] happy to be [t]here, maybe people [thought] [he was not] but it [was] not like that” and that “it [was] not a problem, really” (Moretti and Villa, 2016: 159). What is more, Pearl Jam’s first music video after 1991 (in which they made the videos for “Alive” and “Even Flow – alternate version”) and 1992 (in which videos for “Even Flow”, “Jeremy – alternate version”, “Jeremy” and “Oceans” were recorded) was for “Do the Evolution”, a song included in “Yield”, which was filmed in 1998 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_Jam_discography#Music_videos), so several years later than their debut as a grunge, anti-popularity band. Hence, Pearl Jam’s popularity has never been doubted ever since the beginning of their career, but what changed over the years is their relationship with it, which began as an unbearable enmity and became a regular everyday circumstance that was eventually accepted.

As noted earlier, Pearl Jam’s initial reaction to fame was rather unpleasant, even when the band was honored with prestigious awards. Even after being awarded a prize at the 38th ceremony of the Grammy Awards in 1995, the band resulted particularly uncomfortable and baffled in the acknowledgment of the accolade, as told in the official page of the awards (<https://www.grammy.com/awards/38th-annual-grammy-awards>):

However, the unofficial award for most ambivalent GRAMMY acceptance speech of the year had to go to Pearl Jam’s Eddie Vedder when the band won Best Hard Rock Performance for “Spin The Black Circle.” As Vedder said, “I just wanted to watch the show. I don’t know what this means. I don’t think it means anything. That’s just how I

feel...you've heard it all before. My dad would have liked it, but my dad died before I got to know him...Thanks, I guess...".

Again, during the 1993 MTV Music Awards, in which the band was awarded four prizes for the "Jeremy" music video – namely Best Music Video of the Year, Best Metal/Hard Rock Video, Best Direction and Best Group Video, Eddie Vedder commented "No... I mean, I guess you gotta say 'thanks'" and "if it weren't for music, I think I would've shot myself in the front of the classroom, it really is what kept me alive, so this is full circle, so to the power of music, thanks", again showing a weird attitude to the award and commenting over the tough topic of suicide, together with a confused face and avoiding eye contact with the audience (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sf5qt4y1ji0>, minutes 2:10-2:38).

Notwithstanding the initial discomfort with fame, throughout their career Pearl Jam have received several prizes and accolades for their music. First and foremost, solely taking into account the band's sales in the USA – which grant an artist either gold or platinum certifications on the basis of how much music material is sold – the Recording Industry Association of America, also known as RIAA, has awarded the band the following certifications: 13 times platinum to "Ten", 7 times platinum to "Vs.", 5 times platinum to "Vitalogy", 3 times platinum to the "Live at The Garden" full-concert video, platinum to the albums "Rearviewmirror", "Live on Two Legs", "Yield" and "No Code", to the singles "Daughter" and "Just Breathe" – respectively, from "Vs." and "Backspacer" – and to the full-length movies and concerts "Twenty", "Touring Band 2000" and "Single Video Theory", gold to the albums "Backspacer", "Pearl Jam", "Lost Dogs", "Riot Act" and "Binaural", to the singles "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town", "Jeremy" and "Last Kiss" – respectively, from "Vs.", "Ten" and "Lost Dogs" –, to the EP "Merkin Ball" and to the full-concert video "Imagine in Cornice: Live in Italy" (https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&ar=Pearl+Jam&ti=&format=&type=#search_section). Then, Pearl Jam's songs and albums have also reached noteworthy positions according to Billboard: as for the albums, "Vs.", "Vitalogy", "Backspacer", "No Code" and "Lightning Bolt" have reached first positions in the Billboard 200 chart, namely the chart covering the

best-selling albums of the week, and stayed in that position for one week, apart from “Vs.” which peaked for five consecutive weeks (<https://www.billboard.com/artist/pearl-jam/chart-history/hsi/>); as for the singles, the Billboard Hot 100 chart, which concerns the week’s most popular songs, placed “Last Kiss” in the second place on June 26th, 1999, and “I Got Id/Long Road” in the seventh position on December 23rd, 1995, while all the other singles in the chart vary in their positions from the 97th (“Daughter/Yellow Ledbetter”) to the 18th (“Tremor Christ/Spin the Black Circle”) (*ibid.*). What is more, the band received a third position on the most popular artist of the week chart, the Billboard Artist 100, on April 11th, 2020 (*ibid.*). Furthermore, after the band’s awkward acceptance appearance during the 38th edition of the Grammys, the album “Lightning Bolt” won the Best Recording Package prize at the 57th edition of the same awards (<https://www.grammy.com/awards/57th-annual-grammy-awards>). Finally, Pearl Jam’s sustained success over the years has allowed them to earn a spot at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a museum that chronicles rock music history and the artists or other influential figures that particularly helped shape it: inducted by comedian and television host David Letterman, who commented that “they are a true, living cultural organism” the band received their place in the museum in 2017 under the category of Performers (<https://rockhall.com/inductees/pearl-jam/>).

Awards and certifications aside, Pearl Jam’s popularity would be nothing if it were not for their fanbase: over the years, indeed, the group has gathered a multitude of loyal fans who eagerly await seeing and hearing their favorite band live. In Cameron Crowe’s 2011 documentary, some fans declared to have seen Pearl Jam several times – one man said 5 times, another one 24, another 61, the following 54 and the last one 153 – commenting that by the time that there is no previously-decided setlist that applies to all concerts, every time their show is different, adding that “there’s not another band like them”; what is more, for this reason many fans travel from abroad to see their concerts, such as the man in the movie who went to see them in a location in America from Bucharest, Romania (minutes 1:48:20 – 1:49:05). The band also has an official fan club, called Ten Club, which “was born from the remains of the Mother Love Bone Earth Affair – a fan organization started by Pearl Jam in 1990 as a way for the band to give back to their fans and create a community around Pearl Jam’s music”,

in which fans from all over the world can enroll and, among many advantages, enjoy exclusive content, receive updates about the band, access priority ticketing, download the official bootleg CDs with unique discounts and buy membership items or limited merchandise (<https://pearljam.com/ten-club>).

Finally, the last reason why Pearl Jam are famous is because they support several social, political and environmental causes. The members are, indeed, very motivated and devoted activists for several areas, which they even address in some songs, as mentioned in the previous Section, and have never feared to publicly defend (or go against, see the time in 2003 when Eddie Vedder wore a Bush mask and started mocking him while singing the band's song against him, the twelfth "Riot Act" track "Bu\$hleaguer", and got booed by Republicans attending a Veterans Memorial day in Uniondale, New York, as can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhSd8n5TeRg>). Moreover, the band also actively sustain their causes thanks to their non-profit organization, Vitalogy Foundation, named after the band's third studio album, whose aim is to "translate the ethos of [Pearl Jam's] music into tangible positive impacts" by acting "both as an advocate", meaning that the Foundation "educates on critical issues and organizations", "and a donor", "identif[y]ing and financially support[ing] organizations inline with its mission" (<https://pearljam.com/vitalogy/>). Vitalogy Foundation mainly focuses on three subject matters, namely "environment", since "we have one beautiful planet and [Pearl Jam] want to do [their] part to protect it", "homelessness", a problem "Vitalogy believes can be solved through working together and deepened civic engagement", and "indigenous causes", to help "some of the world's most overlooked and underserved communities around the globe" (*ibid.*). Besides these three main areas of focus, each Pearl Jam member endorses additional causes that align with the organization's charitable objectives: Eddie Vedder is a vocal supporter of a number of progressive causes, including climate change and access to abortion – even in 1992, during the MTV Unplugged concert, Vedder extracted a permanent marker from his pocket and wrote 'PRO·CHOICE!!!' in his left arm to support women's rights to choose, and then improvises on the topic saying "I could try... to make a change for it" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llOpE85bmW0&t=1s>, minutes 2:16-3:56), and some months later the band appeared on Saturday Night Live, with Eddie wearing a t-

shirt portraying a coat hanger, a tool used in illegal abortions (Battistelli, 2022) – and is also a co-founder of EB Research Partnership, an organization established to fund research into a dreadful skin condition called Epidermolysis Bullosa; Stone Gossard has a lengthy history as an environmentalist, is an outspoken supporter of carbon mitigation, and even backs changes to laws pertaining to homelessness; Jeff Ament, who is deeply rooted in his native Montana, uses his love of music, art, and skateboarding to benefit the state's communities; Mike McCready is an advocate for healthcare, being himself affected by Crohn's and Colitis diseases, and participates in related charity activities around Seattle; finally, Matt Cameron is a mental health champion who is dedicated to suicide prevention and supports music education for young people (<https://pearljam.com/vitalogy/band>).

In conclusion, Pearl Jam's journey from initial discomfort with fame to becoming mature and socially conscious artists perfectly captures their special place in rock history. Their devoted fans, impactful and never-the-same live performances, numerous recognitions, and unwavering commitment to important social causes have cemented their enduring popularity and cultural significance, and are what makes Pearl Jam Pearl Jam. In other words, the group's evolution shows that not only did they adapt to their popular influence but have embraced it, leveraging it to drive meaningful change and connect even deeper with the audience, going straight to their heart.

2.4 Production of Non-Musical Material

As mentioned in the previous Section, Pearl Jam's commitment to charitable causes or political and social issues has frequently been voiced through their music. However, the band's dedication to the various causes has also been reflected in non-musical items, namely material goods such as flags, posters and t-shirts. Some examples of the band's merchandising, in this case t-shirts, pertaining to the previously mentioned topics are going to be displayed next.

Figure 3 shows a t-shirt released and marketed by Pearl Jam in the mid-90s, which aimed at raising awareness on the topic of gun violence (Nattress, 2020). The front side of the t-shirt displays two yellow writings with the same lowercase font, that are the name of the band and the writing "choices", and between the two writings appears a sepia-toned photo of a little girl, who is sitting on a white sheet and is facing

a gun and some crayons, while her hand is reaching forward towards the gun. On the other side of the shirt, there is just a yellow writing that says, “9 out of 10 KIDS prefers crayons to GUNS”, with a box of crayons that is substituting the letter “I” in the word “KIDS”. The t-shirt refers to the band’s single “Jeremy”, which was inspired by the true story of Jeremy Wade Delle, a 16-year-old boy “who shot himself in front of his English class in 1991” (Nattress, 2020), and in this case Jeremy is the one kid who preferred the gun to crayons, represented by the picture of the girl. In year 2020 then, Pearl Jam have released an updated version of the t-shirt, which reads on the back “10 out of 10 kids prefer crayons to guns”, and this time the t-shirt also came in orange, which is “the color Gun Violence Awareness advocates use to signify safety” (*ibid.*). The reason behind the slight modification of the message was because of the Black Lives Matter protests that were happening in the US at the time, and was explained by the band on an Instagram post dated June 1st, 2020:

We planned to release a new version of the Choices shirt today as part of Gun Violence Awareness Week to fundraise for frontline organizations working to prevent gun violence. The events of this past week have underscored the importance of this issue and remind us that Black Americans are ten times more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide. We continue to stand with communities of color and all of those taking actions for racial justice across America (*ibid.*).



Figure 3: front and back of the ‘Choices’ t-shirt. Source:

<https://www.merchandisingplaza.com/Pearl-Jam/T-shirt-Pearl-Jam-unisex---Design--Choices-398164>.

Another example of a t-shirt made to showcase the band's opinion on certain matters is the one portrayed by Figure 4, this time it is based on politics. On the 2018 world tour, the band put on the merchandise table a t-shirt that clearly represented the band's feeling on the actual presidency, namely Donald Trump's: on the front, the t-shirt displays a well-known photo, the iconic 1945 Joe Rosenthal World War II photo "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima", but with a slight change, it being that the American flag is upside down – a reference to the July 7th, 1976, Flag Code, which states that "the display of the reversed flag indicates an official and overt state of distress, accompanied by extreme danger to life" (<https://www.rockol.it/news-691961/pearl-jam-la-t-shirt-con-la-bandiera-americana-capovolta-ecco-perche>, trad.) – and on the back there is just a writing, "Condition Critical", a lyric from the 2018 single "Can't Deny Me", which "appears to take aim at Donald Trump, with lined such as 'You may be rich but you can't deny me' and more bluntly, 'The country you are representing / Condition critical'" (Arcand, 2018). Basically, the t-shirt speaks for itself, being that, putting together a sentence that clearly declares a difficult, or rather critical, state from a song that addresses the Trump administration with a picture that shows the flag meant for life-threatening situations means that really the band was concerned about the president's politics.



Figure 4: front (t-shirt on the top) and back (t-shirt on the bottom) of the 'Condition Critical' t-shirt.

Source: <https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/pearl-jam-selling-t-shirt-150357499.html>.

Finally, very recently the band designed for Pride Month a limited edition of their trademark Stickman t-shirt – the one with a doodle of a man wide opening his hands

and legs and smiling – with the rainbow writing of their name and the addition of the red writing “PRIDE”, and revealed that “proceeds from this shirt will go to organizations that need our support more than ever amid a wave of repressive, anti-LGBTQ legislation” (<https://shop.pearljam.com/products/2024-pride-stickman>). The drawing of the t-shirt is portrayed in Figure 5.



Figure 5: *drawing of the '2024 Pride Stickman' t-shirt.* Source: <https://shop.pearljam.com/products/2024-pride-stickman>.

These were only three examples of the band’s physical renditions of their commitment against social inequalities or political positioning, which is, once again, a proof of their importance to speak out for those topics, which are oftentimes concealed in order not to ruin someone’s own public image. In this sense, Pearl Jam have always been and will forever be putting their face on these peculiar issues, starting from the very beginning of their career as a grunge band and criticizing society by voicing the concerns of the younger generations and then growing up but always exhibiting a desire to actively address urgent societal issues by also creating and selling items that promote or criticize these causes. Through their continuous efforts and also thanks to the actions taken by Vitalogy Foundation, Pearl Jam do embody the true spirit of activism, putting values into concrete action and inspiring others to do their own to try to change the world a little bit, like Eddie Vedder said, “I could try... to make a change for it”.

CHAPTER THREE

Timoria: The Italian Counterpart of Grunge

The subject of this Chapter is the Italian band Timoria. It was formed in Brescia in 1985 – initially with the name of Sigma Six, then it became Precious Time, and finally Timoria – and was active until year 2003 (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017). Similarly to the previous Chapter, concerning the American band Pearl Jam, the present will investigate into the group's history and members (in Section 3.1), discography and song themes (in Section 3.2), popularity (in Section 3.3) and other non-musical products (in Section 3.4). This band demonstrated that rock music could be successfully recorded, sung, and relished also in Italian, making a huge contribution to the country's music industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which used to focus more on English-written music. Across their career and in their works, Timoria have been able to tell stories and address a multitude of issues, combining an expressive language full of lyrical, literary, and social significance with an experimental and evocative rock soul.

3.1 Origins of the Band and Members

The place where it all began was in the city of Brescia, in North-Eastern Italy, and it was the *Liceo ginnasio statale Arnaldo da Brescia* – a type of high school that focuses on humanities, in particular on the study of classical languages such as Latin and Ancient Greek, together with literature, history and philosophy. Due to the coincidence of their surnames being next to each other in the alphabetical list, Omar Pedrini, the future Timoria guitarist, second singer and songwriter, and the band's future bassist Carlo Alberto Pellegrini, became desk mates on their first day of school, and bonded over the shared love of playing the guitar (<https://www.rockol.it/news-716108/timoria-quando-rischiarono-di-iniziare-col-renga-sbagliato>). Some months later, the two young men, together with another classmate of theirs who played the keyboards, Enrico Ghedi (Pedrini, 2018: 27), decided to form a band called Sigma Six, borrowing the name from the formation that would later become Pink Floyd, and tried to emerge in the local musical scene (*ibid.*). So, in 1985 the band signed in for a contest created by journalist and music connoisseur Franco Zanetti for school bands called

Deskomusic – a word created by fusing the names ‘desk’, meaning the school bench and a different rendition of ‘disc’, and ‘music’ – and they won, representing their high school (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 144-145).

Noticing that the project had potentiality, Pedrini and Pellegrini decided to improve the formation of the group by introducing drummer Diego Galeri and a frontman, Stefano Renga, considered to be “the city’s best singer”²⁹ (<https://www.rockol.it/news-716108/timoria-quando-rischiarono-di-iniziare-col-renga-sbagliato>). However, before arriving to an official lineup, Pellegrini exited the group to form another one called Sweet Revenge, to Pedrini’s disappointment (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 145), and Renga abandoned the project at the last minute because he signed a contract with Sony. However, Renga proposed to bring into the band as singer his younger brother Francesco, currently the singer of another group called Modus Vivendi, and the position of bassist was taken by Pier Paolo Pettenadu (*ibid.*, 145; 139). This new formation assumed the name of Precious Time, and in 1986 participated once again at Deskomusic, winning again by “enchancing the public and the jury”³⁰ (*ibid.*, 145). What was different about these young men was explained by their first manager, Mario Massolini, in Federico Scarioni and Omar Pedrini’s book (2017: 138-139):

There was a vibrant music scene in Brescia during those years. In hindsight however, it is clear why Precious Time were so well-liked, they had something extra that created a unique blend, something that did not go unnoticed by “industry insiders”. Omar [Pedrini]’s ability to compose lyrics and music, combined with [Francesco] Renga’s voice [...], made for an explosive mix. Diego Galeri and Pier Paolo Pettenadu too created a strong synergy between drums and bass, and just a glance was enough for them to understand each other³¹.

²⁹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*il migliore cantante della città*”.

³⁰ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*incantarono il pubblico e la giuria*”.

³¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*C’era un bel vivaio musicale a Brescia quegli anni. Ma col senno di poi si capisce perché i Precious Time piacevano così tanto, avevano una marcia in più che creava un’amalgama particolare, questa cosa non sfuggiva agli “addetti ai lavori”. La capacità di comporre i testi e le musiche di Omar, con la voce di Renga [...], erano un mix esplosivo. Anche Diego Galeri e Pier Paolo Pettenadu creavano un bell’insieme tra basso e batteria, bastava uno sguardo per capirsi.*”

Hence, the key to the group's success were the very members, their skills and the harmony among them, and that is exactly what made them win the 1986 edition of the Deskomusic contest. The prize of the competition was the recording of a song for the Brescian label Time Records, which at the time was specialized in the production of dance music, but unfortunately the track was lost. Some months later, however, the band recorded an EP cassette called "Berlino", which included four tracks – "Berlino Est", the only track in Italian, "We Can Play Guitar", "Calling Your Name" and "Walking On My Way" (Fassina, 2019). Paolo Salvarani, the producer of the tape, admitted that it was a very complex recording, because of the members' desire to carefully select the texts that would be published.



Figure 6: *Precious Time* members (from the left: Enrico Ghedi, Francesco Renga, Omar Pedrini, Davide Cavallaro and Diego Galeri) and their EP cassette "Berlino". Source: Pedrini, O. and Scarioni, F. (2017). *Cane Sciolto*. Genova: Chinaski Edizioni, 139.

After the publication of the first EP, the band in 1987 participated in another contest called Rock Targato Italia (literally, Rock Made in Italy), a contest designed for Italian rock bands, which, at the time, were very few, and would reward the first prize winners with an audition for the recording label PolyGram (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 164). This time, the band assumed a brand-new name: Timoria. The name was taken by the Ancient Greek *τιμωρία*, and its meaning was explained by Pedrini in his and Scarioni's book (2017: 222):

The name Timoria was born among school desks, in Greek means both 'help' and 'revenge'. We were considered to be the "village idiots" because, when there were

political assemblies, our other classmates would skip school and go out with girls, while we would lock ourselves in the rehearsal room to play music, so they would make fun of us. “One day, we will get our revenge” I thought, and that is how the name was born³².

To a certain level, they got their revenge by entering popularity, thanks to their victory in the 1987 edition of Rock Targato Italia – obtained by the simple fact that they were the only ones singing in Italian – which brought them to the successful audition with PolyGram and to the recording of their first EP, “Macchine e Dollari”, in 1988 (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 164). For this first studio work with the new name, the formation had changed: bassist Pier Paolo Pettenadu was replaced with Davide Cavallaro, and Enrico Ghedi, who was currently on his military draft, was substituted for that short period of time with Roberto Bandello (*ibid.*, 139). Then, one year later, for the recording of their first album “Colori che esplodono”, Carlo Alberto Pellegrini returned and took the place of bassist, as well as Ghedi, who had finished his period of military draft, and so, the first stable and most long-lasting lineup was complete (Fassina, 2019).



Figure 7: *Timoria* members. From the left: Diego Galeri, Carlo Alberto “Illorca” Pellegrini, Enrico Ghedi, Francesco Renga, Omar Pedrini. Source: <https://www.nemesismagazine.it/i-timoria-e-quel-manifesto-della-generazione-senza-vento-il-viaggio-di-joe-compie-trentanni/>.

³² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *È sui banchi di scuola che è nato il nome Timoria, che in greco significa ‘aiuto’ ma anche ‘vendetta’. Ci consideravano un po’ come gli “scemi del villaggio” perché, quando c'erano le assemblee politiche, gli altri compagni saltavano la scuola e andavano in giro con le ragazze, noi invece ci chiudevamo in sala prove a suonare, ci prendevano in giro. “Un giorno ci vendicheremo” pensai, e nacque quel nome.*

With this formation, Timoria recorded six of their nine albums, from their 1990 “Colori che esplodono” to their 1997 “Eta Beta”, because between 1997 and 1998 Francesco Renga decided to leave the group due, probably, to the fact that Omar Pedrini was the true leader of the band (https://www.ilmessaggero.it/schede/francesco_renga_fidanzata_ambra_angiolini_timoria_oggi-ecco_perche_renga_ha_lasciato_i_timoria-4-7351109.html). As a matter of fact, since Timoria were Precious Time there was always a sort of competition between the two singers, as their first manager Mario Massolini recalls (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 139-140):

But it was always Omar to be the most charismatic of them all, the true driving force behind the group, and perhaps this caused some resentment in Francesco, who was overshadowed by the charisma of the real leader of the band. [...] [Omar] was the one writing the lyrics and music, and the one arranging the songs. [...] What was immediately noticeable, in fact, was a strong, unspoken rivalry between [the two], though it was more on Francesco’s side. Omar never cared about competition; for him, it was enough just to play music and have fun. [...] Perhaps, Francesco struggled with Omar’s dominant presence, both on stage and in artistic decisions³³.

After Francesco’s separation from the group, Sasha Torrisi, a friend of his and Omar’s, took over his position, as singer and guitarist (http://www.sashatorrisi.it/biografia_musica.php). With him, the group recorded three more albums, from the 1999 “1999” to the 2002 “Un Aldo qualunque sul treno magico” (*ibid.*). In addition to him, in 1997, for the “Eta Beta” tour, a new member entered the lineup, i.e. percussionist Filippo “Pippo” Ummarino (<https://www.succoallapera.com/timoria/biografia.htm>).

³³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Ma è Omar ad essere sempre stato il più carismatico di tutti, il vero trascinatore del gruppo, e forse questa cosa creava un po’ di malumore in Francesco che subiva il carisma dal vero leader del gruppo. [...] Era lui a scrivere i testi e le musiche, ad arrangiare le canzoni. [...] Quello che si percepiva da subito invece era un forte antagonismo, non dichiarato, tra [i due], ma più da parte di Francesco. Omar se ne è sempre fregato della competizione, a lui bastava suonare e basta, si divertiva. Forse francesco pativa un po’ questa sua figura ingombrante, sul palco e sulle scelte artistiche.*



Figure 8: *Timoria* with *Sasha Torrissi* (up center) and percussionist *Filippo “Pippo” Ummarino* (far right). Source: https://www.debaser.it/resize.aspx?ARTIST_ID=249199.

The early 2000s were a tough time for the band: after the band’s participation at Sanremo 2002, Italy’s most important music festival, keyboardist Enrico Ghedi asked for a sabbatical year, given that he was not experiencing the best time because of some problems with depression and alcohol (Fassina, 2019). What is more, some tensions started to arise between the band members, since Galeri and Pellegrini were not happy with Torrissi’s entrance, while Pedrini and Ghedi were trying to defend him, only gaslighting the others’ irritation (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 154).

As a consequence, Galeri and Pellegrini sent Ghedi a letter by telling him that they did not want to play with him and Pedrini anymore, so, by also involving a lawyer and after some disagreements on either a disbandment or a simple pause, all members agreed to the band’s freeze (*ibid.*). However, this stop, which was initially meant to be temporary, turned to permanent due to several reasons: after Galeri and Pellegrini’s formation of a new band called Miura, the two former *Timoria* members were involved in a car accident provoked by a young unlicensed driver, from which Galeri remained unharmed but Pellegrini suffered severe brain injuries and head trauma and ended in a wheelchair, hence ending his musical career (<https://www.rockol.it/news-65223/incidente-a-pellegrini-e-galeri-ex-timoria-miura>). At the same time, Omar Pedrini, who had already started a solo career simultaneously with *Timoria*’s work, in 2004, after experiencing a sudden illness during his performance at that year’s edition of the Sanremo Festival, underwent the first of his six open-heart surgery, this time for an aortic aneurysm (Pedrini, 2018: 193). After this episode however, Pedrini continued – and still does to this day – with his career, playing both *Timoria*’s repertoire, the

majority of which was written by him, and his own songs (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 161). Even Francesco Renga is still active in the Italian music scene, however he switched to a more pop genre and forever abandoned his past as a Timoria member not singing the band's songs anymore (*ibid.*, 162), as well as Sasha Torrissi, who now plays his own repertoire, which includes Timoria's songs, and has a project called "Sasha Torrissi canta Lucio Battisti" (literally, "Sasha Torrissi sings Lucio Battisti"), which consists in a tribute to the Italian singer Lucio Battisti by playing his songs using a more rock genre (http://www.sashatorrissi.it/biografia_musica.php). As for the other two original members, Enrico Ghedi now works as a computer technician but still keeps his artistic side, since he has published several poetry books and he keeps playing many instruments on his own (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 156-157; 161), while Diego Galeri is now a drum teacher and a drummer for several projects (Galeri, 2023).

3.2 Discography and Themes

In their almost-20-year-long career, Timoria have published nine studio albums, one EP (namely, the 1988 "Macchine e Dollari" mentioned in Section 3.1), two collections (the 1998 "Senzatempo", published in occasion of the band's ten-year anniversary, and "Ora e per sempre", published posthumously to the group's dissolution), one live album (the 2003 "Timoria live: generazione senza vento", the album published as the band's goodbye) and more than 30 singles, as well as two concert films (<https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timoria#Discografia>). Their discography, which will be discussed afterwards, spans a variety of musical styles, including rock, grunge, pop, metal, electronic music, and even funk. Their success has been significantly impacted by their adaptability, appealing in a diverse and broad audience.

The band's first official album as Timoria was the 1990 "Colori che esplodono" (literally, "Exploding colors"). The twelve-track debut album is characterized by a raw, warm but direct sound that takes inspiration by rock bands from the other side of the channel and of the ocean, with the particularity of having texts written in Italian (Natale, 2020): for instance, as Omar Pedrini reminded, the English band The Smiths served as a major inspiration for this record, as he used to bring the band's albums into the recording studio so the sound engineers could listen to them and try to replicate

their sound into Timoria's songs, which was something that, at the time, very few Italian sound engineers used to do³⁴. From the point of view of lyrics, the album tells several stories, as the one of a young bride that awaits a man that does not exist in "Forse Un Giorno" (translatable as "Maybe One Day"), or the one of a regular customer in Brescian bars, Giovanni, a "man without heroes and perhaps without a heart"³⁵ (Timoria, 1990), in "Hey Giò"; the album also addresses issues such as trying to become famous singing in Italian and not trying to blend in with others because they sing in English, hence pursuing the "American Dream" (translation of the first track, "Sogno Americano"), or the fact of holding on to your ideas, because they are a tangible sign of your courage, of your strength not to amalgamate with society, as in "Walking My Way" (Natale, 2020). It is namely a multifaceted album, that reflects on many social aspects but with a particular focus on the hypocrisy of society and older figures telling young people what they should or should not do, as the back of the album reports:

Colori che esplodono is the cry of our generation against the cautious boundaries of old professors [reference to the song "Vecchio Professore"] with their hypocritical smiles who peddle the American dream [reference to the song "Sogno Americano"]. Dreams aren't enough! We don't have them! We walk our ideas, to be born again, perhaps one day without gods [reference to the songs "Walking My Way" and "Siempre Nacer"]. We dedicate this work to all the Giòs of today and tomorrow [reference to the song "Hey Giò"]³⁶ (Timoria, 1990).

What is more, two songs are explicitly dedicated to and inspired by notable people, as indicated in the album booklet: the title track "Colori che esplodono" is dedicated to painters such as Wassily Kandinsky, Vincent Van Gogh and Modest Mussorgsky, while "Siempre Nacer" (Spanish for "Always to Be Born") is "loosely based on the homonymous poem by Pablo Neruda"³⁷ (Timoria, 1990). Finally, the album features

³⁴ For reference, see the "July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini" in the Appendix A Section.

³⁵ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *"uomo senza eroi e forse senza cuore"*.

³⁶ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Colori che esplodono è il grido della nostra generazione contrario al confine prudente di vecchi professori con il sorriso ipocrita che spacciano il sogno americano. I sogni non bastano! Noi non abbiamo! Camminando le nostre idee, per nascere ancora, forse un giorno senza più dei. Dedichiamo questo lavoro a tutti i Giò di oggi e di domani.*

³⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *"liberamente ispirata all'omonima poesia di Pablo Neruda"*.

Bertrand Cantat, the singer of the French alternative rock band Noir Désir, very famous at the time – at least before Cantat was arrested for killing his lover – in three songs, as he played the harmonica for “Confine” (translatable as “Border”) and “Siempre Nacer” and performed a short acting part in “Hey Giò”, where he said “*Ciao Giò, come va? Io mi chiamo Bertrand ed in questo disco ho suonato un po’ di armonica, ascolta! Ciao Giò!*”, literally, “Hi Giò, how are you? My name is Bertrand and in this record I played a bit of harmonica, listen! Bye Giò!” (*ibid.*, minutes 3:18-3:29 of the song), and Italian singer Biagio Antonacci, who claps his hands while keeping the rhythm and “imitated [The Police’s lead singer] Sting’s voice”³⁸ in “Walking My Way” (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 142).

The band’s second work, the 1991 “Ritmo e dolore” (literally, “Rhythm and pain”), still maintains the overall tone of the previous one, also maintaining the Italian lyrics, while adding some tracks that are more in line with a more progressive and hard rock genres, respectively for the tracks “Baby Killer” and the title track “Ritmo e dolore”. This album also features an acappella song called “La Nave” (“The Ship”), where every member of the band sings. As far as lyrics are concerned, once again the album contains two songs inspired by works by great artists, namely Herman Hesse in the song “Jugendflucht”, as it is inspired by his homonymous poem, and Victor Hugo in “L’uomo che ride” (“The laughing man”) for the same reason, this time for a book (Timoria, 1991). Then, this album addresses several topics and tells different stories, making itself a kaleidoscopic work such as the previous one: the title track addresses the strength of choosing for one’s own sake, and the fact that everyone else will criticize it, something that recalls the topic of the songs from the previous work, “Albero” (“Tree”) is a song about growing up and acknowledging the passing of time and “Gloria fluxa est” criticizes someone’s pride and god complex (*ibid.*).

The next year the band published their third studio work, “Storie per vivere” (translatable as “Stories to live”), which, once again, carries on with the sounds already heard in the first two albums, a mix of lively and soft songs belonging to a rock and pop genre. This album, as for the last ones, contains songs that are dedicated to someone, famous or not: the first track “Non siamo solo noi” (“It’s not just us”) is dedicated to Freddie Mercury, “Accontentarsi mai” (“Never settle”) to “Nicola and

³⁸ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*imitava la voce di Sting*”.

Franco”, probably acquaintances of one of the members (Timoria, 1992), “Fiore di ghiaccio” (“Ice flower”) to Federica, or Chicca, Omar Pedrini’s girlfriend at the time (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 193) and “Sacrificio” (“Sacrifice”) to Pedrini’s parents (*ibid.*, 317). Other information that are worth mentioning of this album is that the song “Male non farà” (“It will not hurt”) was written, both in terms of music and lyrics, by Italian singer Luciano Ligabue, the song “Atti osceni” (“Indecent acts”) mentions several noteworthy people such as the French poet Charles Baudelaire, The Doors singer Jim Morrison, the American artist Andy Warhol, and jazzmen Jaco Pastorius, Charlie Parker and Chet Backer (Timoria, 1992), and the song “Nel nome dell’arte” (“In the name of art”) addresses “the theme of an artist’s sacrifice for art and his consequent poverty”³⁹, adding in the lyrics a revisitation of the Italian saying “*l’artista è come il maiale, è buono da morto*”, literally “an artist is like a pig, he is only appreciated once he is dead” (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 58). In spite of everything, this album was particularly discouraging to guitarist and songwriter Omar Pedrini, as keyboardist Enrico Ghedi revealed (*ibid.*, 153-154):

[At some point,] we were falling apart because our albums were not giving us the breakthrough we expected. We were supposed to go into the studio, and Omar would not show up, he was afraid of making another mental effort for nothing. He was disappointed with the production of “Storie per vivere”, which had ruined the sound of his songs, making them too pop, while [he] wanted something closer to the raw rock productions of [Giorgio] Canali and [Gianni] Maroccolo [the producers of the first two albums]⁴⁰.

This moment of discomfort, however, was the group’s springboard for their creative output, as Ghedi continues (*ibid.*):

At a certain point, Omar showed up, sat down, looked at all of us, and said, “Come on

³⁹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*il tema del sacrificio dell’artista per l’arte e della sua conseguente povertà*”.

⁴⁰ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “[*Ad un certo punto*] ci stavamo smembrando perché i nostri dischi non davano quella svolta che ci aspettavamo. Dovevamo andare in studio e Omar non arrivava, aveva paura di fare un altro sforzo mentale inutile. Era deluso dalla produzione di “Storie per vivere” che gli aveva rovinato il sound delle sue canzoni, troppo pop, che invece Omar voleva più vicino alle produzioni rock selvagge di Canali e Maroccolo.

guys, let's make a kick-a*s album, something we like, something great that will last, and if things don't work out, well, screw it, we'll quit everything". That's how "Viaggio senza vento" was born; in that spirit of freedom was hidden the true essence of Timoria⁴¹.

What indeed Ghedi refers to is considered to be the band's true masterpiece, namely the 1993 album "Viaggio senza vento" ("Windless journey"). The band's fourth studio album, indeed, is considered to be a breakthrough in their career, given that, thanks to "Viaggio senza vento", the band left their own unique mark in the Italian rock scene, becoming the creators of the generational manifesto of the Italian '90s (D'Onofrio, 2022). According to Omar Pedrini, the impact that "Viaggio senza vento" had in Italy was the same that Nirvana's 1991 masterpiece "Nevermind" had on the world⁴², given that both of the albums belong to the grunge movement (confirmed by the album's sound engineer Max Lepore in Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 212) and hence represent and reached the depths of Generation Xers' hearts, who felt "a strong sense of bewilderment, a feeling of living in an age with nothing alternative to believe in or fight for"⁴³ (D'Onofrio, 2022). From a stylistic point of view, "Viaggio senza vento" is a 21-track concept album, that is a type of record that "might revolve around a central theme [...], tell a narrative story [...], exhibit a cohesive stylistic approach [...], or be tied together by a unifying mood" (McCormick, 2023); in the case of Timoria's fourth album, its songs tell the story of Joe, Omar Pedrini's "alter-ego", who is a young boy that does not fit in very much with society and is, in every way, the embodiment of Generation X, who embarks on a inward journey to discover and save himself (Pretta, 2023). Joe's journey starts with him acknowledging that he belongs to a "windless generation", as Omar Pedrini mentioned in the July 19th, 2024, Interview, so he belongs to a lost generation, the one who is not pushed forward by the prosperous wind of history⁴⁴, (in "Senza vento", "Windlessly"), and he feels bewildered because he

⁴¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Ad un certo punto è arrivato, si è seduto, ci ha guardato a tutti e ha detto: "Dai ragazzi, facciamo un disco coi co****ni, qualcosa che piaccia a noi, una cosa bella, che resti, e se le cose non vanno, beh, fa***lo, molliamo tutto". Nasce "Viaggio senza vento"; in quello spirito, di libertà, era nascosta la vera essenza dei Timoria.*

⁴² For reference, see the "July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini" in the Appendix A Section.

⁴³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *"un forte senso di smarrimento, una sensazione di vivere in un'epoca senza nulla di alternativo in cui credere o per cui lottare".*

⁴⁴ See the Appendix A Section.

does not feel safe in those institutions he once did, such as in religion or in his very home, and cannot find his way into society (in “Joe” and “Sangue impazzito”, “Mad blood”); then, he is arrested and thrown into jail for drug use (in “Lasciami in down”, “Leave me in down”, in which Carlo Alberto Pellegrini performs a spoken/rapped part in the stanzas) under the supervision of a terrible guardian (“Il guardiano dei cani”), and later is transferred into a rehab center where he tries to find a cure for his sickness, physical and mental (“La cura giusta”, “The right cure”); yet, Joe escapes by killing his supervisor “with three gold bullets” (“La fuga”, “The getaway”) and runs “Eastwards” (“Verso Oriente”), far from his homeland, “Lombardy” (“Lombardia”), after saying goodbye to his friends he will leave behind (“Freedom”); in this journey, Joe is followed by and meets a clairvoyant, “The merchant of dreams” (in “Il mercante dei sogni”), who helps him understand his dreams (in “Il sogno”, “The dream”) and the difference between good and evil (in “Come serpenti in amore”, “Like snakes in love”), then a psychedelic character (in “Frankenstein”) and finds love (in “Come serpenti in amore” and “La città di Eva”, “The city of Eve”), and he visits “The city of the sun” and “The city of war” (“La città del sole” and “La città della guerra”); he is also purified by rain (in “Piove”, “It rains”), he realizes that he has changed and gained freedom (“Freiheit”, “Freedom” in German), and eventually, he comes back stronger and more aware of his own self, becoming, as a matter of fact, a true “warrior” (“Il guerriero”, Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 79; Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021).

Together with the grunge influences (especially in “Senza vento”, “Sangue impazzito” and “Piove”), the album contains also jazzier songs (“Campo dei Fiori Jazz band”), slower ones (“Il sogno”), funkier ones (“Frankenstein” and “Lasciami in down”), as well as some that at best represent the essence of Timoria’s original sound, (“Come serpenti in amore”, “Il guerriero” and “Lombardia”, which features violinist Mauro Pagani) and a spiritual and oriental ballad that features the Italian singer Eugenio Finardi and Colombian percussionist Canelo Cabezas (“Verso oriente”). This blend of genres that still maintains as a *fil rouge* the story and development of a character that best represents the younger generation of the time makes “Viaggio senza vento” a true mouthpiece for the Italian Gen Xers of the ‘90s, as well as being Timoria’s chef-d’oeuvre and most mature production.

The band’s fifth studio album “2020 Speedball”, released in 1995, is another

concept album, but this time it is concept-based, in that all songs share a common mood: a feeling of fear and uncertainty about the upcoming future, placed in year 2020, which is expected to involve uncontrolled consumerism and virtual reality, the acclamation of fake leaders, the decay of the Earth, and the menace of the rapidly expanding use of real and virtual drugs – speedball itself is a combination of heroin or morphine with cocaine or crack cocaine (Pellucchi, 2020). As a matter of fact, the liner notes in the booklet of this prophetic album contain a sort of letter addressed “To the argonauts of the 2nd millennium” which concerns the aforementioned topics in the following way (Timoria, 1995):

2020: Have you ever tried making love with a cyber-pirate you met hitchhiking on an information superhighway?

2020: Will governments, now prohibitionist, fight virtual drugs? Will the drug trip of the future be that dangerous?

2020: Society increasingly needs preachers. You will have them, at home obviously, on your favorite channel.

2020: We are looking for the astronaut who will lead the Europa III mission in search of new planets to colonize.

2020: Will you be able to keep your love for the Earth and its gifts? Will you have time, “little fast dot”, to love yourself with all your imperfections?

Safe travels, human⁴⁵.

The first four topics and concerns are also addressed in some of album’s songs, namely “2020” for the first one, “Speedball” and “Brain Machine” for the second one – these three songs share a very hard rock/heavy metal style and last of which tells that the only solution for the youth is lobotomy – “Guru” for the third one, a heavy metal song

⁴⁵ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “agli argonauti del 2° millennio” / 2020: Hai mai provato a fare l’amore con un cyberpirata incontrato in autostop su una superstrada informatica? 2020: I governi, oggi proibizionisti, combatteranno le droghe virtuali? Sarà così pericoloso lo sballo del futuro?

2020: La società ha sempre + bisogno di predicatori. Li avrai, naturalmente a casa tua, sul tuo canale preferito.

2020: Cerchiamo l’astronauta che guiderà la missione Europa III in cerca di nuovi pianeti da colonizzare.

2020: Sarai capace di conservare l’amore per la terra e per i suoi doni? Avrai tempo, “piccolo punto veloce”, di amare te stesso con le tue imperfezioni?

Buon viaggio, uomo.

with spiritual moments given by a sarod, one of the most famous Indian instruments similar to a guitar, and “Europa 3” for the fourth, which starts slow and then becomes heavy. As for some of the others, the heavy ballad “Via Padana Superiore”, which is the name of an Italian highway but is also the name of the street Omar Pedrini used to live in with his ex-partner and mother of his first child, talks about “the crisis of not being able to write a song” while “look[ing] outside the window and s[eeing] cars passing by”⁴⁶ and also thinking about a love that is not going to last long (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 193), the poetic “Boccardo” is a reference to Herman Hesse’s book “Narcissus and Goldmund”, in Italian “*Narciso e Boccardo*” (Timoria, 1995), “Mi manca l’aria” (“I feel suffocated”) refers to an “armed poet” who wants to fight against the upcoming death of poetry, “Dancin’ Queen” is a criticism against “moralists”⁴⁷ and hypocrites (*ibid.*), and “Senza far rumore” (“Making no sound”) is an intense poetic ballad, “one of Pedrini’s highest examples of authorship”⁴⁸ (Scarioni, 2020).

Generally, from a musical point of view, this is the band’s heavier album, as the band’s main inspiration for this work was Metallica’s “Black Album” (Pedrini, 2020b), as well as the American bands Pantera, Skid Row and Faith No More’s sounds, but other styles like Pink Floyd-style ballads, like “Via Padana Superiore” or “Boccardo”, punk rock, as in “Week End”, and the 1970s’ disco music, as in “Dancin’ Queen” (Galeri, 2020), which also contains a rapped part in the style of Compton gangsters (Pellegrini, 2020), are not excluded. The result is a direct, dystopic and deep 17-track album, a mixture of hard sounds and poetic lyrics, that sounds like a testament, a warning for the future generations – the 27-year-old Omar Pedrini wrote the album thinking about his son Pablo who, in 2020, would have been the same age as him then – to be ready of what may await them, and they did not go that far considering what happened in 2020 (Scarioni, 2020).

The last album Francesco Renga recorded with Timoria was the 1997 “Eta Beta”, the band’s most experimental work. In fact, the album includes songs that belong to several music genres, as there is rock (in most of the songs, namely “Sono qui”, “Faccia da rockstar”, “Fioriscono”, “L’isola del tempo”, “Bella bambola”, “Il

⁴⁶ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*la crisi di non riuscire a scrivere una canzone*” / “*guarda[re] fuori dalla finestra e vede[re] le auto passare*”.

⁴⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*poeta armato*” / “*moralisti*”.

⁴⁸ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*una tra le più alte prove autoriali di Pedrini*”.

giardino di Daria”, “Zobie la mouche” and “Cerco di te”, translatable as “I am here”, “Rockstar face”, “They bloom”, “Time island”, “Cute dolly”, “The garden of Daria”, “Zobie the fly” and “Looking for you”) dub and rap (in “Sudeuropa/Dubeuropa”) and, as usual, ballads (“Vola Piano”, “Fly cautiously”), but there are also experimentations, as in “Alleluja”, which starts slowly, goes heavy, and ends jazzy, or “Europanic”, which starts almost reggae and has fast, funky and heavy interludes. As for the lyrics, the album does not address specific or important topics, except maybe for the track “Sudeuropa/Dubeuropa”, which explains that the division of Italy between the North and the South is just fictitious, because even the Northern part of Italy belongs to Southern Europe, condemning those who think that the North is better than the South (Pons, 1999); taking for example other songs, “Il giardino di Daria” is a song that Omar dedicated to his mother, Daria, who used to love flowers (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 204), “Vola piano” is a poetic song that include a haiku by journalist Fausto Piroto, a friend of Pedrini’s (*ibid.*, 264), and “Alleluja” resembles a prayer, given that it includes the verses of the Lord’s Prayer, or Our Father, in Italian but then revolves into an invocation of an angel of justice (Timoria, 1997). Another peculiarity about this album is that, often, songs are sung by other members, for example keyboardist Enrico Ghedi, who sings in growl and raps in “Europanic” and “Alleluja”, and bassist Carlo Alberto Pellegrini, who sings and raps in “Sudeuropa/Dubeuropa” and in the introduction to “Europanic” (Timoria, 1997). What is more, the album features in the song “Sudeuropa/Dubeuropa” a Neapolitan rapper, Luca “O’Zulù” Persico, member of the hip hop/reggae group 99 Posse, famous at the time (*ibid.*). Finally, what makes this album different from the others is the fact that it contains songs sung either totally or partially in a foreign language: first, besides the stanza in Neapolitan dialect, “Sudeuropa/Dubeuropa” contains a stanza in English; second, the chorus in “Europanic” is in French; thirdly, “Zobie la mouche” is a rock reinterpretation of a song by the French group Les Nègresses Vertes, so it is entirely sung in French (*ibid.*). To sum up, “Eta Beta” is a work that is distinctly different from its predecessors due to its unique blend of genres and experimental elements; furthermore, it is also notably multilingual and Europe-aware, with three of the 14 tracks having in the title the word “Europa” or “Euro” and featuring several languages in the songs.

After the split with Renga, which officially concluded in 1998 with the

publication of the collection “Senzatempo”, also in occasion of the band’s ten-year anniversary, the band, with the new singer Sasha Torrisi, published in 1999 the album “1999”. This album is characterized by a more pop-rock arrangement (in the majority of songs), sometimes recalling the Italian Beat movement in the sounds, with glimpses of funk and of rap-core (like in “In the ghetto” or “Il Maestro”, “The master”), and, as in every Timoria album, there are a few slow, poetic songs, product of Omar Pedrini’s pen, who once again demonstrates his talent as a songwriter (as in “È così facile”, “It is so easy”, or “Genova”). These last two songs are quite intimate to Pedrini, as they speak of his own personal experiences, the former “express[ing] [his] ineptitude to live without the woman [he] still loved”⁴⁹, the aforementioned Federica, and the latter being named after an Italian city he discovered thanks to this woman (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 193). Regarding the others, “Il Maestro” is a song about Enrico Ghedi, whom the other group members have always referred to as such, as a “master of life”⁵⁰, and is also the one who sings it (Timoria, 1999), “B. Bl. Blu. II” is a poem about colors, and is voiced by Mario Lodola, an Italian artist who is also the author of the horse statue in the album cover, “Deserto” (“Desert”) recalls exotic and oriental themes, and is sung by Carlo Alberto Pellegrini in the stanzas, and “L’amore è un drago dormiente” (“Love is a slumbering dragon”) is a song about the topic of love (*ibid.*).

In 2001 the band returns with a third concept album, “El Topo Grand Hotel”, the second chapter of Joe’s journey, who “sets out again after the disappointments given by his time, his world and his people, for a psychedelic space-time journey, this time, not coming back”⁵¹ (Ancordi, 2001). The protagonist of “Viaggio senza vento”, indeed, after understanding that he is feeling stuck, as if he was in prison (“Sole spento”, “Dimmed Sun”, a song that, by the way, was inspired by and dedicated to the story of Il Cana, a friend of Pedrini’s, who was jailed for 18 years, as explained in Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 83), and ascertaining that the real world lies beyond Milan (in “Cielo immenso”, “Limitless sky”), he decides to leave, once again, after saying goodbye to the friends he leaves here (in “Mandami un messaggio”, “Send me a

⁴⁹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*esprimere l’incapacità di restare senza la donna che ancora amav[a]*”.

⁵⁰ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*maestro di vita*”.

⁵¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*si rimette in cammino dopo le delusioni date dal tempo, dal mondo e dalle persone, per uno psichedelico viaggio spazio-temporale, questa volta senza ritorno*”.

message”, in “Vincent Gallo blues”, in “Joe – part 2” and in “Supermarket”). He goes to the train station (in “Neve – il Capostazione”, “Snow – the Station Manager”) and leaves for Amsterdam (in “1971 – live in Amsterdam”), before going to “Mexico” and finding the underground hotel “El Topo Grand Hotel” (Timoria, 2001). During his second journey, he encounters many characters, like the hotel director Ugo Tognazzi, an Italian actor and director, the cook Nadia, the sommelier don Luis, a girl named “Valentine” (the character in “Valentine – l’ultima tentazione di Joe”, “Valentine – Joe’s last temptation”) and an alien named “Mork”, who convinces Joe to leave with him for space, for planet Europa 3 (a reference to the homonymous song in “2020 Speedball”), where the new “pioneers have reconstructed the ancient Mayan city Tikal”⁵² (*ibid.*). So, the spaceship that hosts Joe and Mork takes off for space, after the two characters have observed their last dawn on planet Earth (“Alba Fragile – l’ultima notte sulla terra”, “Fragile dawn – the last night on Earth”) (*ibid.*).

The songs in “El Topo Grand Hotel” belong to different music genres, such as metal in “Valentine”, funky in “Joe – part 2”, jazz in “Vincent Gallo blues” and “Ferlinghetti blues” and ethnic music in “Mork”, as well as hip hop/rap in “Mexico”, which even features the Italian hip hop duo Articolo 31, consisting of rapper J-Ax and disc jockey DJ Jad. What is more, other important figures have given their contribute in the album, such as Italian-American poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who performed a spoken word part in “Ferlinghetti blues”, or Chilean-French filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky, who performed the spoken word part in “El Topo Grand Hotel” and was also the inspiration for the very album, given that “El Topo” was the name of his 1971 movie (*ibid.*). This time, Joe’s travel is more pessimistic, as he leaves in hope to find a better world and a better life, something he could not and will not find here on Earth. According to Omar Pedrini, Joe’s adventures should have been three, hence a sort of trilogy, as his wish was to bring Joe back to Earth, but this never happened because, after the group’s ninth studio album, Timoria dissolved, so, as of now, Joe’s story does not yet have an end (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 329).

The group’s last work before the disbandment was the 2002 “Un Aldo qualunque sul treno magico” (“An ordinary Aldo on the magic train”), an album with

⁵² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*pionieri hanno ricostruito l’antica città maya Tikal*”.

strong influences from the '60s and the '70s due to the very presence of the adjective "magic", which brings to memory the Beatles' 1967 album "Magical mystery tour" and The Who's 1968 single "Magic bus" (Verzeletti, 2002). Even the sound of the songs resembles and takes inspiration from artists of the time, like Led Zeppelin in "Atomic lovers" or Pink Floyd in "Helena song", and, together with some other rock songs like "Treno magico" ("Magic train") or the revisitation of the liturgical chant "Symbolum 77", also known in Italian as "Tu sei la mia vita" ("You are my life"), and the multitude of slower ballads, the record is considered to be "hovering between the smoky and the dreamy"⁵³ (*ibid.*). Like in "Eta Beta", this album contains songs in English or with some verses in English, and even some words in German: the song "To love somebody" is a cover of the original song from the Australian-English band Bee Gees, the lyrics in "Mr. Run" are entirely in English, "Atomic lovers" has lyrics both in English and in Italian, and "Helena song" begins in German and continues in English (Timoria, 2002). Concerning the topics of the songs, some speak of personal vicissitudes of Pedrini's, especially with women (in "Non è divertente", "It's no fun", "Fresco", "Fresh", "Lulù", and "Un altro giorno senza te", "Another day without you"), while some others talk about travelling and finding a place to feel safe in (as in "Casa mia", "My home", "Il mare nella strada", "The sea in the street", "Vivo alla giornata", "I live the day", or "Treno magico") (*ibid.*). Timoria's train has reached its final station, after a motley discography full of themes and stories, and with no small success not only in Italy; even this last work became the complete soundtrack of a movie called "Un Aldo qualunque", directed by Dario Migliardi, where Pedrini played the part of a hippie priest (Verzeletti, 2002), thereby giving importance to the last studio work of a band that has made significant contributions to the Italian music scene.

3.3 Popularity

The rise of Timoria marked a revolutionary shift in Italian music production, and it was likely this that contributed to their popularity, since they were the ones who showed record labels that rock music could be written, recorded and could have success also in Italian. This was, namely, the challenge Italian rock bands had to face

⁵³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: "*in bilico tra il fumante e l'onirico*".

during the late 1980s and early 1990s, because of different reasons: first and foremost, there were no Italian sound engineers that only focused on the production of rock music, as Omar Pedrini reminded⁵⁴, because bands at the time used to go recording their albums in studios where artists like Eros Ramazzotti, Gianni Morandi, Julio Iglesias or Pooh – artists and bands who belonged to completely different genres such as light music or pop – used to, so engineers did not really know where to begin with when recording rock music (in the same interview, Omar Pedrini called Max Lepore, the sound engineer for “Viaggio senza vento” and “2020 Speedball” a “genius”, because he was able to adapt the sound of bands such as Alice in Chains, whose records Pedrini used to bring into the studio for reference, into Timoria’s sound in those two albums); second of all, writing the songs’ lyrics in English was almost mandatory at the time: indeed, Pedrini (2018: 122) mentioned the fact that when he was younger and brought the cassettes with the tryout recordings of his first songs, either with Sigma Six or Precious Time, or even earlier, to recording studios, he would be told, “«Nice songs, with a good singer, the band sounds nice, but you must sing in English!»”⁵⁵, otherwise they would not make him sign any contract; thirdly, it must be mentioned that, at the time, there was a flourishing scene of bands singing in Italian, like Diaframma, Litfiba, or Moda, but they belonged to the new wave movement, so it was a different genre in comparison to rock, so someone should have done something to enlarge the horizons of music producers in order to introduce rock in the Italian music scene (*ibid.*).

The first step that was done to change the situation was the introduction of the previously mentioned Rock Targato Italia (see Section 3.1), the contest designed as a showcase for bands who sung in Italian, in 1986, whose first edition was just a concert, but its second edition was won by Timoria (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 164). After the band had proven that by using Italian lyrics everyone in Italy could understand them without trying to translate it – an action that, sometimes, according to Pedrini (2018: 122), quite destroyed the artist’s initial intention or meaning of the song itself – Timoria's first album “Colori che esplodono” won the debut album of the year, as the

⁵⁴ For reference, see the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” in the Appendix A Section.

⁵⁵ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “«Belle canzoni, bravo il cantante, la band suona bene, ma dovete cantare in inglese!»”

band was considered to be “the flagship of the new Italian rock”⁵⁶, and in 1991 became the first rock band to attend the prestigious Sanremo Festival in the *Nuove Proposte* section, namely the one where emerging bands or artists performed (Pedrini, 2020a). The band performed the song “L’uomo che ride”, included in the 1991 “Ritmo e dolore”, and what follows is the story of what transpired, according to Pedrini (2020a):

On the evening of the performance, [actress] Edvige Fenech [...] almost mechanically introduced us as ‘one of the most interesting acts in the new Italian music scene’. But that Italy of the Festival wasn’t ready for us, and... we were immediately eliminated: one performance and ‘back home’! With a bitter taste in our mouths but aware that ‘at least we tried’ to change things, we headed back to Brescia, all silent and with our tails between our legs. After a five-hour drive, I arrived home to see my mother frantically waving from the window, shouting, «Oooooomar! You’ve won something! You need to go back to Sanremo!». There were no cellphones back then, so no one could have warned me about the surprise: the journalists in the press room, provoked by our [manager Francesco] Caprini, were outraged by our elimination and decided to create the ‘Premio alla Critica per le Nuove Proposte’ (‘Critics’ Award for Newcomers’), which they gave to us. So, we headed back to Sanremo. We thus ended up on stage together with [singer] Enzo Jannacci, who was accepting the Big Artists Critics award for his song “La fotografia”, and then it was our turn. The press was doing justice to the Italian rock, and from that day on, every year, the Critics’ Award would also be given to new acts⁵⁷.

In this sense, not only did Timoria open the doors of the Sanremo Festival to rock

⁵⁶ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*la punta di diamante del nuovo rock italiano*”.

⁵⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *La sera dell'esibizione Edvige Fenech [...] quasi meccanicamente presentò 'una delle più interessanti realtà della musica nuova italiana'. Ma l'Italia del Festival non era pronta a tanto, e... fummo eliminati subito: un'esibizione e "a casa"! Con l'amaro in bocca, ma consapevoli di 'averci almeno provato' a cambiare le cose, ci avviammo silenziosi con la coda tra le gambe verso Brescia. Al mio arrivo a casa dopo cinque ore di viaggio, vedo mia madre sbracciarsi come un'ossessa dalla finestra gridando: «Oooooomar! Avete vinto qualcosa! Dovete tornare a Sanremo!». I telefoni cellulari non esistevano, e quindi nessuno mi aveva potuto avvisare di quella sorpresa: i giornalisti della sala stampa, provocati dal nostro Caprini, erano indignati per la nostra eliminazione e avevano deciso di istituire il 'Premio della Critica per le Nuove Proposte', assegnandolo a noi. Così ripartimmo per Sanremo. Ci ritrovammo così sul palco con Enzo Jannacci che ritirava il premio dei big per la canzone “La fotografia” e poi toccò a noi. La stampa rendeva giustizia al rock italiano: e da quel giorno, ogni anno sarebbero state premiate dalla critica anche le nuove proposte.*

bands, but they even made the judges create an award for the newcomers.

Consequently, another significant advancement that Timoria caused into the affirmation of Italian rock was given by the appointment of the Golden Record award, generally awarded when sales surpass 50.000 copies, to three of their albums, namely “Viaggio senza vento”, “2020 Speedball” and “El Topo Grand Hotel”, (<https://www.corriere.it/salute/tempo-della-salute/notizie/omar-pedrini-1dda1f52-fbf0-11e9-9c72-2ef647a878f6.shtml>). As for their first win, which was in 1993, Omar Pedrini joked on the fact that “maybe three people would have bet on [“Viaggio senza vento”] becoming a golden record”⁵⁸, highlighting the issue of popularity of Italian alternative rock in a moment when it was still emerging and was proving to be effective. From then on, a plethora of rock bands started to appear on the Italian music scene and some others started to sing in Italian, following the lead of Timoria and experimenting with several genres, as Timoria did: as a matter of fact, the band Afterhours, already famous and with three albums with English lyrics, started publishing albums in Italian, the first of which was the 1995 “Germi”, followed by the more famous 1997 “Hai paura del buio?”; other notable alternative rock bands of the period are Marlene Kuntz, Ritmo Tribale, Karma and Verdena, all of which were particularly influenced by the grunge movement and, along with Timoria, were de facto affiliated to the Italian grunge scene. Later on, came bands that belonged to a more pop genre, such as Le Vibrazioni or Negrita, or to the electronic-rock movement, like Bluvertigo, Subsonica or La Crus, all of which however shared the feature of singing in Italian⁵⁹. In this sense, part of Timoria’s popularity is given by the fact that they were the true initiators of the Italian rock scene, still stuck with the idea of having to obligatorily and exclusively make music in English, and were indeed able to prove that there was market also for Italian bands that wanted to sing in Italian, making their listeners truly understand everything said in the lyrics, at least from a linguistic point of view, without having to translate them. Furthermore, because of their wide range of musical styles, they inspired and provided opportunity for other bands that specialized in only one of the genres they touched to flourish, adding to the diversity of Italian rock music that still continues to thrive to this day.

⁵⁸ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” on the Appendix A Section for reference.

⁵⁹ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” on the Appendix A Section for reference.

Even though Timoria do not exist anymore as a band, their legacy still endures nowadays. As previously mentioned in Section 3.1, both Omar Pedrini and Sasha Torrisi still perform the Timoria songs during their live concerts, so that nostalgic fans can relive the emotion of hearing those songs live again. Additionally, there are tribute bands, like Precious Time and JOE Timoria Experience, that reenact the songs by Timoria, again trying to recreate the experience of seeing the original band live, and have even invited Omar Pedrini as special guest more than once (Precious Time, n.d.; JOE Timoria Experience, n.d.). Finally, to celebrate the success of those two iconic albums, special reissues of “Viaggio senza vento” and “2020 Speedball” have been released for their 25th anniversary, hence respectively in 2018 and in 2020: as for the “Viaggio senza vento” rerelease, it was sold in limited edition double CD or double yellow vinyl – which, together with the original songs from the album, also included the unpublished tracks “Angel”, written by Pedrini in honor of Kurt Cobain, the cover version of The Who’s “Can’t Explain” and the Bengalese chant “Taruni Taruni” – with a poster of the tour, together with a 56-page book with unreleased pictures and testimonies of artists that have participated in the recording of the album (<https://bsnews.it/2018/10/09/i-timoria-tornano-nei-negozi-con-un-nuovo-viaggio-senza-vento/>), while the 25th anniversary reissue of “2020 Speedball” consisted of a double CD, the first containing the original songs from the album and the second containing the eleven tracks recorded during the December 18th, 1995, concert in Milan, both issued in physical CD and in streaming, and of a limited edition and numbered double orange vinyl containing the remastered original songs (<https://www.rockon.it/musica/dischi/25-anni-di-2020-speedball-esce-il-3-luglio-la-ristampa-del-disco-dei-timoria/>). What is more, for the 25th anniversary of “Viaggio senza vento”, Omar Pedrini did in 2018 a minitour in libraries around Italy to present the reissue of the iconic album – in the first of whose dates, in Corso Zanardelli in Brescia, also Enrico Ghedi and Carlo Alberto Pellegrini were present – and then in 2019 he performed 50 sold-out concerts all over Italy in celebration of the album’s anniversary (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021: 8; 11). During the December 2nd, 2019, concert at the Fabrique music hall in Milan, Omar was also joined on stage by special guests, namely rapper Ensi (who appeared during “Lasciami in down”), singer Eugenio Finardi (who performed, as he originally did in the album, in “Verso

Oriente”), violinist Mauro Pagani (who performed in “Lombardia”, as he when the album was first published), psychedelic artist Matteo Guarnaccia, writer and tattoo artist Nicolai Lilin, Enrico Ghedi and Le Vibrazioni singer Francesco Sarcina (both of which appeared and sung in “Sangue impazzito”), who shared with the audience an amazing musical, sensorial and existential experience (*ibid.*, 11; 29; 43; 49; 108). Therefore, given the former members’ persistence into playing the old songs and the success of the reissue and the sold-out status of the celebratory concerts, it is plain to see that, although Timoria are no longer a band, their fans will forever keep them in their heart, will always remain devoted to their idols and will always find a way to experience the thrill of singing their songs live again.

3.4 Production of Non-Musical Material

Regarding merchandise, Timoria have released some album-related t-shirts, as well as posters as seen in the previous Section when describing the 25th anniversary box set, but unfortunately, other than Pedrini’s testimony in the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” (see Appendix A Section) and some photos on the Internet, there are no other sources that provide information on the subject.

During the interview, Pedrini revealed that Timoria “were among the first bands” in Italy “to have merchandise”, since they were inspired by foreign bands performing concerts in Italy and always having “a stand with t-shirts and other items”. He then mentioned three t-shirts that were made for three different occasions: “the iconic shirt with the blue and orange Om” for “Viaggio senza vento”, its reprinted version for the 2018 celebratory tour, and a t-shirt for “2020 Speedball”. The first t-shirt is displayed in Figure 9 and, as described by Pedrini, it portrays on top the yellow writing “Timoria”, on the bottom the orange writing “Viaggio senza vento”, both in Timoria’s iconic font, and on the center a blue symbol, that is the Om, namely the “sacred syllable” in Hinduism, “considered to be the greatest of all mantras, or sacred formulas” (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Om-Indian-religion>). Yet, not only is the Om the most significant symbol in Indian religions, it is also the symbol of “Viaggio senza vento”, since it appears in the album cover, as it is the symbol of Joe’s rebirth following his inward voyage to discover who he really was, a journey he did by ‘travelling’ “Eastwards” and is recounted throughout the songs of the album, and has

even a very special significance for Pedrini, as he explained in the Interview:

At the time, I used to frequent a Hindu ashram, and my guru often came to the studio in Milan, on Viale Lombardini, during the recording of “Viaggio senza vento”. The Om, which I later had tattooed, is a symbol that encompasses an entire philosophy and has over a thousand meanings. My name is Omar, and many friends call me Om, which is wonderful; I’m lucky to have the sacred syllable of Hinduism in my name – I believe the only Italian names that have it are Omar and Giacomo. So, I asked for the cover to feature an Om.

So, the Om has indeed come to represent an album, a generation, and a person’s history, thus becoming a true emblem for the multitude of Joes who are on a never-ending quest to discover their true being. What is more, this t-shirt has become a rarity, and is even “sold at auctions online”, as Pedrini revealed.



Figure 9: Timoria’s “Viaggio senza vento” t-shirt. Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/ziTppLXCLTY6F6LF/?mibextid=WC7FNe>.

The evolution of the original “Viaggio senza vento” t-shirt (as shown in Figure 10) was issued during Pedrini’s commemorative 2018 and 2019 tours of the album for its 25th anniversary, and it slightly changed in terms of graphics: every writing and symbol is orange, the top writing has changed from “Timoria” to “Omar Pedrini”, as he was the one actually performing the concerts, and the bottom writing enlarged and added the wording “tour 2019”. Perhaps, choosing orange as the color of every writing on the shirt brings back to Indian religions: according to Hinduism, orange is the “color

of purity” and it “symbolizes the quest for Knowledge of Godhead”, for Buddhism it is “the color of illumination, the highest state of perfection”, and for Sikhism it is “the color of deep joy and bliss” (<https://www.sanskritimagazine.com/why-orange-color-is-used/>).



Figure 10: the 2018 and 2019 celebratory t-shirt for the 25th anniversary concerts of “Viaggio senza vento”. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/4u77YjUy4RPSvPgJ/?mibextid=UalRPS>.

Finally, the other t-shirt that Pedrini mentioned is the one exhibited in Figure 11. It is a t-shirt made for “2020 Speedball” – an album that, among others, concerns the topic of drug use and condemns it as a threat of the upcoming future – which depicts on top the usual writing “Timoria”, and a peculiar image below: in the very center of the t-shirt there is a caps-lock writing, “FERMA LA FOLLIA” (“STOP THE MADNESS”), then there is a representation of a broken syringe, the instrument used to pierce the skin and to inject drugs such as heroin, and finally there is another caps-lock inscription arranged in a semicircle that cites “TIMO CONTRO L’ERO”, “TIMO” and “ERO” being, respectively, abbreviations of “Timoria” and of the Italian word for “heroin”, “*eroina*”, meaning “TIMORIA AGAINST HEROIN”. What is more, the needle of the syringe lies precisely between the two words “TIMO” and “CONTRO”, and it recalls the very cover of the album, which features a citrus fruit, probably an orange or a lemon, that is pierced by a needle. Timoria were, hence, trying to deliver a message, a warning to stop the habit of assuming drugs, the cause of death for many youngsters and artists at the time, trying to “save a generation of friends that was being lost” to this social scourge (Scarioni, 2020). Apart from spreading their concern

through the t-shirts, the band also applied a white sticker with the same design as the shirt on the CD and cassette cases, so that listeners could be made aware of what the album would be talking about and could partake in the spreading of the anti-drug word.



Figure 11: the “2020 Speedball” t-shirt. Source: <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRjNBdSJOIuPyYQMzW1w1xFJ-4YjVobCcFkNw&s>.

A final little spoiler Omar Pedrini made during the Interview was revealing that on October 30th this year the comic book of “Viaggio senza vento” will be presented at Lucca Comics, the largest and most important comics festival in Europe which takes place in the center of Lucca, a city in Tuscany. So, Timoria’s merchandise could be considered as never-ending and always expanding, given that the stories recounted in the albums will never die and will always be celebrated, like Omar Pedrini said:

It’s wonderful, because it reminds me that this album is still and always alive, because it’s a story about a twenty-year-old in crisis, and as long as there are twenty-year-olds in crisis, “Viaggio senza vento” will be loved. That album is timeless, and I think that’s its real magic: it could be from the Sixties or from 2030. Still nowadays many people, including youngsters, tell me that “Viaggio senza vento” saved their lives, and just as it did for them, it also saved mine⁶⁰.

In a nutshell, not only did Timoria address high and culturally significant causes in their works, but they also endorsed them through their goods, particularly t-shirts. By

⁶⁰ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” on the Appendix A Section for reference.

using this unusual medium of expression, they raised awareness on the issue of drug use and symbolized the ongoing search for inner peace and one's position in the world, inspiring a generation of admirers who might carry on those messages. Furthermore, with the future publication of "Viaggio senza vento" in the format of comic book, apart from attracting the attention of longtime fans, who will approach to the album in a brand-new way, the new generations will get to know the story of Joe and will pass it on, making its story something that will forever live on.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data and Methodology

4.1 Data analyzed

Regarding the data chosen for this thesis, the study focuses on two different categories of music material, namely song lyrics and music videos, that are particularly representative of the grunge scene of the two nations in comparison, the USA and Italy. The specific songs and videos were manually chosen because of their iconicity and adherence to the principles of the grunge genre: indeed, as previously mentioned in Chapter One, grunge is a musical movement that addressed social injustice, criticism of society as a whole, and class concerns, as well as feelings of hopelessness and melancholy that Generation X felt, who tried in every way to flee from an alienating and depressing social environment (Klosterman, 2022; Chaney, 2024). In the selected material, these issues are addressed both explicitly and implicitly, so the data under analysis not only prove to be raw and earnest criticisms to the societal and individual problems but also provide metaphors and indirect references to the concerns of the younger generation.

4.1.1 Song Lyrics

The first song selected for analysis is Pearl Jam's "Even Flow", taken from the band's 1991 debut album "Ten", in which it is the second track, and was released in 1992 as the album's second single (<https://pearljam.com/music/song/even-flow>). The instrumental part of the song was written by guitarist Stone Gossard and its lyrics by singer Eddie Vedder. This song has received a significant amount of popularity, as it reached third position on Billboard's Mainstream Rock chart (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160529164502/http://www.allmusic.com/album/ten-mw0000265614/awards>), was included in Rolling Stone Magazine's "The 100 Greatest Guitar Songs of All Time" at the 77th place (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080531001214/http://www.rollingstone.com/news/coversstory/20947527/page/32>) and recently obtained the 18th position in Grunge Bible's "Top 100 Grunge Songs" chart (Celona, 2023).

The song lyrics address in a particularly earnest, vivid, and evocative way the issue of homelessness, a problem that has always existed in American society and that, in the 1990s, persisted as an aftermath of the 1980s, a paradoxical decade characterized by “both outrageous greed and outrageous suffering” and when billions of dollars invested in “speculative commercial real estate [...] led to an unprecedented high office vacancy rate” (Dreier and Applebaum, 1992: 155); actually, the housing crisis that started in the ‘80s still continued in the ‘90s, and even if public opinion converged to focus on finding a solution to the matter, from a political point of view “not enough concern” has been shown to help the homeless (*ibid.*, 156) and despite the increase of “programs and services to help the homeless”, the issue did “not seem to have diminished” (Burt et al, 1999). As a consequence, census agencies estimated that there were 228,621 homeless people in the USA in the early 1990s, and homelessness advocates denounced the American system as having “a gross undercount” on the statistic (Fulwood, 1991). Regarding Pearl Jam’s song, the inspiration for “Even Flow” came from one of singer Eddie Vedder’s experiences: while the band was recording “Ten” in the studio in Seattle, he met and befriended a homeless Vietnam War veteran also named Eddie, who was living in the foyer of the Pioneer Square office building. The two Eddies spoke often, and Vedder got to know the “stories of the atrocities [the veteran] had seen”, but one day the homeless man moved underneath a viaduct and Vedder went touring with the band; as soon as the band returned from the tour, Vedder learned that the veteran had died, so he decided to dedicate the song “Even Flow” to him (Rietmulder, 2018).

The second song lyrics to be analyzed are the ones of “Senza vento”, the first track from Timoria’s fourth album “Viaggio senza vento”. The song was released as the album’s promotional single in 1993, and both its lyrics and music were written by guitarist Omar Pedrini (Timoria, 1993).

The song is to be considered as a cry for Generation X, a lost and ill-fated generation that found themselves “living through the late 1980s and early 1990s [and] has experienced firsthand overwhelming changes”⁶¹ (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021: 16). As a matter of fact, those belonging to Generation X – those who, according to

⁶¹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*a vivere la fine degli anni '80 e l'inizio dei '90 [e] ha vissuto sulla propria pelle dei cambiamenti stravolgenti*”.

Klosterman (2022: 9), were “born between 1966 and 1981” – were the first to experience the effects of climate change and global pollution, to watch the Gulf War bombings on television and to be afraid of AIDS, and, for these very reasons, grew up with disillusioned and disoriented feelings who pushed some of them to seek solace in the usage of drugs such as heroin (*ibid.*). Moreover, to the eyes of the older people, the youngsters in the 1990s were considered losers, as Pedrini wrote in his and Scarioni’s book:

The older friends saw us as losers. They, who had made the revolution in the ‘60s and fought on the front lines in the ‘70s, bringing the youth to the streets and into the spotlight, trying to change the world, viewed us as a generation without ideals, a lost one. If we add to this the situation of the ‘80s, with Reagan’s era of hedonism and the “*Milano da bere*” where everything seemed possible, our years truly seemed unfortunate⁶² (*ibid.*, 2021: 17).

Hence, for all these factors, “Senza vento” functions as a juvenile scream of rebellion against a society that only saw its youngsters as hopeless and good for nothing – “windless”, in fact – and had no powerful sources of inspiration and interest for them. In addition to this, the song is also one of the manifestos of the Italian grunge movement, not only because of its themes but also because of its sound that was “right on point”⁶³ with the grunge sonority (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 168), since it is the band’s hymn of affirmation – a sort of “stadium anthem” as Omar Pedrini named it in the “July 19th, 2024, Interview” (see Appendix A Section) – of the younger people’s potential and personalities, which were hindered by society that misled and abandoned them on the brink of the precipice, as Pedrini stated:

I renamed my generation the “windless generation” because I imagined it as a boat stranded in calm sea; without the wind in its sails, the journey becomes much more

⁶² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *Gli amici più grandi di noi ci consideravano degli sfigati. loro che negli anni '60 avevano fatto la rivoluzione e negli anni '70 avevano lottato in prima linea, portando i giovani nelle piazze e al centro dell'attenzione, cercando di cambiare il mondo, vedevano in noi una generazione senza ideali e perduta. se poi ci mettiamo anche gli anni '80, quelli dell'edonismo reaganiano e della 'Milano da bere' dove tutto era possibile, i nostri sembravano veramente degli anni sfortunati.*

⁶³ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*dannatamente in linea*”.

arduous. Unlike previous generations, we didn't have the wind of history at our backs, we were starting at disadvantage. [...] With my guitar, I was convinced I could bring about social justice, I believed that with poetry and music I could change something, leave a mark on my time, and redeem my generation⁶⁴ (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021: 17).

4.1.2 Music Videos

The first music video chosen for examination is the one of the song “Jeremy”, the sixth track of “Ten” and the band’s third single, released in 1992 (<https://pearljam.com/music/song/jeremy>). Bassist Jeff Ament wrote the music, and singer Eddie Vedder wrote the lyrics. Following its debut as a single, the song peaked at number five on Billboard’s Mainstream Rock and Modern Rock charts (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160529164502/http://www.allmusic.com/album/ten-mw0000265614/awards>) and, recently, has been awarded the seventh position in Grunge Bible’s “Top 100 Grunge Songs” chart (Celona, 2023).

The song deals with one of the most controversial topics in American society, that is the one of possession of weapons and gun violence. In fact, the Second Amendment in the American Constitution reads that “a well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed” (<https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/constitution.htm>), indicating that anyone, civilian or military, has the right to possess weapons, even for domestic self-defense, since it is legally regulated. For this reason, the topic of gun violence has always been a severe issue in the American state, as not only has it caused public debates over its consequences, but also, throughout the years, it has caused several serious repercussions, such as mass shootings, an increase in suicides by firearm and deaths of Black American victims, as well as degradation of public health and an increasing fear of gun violence especially in women and children (Dubey, 2021). In the case of Pearl Jam’s “Jeremy”, the song is based on the true story of Jeremy Wade Delle, a 16-year-old boy who shot himself

⁶⁴ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: *La mia generazione io l'ho ribattezzata "generazione senza vento" perché me la sono immaginata come un'imbarcazione in mezzo al mare in bonaccia; senza il vento in poppa tra le vele, il viaggio diventa molto più faticoso. A differenza delle generazioni precedenti, noi non avevamo il vento della storia a favore, partivamo svantaggiati. [...] Con la mia chitarra ero convinto di fare giustizia sociale, credevo che con la poesia e la musica avrei potuto cambiare qualcosa, lasciare un segno nel mio tempo, riscattare la mia generazione.*

in front of his peers by “firing a .357-caliber Magnum into his mouth” on the morning of January 8th, 1991, at Richardson High School in Richardson, Texas (Miller & Nevins, 1991). The youngster, referred to as a “loner” by his classmates, was the son of a divorced couple, had been in counseling with the father and had only sometimes attended classes (*ibid.*). For this very last reason, Wade Delle was requested by his teacher Fay Barnett that day “to get an admittance slip from the school office”, but “instead, he returned with a gun” and, before taking his own life, he said: <<Miss, I got what I really went for>> (*ibid.*).

The “Jeremy” music video was filmed in June 1992 by director Mark Pellington and edited by Bruce Ashley, and it premiered on MTV on the first of August of the same year (Villa, 2020), replacing its first version, filmed by photographer and band friend Chris Cuffaro one year earlier. The video was recorded in King’s Cross, London, and sees as its main characters the singer Eddie Vedder and a 12-year-old actor, Trevor Wilson, who plays the role of Jeremy Wade Delle. Following its premiere, the video gained considerable amounts of popularity and saw frequent airing on MTV; then in 1993 it was recognized with four MTV Video Music Awards, namely Best Group Video, Best Video of the Year, Best Direction and Best Metal/Hard Rock Video (<http://www.rockonthenet.com/archive/1993/mtvvmawards.htm>). However, MTV banned the first edition of the video due to graphic content, cutting the last scene (in which the boy playing Jeremy puts a gun in his mouth) and shortening the sequence that referenced to the Bellamy Salute during the Pledge of Alliance (as it can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/582572287>). Yet, on June 5th, 2020, the uncensored version of the video, which will be the one analyzed in this thesis, was uploaded in a higher definition on Pearl Jam’s official YouTube channel on the occasion of the National Gun Violence Awareness Day (Kreps, 2020).

Timoria’s video for “Sangue impazzito” is the second multimedia material analyzed in this section. The song is the third track from Timoria’s 1993 “Viaggio senza vento” and its second single, written and put to music by guitarist Omar Pedrini (Timoria, 1993).

The issue addressed to in the song is the one of substance addiction, from which the main character, Joe, suffers. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a surge in intravenous drug abuse in Italy, especially with the case of heroin, but in the 1990s

new drugs started to emerge, such as cocaine or ecstasy, which could be ingested or inhaled, “except in heroin addicts who [...] maintained their affection for needles”⁶⁵ (Riglietta, 2018). Despite the expansion of drug market due to the addition of new narcotics, however, heroin remained the most abused substance because it “maintain[ed] a high number of addicts”, as they “represented the ideal reservoir both for the use of other substances and for their distribution” given that “most retail sales [were] managed by addicts”⁶⁶ (*ibid.*). The problem of drug abuse was not only an economic one – as medium-to-low quality heroin in the ‘90s cost “between 100,000 and 120,000 lira, while the average salary was slightly above one million lira”, which meant that with such salary “it was possible to purchase approximately 10 grams” of street heroin (*ibid.*) – but it also reached the social sphere, since “until the 1990s a drug addict was considered an outcast from society, a public disturbance, and a nuisance to be marginalized”⁶⁷ (Dotti, 2021). Even Joe, the protagonist of this song and of the whole album, is an outcast, a “twenty-year-old in crisis”⁶⁸ with drug issues, no place to go, and nothing that belongs to him anymore. In this song, he reflects on his condition as a drug addict: “he finds himself outside the church unconscious” with “his blood [that] pushes, pulses, is crazed” and no one helps him (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2021: 24); then, “he wakes up and watches people going to Sunday Mass, questioning how he lost his faith” (*ibid.*); in this very moment of reflection, he “feels the need to leave”⁶⁹ (*ibid.*), and so he departs from his city, that city he feels it has abandoned him and never offered any assistance, leaving him alone in his condition.

The “Sangue impazzito” music video was filmed in 1993 and was directed by Alessandro “Alex” Orlowski and Alessandra Pescetta (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggBCg>, minute 0:19; also reported by

⁶⁵ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*tranne che negli eroinomani che [...] hanno mantenuto l'affezione per gli aghi*”.

⁶⁶ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*mantene[va] una quota elevata di tossicodipendenti*” / “*rappresenta[va]no il serbatoio ideale sia per l'uso di altre sostanze che per la loro commercializzazione*” / “*la maggior parte delle attività di vendita al dettaglio [era] gestita da persone tossicodipendenti*”.

⁶⁷ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*tra le 100.000 e le 120.000 lire, mentre lo stipendio superava di poco il milione*” / “*era possibile acquistare circa 10 grammi*” / “*fino agli anni Novanta il tossicodipendente era considerato una persona esclusa dalla società, un disturbatore dell'ordine pubblico e un fastidio da emarginare*”.

⁶⁸ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” in the Appendix A Section for reference.

⁶⁹ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*si trova fuori dalla chiesa privo di sensi*” / “*il suo sangue spinge, pulsa, è impazzito*” / “*si sveglia e osserva la gente andare alla Santa Messa, chiedendo a sé stesso come abbia fatto a perdere la fede*” / “*sente la necessità di andarsene*”.

Omar Pedrini in the “July 19th, 2024, Interview”, see Appendix A). Initially, as Pedrini reported, the music video was “conceived as a short film”, lasting 15 minutes, but then it was shortened to four and a half minutes for its release as a music video⁷⁰. The narrative follows a young man, Joe, as he walks and sails through small towns and beaches in the Veneto region. Moreover, the members of Timoria also appear, playing and singing around a campfire on a beach in Jesolo, a maritime location in Veneto, and, in the final part of the video, are seen planting a tree on the same beach⁷¹. The video is shot entirely in black and white, and uses evocative imagery to allude to the problem of drug abuse; according to art critic Fabiola Naldi, the early 1990s marked the emergence of “video clips as a means of communication but also as a form of artistic expression, as well as experimentation”, and in line with this trend, the “Sangue impazzito” music video, as well as Timoria’s other visual works, can be seen as a “short piece[...] of art”⁷² (Pedrini and Scarioni, 2017: 186). Timoria’s creativity and artistic experimentation, particularly their ability to reference other artistic material, can also be seen in one of the final segments of the “Sangue impazzito” video, as this part recreates a scene from Russian director Andrei Tarkovskij’s movie “The Sacrifice”⁷³.

4.2 Method of analysis

In terms of methodology used to examine the chosen material, the present study employs two separate theoretical approaches to qualitatively analyze the different data, namely song lyrics and music videos. Owing to the restricted amount and nature of the selected content, only qualitative evaluations are carried out.

4.2.1 Lyrics Analysis

The chosen song lyrics were analyzed using Norman Fairclough’s (1995, 2003) framework for Critical Discourse Analysis. This specific methodology seeks to understand the relationship between language, power and society, being based on the supposition that “one productive way of doing social research is through a focus on

⁷⁰ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” in the Appendix A Section for reference.

⁷¹ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” in the Appendix A Section for reference.

⁷² Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*video clip come strumento di comunicazione ma anche come forma di espressione artistica, anche di sperimentazione*” / “*brev[e] oper[a] d’arte*”.

⁷³ See the “July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini” in the Appendix A Section for reference.

language” (Fairclough, 2003: 2). In other words, according to Fairclough’s framework, discourse is both a social practice and a means of communication that helps to shape reality, and it not only influence social structures, but is also influenced by them.

In particular, Critical Discourse Analysis is structured as a “three-dimensional framework”, as it involves the interaction among three spheres (Fairclough, 1995: 2): the first concerns the analysis of the text and consists of a mere description of its linguistic features, such as grammar, cohesion, and structure; the second dimension focuses on the interpretation of the discursive practice, examining the contexts and production and reception of the text and uncovering the concealed ideological practices (*ibid.*); finally, the third component involves a sociocultural examination and explanation, where the text and its discursive practices are connected to the broader social and cultural context, highlighting ideologies, norms, and power relations embedded within it (*ibid.*).

Given these theoretical underpinnings, Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis proves particularly useful when applied to the analysis of texts that address and criticize social inequalities, and these specific texts take various forms and do not necessarily have to “be linguistic” (Fairclough, 1995: 4). Considering that grunge lyrics explore societal themes including alienation and criticism of established power structures, as well as injustices and tensions experienced by underprivileged and ostracized classes, this framework has been selected as a well-suited instrument for the analysis of the selected lyrics belonging to Pearl Jam’s and Timoria’s repertoire precisely for these reasons.

4.2.2 Video Analysis

The selected music videos were examined using Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault’s (2006) methodological framework for Phasal Analysis. This specific instrument of analysis belongs to the scholars’ multipurpose toolkit for Multimodal Analysis, which sees multimodality as a useful means to assess “the diversity of ways in which texts and their associated meaning-making practices are the results of the ways in which semiotic resources of various kinds work in partnership to create [...] meaning” (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: xv) and considers texts as “not limited to the spoken and written media of language” (*ibid.*, 4).

In particular, Phasal Analysis considers as “basic units of textual sequencing” phases, which are defined as a “text-analytical units in terms of which the text as a whole can be segmented and analyzed” (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 47). Phases can also be divided into subphases, hence smaller units, and a moment “when one phase or subphase ends and another begins” is called transition point. A phase is characterized by a “high level of metafunctional consistency or homogeneity” (*ibid.*), meaning that it is made of semiotic elements such as visual, auditory, or linguistic features that are coherent and present a “high degree of sameness”, making it easy to distinguish that phase from another one (*ibid.*, 49-50). In this sense, a multimodal text that is divided into phases, subphases, and transition points displays a “constantly varying constellation of sound, image, gesture, text and language” (*ibid.*).

According to the scholars, Phasal Analysis is a perfectly suited tool to examine film texts and media (Thibault, 2000), “including those relating to the general public” such as “cinema, DVD, TV or web-based films” and “those intended for more restricted audiences” such as “company training films [or] recordings of university lectures” (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 46; 48). Moreover, Baldry and Thibault suggest pairing a textual Phasal Analysis of film media with a Multimodal Transcription technique, which provides an in-depth visual dissection of the video text into blocks – i.e., phases, subphases and transition points (Thibault, 2000) – and showcases “the way these blocks relate to metafunctional organization and the constant changes in this metafunctional organization as the text flows in time” (*ibid.*, 49). Usually, Multimodal Transcription is provided in the form of tables (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: Appendix I; 168-169; Appendix II).

Given these theoretical premises, the present research has selected the framework for Phasal Analysis and its pairing with the Multimodal Transcription as the most comprehensive means of examination for the chosen music videos, reason being that they enable a thorough dissection of the selected materials, trying to interpret their multimodal complexity through the interplay between music and imagery, any deeper thematic connections, and the emotional resonance that are consistent with grunge’s social criticism and the artists’ personal engagement with the discussed topics. However, it must be mentioned that, unlike the approach adopted by Baldry and Thibault in their reference book – where they selected videos no longer

than sixty seconds and conducted an extremely precise, second-by-second analysis – the Multimodal Transcription of the selected materials has still been carried out with precision albeit not down to the second due to their greater length, as the video for “Jeremy” lasts 5:33 minutes, while “Sangue impazzito’s” lasts 4:24 minutes.

As for the Multimodal Transcription of the chosen music videos, the Tables displaying the dissection of the selected materials include several elements that co-occur to the meaning-making process of each of the videos’ phases. First and foremost, the Tables – appended in the Appendix B Section – include the time reference of the phase or subphase analyzed (indicated by the ‘T’ column, where T stands for Time in minutes and seconds) and a screenshot taken from that precise timeframe (indicated by the ‘VTF’ column, where VTF stands for Visual Transitivity Frame); then, the Tables include a description of the Ideational Meaning of the videos, which consists in taking into account the Participants (who is performing an activity), the Processes (what they do), and the Circumstances (where they do the activity) that occur in a specific phase or subphase (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 22); additionally, the Tables display characteristics that belong to the Interpersonal Meaning of the videos, which “is concerned with language as interaction, [...] the expression of attitudinal and evaluative orientations [...] and the taking-up and negotiating of particular subjective positions in discourse” (*ibid.*): in particular, the analysis conducted in this thesis considers the camera position (indicated by CP, which can be either static or moving) and distance (indicated by D and includes a range of positioning that goes from a very close shot – VCS – to a very long shot – VLS) in the phase, the gaze of participants (which can be distance-oriented, engaged, disengaged or off-screen, *ibid.*, 196) and their facial expression (indicated by FE), the vertical and horizontal perspective (indicated by VP, which can be high, median or low, and HP, which can be direct or oblique, *ibid.*, 195), the colors and their orientation (indicated by CR and CO, which can be naturalistic, sensory, evocative or hyperreal, *ibid.*, 200).

Another important aspect included in the Tables is the one of Textual Meaning, that addresses “the organization of language into semantically coherent text and the relation of text to its context and with the distribution of information in text, continuity of reference and lexico-semantic cohesion” (*ibid.*, 22). Since the selected materials are music videos, peculiar attention has also been given to the Soundtrack, thus Tables

indicate via notational symbolic conventions (following Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 215, Figure 4.6) the presence of instrumental music, of soloists, of speakers, of spoken or sung off-screen voices, and of other non-speech or non-musical sounds, also including their tempo (which can be slow, median or fast, hence S, M, F, *ibid.*, 219) and loudness (which can be soft, normal or loud, hence p, n, f, *ibid.*, 218) and if there are lengthened sounds (indicated by (!!), *ibid.*). Finally, the Tables include in the 'Other' column references to the Metatext, that is the presence of text inside the video, and the points in which Transitions happen and why they happen.

CHAPTER FIVE

Critical Discourse Analysis of the Lyrics

5.1 Qualitative Analysis

5.1.1 The song “Even Flow”

When employing the Critical Discourse Analysis framework to examine a text, textual analysis is the first aspect to take into account, since it provides valuable insights on the linguistic elements included in the song’s lyrics. Lexically and semantically, the song “Even Flow” addresses the issue of homelessness in a harsh and earnest way by evoking images of discomfort and hardness through his vivid and straightforward vocabulary.

1. **Freezin’**, rests his head on a **pillow made of concrete**, again (verse 1);
2. Oh, **hand out**, faces that he sees time again **ain’t that familiar** (verse 3);
3. Oh, dark grin, he can’t help, **when he’s happy looks insane** (verse 4);
4. **Kneelin’**, looking through the **paper** though he doesn’t know to read (verse 9);
5. Oh, feelin’, understands the **weather of the winter’s** on its way (verse 11);
6. Oh, **ceilings**, few and far between all the **legal halls of shame** (verse 12). [my bold]

Examples 1, 3 and 4 are particularly representative for the topic of homelessness, as the first one cites a “pillow made of concrete” to allude to the sidewalk surfaces, often made of concrete, where homeless people rest all day and all night long; then, looking “insane” even when “happy” refers to the fact that the homeless always look messy and disheveled because they have nowhere to shower or brush themselves; finally, the third example mentions a “paper”, presumably a newspaper, that is something homeless people use to cover themselves from cold and rain or as a base for their bedding. Moreover, the condition of vagrants is depicted through the use of words that fall under the semantic field of cold, like “freezing” in Example 1 and “the weather of the winter” in Example 5, it being a critical issue regarding the homeless, as many of them die or suffer severe injuries from extreme cold weather. Another habit frequently adopted by vagrants is placing their “hand out” while “kneeling”, pleading for some

money in order to buy themselves some food or something to drink, as reported in Examples 2 and 4. Lastly, living on the streets implies that one must travel frequently throughout the city in search of better places to sleep – which are hard to find (“few and far” in Example 6) if one does not want to recur to homeless shelters (“the legal halls of shame” in Example 6) – and so the “faces” of people passing by are never the same, “ain’t [...] familiar” (Example 2).

From the text it emerges that the subject is a “he”, a homeless man who is conscious of his troubled condition and hopes that better days will come, as displayed in Examples 7 and 8:

7. Oh, feelin’ maybe he’ll see **a little better, set a days** (verse 2);
8. Someday yet, **he’ll begin his life again** (verses 7, 15 and 22). [my bold]

Additionally, this “he” is also a very thoughtful person, as he often finds himself reflecting about life in general and praying, as reported in Examples 9 and 10:

9. Even flow, **thoughts** arrive like butterflies (verses 5, 13 and 20);
10. Oh, **prayin’**, now to something that **has never showed him anything** (verse 10). [my bold]

However, as Example 10 shows, the God or Deity to whom “he” directs his prayers reveals to be of very little assistance, offering neither recompense nor assistance in any meaningful way as he still remains a homeless man, hence the lyric “has never showed him anything”; furthermore, the myriad of thoughts that buzz through and come to his mind constantly (in an “Even flow”) and “like butterflies” – the only simile in the text – are so varied and incoherent in their nature that the homeless man decides to push them all away for his own sanity (see Example 11). By doing so, though, he drives away both positive and negative thoughts, thereby experiencing his condition neither optimistically nor pessimistically.

11. Oh, he don’t know, so he **chases** them away (verses 6, 14 and 21). [my bold]

Another aspect to consider in the textual analysis of the text is the use of rhetorical figures. As previously mentioned, the text includes a simile, that is “like butterflies” in Example 9, but this is not the only rhetorical device present. In fact, the text also features a metaphor, namely the “flow” in Example 9, which is a symbol of a perpetual movement, of something that, indeed, flows incessantly, in this case the thoughts of the protagonist and his constant research for peace and stability; then, the oxymoron “pillow made of concrete” is particularly evocative: a pillow is typically associated with softness and comfort, yet here it is described as being “made of concrete”, which is a material that is extremely hard. Hence, this juxtaposition completely revolutionizes the conventional image of a pillow, perfectly capturing the discomfort experienced by homeless people when lying on the ground; finally, Example 12 displays a fourth figure of speech included in the text, that is the one of personification, as the “hands” are attributed a human characteristic, or at least one associated with beings capable of speech, which is the one of “whispering”:

12. **Whispering** hands, gently lead him away (verses 16 and 23). [my bold]

Finally, because the text under analysis is a song lyric, refrains – lines or stanzas that are repeated more than once throughout the composition – are a given. Here, there are three refrains, however only the last two are identical – the first chorus is “Even flow, thoughts arrive like butterflies / Oh, he don’t know, so he chases them away / Someday yet, he’ll begin his life again / Life again, life again...”, while the last two are “Even flow, thoughts arrive like butterflies / Oh, he don’t know, so he chases them away / Someday yet, he’ll begin his life again / Whispering hands, gently lead him away / Him away, him away... / Yeah!”. Generally, the repetition of phrases create emphasis on the repeated concept, and this is also the case here, as the choruses create a sense of cyclicity, of a routine without a change, mirroring the stagnant and alienating conditions that characterize homelessness and reinforcing the theme of an unchanging and monotonous existence.

The second step in order to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis is to investigate the discursive practice underlying the context of production and reception of the lyrics. As previously mentioned in Chapter Four, Pearl Jam wrote this song in

1991 (<https://pearljam.com/music/song/even-flow>), hence at the dawn of a decade marked by growing economic inequality, political uncertainty and social tensions (Klosterman, 2022: 2-4); it is also one of the most iconic productions of the grunge genre, the American-born musical movement that put into lyrics the discomfort of “a disenchanting youth” and encapsulated “frustration and apathy”, together with the feelings of anxiety, hatred and criticism against the system and the societal norms (Chaney, 2024). In this case, the song addresses themes of social exclusion and homelessness, embodied by the main character who is obliged to live in precarious conditions and without support or assistance from society, hence putting him in a condition of social inferiority. In this sense, the hidden message of the song lyrics is that including as a main protagonist a person with no home and no stability reflects and strongly criticizes the broader social, economic, and political picture that characterized the United States in the 1990s. This was especially true for younger people belonging to Generation X, the target audience, who viewed modern life as a challenging and uncertain journey and resonated with the instability of the main protagonist, as they felt deprived of protection due to the lingering effects of the mistakes made by previous generations (Klosterman, 2022: 16). This criticism transpires from specific lyrics, that are the ones in Examples 10 and 12. As for the first example, not only does it convey the fact of being spiritually deserted by the God or Deity worshipped, but it is also a reference to being left alone, uncared and unprovided for by society, which, toward the person in question being them the homeless protagonist of this song or a young American adult in the 1990s, “has never showed [...] anything”; as for the second example, the “whispering hands” are indeed those of society, who “gently lead” either the homeless man or the young adult “away”, far from normality and stability, forcing them to face their conditions alone without providing any sort of help.

These last points set the basis for the third part of the analysis, that is unveiling the sociocultural practices that the lyrics convey, highlighting how the text interacts with power dynamics and social structures. It becomes evident to see that the song positions society – which is depicted as an indifferent and insensitive system – in opposition to its most vulnerable members, such as young, inexperienced adults or marginalized groups like the homeless, who are both visible yet disdainfully

overlooked by the general public. In the case of the last category, the lyrics suggest that the only cure to this issue set by society are the “legal halls of shame” shown in Example 6, which are meant to be places of protection but are, to the eyes of vagrants, places of humiliation and depersonalization (hence, “shame”), underlining society’s habit to relegate those that do not conform to its rules to margins, offering no real chance for liberation. Due to society’s lack of care and concern for those who do not adhere to its prescribed paths to success and stability, the song thus reveals that anyone can feel alienated and uneasy within such a dysfunctional system. Nevertheless, the main character of the story serves a symbol of passive endurance, because, in spite of terrible circumstances, including having no money and experiencing harsh weather with just a newspaper sheet as a blanket, he manages to survive, and still clings to the hope that one day he will overcome homelessness, putting an end to his sufferings (as illustrated in Examples 7 and 8). Thus, the song becomes an anthem of resistance and resilience, of demonstrating to be stronger than those who perceive someone as weak and useless, that speaks directly to the younger generations, reassuring them that their feelings of abandonment and disillusionment in such a toxic environment are justified, and that they are not to blame. To sum up, Eddie Vedder’s words stand up for those that think society will defeat them, offering them the glimmer of hope that will eventually emerge from their adversities through the figure of a homeless man and his quiet resilience. His fight against a system that seeks to nullify and erase his identity serves as a compelling reminder that, even in the face of societal indifference and scorn, there is always potential for perseverance and personal triumph.

5.1.2 The song “Senza vento”

As for the former analysis, the first aspect to examine is the one regarding the text in its linguistic characteristics. From a linguistic point of view, the words in the text evoke a sense of immobility and monotony (see Examples 13 and 15), as well as boredom and lack of beliefs (see Example 14), which reflect the conditions of younger people in the society of the time.

13. E son qui e **non c’è niente** / Strade, bar⁷⁴ [...] (verses 1 and 2);

⁷⁴ English translation: “And I’m here and **there’s nothing** / Streets, cafés [...]”.

14. Nato qui, vivo e **non credo in niente, credo in niente**⁷⁵ (verse 4);
15. Come me anche tu / resti qui e **vedi le giornate già vissute**⁷⁶ (verses 9 and 10).
[my bold]

As a matter of fact, from the text it emerges that the main character is an “I”, a young person – or better, a young man, namely Joe, the main character of “Viaggio senza vento”, the album from which the current song is taken – that feels stuck in a boring and tedious life, as he feels there are no points of interest for him in the environment in which he lives. There is also a “you” in the narration, as exemplified in Example 15, to which the “I” addresses in order to highlight the fact that this boredom is something every young person shares. The solutions to this problem are, on the one hand, resisting by not giving up, so staying in the same place but trying to defend one’s own position and identity (as Example 16 shows), or, on the other hand, escaping, leaving for new destinations that, hopefully, will be more stimulating and entertaining for youngsters (as Examples 17 and 18 report).

16. [...] comunque **mi difendo, non mi arrendo**⁷⁷ (verse 2);
17. Ma son pronto (è **libertà**) / Per **volare**⁷⁸ [...] (verses 7, 8, 15 and 16);
18. Ciao a voi perché **domani parto**⁷⁹ [...] (verse 12). [my bold]

Other pieces of information that emerge from the text are references to past years and decades, as displayed in Examples 18 and 19. Indeed, the two examples cite, respectively, the 1960s and the 1970s, which were years full of cultural development and in which younger people felt more encouraged to try and change their situations, as there were more opportunities for them.

19. Mi dici che voi **30 anni fa** fermaste un po’ il mondo⁸⁰ (verse 5);

⁷⁵ English translation: “Born here, I live and **believe in nothing, I believe in nothing**”.

⁷⁶ English translation: “Like me, also you / stay here and **see the days already lived**”.

⁷⁷ English translation: “Anyway, **I defend myself, I don’t give up**”.

⁷⁸ English translation: “But I’m ready (it’s **freedom**) / To **fly** [...]”.

⁷⁹ English translation: “Bye to you all because **tomorrow I’m leaving**”.

⁸⁰ English translation: “You tell me that **30 years ago** you kind of stopped the world”.

20. Mi dicono che **20 anni fa** era tutto diverso⁸¹ (verse 6). [my bold]

Finally, from the textual analysis it emerges that the text features two rhetorical figures, namely an oxymoron and a metaphor. The first figure of speech appears in verse 3 (see Example 20) and is particularly evocative: “fire” (“fuoco”) is normally associated with heat and warmth, as well as being a recurring figure for a powerful and vivacious personality, but in this case, fire is “cold” (“freddo”). In this sense, the oxymoron perfectly exemplifies how the lively characters of youngsters are dimmed and extinguished by a cold society, who wants to control them and keep them in places that are unfit for them. Then, the metaphor appears in the refrain of the song, right after the “per volare” in Example 16, and it involves the image of the “wind” (“vento”), often associated to the topics of change and of vital forces, however its absence, like in this case, seems to denote emotional stagnation, an absence of strength or direction in life.

21. La mia età è un **fuoco freddo**⁸² (verse 3);

22. Per **volare senza vento**⁸³ (verses 8 and 16). [my bold]

The second part of this song’s examination, a reflection on discursive practices, is based on these last considerations. The song was written in 1993, at the beginning of a disenchanting decade in Italian history and society due to the fallout from previous decades’ excesses, so younger people felt confused and demoralized, believing they had no future in a society that had to compensate such difficulties from the past (Minonzio, 2019; Macchioni, 2022; Pedrini in the “July 19th, 2024, Interview”⁸⁴). Moreover, as explained in Chapter Three, the Italian music industry at the time was impeding the rise of alternative rock bands that desired to sing their lyrics in Italian, as using English texts would have allowed music to be understood by audiences other than just Italians, thus making it more marketable (Pedrini, 2018). For these reasons, not only is the song intended for the younger public, who might have interpreted it as

⁸¹ English translation: “They tell me that **20 years ago** everything was different”.

⁸² English translation: “My age is **cold fire**”.

⁸³ English translation: “To fly **without wind**”.

⁸⁴ See Appendix A Section.

a reflection on existential concerns, apathy, or on the general need for change in a society that lacks guidance and sense of purpose for its youth, but also for young musicians who were fighting for recognition by defending their decision to sing in Italian, feeling stymied and hindered by a society who wanted them to sing exclusively in English. As a result, “Senza vento” is a perfect fit for the ideologies and philosophies of the grunge movement, whose main goal was to communicate the younger generations’ frustration against social injustices and societal conventions that they could not seem to escape. However, the song is also a cry of rebellion against this impossibility to find a way out from social inequalities and impositions, as exemplified in the following Examples:

23. [...] **non mi arrendo**⁸⁵ (verse 2);
24. Ma son **pronto** (è libertà) / per **volare senza vento**⁸⁶ (verses 7, 8, 15 and 16);
25. **Qualcosa di mio lo lascerò** in questo mio tempo⁸⁷ (verse 13);
26. **Saltando nel vuoto** aspetterò il nostro momento⁸⁸ (verse 14). [my bold]

These three Examples show, indeed, verses of the song that highlight the band’s commitment to oppose a culture that merely encourages younger people to submit, laying the groundwork for the sociocultural practices examination. The message of this song, written by Omar Pedrini, is the one of resistance and defiance against social expectancies and cultural dominances and of the refusal of conventions set by society, hence highlighting the need for one’s redefinition of the self. This holds true for both the ordinary young person and for the young musician of the time, who had to demonstrate their strength against their surroundings, which only wanted them to be uncertain and weak. Therefore, the points suggested by Timoria, which give rise to their own interpretation of social rebellion, are those illustrated in Examples 23 through 26: first and foremost, it is paramount that one never surrender (Example 23), hence trying to survive in a dull and monotonous atmosphere that offers nothing exciting to the youth, in which “streets” and “cafés” (see Example 13) are always the

⁸⁵ English translation: “**I don’t give up**”.

⁸⁶ English translation: “But I’m **ready** (it’s freedom) / To **fly without wind**”.

⁸⁷ English translation: “**I’ll leave something made by me/of my own** in this time of mine”.

⁸⁸ English translation: “I’ll wait for our moment **leaping in the dark**”.

same day after day, and where there is no innovation or anything appealing for youngsters. Then, the young person, or musician, must demonstrate to society that they are able to “fly without wind” (Example 24), proving that they can succeed in life even in unprosperous times – as opposed to “30” or “20 years ago”, as displayed in Examples 19 and 20 – when younger people felt they lacked inspiration and hope and when society doubted their ability to accomplish anything significant. A meaningful act one can take many forms, such as a song, a piece of art, or even a simple social activity, but what matters is that it originated from the hands and the dedication of a young person, who wants to make a difference, who wants to make “something of [their] own” (Example 25), in a society that does not give space to them. Oftentimes, change comes as a result of audacious and risky moves, such as a “leap [...] in the dark” (Example 26), and this is something the lyrics suggest taking, for both the average young person and the musician. In the case of Joe, the main character of the album and personification of the first category, his “leap” consisted in his departure for new destinations, in the hope of finding places full of opportunities to develop personally – something that he, indeed, found travelling towards Eastern countries, in which he discovered the meaning inner rebirth and awakening and returns home as a changed person (not surprisingly, the eleventh verse of the song recites “Dentro me, il risveglio”, “Inside me, the awakening”, meaning both the driving force that pushes Joe to begin his journey and a sort of preview of what will happen there, i.e., Joe’s rebirth in accordance to the teaching of Eastern religions). As for the second category, the “leap” the band proposes taking regards the production of alternative rock music sung in Italian, which was a very challenging endeavor at the time and in which Timoria were attempting to set an example by paving the way for others to follow. In summary, a sociocultural study of the song reveals how the resource-rich young individual, the “I”, is pitted against a society that does everything in its power to hide their potential, by immersing them in circumstances that are alienating and empty of chances for them to thrive and putting them in comparison to older generations, whose times they lived in were fuller of opportunities. With their words, Timoria in “Senza vento” reflect on the possibilities young people have to challenge the demotivating and static status quo, whether through personal growth as for the general younger public or through artistic expression for young rockers who want to make their debut in the music industry and

create their own destiny by taking their “leap in the dark” and rebelling against a stifling and uninspiring surrounding.

5.2 Discussion

Employing Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis framework to examine the lyrics of Pearl Jam’s “Even Flow” and Timoria’s “Senza vento” proved to be highly effective, as it helped illuminating the nuanced linguistic features, power dynamics and broader social contexts embedded within their texts. In particular, Fairclough’s methodological tool of analysis demonstrated to be an appropriate approach to the examination of grunge music, a genre renowned for its raw and direct approach to confronting social inequalities and youth disillusionment: as a matter of fact, Critical Discourse Analysis’ focus on relationships between language and power revealed several aspects communicated both overtly and covertly through the songs’ lyrics, such as the senses of rebellion and frustration of the younger generations, the exposure of systemic flaws and the expression of the struggles of marginalized people, all of which are central to the grunge movement’s ethos.

Despite different settings and stories – as “Even Flow” openly concerns the situation of the homeless in America but broadly speaks to those that feel left aside by American society and “Senza vento” speaks to both disillusioned Italian youngsters and emerging musicians who want to make a change in the Italian rock music scene – the two songs share common ground in the critique of societal indifference and unfair treatment, embodying the anger and frustration of Generation X and respecting the principles of the grunge genre. Indeed, both songs employ detailed and evocative imageries to delineate social isolation, senses of stasis and frustration, as well as rhetorical devices that perfectly portray the characters’ struggles and their diminishing vitality in the face of a marginalizing environment. In the case of “Even Flow”, not only is the issue of homelessness strongly criticized as extremely depersonalizing and alienating, but is also used as a metaphor for the broader social estrangement many young people felt at the time, particularly in an increasing materialistic and individualistic American society that seemed disinterested in their progress and struggles. As for “Senza vento”, the song is a bitter criticism to the Italian society of the time, who made its youngsters feel disenchanting and lacking clear future, since its

lyrics lament the loss of opportunities available to earlier generations, hence framing the protagonist as a victim of an insouciant society that offers little in terms of possibility to make meaningful changes in its youngsters' prospects. In this sense, in both cases society is seen as the enemy of personal growth and redemption, as the protagonists of the story will forever be considered rebels and ungrateful when trying to change their positions, instead of appreciating their triumphant life transformations.

However, despite these points the two songs share in commonality, what distinguishes them is the way they respond to the sense of marginalization the characters feel. On the one hand, in "Senza vento" Timoria suggest an active form of rebellion, which consists in breaking the walls of a societal stagnation and ideological boredom by searching one's own fortune and points of interest: even "without wind", so with no positive outer driving forces or a favorable course of history, the band strongly encourages the target audience to "fly" and take a "leap in the dark", which for the average young person consists in the search for personal liberation, but to the young artist is a strong stance against the music industry that seeks to stifle their voice. On the other hand, the main character of "Even Flow", the homeless man, is an emblem of passive resistance, as he perseveres in the face of hardship and clutches onto the hope that one day he will "begin his life again". Enduring quietly but persistently, the homeless man is the symbol of survival in the face of societal neglect. In this sense, "Even Flow", as opposed to "Senza Vento", does not propose a concrete act of rebellion, but encourages younger generations to be resilient, not to surrender to social rejection and disenchantment because, sooner or later, it will come to an end; in other words, Pearl Jam's song is probably highlighting the fact that, oftentimes, escaping from life problems does not make them end, and that time heals wounds, possibly even those provoked by an oppressive society.

As a conclusion, using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework to analyze "Even Flow" by Pearl Jam and "Senza vento" by Timoria revealed how, in spite of their cultural and geographic differences, both songs serve as powerful societal commentaries on alienation and resistance, hence perfectly embodying the standards of grunge music. While "Senza vento" advocates for active resistance and the quest for personal and artistic independence, "Even Flow" emphasizes the passive perseverance of people ostracized by society. Both songs,

however, ultimately highlight the need for increased social compassion and awareness, as well as calling attention to the possibility of individual and group resilience in the face of adversities. Through their stories and characters, Pearl Jam and Timoria prove to be impressive spokespeople for those who feel forgotten or disregarded by society, challenging their listeners to confront the harsh realities of social exclusion and to strive for personal and societal change by either rebelling actively or enduring quietly, in both cases trying to make their way into a corrupt and estranging environment.

CHAPTER SIX

Phasal Analysis of the Music Videos

6.1 Qualitative Analysis

6.1.1 The “Jeremy” music video

According to the methodological framework of Phasal Analysis and following the Multimodal Transcription of the video (see Appendix B), the “Jeremy” music video can be divided into thirteen phases, as Table 1 shows.

Phase number	Phase name	Time	Subphases	Subphase name
1	Introduction to the story of Jeremy	0:00 – 0:16	1	The newspaper articles concerning gun violence episodes
		0:16 – 0:39	2	Introduction of Jeremy
2	Presentation of the characters of the story	0:39 – 0:59		
3	Parents-son relationship (I)	0:59 – 1:15		
4	Narrative moment (I)	1:15 – 1:46		
5	Classroom scene (I)	1:46 – 1:52		
6	Narrative moment (II)	1:52 – 2:10		
7	Parents-son relationship (II)	2:10 – 2:29		
8	Classroom scene (II)	2:29 – 2:37	1	Jeremy draws
		2:37 – 2:51	2	Jeremy is ridiculed by his peers and teacher
		2:51 – 2:56	3	Eddie Vedder’s appearance
9	Scene of confusion	2:55 – 3:04		
10	A message from Eddie Vedder	3:04 – 3:15		
11	Jeremy’s last disobediences	3:15 – 3:35	1	The wall of fire
		3:35 – 3:41	2	The shirtless Bellamy salute
		3:41 – 3:59	3	Eddie Vedder’s contribution
12	The last crescendo	3:59 – 4:15	1	Jeremy in the woods
		4:15 – 4:33	2	Eddie Vedder’s cry of suffering
		4:33 – 4:45	3	The giant hand
		4:45 – 4:50	4	Eddie Vedder’s last appearance
13	Jeremy’s suicide	4:50 – 5:06	1	Jeremy’s last actions
		5:06 – 5:33	2	His classmates’ reaction

Table 1: *phases division for the “Jeremy” music video.*

The first phase consists of two subphases: in the first subphase, which corresponds to the first sixteen seconds of the music video, three black-on-white sentences in a typewriter-like style that read “an affluent suburb”, “3:30 in the afternoon” and “64 degrees and cloudy” are interspersed with images of black-and-white and red-and-black newspaper stories covering incidents of gun violence in the United States. Additionally, two recorded voices, a female one and a male one, respectively say “and the news media, and a lot more” at minute 0:06 and “it is very relevant in America today” at minute 0:12, among the soundscape of this section that mostly consists of buffering noises, bangs, and school bells. At last, the childlike handwriting of "jeremy" in lowercase finally appears (see Figure 12, which relates to minute 0:16).



Figure 12: *the name 'Jeremy' written by hand.* Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

In a way, this first subphase and the first phase in general serve as an overview for viewers and listeners of what they can expect to see and hear next. The story they will hear deals with another incident of gun violence, adding to the ones that have already occurred and been reported in newspapers, as evidenced by the pictures included in this first segment of the video. The main character of the story is Jeremy, who might happen to be a boy based on the handwriting style of his name. The shots in the second subphase support this idea: not only is the blurred face of the boy depicted lit by a white light, but it is also indicated that the boy is a student, due to a close-up of a blackboard hanging from the ceiling. Another interesting feature of this second subphase is that its color scheme only consists of three tones, namely red (the two ropes holding the blackboard's two upper corners), black (the blackboard) and white (the chalk marks and erasures on the blackboard). Concerning the soundscape, its only musical elements are a bass riff and a drum section, which begins softly before picking up speed and volume: in this way, the instruments prepare the audience for the singer, who will tell the tale that they are ready to hear. Furthermore, the use of the color red, often associated with blood, in both this subphase and the preceding one indicates that the narrative that is going to be presented is one of violence, possibly of death.

After the song's instrumental introduction, the second phase begins. In this phase, which corresponds with the song's opening verse, some of the characters of the music video are seen for the first time: to begin with, a boy, Jeremy, is seen angrily drawing spooky scenes on what appears to be a woodland (as seen in Figure 13, which refers to the minute 0:43), physically depicting the first verses of the song: "At home

drawing pictures / Of mountain tops / With him on top / Lemon yellow sun / Arms raised in a V / And the dead lay in pools of maroon below”.

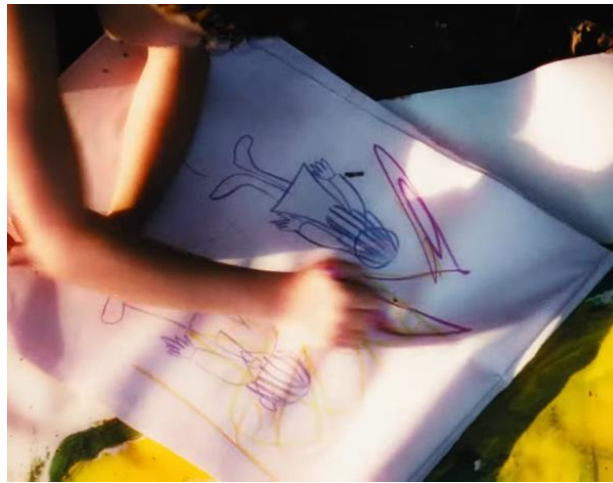


Figure 13: *Jeremy* “drawing pictures of mountain tops”. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

Afterwards, a man, singer Eddie Vedder, appears while mimicking the words of the song (Figure 14 references the minute 0:45); finally, four close-ups of Pearl Jam’s other members emerge.



Figure 14: *singer Eddie Vedder* representing “with him on top”. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

It is clear that just the first two individuals – the former being the protagonist and victim and the latter the storyteller – are actually the major characters in this instance, with the other four being supporting characters who further the plot. Additionally, in this phase the first of the video’s three biblical allusions appears, all of which connect to the concept of original sin: at minute 0:53, the writing “the serpent was subtil”

comes into view, again in the childish handwriting that was seen previously, and this is, in fact, a passage from Genesis 3:1, which describes how the snake tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden apple (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis. 3:1). This suggests that something weird, still ambiguous and subtle, could be happening in the youngster's head from the very beginning of the song, when the character of Jeremy is introduced. This can be seen physically as well, as evidenced by the abnormalities of the characters in the drawings and in the way the boy draws them.

The ensuing phase will be examined together with phase number seven, reason being that these two phases, which correspond with the song's two bridges, address the subject of parents-son relationship slightly differently from one another, both vocally in the song lyrics and visually in the music video.

Concerning the lyrics, each bridge has four verses, however the first two are different on each bridge while the final two are the same: if on one side the first bridge reads: "Daddy didn't give attention / Oh, to the fact that mommy didn't care / King Jeremy the wicked / Oh, ruled his world", on the other side the second bridge reads: "Daddy didn't give affection, no / And the boy was something that mommy wouldn't wear / King Jeremy the wicked / Oh, ruled his world". These powerfully sung, which border on screaming, paint Jeremy's parents as unloving, unaffectionate and uncaring; very likely, this kind of parental behavior and upbringing has contributed to Jeremy's reputation as a "wicked" boy, which is further supported by his artwork, as seen in Figure 13. When it comes to the music video, viewers are presented with an unusual portrayal of Jeremy's parents: in the lyrics, despite their negligence for their son, the parents are still mentioned as people with a thinking mind, but in the video the parents are portrayed as lifeless, almost inhuman figures. In fact, in phase three, which runs from minute 0:59 to minute 1:15, the parental figures are nothing more than white, rectangular cardboards, the first of which shows a grey suit seen from the back – the father – while the second of which depicts a red dress seen from the front – the mother –, as can be seen in Figure 15, taken from the minute 1:13. Another aspect that can be noticed in this frame is that Jeremy's arms are extended towards the two cardboard figures, giving the impression of him controlling this parents, which refers back to the lyric "Oh, ruled his world", another behavioral trait that Jeremy acquired as a result of

his parents' disdain.



Figure 15: *Jeremy controlling his cardboard parents*. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

Phase seven, which runs from minute 2:10 to minute 2:29, features the second visual depiction of Jeremy's parents. Here, the viewers witness Jeremy arguing and yelling against two mannequins, who are seated at a dining table in front of a large cardboard that shows the image of an eye (see Figure 16, which references to minute 2:17). The female mannequin is seen aggressively pointing a finger at the male one, as if she were accusing him of doing something wrong, while the male mannequin is holding his hands out and slightly opening his mouth, as if he were attempting to establish his innocence. Meanwhile, Jeremy appears to be irritated and upset, and he occasionally acts childishly, as if he were throwing a tantrum to try and get his parents' attention – a tactic that utterly fails. Furthermore, this scene alludes to the verse “Oh, ruled his world”: the enormous eye portrayed by the cardboard in the background actually conjures up the idea of observing, monitoring, and keeping an eye on something that, in the perspective of the villain of the story (“King Jeremy the wicked”), is lesser.



Figure 16: *Jeremy arguing with his mannequin parents*. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

As previously noted, Jeremy's poor habits and peculiar personality have mostly developed as a result of the normal lack of care and attention that parental figures provide. This is unquestionably supported and reinforced by the way in which Jeremy's parents are portrayed in these two phases of the music video: mannequins and cardboard cutouts that only show clothing and not the real people wearing it create an impression of parents who are invisible, absent, and nearly soulless, which Jeremy could never take as role models and instead helped to shape his strange and evil personality.

Phase number four coincides with the song's first chorus, which consists of just two identical verses: "Jeremy spoke in class today / Jeremy spoke in class today". Vedder is the primary character in this phase, as his close-up shots signify that he is the storyteller of Jeremy's story. He informs the viewers and listeners that Jeremy spoke in class that day, referring to Jeremy's final words before taking his own life, that were: "<<Miss, I got what I really went for>>" (Miller & Nevins, 1991). A reference to the scholastic environment is also provided by a peculiar frame, that is the one portrayed in Figure 17 (taken from minute 1:32), which sees Jeremy facing a cardboard displaying a green crayon.



Figure 17: *Jeremy staring at the crayon cardboard.* Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

Then, the second biblical reference appears in the previously seen childish handwriting: the writing “genesis 3:6”, which occurs at minute 1:23, alludes to passage 3:6 from the Genesis (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis. 3:6), that recites:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate.

The passage refers to the moment that follows Eve’s temptation by the snake to eat the forbidden fruit, which had already been mentioned in the second phase with the writing “the serpent was subtil”. By relating these passages to Jeremy’s story, what initially seemed like a faint sense of negativity when observing his drawings and learning about his relationship with his parents now reveals a deeper understanding: Jeremy’s internal turmoil and personal struggles could potentially drive him to do something harmful, nearly akin to committing a sin.

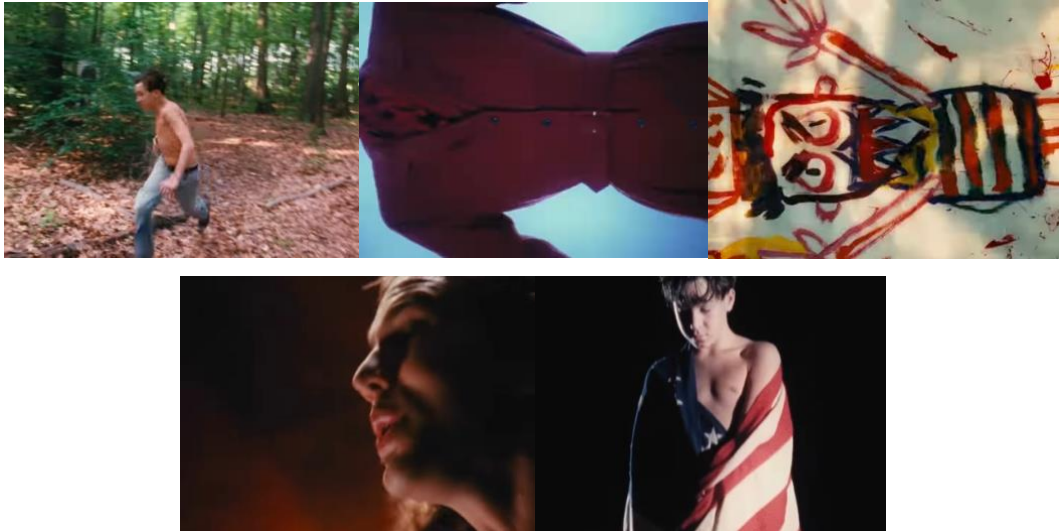
From the point of view of lyrics, both phase four and phase six address a personal episode that happened to singer Eddie Vedder when he was a student: he used to know a boy named Brian from his junior high school in San Diego, who displayed violent behavior in class, biting the teacher’s breast and then punching Vedder in the jaw, and eventually he “ended up shooting an oceanographic room” (Sadoff, 1991). Then, in phase six Vedder is seen covering his face and singing “Just like the day / Oh,

like the day I heard...”: in this sense, the singer is connecting the personal anecdote and experience with the one of Jeremy, and is emotionally involved in doing so as both experiences are violent and brought to the most tragic consequence of all, that is death.

In phase number five, Jeremy is depicted as drawing with the same energy as in the second phase, but this time he is in his classroom, which is rendered as bland and grey. He is seated at his desk while surrounded by his classmates, who are once again shown to be lifeless mannequins. In this regard, Jeremy could not even rely on his peers, since they are portrayed as unmoving, unhelpful and uncaring, like his parents. This phase also has a writing that reads “ignored” (minute 1:50). This writing, along with those that appeared in phases four, “bored” (minute 1:40), and six, “harmless” (minute 2:01), are likely the words that people who knew him used to describe him. This could be because he was shunned by both his parents and his peers.

Phase number eight, which corresponds to the song’s second chorus, features two more classroom scenes. Unlike the first chorus, this one repeats the same lyric three times, “Jeremy spoke in class today”, sung almost with sorrow by singer Eddie Vedder, who makes his appearance in the third subphase. Jeremy is still seen drawing in the first subphase, while the other students remain still, as well as a stiff and immobile teacher who stands amid the pupils’ tables. Then, the second subphase features Jeremy as the target of accusations from both the teacher and all his classmates, who appear to be ridiculing and tormenting him. As a result, Jeremy is shown as terrified, and there are even close-ups of his face with a flashing light shedding it.

At this point, everything changes: the following phase, which lasts from minute 2:56 to minute 3:04, is visually disorienting due to several scenes that flash after one another – Jeremy is seen running in a woodland, his mother’s red dress appears, as well as one of his characters from the drawings, the words “wicked” and “problem” appear, and finally Jeremy is portrayed as almost naked while wearing an American flag as a cape; in the meanwhile Eddie Vedder is seen shaking his head rapidly and singing a high pitched “ooh” sixteen times (as portrayed in Figures 18-22, taken from minutes 2:55 to 3:04).



Figures 18-22: *frames from phase nine*. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

In this way, the viewer is exposed to scenes that happen very quickly and create an uncomfortable situation, so it's possible that Jeremy's mind is the source of this confusion. Prior to killing himself in front of the class, countless images may have flashed through his mind, making it difficult for him to focus on just one of them.

This moment of discombobulation ends with a message from singer Eddie Vedder himself: he is the lone protagonist of the tenth phase, in which he sings, nearly screams, staring directly at the camera, breaking the fourth wall: “Try to forget this / Try to erase this / From the blackboard”. These potent lines resemble a threat or a warning, for the listeners not just to remember Jeremy’s story, otherwise it will be forever kept concealed in a short newspaper article, but also to take care of everyone and not to treat them with disregard, as Jeremy’s parents and classmates did to him; to put it another way, this message is obviously a reference to gun violence prevention, because any possible horrible deed can be averted through care and affection, something that Jeremy did not receive, as stated in the song lyrics.

The next phase portrays Jeremy as he executes his last small acts of disobedience before the larger one shown in the last phase: the first subphase sees Jeremy turning his back on a fire while shirtless and with his “arms raised in a V” and then staring right at the camera and smirking. Then, in subphase two, he is observed in the rear of the classroom without a shirt on while performing what appears to be the Bellamy salute, a traditional schoolyard ritual intended to “show [...] their loyalty to

[the American] flag and country [...] while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance” (Longley, 2020). The third subphase sees Eddie Vedder yowling "Jeremy spoke in, spoke in / Jeremy spoke in, spoke in, Jeremy spoke in. Class. Today", as he places his gun-shaped hand to his right temple recreating Jeremy's suicide (as seen in Figure 23, taken from minute 3:56 of the video).



Figure 23: *Eddie Vedder portrays Jeremy's fate.* Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

In the first subphase of the penultimate phase, which represents the final crescendo before the end, Jeremy is once more in the woods, but this time it is nighttime, and he is surrounded by cardboard cutouts depicting his drawings, the eye in Figure 16, and other eerie figures. He is shirtless, and he looks around in terror, he breaks branches against other trees and screams raising his arms, again, “in a V”. Vedder appears too in the second subphase, while a white flashing light reflects on him, and sings several “Whoahs”, some longer than others, creating a complex and multifaceted cry of suffering. The final biblical allusion appears in this phase, is written in the same childish handwriting, and cites “the unclean spirit entered”: this is a reference to passage 5:13 of Mark's Gospel (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Mark. 5:13), which deals with a demonic possession, and might possibly be understood in relation to Jeremy's internal suicidal thoughts, which were growing more and more obvious. This is also evident in the third subphase, which extends from minute 4:33 to minute 4:41, in which flashing images of Jeremy's white-lit scared face, of him standing in front of a large cardboard depicting a hand big enough to splat him and of the singer with the gun-shaped hand in his temple rapidly alternate, creating the same confused

and uneasy feeling as in phase nine. This crescendo ends with the fourth subphase, which shows images of Eddie Vedder frantically shaking his head, while a fast drumbeat accompanies the pressing rhythm of the singing part, which consists of eight scratchy “I”-s.

The thirteenth phase starts as soon as the crescendo finishes. This final scene, which depicts Jeremy Wade Delle’s last moments (albeit not in a way that is entirely true to the original story), is the most intense and sensitive moment in the entire video, which was the subject of controversy prior to the release of the uncensored version. In the first subphase, Jeremy enters the classroom shirtless, tosses an apple to the teacher, who now moves to catch it, stands in front of his classmates and takes a final look at them almost arrogantly, then puts the barrel in his mouth, closes his eyes and pulls the trigger (see Figure 24, taken from minute 5:05).



Figure 24: *Jeremy commits suicide in front of his class.* Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

The other side of the classroom, namely Jeremy’s classmates’ reaction, is portrayed in the second subphase (see Figure 25, taken from minute 5:23 of the video): petrified by fear, the classmates are all holding their hands over their faces as Jeremy's blood splatters all over the front row members' uniforms. These final scenes have a color scheme that mostly consists of blue and white tones, but a splash of red creates a striking contrast; not surprisingly, the three colors the audience is shown are the exact colors of the American flag, which makes these scenes a final jab at the American state, as if it were its fault that there had been another incident of gun violence. Parallel to these last visual pictures, soundscape-wise the song changes and becomes a simple

guitar riff with no further accompaniment, which becomes gradually slower until the very end, which only consists of two notes.



Figure 25: *Jeremy's shocked classmates a few instants after his death.* Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZezhUkOSk.

Right before this final moment when the classmates appear, the three writings from the very beginning of the first phase reappear, again written in the same childish handwriting as before, again on a black background that is sometimes flashed with red and blue lights, but they now occur in a different order (the order now is “3:30 in the afternoon”, “an affluent suburb”, and “64 degrees and cloudy”). The reason behind the decision to include these writings, that are totally unrelated to the original story, was explained by singer Eddie Vedder on a subsequent interview (Vedder, 1993):

[The inspiration for the song] came from a small paragraph in a paper which means you kill yourself and [...] that all you're gonna end up with is a paragraph in a newspaper. Sixty-three degrees and cloudy in a suburban neighborhood. That's the beginning of the video and that's the same thing is that in the end, it does nothing ... nothing changes. The world goes on and you're gone.

Viewed in this way, the song and music video – which eventually served as mementos that honored another violent incident that would have otherwise gone unnoticed being only mentioned in a short newspaper paragraph – were primarily responsible for bringing attention to Jeremy's tale and bringing the world to know about it.

6.1.2 The “Sangue impazzito” music video

The “Sangue impazzito” music video can be divided into eight phases (see Table 2), according to the methodological framework of Phasal Analysis and following the Multimodal Transcription of the video (see Appendix B).

Phase number	Phase name	Time	Subphases	Subphase name
1	Introduction to the character of Joe	0:30 – 0:33	1	The first fish out of water
		0:33 – 0:52	2	The first appearance of Joe
2	Joe continues his journey and arrives on the mainland	0:52 – 1:05	1	Joe still on boat
		1:05 – 1:12	2	Joe arrives on the mainland
		1:12 – 1:32	3	Presence of some people
		1:32 – 1:35	4	The floating syringe (I)
3	Religion scene	1:35 – 2:17		
4	Back to the boat	2:17 – 2:25	1	An exchange of glances
		2:25 – 2:36	2	The second fish out of water
		2:36 – 2:51	3	The third fish out of water
		2:51 – 3:00	4	Joe goes back into his boat
		3:00 – 3:12	5	The floating syringe (II)
5	Soccer scene	3:12 – 3:53		
6	Joe is completely alone	3:53 – 4:01		
7	The tree scene	04:01 – 4:28		
8	Timoria members pulling Joe's body out of water	4:28 – 4:54		

Table 2: *phases division for the “Sangue impazzito” music video.*

The first phase begins at minute 0:30 with a short glimpse of a dead fish surrounded by flies (see Figure 26) – the first of the four images of dead or agonizing fish in the video, probably physical renditions of the idiom “fish out of water”, which indicates “a person who feels awkward or unhappy because they are in a situation that is not familiar or because they are different from the people around them” and hence perfectly summarizes the person of Joe (Cambridge, n.d.).

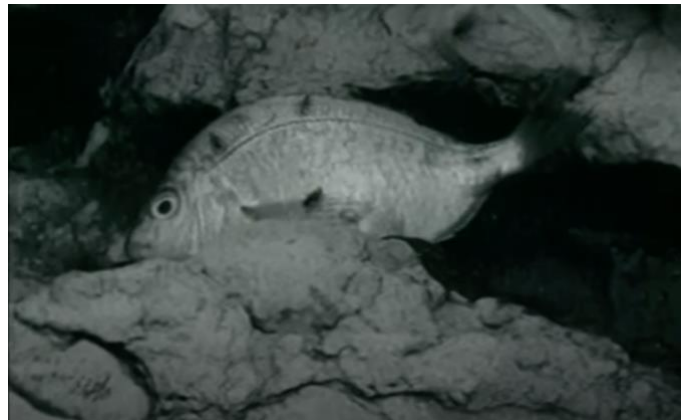


Figure 26: *the first fish out of water.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

Then, the viewers are presented with the character of Joe: the young man is slumbering on a small boat that is being carried by water, while holding a cigarette in his hand, he

has long, dark hair and is wearing worn-out clothes, namely a denim jacket, a shirt and jeans, and combat boots. He then wakes up from his slumber, rubs his eye and looks up (as portrayed in Figure 27, which references minute 0:52), as if to see where the boat he was on led him.



Figure 27: *Joe*. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

As previously mentioned, Joe is the main protagonist of Timoria's album "Viaggio senza vento", he is a misfit with addiction problems who sets off for a spiritual journey in order to save himself and, broadly speaking, his generation. Here, the journey is physically rendered with the image of the boat and of the sea, in which he lays and lets himself be carried towards unknown destinations. From the point of view of sound, this first phase is accompanied by a gentle guitar arpeggio.

Consequently, the second phase, which goes from minute 0:52 to minute 1:35 and corresponds to the first six verses of the song's first stanza, begins with Joe still on the boat discovering where he is now, somewhere in the Venetian lagoon (as previously said, the video was shot around the locality of Jesolo), where he spots some people walking in the shallow water, then he descends into the mainland and notices some seagulls flying over the church. As he starts to walk, or better to stagger, along the streets of this small unknown Venetian town, through which a dog is seen running by, he is mistrustfully stared at by some kids that were playing there, as it can be seen in Figure 28, taken from minute 1:27. In this sense, the scene re-evokes and portrays Joe's situation, his being looked at and judged with suspicion by even younger kids, and thus society's rejection of individuals such as him, who are forced to walk around with their heads lowered in order to escape recognition, possibly even out of shame. To put it another way, this is a metaphor for the state of mind that many young people

experienced in the 1990s: they were viewed as losers, believed that society had little in store for them, and felt alone and unmotivated as a result; at the same time, society continued to criticize them and expected them to make up for the mistakes made by earlier generations.



Figure 28: *Joe staggers around the small town.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

This entire scene is, in a way, supervised from afar and musically accompanied by singer Francesco Renga and guitarist Omar Pedrini, who are sitting on a beach campfire and notice a needleless syringe in the water, symbol of Joe's condition of drug addict (see Figure 29, taken from minute 1:33). From the point of view of the lyrics, the initial verses describe the normal activities people do on Sundays and the fact that, on that specific weekday, everything is closed, as they mention "Uomini, Domenica / gente che allegra va / risveglia la città / Dormono le fabbriche"⁸⁹; however, the most representative verses are the following two, namely "E in giro ancora io / vivo? Non lo so"⁹⁰, which focus on the character of Joe, who, in the midst of everyone else going about their daily lives, is walking around in appalling conditions, questioning his own health and even whether he is still alive or not, trying to make his way home, or at the very least, a place where he feels safe, something he no longer has.

⁸⁹ English translation: "Men, Sunday / cheerful people walk by / waking up the city / The factories are sleeping".

⁹⁰ English translation: "And I'm still wandering around / alive? I don't know".



Figure 29: *the floating syringe*. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

Then, the third phase (which starts at minute 1:35 and ends at minute 2:17) is, both lyrically and visually, focused on the topic of religion. The phase, indeed, begins with the image of a priest walking, which Joe follows swaying from side to side, once more under the influence of drugs. By following him, Joe finds himself in a weird site, which appears to be a little temple built by the residents of the small town, which has a statue of the Virgin Mary, some candles, and a wall covered with pictures of people of every age that are, most likely, their memorial cards. With the same doubtful and judgmental expression as seen before in the younger children, an old man looks at Joe, who sits for a short while at this little temple, but then turns away and leaves, as displayed in Figure 30 from minute 2:17.



Figure 30: *Joe looks away from the little temple*. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

This entire sequence is, presumably, an allusion to Joe's spirituality, something he has lost during his life because he could not feel safe in there either, or because it was

something that, along with society, had abandoned him. This is also reflected in the lyrics, which state: “E incontro anche te / che corri a pregare un po’ Dio / la strada la so / E penso che un tempo quel tempio era mio / e mi chiedo perché un giorno ho detto addio”⁹¹, meaning that Joe once used to regularly attend temples or churches, but stopped believing in God due to an unanswered question; this was likely caused by the fact that friends, the religious institutions and society were no longer able to assist and help him, also because his drug addiction acted like his badge of infamy, leaving him without faith.

Joe indeed “says goodbye” while departing the little shrine, and with his departure starts phase number four, which comprises the scenes between minutes 2:17 and 3:12. In this phase, there are a few different characters: the first one is bassist Carlo Alberto Pellegrini, who is on the beach together with the other members and is the one who exchanges a glance with Joe; then, there is Omar Pedrini, who looks down on a small fish, which looks like a goby, on a wooden board outside the water, that manages to go back into the water by wiggling its tail (here is the second “fish out of water”, this time just shortly as it returns to its habitat) and, at the end of the phase, is seen playing his guitar, and finally, there is drummer Diego Galeri, who simply stares out to the sea while smoking. Later, the focus returns on Joe who, after taking a look at the third “fish out of water”, who seems to be a dead needlefish, returns to his boat and, as he did at the beginning of the video, lets the boat carry him around (as can be seen in Figure 31, taken from minute 2:53). In the very last part of this phase, there is another short framing of the water puddle with the syringe in it.

⁹¹ English translation: “And I meet you too / running to pray God / I know the way / And I think that once that temple was mine / and I wonder why one day I said goodbye”.



Figure 31: *Joe lies again on the boat.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggBCg>.

Concerning the soundscape, this phase hosts a change in the song, given that, up to this point, the song was essentially an acoustic ballad consisting of an acoustic guitar arpeggio, Renga's soft-then-powerful voice and some keyboards; as a matter of fact, here the song shifts to a more rock-grunge sound, as the electric elements such as guitar and bass join in, together with the drums. Remarkably, the electric shift begins in the very moment in which the goby wiggles back into the water, and this, to both the viewers and the listeners, is like a surprise, since no one expects a fish out of water to be able to return to water and, acoustically, the transition from a ballad to a true rock song is striking. Lyrically, the phase comprises the first six verses of the second stanza, which are: "Corro via, ma non so se / fuggire o rincorrere / qualcosa, forse chi / Sono qui e dentro me / sangue impazzito che / mi spinge fino a voi"⁹². These verses convey the idea of, indeed, running away, escaping or chasing after something, or someone, which bring back to the concept of travelling, of trying to save one's own self by evading from the society that let them down in the attempt to grasp happiness and calm; moreover, using the phrase "sangue impazzito", "crazed blood", refers to the topic of drug use, because the blood of drug addicts is packed with toxic substances and therefore can be considered altered, crazed, and can push addicts to do something out of their control, like stepping onto a boat and letting oneself go, rocked by the waves.

⁹² English translation: "I run away, but I don't know whether / to flee or to chase / something, maybe someone / I'm here, and inside me / crazed blood that / drives me towards you".

The setting once again changes in phase number five, which goes from minute 3:12 to minute 3:53 and coincides with the last five verses of the song's second stanza. The majority of the actions takes place at a makeshift soccer field in one of the town's small squares, where Joe is idly observing some young boys playing the sport. The only interruption to this scene is a quick framing of keyboardist Enrico Ghedi, who is sitting at the beach campfire while observing Pedrini playing the guitar. At a certain point, the soccer ball is kicked toward Joe, and one of the boys approaches him to get it. Joe notices the ball and returns it to the boy (see Figure 32 for reference, from minute 3:35), the two exchange a quick look, but as soon as the boy receives the ball, his mother calls him from a window, most likely telling him to get away from Joe, and so after another quick glance he runs away back to his friends, leaving Joe, once again, alone.



Figure 32: *Joe hands back the ball to the boy.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

This last scene is another particularly powerful metaphor of how society, embodied by the mother at the window, reacts to marginalized people, Joe: by telling her son to distance himself from Joe, the mother merely serves to reinforce the stigma and instills in her son a mistrust of the young man who was only trying to be helpful; in other words, despite his harmless intentions, Joe is judged solely based on the basis of his appearance and situation, reflecting the broader tendency to marginalize and ostracize individuals simply because of their state, rather than understanding and teaching about their human side. From Joe's point of view, as happened in the third phase with the topic of religion, he also feels he has been abandoned and can no longer receive help from his other interest, namely soccer: as the lyrics state, similarly to what stated

before, “E penso che un tempo quel campo era mio / e mi chiedo perché un giorno ho detto addio”⁹³, hence indicating that, for the same apparently unidentified reason as before, Joe does not play soccer anymore and does not feel he belongs there, arguably because of the societal stigma against people who struggle with addiction, which may have discouraged other boys from playing with him, and so he “said goodbye”.

The long and emotionally-screamed “addio” prolongs until the beginning of the next phase (from minute 3:53 to minute 4:01), which acoustically coincides with the beginning of the song’s guitar solo and visually consists of two different scenes: the first one features Joe returning to his small boat and lying back wearily (see Figure 33, taken from minute 3:53) – interestingly, this is the only scene in the entire black-and-white video with color, as Joe’s jeans and jacket appear blue, a color not only associated with calm and purity, but also with feelings of sadness, melancholy and loneliness (Rota, n.d.); the second scene centers a needlefish out of water that is gasping in agony, it being the last of the four images of “fish out of water”. In this sense, the sixth phase portrays Joe as being completely left alone by everyone he met in this small Venetian town, and his feeling of sadness is even portrayed from a chromatic point of view. Moreover, the addition of a “fish out of water” scene also in this phase further reinforces Joe’s position as an outsider and rejected individual, struggling for survival in an environment that does not include and accept him.



Figure 33: *Joe lays back with sadness into his boat.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

The phase that follows is particularly meaningful and evocative: indeed, phase number

⁹³ English translation: “And I think that once that field was mine / and I wonder why one day I said goodbye”.

seven sees the five members of Timoria taking out from the water a slender tree trunk with a few branches and cooperating to place it straight on the beach they were sitting on. As they proceed, Joe walks by and observes them (this is portrayed in Figure 34, which features minute 4:22 of the video). Then, he leaves, carrying on with his journey.



Figure 34: *Joe looks at Timoria members erecting the tree trunk.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

This curious scene where the Timoria members are planting the tree has a deep meaning, which was explained by Omar Pedrini in the “July 19th, 2024, Interview”, included in the Appendix A Section:

The story [portrayed in the video] is about a drug addict who finds redemption, and us Timoria are also in it, planting a tree on the beach in Jesolo at the end, as a symbol of the return to life and of overcoming drugs. Apropos, we were inspired by a movie by Andrei Tarkovskij called “The Sacrifice”, which had a final scene where a tree was planted, precisely as a symbol of life.

It is widely believed that the tree is a symbol for life, growth, wisdom and prosperity, as well as being the emblem of rebirth and evolution (Yezi, 2017), so the fact that Timoria decided to include the scene of planting an actual tree in a video that concerns the decision of a drug addict to try to change his condition and start to live again by evading society and embarking on a journey is rather noteworthy, as they physically portray the fact of choosing life over death and decay. What is more, Pedrini mentions the 1986 movie by Russian director Andrei Tarkovskij called “The Sacrifice”, which does, in fact, have a scene where the main character and his son plant a dry tree on the

seashore, “taking up the ancient Japanese legend that a similar one, scrupulously watered for three years, eventually flourished again”⁹⁴ (<https://www.cinematografo.it/film/sacrificio-soet0lj8>); contextualized to Joe’s story, his choosing to overcome drugs and to take back his life is not an immediate process and will take some time and effort, but after a while, as the tree will do according to the Japanese teaching narrated in the movie, he will flourish again and will return to a wiser and better person.

The last phase of the music video starts with the image of water waves flowing, accompanied by Francesco Renga’s final “Un giorno ho detto...”⁹⁵, backed by a gentle acoustic guitar arpeggio which, together with the voice, progressively slows down and stops. After the final words, the scene portrays the five Timoria members that retrieve Joe’s body from the water, as he has allegedly fainted, and try to get him to stand up, just like they did with the tree (as can be seen in Figure 35, taken from minute 4:44), but are unsuccessful, and so they lay Joe’s body on the sand while continuing to look at him with curiosity and compassion.



Figure 35: *Timoria members take out Joe’s body from the water.* Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYhQLsggbCg>.

This final scene serves as a sort of metaphor for what music did to the younger generations during the 1990s: as previously indicated, grunge music became the mouthpiece of Generation X, a disillusioned and uncertain youth, voicing their concern and sharing them (Chaney, 2024). Grunge music thus became a kind of rescue for the

⁹⁴ Translated into English from the original text in Italian: “*riprendendo l’antica leggenda giapponese secondo la quale uno analogo, annaffiato scrupolosamente per tre anni, alla fine rifiorì*”.

⁹⁵ English translation: “One day I said...”.

younger generation as they began to relate to it and felt understood by the exact artists they used to listen to. The act of portraying in a music video a young man that is being rescued by a group of musicians represents, as a matter of fact, how music offered an escape, a voice, for the frustrations of youngsters, and a sense of belonging during such a peculiar time, when many of them felt lost and disconnected, and sometimes resorted to dangerous substances in order to escape reality, as Joe did.

6.2 Discussion

The purpose of this Phasal Analysis was to demonstrate how music oftentimes needs to be paired with visual elements to better convey the intentions of artists and narrate stories. In this case, the analysis of two music videos belonging to different artists – one American band and one Italian band – both within the grunge genre, highlights how this specific genre, when combined with visuals, is especially effective in addressing and condemning social issues, while also serving as a voice for the fears and concerns of a generation.

Both videos are rich in symbolic elements, ranging from the biblical references in the “Jeremy” music video to the “fish out of water” scenes in “Sangue impazzito”. However, the most significant symbolism adopted in the two videos relates to their critique of society and social issues. Starting with the Pearl Jam video, its central theme is the condemnation of gun violence – one of America’s most pressing and controversial issues. This theme is presented through various visual cues: from newspaper clippings and the recorded voice saying that “It is very relevant in America today”, to the images portraying the young protagonist’s tragic fate – the one where singer Eddie Vedder puts the gun-shaped hand to his temple and the rendition of Jeremy’s suicide in class. Additionally, the video critiques American society itself, visually referencing national customs and symbols, like the Pledge of Alliance, the school uniforms, and the American flag used as a cape; moreover, the chromatic choices in the final scene reinforce this symbolism, with the dominant red, white and blue mirroring the colors of the American flag. Nevertheless, these colors take on darker connotations: red representing spilled blood, white the pallor of fear, and blue the bleakness of a fear-laden environment. Hence, the video suggests that gun violence is deeply ingrained in American culture, where loyalty to these colors persists even

though they reflect the devastating consequence of the issue. As for the Timoria video, on the other hand, the entire narrative focuses on society's view of heroin addicts (the topic of heroin itself is represented by the frames of the floating syringe in the water puddle), or more broadly, people in marginalized situations. Society responds to them with neglect and avoidance, which the video illustrates through three different societal groups, i.e. children, mothers and the elderly, them being personifications of society itself – interestingly, aside from the short glimpse with pops of blue, a color associated with melancholy and sadness, the whole video is in black and white, mirroring society's dullness and helplessness for the youngsters. This behavior, spanning across generations, leaves individuals like Joe isolated and trapped in their struggle. Rather than offering help, society turns a blind eye, condemning and abandoning them. In addition to this, the video reflects on how the youth of the 1990s, embodied by Joe, felt abandoned by a society that only viewed them as failures, leaving them to face the challenges of their time alone. Therefore, the Italian band's critique can be summarized as an 'us versus them' dynamic: as long as there are young people struggling to find their place in the world, there will always be those who judge or dismiss them. When this judgement comes from society itself, the issue becomes even more critical.

Jeremy and Joe's stories may be distinct, but the present analysis has revealed some commonalities between them that give their experiences a sense of continuity. Both characters are young and outcasts, two "fish out of water" viewed as odd by those around them – the former by his parents, classmates and teachers, who isolate and tease him, and the latter by society at large because of his condition as drug addict. In both cases then, it is music that brings their stories to a forefront – Jeremy's in reality, and Joe's within a fictional narrative. Besides, Pearl Jam's and Timoria's music acts as a sort of conduit, preserving their legacies and giving them a voice in a world that has largely dismissed and ignored them. Yet, there are also notable distinctions between their tales: first and foremost, Joe's story revolves around heroin addiction, while Jeremy's centers on gun violence; secondly, Joe is ultimately saved, coming to terms with his situation by setting out on a quest for physical and spiritual salvation, while Jeremy Wade Delle had tragically succumbed to his fate that morning in 1991; another important contrast is that, in fact, Joe is a fictional character, brought to life in a concept album and in the music video examined in this Chapter, whereas Jeremy

Wade Delle was a real person, whose life and death were a sharp reflection of the societal challenges of his time.

In spite of this, the analysis of these two narratives, notwithstanding their dissimilar details, revealed how, in the end, they deeply resonate with one another. As a matter of fact, in both cases grunge music has revealed its effectiveness in delivering a poignant commentary on how society treats its most vulnerable, marginalized and misunderstood members. Thus, the examination through Baldry and Thibault's framework for Phasal Analysis of the two music videos has demonstrated and highlighted how music, combined with visual images, has the power to shine a light on stories that have a deep social resonance and relevance, which might otherwise remain forever untold.

CONCLUSIONS

The present thesis has attempted to show how the disenchantment and angst experienced by younger generations of the 1990s', particularly regarding their socio-cultural environment and everyday social inequalities, could be effectively expressed through artistic forms, such as grunge. By focusing on the American band Pearl Jam and the Italian band Timoria, the study has demonstrated how these two groups, through their respective productions, have become prominent spokespeople for the concerns and disquietudes of their contemporaries, aligning closely with the core tenets of the grunge genre. Specifically, the analysis of four pieces of the two bands' repertoires – the lyrics of “Even Flow” and “Senza vento” and the music videos for “Jeremy” and “Sangue impazzito” – using two functional frameworks, namely Fairclough's (1995, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis framework and Baldry and Thibault's (2006) Phasal Analysis toolkit, has not only uncovered the two bands' perspectives on the subject matters – respectively, homelessness, the desire to break free from a stagnant society, gun violence and substance addiction – but has also brought to light the deeper hidden messages, metaphors and symbolism embedded within the works. All these elements, woven throughout the songs and videos, reflect the recurring themes of youth disillusionment, alienation, and societal indifference, often framed within an ‘us versus them’ dynamic.

The examination of both visual and textual materials has revealed the multiplicity of ways through which grunge music can convey a poignant critique on social flaws, serving as a voice for those who feel silenced or overlooked, embodying the spirit of rebellion and resistance, and calling for empathy, resilience, and social awareness. As such, this specific genre, born out of disillusionment and frustration (Edgerton Stafford, 2018; Chaney, 2024), has proven to be a particularly effective means of cultural expression, as it encapsulated the struggles of marginalized individuals and the broader socio-cultural critique of the so-called Generation X: in this respect, grunge music can be considered the 1990s' equivalent of folk music in the 1960s or punk music in the 1980s, as all three genres served as crucial artistic expressions of the generational anxieties and socio-cultural tensions of their respective eras.

This thesis represents a first attempt to examine Pearl Jam's and Timoria's commitment to using their artistic works, particularly those belonging to the grunge genre, to convey the feelings of disillusionment and despair of youth in the 1990s. Although the study provides insightful details about the bands' histories and popularity, as well as a curious remark on the production of socially oriented merchandise, as presented in Chapters Two and Three, and about the socio-cultural messages the bands convey, as presented in Chapters Five and Six, it should be acknowledged that it presents some limitations. The first and most significant limitation concerns the scarcity of scholarly resources that explore in-depth the works of Pearl Jam and Timoria in connection with their socio-cultural engagement. While there is significant literature dealing with the grunge movement and cultural impact, little academic research explores the specific contributions made by the two bands under analysis in this thesis, especially in the case of Timoria, whose popularity outside Italy has been very limited and which led to conducting an interview with former guitarist Omar Pedrini to obtain more information about the band. In addition, the lack of research on the two bands' engagement in real-world activism on issues of different kinds, which was only addressed to in their music, further complicated the definition of a robust state of the art basis.

A second limitation of this study could be identified in the small selection of materials analyzed and in the focus on only two bands belonging to the grunge genre. The study focuses on only two song lyrics and two music videos, which may be not fully representative of the full repertoire of Pearl Jam and Timoria, or, more broadly, of the grunge genre. As for the selected groups, it is true to state that Pearl Jam and Timoria are and were emblematic bands within the grunge movement in the United States and Italy, but they are not the only representatives of the genre. Despite this, it must be mentioned that the scarce video production from both bands limited the selection of the music videos for analysis: considering the small number of videos released by Pearl Jam and Timoria in the 1990s, the choice to focus on "Jeremy" and "Sangue impazzito" was not only appropriate to the topic of the thesis but was almost inevitable.

A final potential limitation could be found in the interpretation of the data. Despite having employed two acclaimed and valuable methodological frameworks to

examine the selected material, the interpretation of the results inevitably involves a certain degree of subjectivity. The messages and symbols that emerged from the analysis could be interpreted in a multitude of ways, depending to the cultural context and personal experience of the researcher. In this sense, the objectivity and generalizability of the conclusions drawn can be considered as somewhat limited.

As suggestion for further investigations, it could be interesting to apply the same frameworks used in this thesis, or potentially employ different ones, to a broader selection of Pearl Jam's and Timoria's repertoire, in order to see if other songs or music videos – even if this latter category is limited – belonging to the grunge era of these two bands also reflect on the generational angst felt by the youngsters of the 1990s. Other future research could be conducted comparing Pearl Jam's material with those from the other three bands that formed the Big 4 of Seattle Sound (namely, Soundgarden, Nirvana and Alice in Chains, as mentioned in Chapter Two), and Timoria's repertoire with the one of other Italian grunge bands (such as Ritmo Tribale, Verdena and Karma, as mentioned in Chapter Three). Such comparisons could reveal differing perspectives on the issues central to the grunge ethos. Finally, further studies could compare grunge music's perspective on socio-cultural issues with that of other music genres popular in the 1990s, aiming to provide a broader understanding of the decade's music as a medium for expressing youth sentiments. Additionally, a comparative study could be conducted between grunge and other musical genres that defined previous decades, such as folk in the 1960s and punk in the 1980s, to explore how music not only reflects but also shapes the collective resistance and identity of its time, as well as highlighting music's powerful role in articulating and influencing social dynamics and generational experiences.

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APPENDIX A

July 19th, 2024, Interview with Omar Pedrini

On July 19th, 2024, I had the amazing opportunity of interviewing Timoria's lead guitarist, singer and songwriter Omar Pedrini. This section of the Appendix contains the transcript of the interview, both in the original Italian form (on the left side) and translated in English (on the right side).

ORIGINAL TEXT

LG: Com'era vivere negli anni Novanta? Ti ricordi se c'era qualcosa di particolare qui in Italia in quel decennio?

OP: La cosa importante e fondamentale da segnalare del decennio è una generazione che io personalmente ho definito “senza vento”, perché non aveva più il vento buono della storia che c'è stato nelle generazioni precedenti. Quelli degli anni Sessanta hanno fatto la rivoluzione culturale, lì i giovani andarono al potere e il '68 universitario francese ha fatto da guida a una grande rivoluzione. Gli anni Settanta sono stati un decennio meraviglioso artisticamente, sono usciti dei film meravigliosi, i dischi più belli di tutta la storia del rock insomma... però purtroppo c'è stata la lotta armata, ma è stato comunque un decennio molto importante. Gli anni Ottanta sono stati gli anni della felicità, della gioia, c'è stata questa grande bolla economica, la ‘Milano da bere’, la

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

LG: How was it like living in the 1990s? Do you remember there was anything particular here in Italy in that decade?

OP: The most important and fundamental thing to point out about the decade is a generation that I personally called “windless”, because it no longer had the prosperous wind of history the previous generations had. Those of the 1960s were responsible for the cultural revolution, back then youngsters went to power, and the French movement of the universities in year 1968 led the way in a great time of revolution. The 1970s were a wonderful decade artistically speaking, amazing movies came out, together with the best records in the whole history of rock, you know... but unfortunately it was the decade of armed struggle, but it was still a very important one. The 1980s were the years of happiness, of joy, there was this great economic bubble, the ‘Milano da bere’

ricchezza, la borsa – tutti i ragazzi volevano diventare yuppies e quindi lavorare in borsa, in banca, nella finanza – è quindi stato il decennio della finanza. Gli anni Novanta invece sono la grande disillusione, quindi tutto crolla, ritorna la povertà nel mondo, ci rendiamo conto che le carte di credito in realtà ci facevano spendere soldi che non avevamo, e quindi nasce questo decennio molto disilluso. Qui riesplode il punk e il suo nichilismo, quindi gli ideali non ci sono più negli anni '90, e ci troviamo di fronte a una generazione che cerca di salvarsi. Non a caso ritornano le morti per eroina, che era scomparsa perché gli anni Ottanta sono stati più gli anni della cocaina, ricominciano a morire ragazzi per l'eroina, e le band non fanno eccezione, vedi Kurt Cobain o Chris Cornell, o ancora gli Alice in Chains, in cui ce ne sono stati due di morti. Si trattava di una strage che non si vedeva dal '71. Quindi ricordo un decennio in cui la musica fa da guida a una generazione perduta, una generazione disorientata, che è appunto questo il motivo per cui l'ho definita “senza vento”.

LG: Tu essendo nato nel 1967 fai parte di ciò che viene etichettata la Generazione X, quella che tu chiami “generazione senza vento”. Voi giovani italiani degli anni Novanta che tipo di sfide avete dovuto affrontare?

OP: Sì, noi Generazione X siamo proprio tra i

phenomenon, the wealth, the stock market – every young adult wanted to become a yuppie, hence they wanted to work in the stock market, in banking, in finance – it was, in a nutshell, the decade of finance. The 1990s, on the other hand, were the years of the great disillusionment, as everything collapsed, world poverty returned, we realized that credit cards actually made us spend money we didn't have, so this great disenchanted decade was born. This is when punk and its nihilism re-exploded, so all ideals were gone in 1990s, and we were faced with a generation that was just struggling to save itself. Not surprisingly, the deaths from heroin, which had disappeared because the 1980s were the years of cocaine, returned, and kids started to die from heroin again, and bands were no exception, see Kurt Cobain or Chris Cornell, or even Alice in Chains, in which there were two deaths because of heroin. It was a massacre that had not happened since 1971. Therefore, I recall a decade in which music acted as a guide for a lost generation, a disoriented one, which is, precisely, why I named it “windless”.

LG: Being born in 1967 you are part of what is labeled as Generation X, the one you call the “windless generation”. What kind of challenges did you young Italians in the 1990s have to face?

OP: Yes, we Generation X are exactly between

Millennials e i Boomers, una generazione sfigata, non considerata quasi da nessuno. Anche adesso si dice “Millennials contro Boomers”, sembra che non siamo neanche esistiti. Infatti, la X è perfetta per la nostra generazione, ci hanno messo proprio una X sopra! Qui in Italia la nostra sfida era quella di far capire che il rock potesse essere cantato anche in italiano. Oggi mi sembra di dire una banalità, ma allora mi dicevano: «Bravi, bel cantato e belle canzoni, ma le dovete cantare in inglese sennò non vi facciamo il contratto». Mi hanno rimbalzato decine di case discografiche per questo motivo, quindi è stata veramente una battaglia. Oggi ascoltiamo i Negramaro, ascoltiamo Le Vibrazioni, forse non immaginano la battaglia che abbiamo dovuto fare noi dalla fine degli anni '80, più o meno per imporre quello. C'è stato un grande cambiamento culturale: prima c'è stata la new wave italiana, quindi i Litfiba e i Diaframma, entrambi prodotti dall'I.R.A. di Firenze, e negli anni '90 si è cominciato a produrre anche il rock alternativo in italiano, grazie al disco d'oro di “Viaggio senza vento” nel '93, perché le case discografiche capiscono che c'era un mercato anche per noi.

LG: Oltre ai Litfiba e ai Diaframma, mi nomineresti altri gruppi famosi al tempo?

Millennials and Boomers, we are a lame generation, hardly regarded by anyone. Even now they say, “Millennials vs Boomers”, it seems like we didn't even exist. In fact, the letter X is perfect for our generation, they really put an X on us! Here in Italy our challenge was to make people understand that rock could also be sung in Italian. Now I feel like I'm saying a platitude, but back then they told me: «Good, nice singing and nice songs, but you must sing them in English, otherwise we won't make you a contract». I was bounced by dozens of record companies for this reason, so it was really a true battle. Nowadays we listen to Negramaro, we listen to Le Vibrazioni, maybe people don't realize the struggle we had to engage in since the late 1980s, more or less to impose that. There was a big cultural change: first came the Italian new wave, so Litfiba and Diaframma, both produced by I.R.A. in Florence, and then in the 1990s we started to produce alternative rock in Italian as well, thanks to the gold record of “Viaggio senza vento” in 1993, because the record companies understood that there was a market for us too.

LG: Besides Litfiba and Diaframma, could you name any other bands that were famous at the time?

OP: Sempre rimanendo nella new wave italiana c'erano anche i CCCP e i Modà (da non confondere con i Modà) del mio amico Andrea Chimenti, loro erano bravissimi, però parliamo appunto degli anni '80. Il rock alternativo negli anni '90 raccoglie quell'eredità di quei gruppi che facevano questo post-punk, questa new wave, in italiano. Noi avevamo capito che anche nel rock si potesse osare, nel rock alternativo e duro, insomma, e ce l'abbiamo fatta! Poi dopo "Viaggio senza vento" escono gli Afterhours, che iniziano a cantare in italiano, perché fino all'anno prima cantavano in inglese. Con i due dischi "Germi" e "Hai paura del buio?" cambiò veramente il panorama, e Manuel Agnelli poté scrivere in italiano, per far capire a tutti i suoi testi molto belli. Ancora, i Ritmo Tribale, che non hanno avuto il nostro successo, ma erano eccezionali e sono stati proprio tra i primissimi. Ricordo i primi concerti al Leoncavallo, c'eravamo noi Timoria e i Ritmo Tribale in giro a Milano; già nell'89 facevamo rock italiano, poi loro hanno avuto qualche problemino in più di noi, ma vanno ricordati: se noi eravamo i Pearl Jam, loro erano i Nirvana! Poi ecco, ci stanno sempre le sfumature, perché ad esempio noi Timoria andavano su tematiche filosofiche o di spiritualità orientale, specie se consideri testi come "Verso Oriente", poi si andava nelle

OP: Still in the Italian new wave genre there were also CCCP and Modà (not to be confused with Modà) of my friend Andrea Chimenti, they were amazing, but I'm talking about the 1980s here. The alternative rock genre in the 1990s picked up that legacy of those bands that were doing this post-punk/new wave in Italian. We realized that even in rock you could dare, in this alternative and hard rock, you know, and we made it! Then, after "Viaggio senza vento" the band Afterhours emerged and started singing in Italian, because until the year before they were singing in English. With their two records "Germi" and "Hai paura del buio?" the scene really changed, and [singer] Manuel Agnelli was finally able to write in Italian, so everyone could understand his very beautiful lyrics. Then, Ritmo Tribale, who didn't have our success, but they were terrific and were really among the first ones to emerge. I remember the first concerts at Leoncavallo [, a social center in Milan], there were us Timoria and Ritmo Tribale around Milan; already in 1989 we were doing Italian rock music, then Ritmo Tribale experienced a few more problems than us, but they have to be mentioned: if we were the Italian Pearl Jam, they were the Italian Nirvana! Then well, there are some nuances, because for example us Timoria used to address philosophical themes or those regarding oriental

specificità. C'erano anche i Karma, che però non hanno avuto molto successo. Loro erano un po' come i Ritmo Tribale, una band molto brava e che meritava. Poi, arrivarono i Verdena, che erano forse più Nirvana loro ancora di più che non i Ritmo Tribale, però i Verdena sono più giovani, sono arrivati qualche anno dopo. Personalmente ritengo che i Verdena siano forse la migliore band, visto che non giudico mai me stesso quindi non so i Timoria come siano percepiti, però personalmente sono il gruppo che mi è piaciuto di più, anche se arrivando qualche anno dopo hanno potuto anche sfruttare quei muri che abbiamo abbattuto noi nei primissimi anni '90. Poi più tardi arriverà più il pop rock, arrivano i Negrita e Le Vibrazioni, ma erano già più pop per noi all'epoca. Poi c'erano i Subsonica, i Bluvertigo, i La Crus, che però facevano elettronica: per noi erano più 'fighetti', anche se sono grandi amici e grandi artisti, sono tre band bravissime, però erano già più su un'estetica anni '80.

LG: Il grunge in Italia invece com'è stato percepito?

OP: Il grunge esplose in Italia con i Nirvana, con la canzone "Smells Like Teen Spirit" dal celebre album "Nevermind" del 1991. Quello è il disco che ha fatto al mondo

spirituality, especially if you consider the lyrics in "Verso Oriente", then there were specific themes. There were also Karma, but they were not very successful. They were a bit like Ritmo Tribale, a very good band that deserved much. Then, Verdena came, who were even more Nirvana-like than Ritmo Tribale, however Verdena were younger and came some years later. I personally think that probably Verdena were the best band around, given that I never judge myself, so I don't know how Timoria is perceived, but in my opinion they are the band that I liked the most, even though their coming a few years later enabled them to take advantage of those walls that we broke down in the very early 1990s. And then later on came a more pop rock genre, such as Negrita and Le Vibrazioni, but they were already more pop-sounding for us then. Then there came Subsonica, Bluvertigo, La Crus, but they did electronic music: they were "swaggerers" for us, even though they are great friends and great artists to me, they are three very good bands, but they were already on a more 80s aesthetic.

LG: On the other hand, how was grunge perceived in Italy?

OP: The grunge genre exploded in Italy with Nirvana, with the song "Smells Like Teen Spirit" from the renowned 1991 album "Nevermind". That is the record that had the

l'effetto che “Viaggio senza vento” ha fatto in Italia, noi senza quel disco non avremmo avuto probabilmente il coraggio di uscire con una “pazzia”, come la definirono i nostri discografici. Credo che forse tre persone ci avrebbero scommesso sul fatto che potesse diventare un disco d'oro! In più era un concept album, ispirato ai concept album degli anni '70, con un contesto unico per tutte le canzoni. Era sulla carta un disco difficile, invece i ragazzi dell'epoca l'hanno amato, forse proprio perché eravamo diversi, non assomigliavamo a nessuno. Da lì in poi parte un decennio con dei gruppi estremamente validi che l'hanno reso “mitico”, ed erano tutte band molto brave. Il grunge era lì, in queste band, quindi in noi Timoria, negli Afterhours, nei Ritmo Tribale, nei Karma e nei Verdena. Oltre alla musica però, il grunge era anche nel look: noi venivamo dagli anni '80, che erano gli anni delle firme, in cui per essere figo dovevi per forza avere capi di Armani, di Versace o di Paul Smith. Se non eri vestito in un certo modo non facevi i concerti, dovevi per forza avere un determinato look. Il grunge, o comunque il rock anni '90, è nato in antitesi, perché i gruppi ormai erano più fotomodelli che artisti, erano perfetti, fighissimi, e non pensavano alla musica. Gli artisti grunge sfoggiavano jeans bucati, scarpe da tennis come All Star o Adidas marce, la magliettina

same impact on the world as “Viaggio senza vento” had in Italy, without that record we wouldn't have had the courage to release what our record label called a “crazy” idea. I think maybe three people would have bet on it becoming a golden record! Plus, it was a concept album, inspired by the concept albums of the 1970s, with a unique context for all the songs. On paper, it was a difficult album, but the kids of that time loved it, maybe because we were indeed different, we didn't resemble anyone else. From that moment on began a decade with extremely talented groups that made it “legendary”, and they were all very skilled bands. Grunge was there, in these bands, so in us Timoria, in Afterhours, in Ritmo Tribale, in Karma and in Verdena. Besides the music though, grunge was also in the look: we came from the 1980s, which was the era of designer labels, when to be cool you had to wear Armani, Versace or Paul Smith clothes. If you weren't dressed in a certain way you didn't perform concerts, you had to have a specific look. Grunge, or at any rate '90s rock, was born in antithesis, because by then bands were more models than artists, they were perfect, super cool, and didn't think about music. Grunge artists sported ripped jeans, worn-out tennis shoes like All Star or Adidas, torn sports T-shirts, or large unbuttoned lumberjack flannel shirts, so

sportiva spaccata, o i grandi camicioni di flanella da boscaiolo sbottonati, quindi proprio l'ultima roba che un'artista negli anni '80 avrebbe potuto mettersi. Più il tuo modo di vestirsi era rotto e scomposto e più eri figo. Poi si iniziavano a mostrare i tatuaggi, solo successivamente ne è uscita la moda, perché allora eravamo solo noi musicisti quelli tatuati, e la gente ti guardava con sospetto, nascondevi pure ai genitori il tatuaggio. Per finire, i capelloni lunghi, le barbe trascurate, per ricordare che conta la tua musica, e non la tua apparenza. Quindi la rivoluzione del grunge è stata fatta anche nel look, come dire: «I vestiti non contano niente, al diavolo gli anni '80». Quel decennio nasce proprio come contraltare al potere del denaro, dell'iperproduzione, della finanza, a quell'America degli anni '80 o la Milano da bere in Italia. Non era un discorso di mancanza di soldi per vestirci, lo si faceva per reazione, per dire a tutti di vestirsi come si pareva. Anche a noi Timoria, sebbene ci piacesse vestirci bene per determinate occasioni, ovviamente non puoi essere sempre e solo grunge, sul palco non guardavamo troppo al nostro aspetto: capelli lunghi in faccia, presi dall'heavy metal, chiodo di pelle... prendevamo ispirazione dal look dei Ramones negli anni '70, quindi proprio contro questi fighetti che riempivano la musica con questi eccessi della moda.

really the last thing an '80s artist would wear. The more broken and disheveled your style was, the cooler you were. Then tattoos started to be shown, only later did it become a trend, because at the time it was just us musicians who were tattooed, and people looked at you with suspicion, you even hid the tattoo from your parents. Last but not least, the long hair and unkempt beards were to remind everyone that your music was the one that mattered, and not your appearance. Therefore, the grunge revolution was also about the looks, as if to say, «Clothes don't matter, to hell with the '80s». That decade arose as a counterbalance to the power of money, of hyperproduction, of finance, to that America of the 1980s or the 'Milano da bere' in Italy. It wasn't a matter of not having money to dress well, it was a reaction, to tell everyone to dress as they pleased. Even for us Timoria, although we liked to dress up for certain occasions, of course you can't just be grunge all the time, on stage we didn't care much about our appearance: long hair in the face, taken from heavy metal, leather jackets... we took inspiration from the look of the Ramones in the 1970s, so truly against those posers who filled music with fashion excesses.

LG: Pensi che per “Viaggio senza vento” siete stati influenzati dal grunge per quanto riguarda le tematiche o i testi?

OP: L'ispirazione dal grunge l'abbiamo avuta per quanto riguarda lo stile musicale, il *sound*, quindi decisamente. Mi ricordo che noi avevamo il disco degli Alice in Chains in studio e anche quello dei Metallica anche se non erano grunge, e dicevamo al fonico che “Viaggio senza vento” deve avere quel sound. Il problema principale è che in Italia non c'erano nemmeno i fonici rock, tu andavi a registrare i dischi dove li faceva Eros Ramazzotti, Gianni Morandi, i Pooh o Julio Iglesias, e dovevi dire: «Fammi un sound alla Nirvana» a questi fonici sessantenni che non li avevano mai sentiti; quindi, c'era questa grossa fatica, anche produttiva. Pensa che nel 1990, quando abbiamo registrato il nostro primo disco, “Colori che Esplodono”, io avevo fatto sentire ai fonici il disco dei The Smiths, la mia band preferita al tempo, e loro mi hanno detto: «Ma che suoni sono questi? Come fai a farli? Che schifo!». Ironia della sorte, ora band enormi come i The Muse vengono a Milano a registrare la loro musica! Il fonico di “Viaggio senza vento”, Max Lepore, è stato veramente un genio, perché appunto nel '92 fare quei suoni era veramente da pochi. Io credo che il sesto Timoria in quel disco sia stato lui, senza di lui non sarebbe nato quel capolavoro.

LG: Do you think that for “Viaggio senza vento” you were influenced by grunge in terms of themes or lyrics?

OP: We had the inspiration from grunge in terms of the musical style and sound, so we did for sure. I remember we had Alice in Chains' record in the studio, as well as Metallica's even though they weren't grunge, and we would tell the sound engineer that “Viaggio senza vento” had to have that sound. The main problem was that in Italy there weren't even rock sound engineers; you would go to record albums where Eros Ramazzotti, Gianni Morandi, Pooh or Julio Iglesias did, and you had to tell these sixty-year-old sound engineers, «Give me a Nirvana sound», and they had never heard them; so, it was a huge challenge, even production-wise. Consider that in 1990, when we recorded our first album, “Colori che Esplodono”, I played The Smiths' album, my favorite band at the time, for the sound engineers, and they said to me, «What are these sounds? How do you make them? They're awful!». Ironically, now huge bands like Muse come to Milan to record their music! The sound engineer for “Viaggio senza vento”, Max Lepore, was truly a genius, because in 1992 making those sounds was, indeed, something very few could do. I believe the sixth [member of] Timoria on that album was him; without

Quindi, l'ispirazione dal grunge era proprio nel *sound*, questo mix di punk, pop e cantautorato alla Neil Young e heavy metal: il grunge era un po' un mix di questi generi. Invece dal punto di vista testuale-concettuale mi sono ispirato più gli anni '70, però non dimentichiamo che il grunge ama gli anni '70! Se ci sono due idoli dei cantanti grunge, da Chris Cornell ad Eddie Vedder, sono Neil Young e i Led Zeppelin. I Soundgarden spesso facevano cover dei Led Zeppelin o dei Beatles, mentre i Nirvana facevano cover di Neil Young, i Pearl Jam hanno proprio fatto un disco con Neil Young, "Mirror Ball". Il grunge ha quindi riportato in auge quel *sound*, inventandone uno nuovo che traesse ispirazione proprio da questi giganti della musica.

LG: Parlando di "Viaggio senza vento", c'è una canzone che tu ritieni possa particolarmente rispecchiare il periodo degli anni Novanta?

OP: Per quanto riguarda lo stile, quindi il ritorno della droga, una generazione perduta a cui apparteneva chi aveva vent'anni negli anni '90, direi "Sangue Impazzito", con quel magnifico video, tra l'altro, girato qua in Veneto: lì c'è la storia di un ragazzo grunge, c'è la storia di Kurt Cobain, di Joe, il mio alter ego, di Omar, perché io andai in comunità per un anno, con l'aggiunta delle filosofie orientali, a cui mi sono avvicinato grazie al libro "Siddhartha" di Herman Hesse.

him, that masterpiece wouldn't have been born. So, the inspiration from grunge was precisely in the sound, in that mix of punk, pop, Neil Young-like singer-songwriter style, and heavy metal: grunge was a bit of a mix of these genres. From a lyrical and conceptual point of view, I was more inspired by the 1970s, but let's not forget that grunge loves the 1970s! If there are two idols for grunge singers, from Chris Cornell to Eddie Vedder, they are Neil Young and Led Zeppelin. Soundgarden often covered Led Zeppelin or The Beatles, while Nirvana covered Neil Young, and Pearl Jam even made an album with Neil Young, "Mirror Ball". Grunge therefore brought that sound back to life, inventing a new one that drew inspiration from these very giants of music.

LG: Speaking of "Viaggio senza vento", is there a song that you feel particularly reflects the 1990s?

OP: In terms of style, so concerning the return of drugs and the lost generation to which those who were twenty in the 1990s belonged, I would say "Sangue Impazzito", with that magnificent video which was, by the way, shot here in Veneto: there lies the story of a grunge kid, the story of Kurt Cobain, of Joe, my alter ego, of Omar, because I went to rehab for a year, with the addition of Eastern philosophy, which I approached thanks to Herman Hesse's book "Siddhartha". This

Questo libro mi ha letteralmente salvato la vita: ero come Joe, un mezzo drogatello, sbandato, ultrà del Brescia, bevevo, ed ero probabilmente destinato ad una vita brutta, perché non mi trovavo con la società e soffrivo la mia condizione di giovane. Hesse invece mi ha condotto verso la purificazione. In più, nel 1993 è nato mio figlio Pablo, e anche quello mi ha costretto a migliorare me stesso, perché volevo essere un bravo genitore per lui. Credo che in “Sangue Impazzito” ci sia tutto questo. Se invece vuoi una canzone simbolo, diciamo da stadio, direi “Senza Vento”, perché era quella che cantavano tutti. Quindi, ecco, direi che “Sangue Impazzito” e “Senza Vento” sono i due manifesti del grunge. Se invece vuoi una canzone non dei Timoria potrei dirti “Male di Miele” degli Afterhours. Queste sono le canzoni slogan che cantavano ai festival.

LG: Mi puoi parlare un po' del video di “Sangue Impazzito”?

OP: È un video importantissimo per me. È stato concepito come un cortometraggio, perché vi è una versione di 15 minuti, poi l'abbiamo ridotta a quattro minuti per il videoclip. I registi sono Alex Orłowski, che tra l'altro oggi è consulente per hackeraggi, lo si vede spesso in tv su La7, e Alessandra Pescetta, che poi da quel video diventò famosa, ha fatto anche video con Ligabue. La storia è

book literally saved my life: I was like Joe, a bit of a junkie, a degenerate, a hooligan for Brescia, I drank, and I was probably destined for a bad life, because I didn't fit into society and suffered from my condition as a young person. But Hesse led me towards purification. Moreover, in 1993 my son Pablo was born, and that event forced me to improve myself as well because I wanted to be a good parent for him. I believe that “Sangue Impazzito” includes all of this. Alternatively, if you ask for a more emblematic song, a sort of stadium anthem, I would say “Senza Vento”, because that was the one everyone sang. So yeah, I would say that “Sangue Impazzito” and “Senza Vento” are the two manifestos of grunge. Then, if you ask for a song that's not by Timoria, I could say “Male di Miele” by Afterhours. These are the anthem songs that were sung at festivals.

LG: Could you tell me a little bit about the “Sangue Impazzito” music video?

OP: This video is very important to me. It was conceived as a short film, because there is also a 15-minutes version of it, we then cut it down to four minutes for the music video. The directors were Alex Orłowski, who, by the way, now is a consultant on hacking and often appears on TV on [the] La7 [channel], and Alessandra Pescetta, who became famous after that video and even did some

quella di un tossicodipendente che si redime, e ci siamo anche noi Timoria, che alla fine piantiamo un albero sulla spiaggia di Jesolo, come simbolo del ritorno della e alla vita, della sconfitta della droga. Tra l'altro, ci siamo ispirati ad un film di Andrei Tarkovskij che si intitola 'Sacrificio', che aveva una scena finale dove si piantava un albero, proprio come simbolo della vita.

LG: Come siete arrivati alla copertina dell'album, alla decisione dell'Om come simbolo dell'album?

OP: In quel periodo frequentavo un ashram indù, e il mio guru veniva spesso in studio a Milano, in Viale Lombardini, durante le registrazioni di "Viaggio senza vento". L'Om, che poi mi tatuai, è il simbolo che racchiude un'intera filosofia e ha più di mille significati. Io mi chiamo Omar, e ho tanti amici mi chiamano Om, ed è meraviglioso, sono fortunato che posso avere la sillaba sacra dell'induismo proprio nel mio nome, e credo siano solo i nomi – almeno italiani – Omar e Giacomo che ce l'hanno. Quindi io chiesi che la copertina fosse un Om. È giusto ricordare che Francesco Renga, che al tempo faceva la scuola per grafico (mentre io facevo scienze politiche) era davvero bravo a disegnare, è un disegnatore eccezionale. Allora gli dissi: «Francesco, se ti va falla tu!» e lui si inventò tutta la grafica del disco.

videos with [singer Luciano] Ligabue. The story is about a drug addict who finds redemption, and us Timoria are also in it, planting a tree on the beach in Jesolo at the end, as a symbol of the return to life and of overcoming drugs. Apropos, we were inspired by a movie by Andrei Tarkovskij called "The Sacrifice", which had a final scene where a tree was planted, precisely as a symbol of life.

LG: How did you come up with the album cover, deciding on the Om as the album's symbol?

OP: At the time, I used to frequent a Hindu ashram, and my guru often came to the studio in Milan, on Viale Lombardini, during the recording of "Viaggio senza vento". The Om, which I later had tattooed, is a symbol that encompasses an entire philosophy and has over a thousand meanings. My name is Omar, and many friends call me Om, which is wonderful; I'm lucky to have the sacred syllable of Hinduism in my name – I believe the only Italian names that have it are Omar and Giacomo. So, I asked for the cover to feature an Om. It's worth mentioning that Francesco Renga, who was studying graphic design (while I was studying political science), was really good at drawing, he is really an exceptional illustrator. So, I said to him, «Francesco, if you please, you can do it!» and he came up with the entire album's

Trovammo fuori dallo studio un fotografo spagnolo e diventammo amici, veniva a trovarci in studio, ci bevavamo una birretta o fumavamo insieme, e Francesco con questo fotografo spagnolo fecero questa copertina bellissima, che è tutta fatta in analogico, tra l'altro, non c'erano i computer. Avevano preso un vetro, e ci avevano messo sopra diversi oggetti, come una catena da bici o un tappo della birra, che sono diventati proprio simboli di quel disco. Infine, col dito abbiamo disegnato un Om e da sotto Francesco e il fotografo hanno fatto risplendere una luce, e così è stata scattata la fotografia, che dà molto l'effetto della luce che abbiamo dentro, cosa che appunto le filosofie orientali insegnano. Quindi, è stata centratissima anche la copertina, e gran parte del merito è di Francesco.

LG: A livello di merchandising invece avete mai fatto qualcosa?

OP: Sì, noi Timoria, ispirati alla musica inglese/americana, eravamo tra i primi ad avere il merchandising. Quando venivano le grandi band in Italia c'era sempre la bancarella con le magliette e gli altri oggetti, e abbiamo deciso di farla anche per noi, con lo stupore di tutti! C'è la mitica maglietta con l'Om blu e arancione, quella era proprio il simbolo di "Viaggio senza vento" e poi ne facemmo altre per '2020 Speedball'. C'è

graphics. We found a Spanish photographer outside the studio, and we became friends; he would come to visit us at the studio, we'd have a beer or smoke together, and Francesco, along with this Spanish photographer, created this beautiful album cover, which was all done in analog by the way, since there were no computers then. They took a glass pane and placed various objects on it, like a bike chain or a beer cap, which really became symbols of the album itself. Finally, we drew an Om with our finger, and Francesco and the photographer lit it from below. And that's how the photograph was taken, and it really gives the effect of the inner light we all have, something that, precisely, the Eastern philosophies teach. Therefore, the album cover was really spot on, and much of the credit goes to Francesco.

LG: On the other hand, have you ever done anything in terms of merchandising?

OP: Yes, we Timoria, inspired by English and American music, were among the first to have merchandise. When big bands came to Italy, there was always a stand with t-shirts and other items, so we decided to do the same for us, much to everyone's surprise! There's the iconic t-shirt with the blue and orange Om, which was really the symbol of "Viaggio senza vento", and then we made others for '2020 Speedball'. There are still

gente ancora che ce l'ha originale, e ne vendono alle aste su Internet, poi l'ho ristampata nel 2018 per il tour di “Viaggio senza vento”. In più, questo è un piccolo spoiler, ti dico che il 30 ottobre presenteremo il fumetto di “Viaggio senza vento” al Lucca Comics, il più importante festival europeo di fumetti! È una cosa bellissima perché mi ricorda che questo album è sempre vivo, perché è una storia che parla di un ventenne in crisi, e quindi finché ci saranno ventenni in crisi “Viaggio senza vento” sarà amato. Non ha tempo quel disco, e penso che sia proprio quella la sua vera magia: potrebbe essere degli anni '60 o del 2030. Tante persone e tanti ragazzi giovani ancor'oggi mi dicono che “Viaggio senza vento” gli ha salvato la vita e, come a loro, l'ha salvata anche a me.

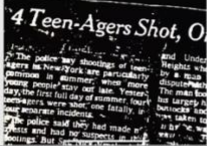



people who have the original ones, and some are sold at auctions online; then, I had it reprinted in 2018 for the “Viaggio senza vento” tour. And here's a little spoiler for you: on October 30th we'll be presenting the “Viaggio senza vento” comic book at Lucca Comics, the most important comics festival in Europe! It's wonderful, because it reminds me that this album is still and always alive, because it's a story about a twenty-year-old in crisis, and as long as there are twenty-year-olds in crisis, “Viaggio senza vento” will be loved. That album is timeless, and I think that's its real magic: it could be from the 1960s or from 2030. Still nowadays many people, including youngsters, tell me that “Viaggio senza vento” saved their lives, and just as it did for them, it also saved mine.





APPENDIX B







Multimodal Transcription

List of abbreviations and symbols				
T: time in minutes and seconds	VTF: Visual Transitivity Frame	CP: camera position	D: distance	VCS: very close shot
CS: close shot	MCS: medium close shot	MLS: medium long shot	LS: long shot	FE: facial expression
HP: horizontal perspective	VP: vertical perspective	CR: color	CO: color orientation	
♫: instrumental music	♫♂: male soloist	♂: male speaker	♀: female speaker	±: spoken voice off-screen
☼ = other non-musical / non-speech sounds	↓: continuation of previous	(!!): lengthened sounds	p: soft degree of loudness	n: normal degree of loudness
f: loud degree of loudness	S: slow tempo	M: median tempo	F: fast tempo	






Section 1: Multimodal Transcription of the “Jeremy” music video




T	VTF	IDEATIONAL MEANING			INTERPERSONAL MEANING	TEXTUAL MEANING	SOUNDTRACK	OTHER
		PARTICIPANTS	PROCESSES	CIRCUMSTANCES				
PHASE 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY OF “JEREMY”								
Subphase 1: the newspaper articles concerning gun violence episodes								
0:00 – 0:16		-	-	-	CR: red, white, black CO: naturalistic, hyperreal	Saliency: images of articles concerning episode of gun violence in the USA appearing one after one, together with three writings	[F]: buffering noises, bangs, school bells [± ♀]: and the news media, and a lot more (n) [± ♀]: it is very relevant in America today (n)	Metatext: “an affluent suburb”, “3:30 in the afternoon”, “64 degrees and cloudy”, “jeremy”
Subphase 2: introduction of Jeremy								
0:16 – 0:20		-	-	-	CR: black, white	Saliency: name of main character of the story appearing for the first time	[♯]: bass riff, guitar harmonics (n)	Metatext: “jeremy”
0:20 – 0:34		-	-	-	CP: moves backwards CR: black, white, red CO: naturalistic and evocative	Saliency: blackboard signaling that the boy (Jeremy) is a student	[♯]: bass riff, guitar harmonics, drum cymbal (n) Tempo: M	The blackboard shows chalk marks and erasures
0:35 – 0:39		A boy, Jeremy	Staring at the camera	In a dark room, lit by a white light	CP: stationary D: VCS Gaze: directed at the viewer FE: confused HP: frontal VP: median CR: white, pink, blue, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: image still unclear	[♯]: bass riff, guitar harmonics, drums (n - f) Tempo: M – gets faster	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 is signaled by a change in setting (the dark room → the woodland) and by a musical change (instrumental → addition of lyrics)




PHASE 2: PRESENTATION OF THE CHARACTERS OF THE STORY								
0:39 – 0:45		Jeremy	Drawing weird and spooky images	On a woodland	CP: moves by zooming in and out and following the boy D: MLS – LS Gaze: object inside personal space (the sheets) HP: frontal and oblique VP: high and median CR: yellow, blue, green, red, white, brown, black, pink CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy displaying a strange behavior	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: At home drawing pictures / Of mountain tops (n) Tempo: M	-
0:45 – 0:51		A man, that is singer Eddie Vedder	Singing and mimicking the lyrics	In a room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS Gaze: directed at the viewer and forwards FE: calm HP: frontal VP: median CR: pink, brown and maroon CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder, narrator of the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: With him on top / Lemon yellow sun / Arms raised in a V (n, f) Tempo: M	-
0:51 – 0:54		Five men, that are Pearl Jam members	Two staring at the camera, two sitting and looking at the ground, one standing and looking down	In a dark room	CP: moves focusing on the men D: VCS, CS, MLS, MLS Gaze: directed at the viewer or disengaged FE: mad, calm HP: frontal VP: median CR: pink, green, brown, blue, purple, black, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Pearl Jam members, background characters that still contribute to the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫] (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "the serpent was subtil"
0:54 – 0:55		Jeremy	Staring at the camera	In a dark room	CP: moves downwards D: VCS Gaze: directed at the viewer FE: challenging HP: frontal VP: median CR: brown, red, pink, white, brown CO: naturalistic	Saliency: boy almost challenging the listeners and viewers	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: And the dead lay (n) Tempo: M	-
0:55 – 0:57		Eddie Vedder	Singing while looking down	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS Gaze: disengaged for self-involvement (reflection) FE: calm HP: frontal VP: median CR: pink, brown and maroon CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder, narrator of the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: In pools of maroon below (n) Tempo: M	-
0:57 – 0:59		Eddie Vedder	Angrily singing, almost screaming	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS Gaze: directed towards a point in the room FE: mad HP: frontal VP: median CR: pink, brown and maroon CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder starting to address the issue of parent-son relationship, a harsh topic in the story	[♫]: strong guitar riff, bass, drums [♫♫]: Daddy (f) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3 is signaled by a change in the gaze of the singer, by the change of topic in his lyrics (Jeremy's behavior → his relationship with his parents) and the addition of a strong guitar riff

PHASE 3: PARENTS-SON RELATIONSHIP (I)								
0:59 – 1:03		Jeremy	Running past a cardboard portraying a grey suit	On a woodland	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed towards personal space HP: oblique VP: median and low CR: brown, green, white, grey, pink, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: cardboard portraying a paternal figure that is almost absent	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♩]: Didn't give attention (n, f) Tempo: M	-
1:03 – 1:09		Jeremy	Crouching down in front of a cardboard depicting a wild animal with an open mouth	On a woodland	CP: static D: LS Gaze: disengaged for self-involvement (fear) HP: frontal VP: median CR: green, brown, blue, pink, red, black, white CO: naturalistic and hyperreal	Saliency: Jeremy afraid of violence, something he lives in his domestic environment	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♩]: Oh, to the fact that mommy didn't care (n, f) Tempo: M	-
1:09 – 1:15		Jeremy	Stretching his arms towards two cardboards portraying a grey suit and a red dress	In a dark room	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed toward the cardboards HP: frontal VP: median CR: grey, red, black, white, pink CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy controlling his absent parents	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♩]: King Jeremy the wicked / Oh ruled his world (n) Tempo: M	-
PHASE 4: NARRATIVE MOMENT (I)								
1:15 – 1:19		Eddie Vedder	Moving his head from side to side and singing	In the room with maroon walls	CP: static D: VCS Gaze: directed towards a point in the room FE: calm HP: frontal VP: median CR: pink, maroon, brown, black, blue CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder, narrator of the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♩]: Jeremy spoke in (n) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition to Phase 3 to Phase 4 is signaled by a shift in the phase's main character (Jeremy → Eddie Vedder)
1:19 – 1:24		Pearl Jam members	Performing several activities: sitting at a chair, jumping, staring at the camera, touching hair	In a dark room	CP: moves around the characters D: VCS, CS, MLS, MLS Gaze: directed at the viewer or disengaged HP: frontal and oblique VP: median CR: blue, pink, white, black, red, brown, purple CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Pearl Jam members, background characters that still contribute to the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♩]: class today(!) (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "peer", "genesis 3:6"
1:24 – 1:29		Eddie Vedder	Singing while looking at the ground	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS Gaze: directed towards a point in the room FE: concerned HP: frontal and oblique VP: median and high CR: pink, maroon, brown, black, blue CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder, narrator of the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♩]: Jeremy spoke in class (n) Tempo: M	-







1:29 – 1:34		Jeremy	Staring at a cardboard depicting a green crayon	On a woodland	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed towards the cardboard HP: frontal VP: median CR: blue, pink, green, brown, red, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: story deals with a scholastic environment	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Today(!) (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "described as..."
1:34 – 1:46		Eddie Vedder	Singing	In the room with maroon walls	CP: static and moving D: VCS, MCS Gaze: disengaged for self-involvement (reflection) and then directed at a point in the room FE: mad, concerned HP: frontal and oblique VP: median CR: brown, pink, red, black, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder narrating a personal episode that concerns school violence	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: Clearly I remember / Pickin' on the boy / Seemed a harmless little f*ck / Oh, but we unleashed a lion (n, p) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 4 to Phase 5 is signaled by a shift in setting and in the phase's main character (Eddie Vedder in the maroon room → Jeremy in the classroom) Metatext: "bored"
PHASE 5: CLASSROOM SCENE (I)								
1:46 – 1:52		Jeremy	Sitting on his school desk, drawing and looking around, surrounded by stiff classmates	In his classroom	CP: moves focusing on the boy D: CS, MCS Gaze: directed towards the desk and towards the classmates FE: calm and curious HP: frontal and oblique VP: median and high CR: blue, grey, pink, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy is alone even in his classroom	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Gnashed his teeth / and bit the recess lady's breast / How could I forget (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "ignored"
PHASE 6: NARRATIVE MOMENT (II)								
1:52 – 1:57		Eddie Vedder	Singing and pretending to slap his face	In the room with maroon walls	CP: static, then moves around the man D: VCS, CS Gaze: his eyes are closed FE: pretended pain HP: frontal and oblique VP: median CR: brown, red, pink, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder narrating a personal episode that concerns school violence	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: And he hit me with a surprise left (f) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 5 to Phase 6 is signaled by a shift in setting and in the phase's main character (Jeremy in the classroom → Eddie Vedder in the maroon room)
1:57 – 2:03		Pearl Jam members	Performing several activities: jumping, walking by, staring at the camera, looking at the ground, swinging hair	In a dark room	CP: moves around the characters D: VCS, CS, MLS, MLS Gaze: directed at the viewer or disengaged HP: frontal and oblique VP: median CR: blue, pink, white, black, red, brown, purple CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Pearl Jam members, background characters that still contribute to the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: My jaw left hurtin' / Oh, dropped wide open (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "harmless"
2:03 – 2:10		Eddie Vedder	Singing and covering face with hands	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: VCS Gaze: his eyes are closed FE: in pain, concerned HP: direct VP: median CR: brown, pink, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder connecting the personal anecdote with the story of Jeremy	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: Just like the day / Oh, like the day I heard... (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "because I say so"

PHASE 7: PARENTS-SON RELATIONSHIP (II)								
2:10 – 2:21		Jeremy	Screaming at and throwing a tantrum against his parents, represented by mannequins	In the kitchen	CP: static and moves zooming in the character D: CS, MCS, LS Gaze: directed toward the mannequins FE: mad HP: direct VP: median CR: blue, white, grey, black, brown, pink, red CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy is mad at his parents for being absent, unloving and uncaring in his life	[♫]: strong guitar riff, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Daddy didn't give affection, no / And the boy was something that mommy wouldn't wear (n, f) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 6 to Phase 7 is signaled by a shift in setting and of the phase's main character (Eddie Vedder in the maroon room → Jeremy in the kitchen) and the addition of a strong guitar riff
2:21 – 2:29		Jeremy	Walking past a cardboard depicting a closed eye	On a woodland at night	CP: moves following the boy D: MCS Gaze: directed toward the direction of his walk FE: unconcerned HP: direct VP: median CR: pink, black, white CO: hyperreal	Saliency: Jeremy walking away from his parents and avoiding them	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: King Jeremy the wicked / Oh, ruled his world (n) Tempo: M	-
PHASE 8: CLASSROOM SCENE (II)								
Subphase 1: Jeremy draws								
2:29 – 2:37		Jeremy	Drawing	In his classroom	CP: moves focusing on the classroom and on Jeremy D: MCS, MLS Gaze: directed on the drawing FE: calm HP: direct VP: median CR: blue, white, grey, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy is the only one moving, meaning he is also left alone by his peers	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Jeremy spoke in class today(!) (n) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 4 to Phase 5 is signaled by a shift in setting (woodland → classroom) Metatext: writings on the blackboard: "Life crisis", "Anxiety disorders", "Environmental stress", "Hereditary factors", "Factors that affect..."
Subphase 2: Jeremy is ridiculed by his peers and teacher								
2:37 – 2:51		Jeremy	Reacting with fear to his classmates' and teacher's accusations	In his classroom	CP: moves focusing on Jeremy and following his classmates D: CS, MCS, MLS Gaze: the classmates and teacher are looking at Jeremy, he hides his face and looks away FE: mocking (classmates), ashamed (Jeremy) HP: direct VP: medial and low CR: blue, red, brown, pink, white, black, grey CO: naturalistic	Saliency: not only ignored and left alone by his peers and reference figures, but also made fun by them	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Jeremy spoke in class today(!) / Jeremy spoke in class today(!) (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: "bored", "black"
Subphase 3: Eddie Vedder's appearance								
2:51 – 2:56		Eddie Vedder	Singing	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS Gaze: his eyes are closed FE: concerned HP: direct VP: medial CR: maroon, brown, pink, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: singer's change in pitch signaling a change in song and events	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: ♫ (n) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 8 to 9 is signaled by a quick appearance of singer Eddie Vedder

PHASE 9: SCENE OF CONFUSION								
2:56 – 3:00		Jeremy	Running	On a woodland	CP: moves following boy D: LS Gaze: directed towards his way FE: normal HP: direct VP: median and high CR: green, brown, blue, pink, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: boy has no way to go	[♯]: guitar riff, bass, drums [±♯♯]: Hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo (n, f) Tempo: F	Metatext: "numb", "disturb", "problem", "wick-ed"
3:00 – 3:04		Jeremy	Wearing the American flag as cape	In a dark room	CP: static D: MCS Gaze: directed downwards FE: calm HP: direct VP: median CR: pink, black, white, red, blue CO: naturalistic	Saliency: boy showing loyalty to America	[♯]: guitar riff, bass, drums [±♯♯]: Hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo (n, f) Tempo: F	Metatext: "90210", "harmless", "child", "problem"
PHASE 10: A MESSAGE FROM EDDIE VEDDER								
3:04 – 3:12		Eddie Vedder	Singing with extreme vigor	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS Gaze: directed at a point in the room, then eyes closed, then directed to the viewer FE: challenging HP: direct and oblique VP: medial CR: brown, maroon, pink, white, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: singer breaking the fourth wall and speaking directly to the viewer, who is warned to remember every person's story and to take care of everyone	[♯]: guitar, bass, drums [♯♯]: Try to forget this (Try to forget this) / Try to erase this (f) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 9 to Phase 10 is signaled by a quick shift in the phase's main character (Jeremy → Eddie Vedder) Metatext: "he said it didn't matter"
3:12 – 3:15		Eddie Vedder	Singing	In the room with maroon walls	CP: static D: VCS Gaze: directed at a point in the room FE: concerned HP: direct VP: medial CR: brown, pink, black, white CO: naturalistic	Saliency: singer recalling the scholastic environment in which the tragedy took place, warning not to forget about it	[♯]: guitar, bass, drums [♯♯]: From the blackboard (f) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 10 to Phase 11 is signaled by a shift in the phase's main character (Eddie Vedder → Jeremy), which happens gradually

PHASE 11: JEREMY'S LAST DISOBEDIENCES								
Subphase 1: the wall of fire								
3:15 – 3:29		Jeremy	Turning back on fire with arms in a V + blurred face appearing	In a dark room	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed upwards and at the viewer FE: satisfaction and pain HP: direct VP: median CR: white, yellow, orange, red, brown, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy performing an act of disobedience	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Whooooooah / Jeremy spoke in class today (n, f) Tempo: M	-
2:29 – 3:35		Jeremy	Sitting while turning back on the fire, smirking	In a dark room	CP: static D: CS Gaze: directed at the viewer FE: provoking HP: direct VP: median CR: white, yellow, orange, red, brown, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy smirking with superiority	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Jeremy spoke in class today (n) Tempo: M	-
Subphase 2: the shirtless Bellamy salute								
3:35 – 3:41		Classmates and Jeremy	Performing the Bellamy salute	In the classroom	CP: moving focusing on the characters and then zooming on Jeremy D: MCS, CS Gaze: directed onwards FE: calm HP: direct VP: median CR: blue, red, white, black, pink CO: evocative	Saliency: Jeremy performing shirtless as a form of rebellion against state, criticism on American society	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: ♫ (n) Tempo: M	Metatext: writings on the blackboards

Subphase 3: Eddie Vedder's contribution								
3:41 – 3:50		Eddie Vedder	Singing	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moving around the man D: VCS Gaze: directed forward FE: anger HP: direct VP: median CR: brown, maroon, pink, white, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder, narrator of the story	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: Jeremy spoke in, spoke in / Jeremy spoke in, spoke in (n) Tempo: M	-
3:50 – 3:59		Eddie Vedder	Putting a gun-shaped hand to temple	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moving around and focusing on the man D: CS Gaze: eyes are closed FE: pain HP: direct VP: median CR: brown, maroon, pink, white, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Eddie Vedder portraying Jeremy's fate	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: Jeremy spoke in. Class. Toda(!!)y (n) Tempo: M	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 11 to Phase 12 is signaled by a shift in setting and the phase's main character (Eddie Vedder in the maroon room → Jeremy in the woodland)
PHASE 12: THE LAST CRESCENDO								
Subphase 1: Jeremy in the woods								
3:59 – 4:15		Jeremy	Screaming, breaking branches and looking around shirtless, surrounded by paintings and images, lit by a white flashing light	In a woodland at night	CP: moving around and focusing on Jeremy's actions D: CS, MCS, MLS, LS Gaze: directed among the trees and upwards FE: angry HP: direct VP: median CR: black, pink, red, white, green, yellow, blue CO: naturalistic and evocative	Saliency: Jeremy venting his anger for the last time	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [±♫♫]: Hoo (x30). Spoke in (x6) (f, p) Tempo: M	Metatext: "the unclean spirit entered", "erase"
Subphase 2: Eddie Vedder's cry of suffering								
4:15 – 4:33		Eddie Vedder	Singing and screaming in pain, lit by a white flashing light	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moving around the man D: CS, MCS Gaze: eyes are closed, then directed at a point in the room FE: in pain HP: direct VP: median and high CR: grey, brown, maroon, white, black, pink CO: naturalistic and evocative	Saliency: Eddie Vedder expressing his sorrow	[♫]: guitar, bass, drums [♫♫]: Whoooooah (x2) (f) Tempo: M	-

Subphase 3: the giant hand								
4:33 – 4:41		Jeremy	Standing in front of an image of giant hand	Indefinite	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed towards the hand HP: direct VP: median CR: pink, white, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: hand symbolizing death, being big enough to splat Jeremy	[♯]: guitar, bass, drums [±♯♯]: Whooooah, ooooh – ooooh – ooooh – ooooh – oh (f) Tempo: M-F	-
4:41 – 4:45		Jeremy	Screaming, lit by a white light	In a dark room	D: VCS Gaze: eyes are closed FE: fear HP: direct VP: median CR: white, pink, red, black CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy is scared	[♯]: guitar, bass, drums [±♯♯]: Whooooah (f) Tempo: M	-
Subphase 4: Eddie Vedder's last appearance								
4:45 – 4:50		Eddie Vedder	Singing, screaming, frantically moving head and waving hair	In the room with maroon walls	CP: moves around the man D: CS, MCS Gaze: eyes are closed FE: in pain HP: direct and oblique VP: median CR: grey, brown, maroon, white, black, pink CO: naturalistic and evocative	Saliency: Eddie Vedder expressing his sorrow	[♯]: guitar, bass, fast drumbeat [♯♯]: I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, yeah (f) Tempo: F	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 12 to Phase 13 is signaled by a fast drumbeat and change in setting and main protagonist (Eddie Vedder in the maroon room → Jeremy in the classroom)
PHASE 13: JEREMY'S SUICIDE								
Subphase 1: Jeremy's last actions								
4:50 – 4:59		Jeremy	Entering the room shirtless and tossing an apple to teacher	In the classroom	CP: moves following the boy D: LS Gaze: directed towards his direction and the teacher FE: calm HP: direct VP: median CR: blue, red, white, black, pink, purple, green CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy activating teacher's motions before his death, as if to provoke her	[♯]: guitar and arpeggio, bass, drums [±♯♯]: Aah (spoke in), aah (spoke in), aah (spoke in) yeah (f) Tempo: M	Metatext: writings on the blackboard
4:59 – 5:06		Jeremy	Glancing at his peers arrogantly, putting the gun's barrel in mouth and committing suicide	In the classroom	CP: moves around the boy and then stops D: VCS, CS Gaze: directed towards his classmates and then forwards FE: arrogant, anxious, then calm HP: direct VP: median, low CR: blue, red, white, black, pink, purple CO: naturalistic	Saliency: Jeremy challenging his peers and then committing the final act	[♯]: guitar and arpeggio, bass, fast drumbeat [±♯♯]: Aah (spoke in), aah (spoke in), aah (spoke in) mmm aaaargh! (f) Tempo: M-F	-
Subphase 2: His classmates' reaction								
5:06 – 5:33		Jeremy's classmates	Reacting with fear, covering faces splattered with blood	In the classroom	CP: moves focusing on kids' faces D: VCS, CS Gaze: directed forwards or downwards FE: shocked, traumatized HP: direct VP: median CR: red, blue, white, brown, black, pink CO: naturalistic and evocative	Saliency: kids are traumatized by Jeremy's suicide	[♯]: guitar arpeggio that progressively slows down, two final notes [±♯♯]: Aah (x6) (p) Tempo: M to S	Metatext: "3:30 in the afternoon", "an affluent suburb", "64 degrees and cloudy"

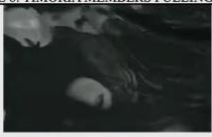



Section 2: Multimodal Transcription of the “Sangue impazzito” music video

T	VTF	IDEATIONAL MEANING			INTERPERSONAL MEANING	TEXTUAL MEANING	SOUNDTRACK	OTHER
		PARTICIPANTS	PROCESSES	CIRCUMSTANCES				
PHASE 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTER OF JOE								
Subphase 1: the first fish out of water								
0:30 – 0:33		A fish	Lying dead surrounded by flies	On a rock	CP: static D: CS HP: direct VP: high CR: black and white (as in the whole video)	Saliency: rendering of idiom “fish out of water”, symbolizing the person of Joe	[♯]: acoustic guitar arpeggio (p) Tempo: S	-
Subphase two: the first appearance of Joe								
0:33 – 0:42		A young man, Joe	Sleeping	On a small boat in the Venetian lagoon	CP: static as the boat passes by D: LS Gaze: eyes are closed FE: relaxed HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe having nowhere to sleep but a small boat	[♯]: ↓(n) Tempo: S	-
0:42 – 0:52		Joe	Waking up, sitting, rubbing eye and looking up	On a small boat in the Venetian lagoon	CP: moving focusing on Joe D: MCS Gaze: directed onward FE: relaxed HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe realizing where the current led him	[♯]: ↓(n) Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 is signaled by a shift in focus (Joe → men) and by a musical change (instrumental → addition of lyrics)
PHASE 2: JOE CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY AND ARRIVES ON THE MAINLAND								
Subphase 1: Joe still on boat								
0:52 – 0:56		Four men	Walking	In shallow water of the Venetian lagoon	CP: static D: VLS Gaze: directed onward HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: focus on inhabitants of nearby town	[♯]: guitar arpeggio [±♯♯♯]: Uomini (n) Tempo: S	-
0:57 – 1:05		Joe	Watching the men	In the small boat	CP: static as the boat passes by D: CS Gaze: directed onward FE: calm HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe still realizing where the current led him	[♯]: guitar arpeggio [±♯♯♯]: Domenica / Gente che allegra va (n) Tempo: S	-
Subphase 2: Joe arrives on the mainland								
1:05 – 1:12		Seagulls	Flying	Above a church	CP: moving focusing on seagulls and then on church roof HP: direct VP: high	Saliency: focus on building of the unknown town	[♯]: guitar arpeggio [±♯♯♯]: Risveglia la città (n) Tempo: S	-
Subphase 3: presence of some people								
1:12 – 1:21		A singer, Francesco Renga	Singing	At a fireplace	CP: static D: CS Gaze: disengaged for self-involvement (reflection) FE: calm HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Francesco Renga, one narrator of the story	[♯]: guitar arpeggio [±♯♯♯]: Dormono le fabbriche (n) Tempo: S	-
1:21 – 1:26		Two boys and a dog	Playing and running	On a street of the small town	CP: static D: LS Gaze: boys disengaged for self-involvement (the game) and directed at dog, dog directed towards its direction FE: joyful HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: focus on inhabitants of the town	[♯]: guitar arpeggio [±♯♯♯]: E in giro ancora io (n) Tempo: S	-

1:26 – 1:27		Joe	Staggering while stared at by boys	Through the street of the small town	CP: static D: VLS Gaze: directed towards the ground HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe is under the effect of drugs, boys stare at him with mistrust, symbol of society's rejection of drug addicts	[♫]: guitar arpeggio [±♫♯]: Vivo? (n) Tempo: S	-
1:27 – 1:32		A guitarist, Omar Pedrini	Playing guitar	At the fireplace	CP: static D: CS Gaze: disengaged for self-involvement (reflection) FE: concerned and curious HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Omar Pedrini, one narrator of the story	[♫]: guitar arpeggio [±♫♯]: Non lo so (n) Tempo: S	-
1:32 – 1:35		A syringe	Floating	In water	CP: static D: CS HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: symbol of Joe's condition of heroin addict	[♫]: guitar arpeggio [±♫♯]: ↓ (n) Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3 is signaled by a change of focus (syringe → priest) and a slight transition in instrumental part (guitar arpeggio → addition of keyboards)
PHASE 3: RELIGION SCENE								
1:35 – 1:39		A priest	Walking	Through a street of the small town	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed forwards HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: focus on inhabitant of the town, symbol of religion	[♫]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards [±♫♯]: E incontro anche te (n) Tempo: S	-
1:39 – 1:48		Joe	Following the priest swaying from side to side	Through a street of the small town	CP: static D: MCS Gaze: directed forwards FE: relaxed but curious HP: direct and oblique VP: median and low	Saliency: Joe is curious to see where priest leads him, swaying from side to side under the influence of drugs	[♫]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards [±♫♯]: Che corri a pregare un po' Dio (n) Tempo: S	-
1:48 – 2:03		An old man	Looking at Joe	In a small temple, covered with memorial cards	CP: static D: VCS Gaze: directed sideways (at Joe) FE: doubtful, judgmental HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: metaphor of society judging drug addicts	[♫]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards [±♫♯]: La strada la so / E penso che un tempo quel tempo era mio (n) Tempo: S	-
2:03 – 2:17		Joe	Looking around and away, leaving the temple	In the small temple	CP: moving following Joe D: VCS, CS Gaze: directed backwards FE: resigned HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe feeling abandoned by religion, as it does not provide help he needs	[♫]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards, addition of soft drums [±♫♯]: E mi chiedo perché / Un giorno ho detto addio (n) Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 3 to Phase 4 is signaled by Joe's departure and a change in character focus (Joe → Carlo Alberto Pellegrini) and by a musical change (lyrics → only instrumental)

PHASE 4: BACK TO THE BOAT								
Subphase 1: an exchange of glances								
2:17 – 2:21		A man, bassist Carlo Alberto Pellegrini	Looking at Joe	On the beach	CP: static D: VCS Gaze: directed at a point in the scene FE: inquisitive HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Carlo Alberto Pellegrini wondering about Joe passing	[♯]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards, soft drums Tempo: S	-
2:21 – 2:25		Joe	Looking at Carlo Alberto Pellegrini	On the beach	CP: moving following Joe D: VCS, CS Gaze: directed at Carlo Alberto Pellegrini FE: inquisitive HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe exchanging glances with Carlo Alberto Pellegrini	[♯]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards, soft drums Tempo: S	-
Subphase 2: the second fish out of water								
2:25 – 2:29		Omar Pedrini	Looking down on a fish	On the beach	CP: static D: CS Gaze: directed downwards (towards the fish) FE: reflective HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Omar Pedrini curiously looking at a fish out of water	[♯]: guitar arpeggio, keyboards, soft drums [±♯♯]: Ooooh (p) Tempo: S	-
2:29 – 2:36		A fish (goby)	Lying and wiggling back to water	On a wooden board	CP: static D: CS HP: direct VP: high	Saliency: rendering of idiom "fish out of water", symbolizing the person of Joe	[♯]: guitar arpeggio, then guitar riff, heavier drums and bass [±♯♯]: Corro via (n) Tempo: S	Musical change: addition of electric instruments as soon as the fish wiggles back into water, shifting from an acoustic ballad to a rock-grunge ballad
Subphase 3: the third fish out of water								
2:36 – 2:39		A man, drummer Diego Galeri	Smoking and lying back, staring at sea	On the beach	CP: static D: VCS Gaze: directed onward FE: calm HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Diego Galeri supervising the scene	[♯]: guitar, drums, bass [±♯♯]: Ma non so se (n) Tempo: S	-
2:39 – 2:50		Joe	Kneels down and looks at a dead fish	On the water's edge	CP: static D: VCS Gaze: directed downward HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe realizing his condition as outcast portrayed by the fish out of water	[♯]: guitar, drums, bass [±♯♯]: Fuggire o rincorrere / Qualcosa, forse chi (n) Tempo: S	-
2:50 – 2:51		A fish	Lying dead	On the water's edge	CP: static D: CS HP: direct VP: high	Saliency: rendering of idiom "fish out of water", symbolizing the person of Joe	[♯]: guitar, drums, bass [±♯♯]: ↓ (n) Tempo: S	-
Subphase 4: Joe goes back into his boat								
2:51 – 3:00		Joe	Lying down and slumbering	In his small boat	CP: static as the boat passes by D: VCS, CS, MCS Gaze: eyes are closed FE: relaxed HP: direct VP: median and high	Saliency: Joe realizing he found his comfort on the small boat, the only thing that belongs to him	[♯]: guitar, drums, bass [±♯♯]: Sono qui / E dentro me (n) Tempo: S	-
Subphase 5: the floating syringe (II)								
3:00 – 3:12		A syringe	Floating	In water	CP: static D: CS HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: symbol of Joe's condition of heroin addict	[♯]: guitar arpeggio [±♯♯]: Sangue impazzito che / Mi spinge fino a voi (n) Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 4 to Phase 5 is signaled by a change of focus (syringe → boys playing soccer)

PHASE 5: SOCCER SCENE								
3:12 – 3:32		Some boys	Playing football, observed by Joe	At a makeshift soccer field	CP: moving focusing on the boys D: MCS, MLS, LS Gaze: engaged FE: entertained HP: direct VP: low, median and high	Saliency: Joe is left apart by other boys	[♫]: guitar arpeggio [±♫♯]: Correte di più / Sognando un futuro così / Vi guardo da qui (n) Tempo: S	-
3:32 – 3:40		Joe	Handing back football at a boy	At the soccer field	CP: static and focusing on Joe's action D: VCS, CS, MLS Gaze: directed at ball and boy FE: calm HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe wanting to be helpful	[♫]: guitar arpeggio [±♫♯]: E penso che un tempo quel campo era mio (n) Tempo: S	-
3:40 – 3:41		A mother	Calling boy, telling him to go away from Joe	From a nearby window	CP: static D: VLS Gaze: directed at boy FE: alarmed HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: symbol of society's rejection and stereotypes against drug addicts, no inclusion	[♫]: guitar, drums, bass [±♫♯]: ♯ (n) Tempo: S	-
3:41 – 3:53		Joe	Sitting left alone by boy who ran away	At the soccer field football	CP: static D: VLS Gaze: directed at boys playing FE: disappointed HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe being excluded by society	[♫]: guitar, drums, bass [±♫♯]: E mi chiedo perché / Un giorno ho detto addio (n) Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 5 to 6 is signaled by a shift in setting (soccer field → Joe's boat) and by a pop of color (blue)
PHASE 6: JOE IS COMPLETELY ALONE								
3:53 – 3:59		Joe	Lying back	In his small boat	CP: static D: LS Gaze: eyes are closed FE: sad HP: direct VP: median CR: black, white, blue CO: evocative	Saliency: Joe finding himself completely alone and sad (symbolized by color blue)	[♫]: guitar, drums, bass [±♫♯]: Addio(!!) (f) Tempo: S	-
3:59 – 4:01		A fish	Gasping in agony	On the water's edge	CP: static D: VCS HP: direct VP: high	Saliency: rendering of idiom "fish out of water", symbolizing the person of Joe	[♫]: guitar, drums, bass [±♫♯]: ♯ (n) Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 6 to Phase 7 is signaled by a shift in focus (fish → Timoria members)
PHASE 7: THE TREE SCENE								
4:01 – 4:05		Timoria members	Pulling tree out of water	At the beach	CP: moving following the men D: MLS, LS Gaze: engaged for action HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: symbolic scene, tree being symbol of life and rebirth, of overcoming drugs, done all together	[♫]: guitar solo, drums, bass Tempo: S	-
4:05 – 4:10		Timoria members	Placing the tree straight	At the beach	CP: static D: VLS Gaze: engaged for action HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: symbolic scene, tree being symbol of life and rebirth, of overcoming drugs, done all together	[♫]: guitar solo, drums, bass Tempo: S	-
4:10 – 4:28		Joe	Passing and looking at Timoria members and tree	At the beach	CP: static D: VLS Gaze: directed at men and tree FE: inquisitive HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Joe being curious about men and tree	[♫]: guitar solo, drums, bass; then, guitar arpeggio Tempo: S	TRANSITION Transition from Phase 7 to Phase 8 is signaled by a musical change (electric guitar solo → acoustic guitar arpeggio)

PHASE 8: TIMORIA MEMBERS PULLING JOE'S BODY OUT OF WATER								
4:28 – 4:34		Water	Flowing	-	CP: static D: CS HP: direct VP: high	Saliency: water getting the better of Joe	[±#ɔ̃]: Un giorno ho detto... (progressively slowing down) (n) Tempo: S	-
4:34 – 4:43		Timoria members	Pulling Joe's body out of water	At the beach	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed at Joe FE: inquisitive, worried HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Timoria members being the only ones showing concern for Joe	[ɔ̃]: waves flowing	-
4:43 – 4:48		Timoria members	Trying to get Joe to stand up	At the beach	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed at Joe FE: inquisitive, worried HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Timoria members trying to make him stand up, hoping that he awakes, being the only ones showing concern for Joe	[ɔ̃]: waves flowing	-
4:48 – 4:54		Timoria members	Lying Joe's body down	At the beach	CP: static D: LS Gaze: directed at Joe FE: inquisitive, worried HP: direct VP: median	Saliency: Timoria members noticing Joe is unconscious, nevertheless they stay with him watching with compassion and worry	[ɔ̃]: waves flowing	-

APPENDIX C

Lyrics of the analyzed songs and videos

Pearl Jam – “Even Flow”

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1 | Freezin', rest his head on a
pillow made of concrete, again | 12 | Oh, ceilings, few and far
between all the legal halls of
shame, yeah |
| 2 | Oh, feelin' maybe he'll see a
little better, set a days, ooh yeah | 13 | Even flow, thoughts arrive like
butterflies |
| 3 | Oh, hand out, faces that he sees
time again ain't that familiar, oh
yeah | 14 | Oh, he don't know, so he chases
them away |
| 4 | Oh, dark grin, he can't help,
when he's happy looks insane,
oh yeah | 15 | Someday yet, he'll begin his life
again |
| 5 | Even flow, thoughts arrive like
butterflies | 16 | Whispering hands, gently lead
him away |
| 6 | Oh, he don't know, so he chases
them away | 17 | Him away, him away... |
| 7 | Someday yet, he'll begin his life
again | 18 | Yeah! |
| 8 | Life again, life again... | 19 | Woo... ah yeah... fuck it up |
| 9 | Kneelin', looking through the
paper though he doesn't know to
read, ooh yeah | 20 | Even flow, thoughts arrive like
butterflies |
| 10 | Oh, prayin', now to something
that never showed him anything | 21 | Oh, he don't know, so he chases
them away |
| 11 | Oh, feelin', understands the
weather of the winter's on its
way | 22 | Someday yet, he'll begin his life
again, yeah |
| | | 23 | Oh, whispering hands, gently
lead him away |
| | | 24 | Him away, him away... |
| | | 25 | Yeah! |
| | | 26 | Woo... uh huh... yeah, yeah,
fuck em up again... |

Timoria – “Senza vento”

- 1 E son qui e non c'è niente
- 2 Strade, bar: comunque mi difendo, non mi arrendo
- 3 La mia età è un fuoco freddo
- 4 Nato qui, vivo e non credo in niente, credo in niente

- 5 Mi dici che voi 30 anni fa fermaste un po' il mondo
- 6 Mi dicono che 20 anni fa era tutto diverso

- 7 Ma son pronto (è libertà)
- 8 Per volare senza vento

- 9 Come me anche tu
- 10 Resti qui e vedi le giornate già vissute
- 11 Dentro me, il risveglio
- 12 Ciao a voi, perché domani parto, sweet reaction

- 13 Qualcosa di mio lo lascerò in questo mio tempo
- 14 Saltando nel vuoto aspetterò il nostro momento

- 15 Ma son pronto (è libertà)
- 16 Per volare senza vento

Pearl Jam – “Jeremy”

- 1 At home
- 2 Drawing pictures
- 3 Of mountain tops
- 4 With him on top
- 5 Lemon yellow sun
- 6 Arms raised in a V
- 7 And the dead lay in pools of
maroon below
- 8 Daddy didn't give attention
- 9 To the fact that mommy didn't
care
- 10 King Jeremy the wicked
- 11 Ruled his world
- 12 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 13 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 14 Clearly I remember
- 15 Pickin' on the boy
- 16 Seemed a harmless little fuck
- 17 Oh, but we unleashed a lion
- 18 Gnashed his teeth
- 19 And bit the recess lady's breast
- 20 How could I forget
- 21 Then he hit me with a surprise
left
- 22 My jaw left hurtin...
- 23 Oh, dropped wide open...
- 24 Just like the day
- 25 Oh, like the day I heard...
- 26 Daddy didn't give affection
- 27 And the boy was something that
mommy wouldn't wear
- 28 King Jeremy the wicked
- 29 Ruled his world
- 30 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 31 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 32 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 33 Try to forget this... (try to forget
this)
- 34 Try to erase this... (try to erase
this)
- 35 From the blackboard
- 36 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 37 Jeremy spoke in class today
- 38 Jeremy spoke in, spoke in
- 39 Jeremy spoke in, spoke in
- 40 Jeremy spoke in class today

Timoria – “Sangue impazzito”

- 1 Uomini, domenica
- 2 Gente che allegra va
- 3 Risveglia la città
- 4 Dormono le fabbriche
- 5 E in giro ancora io
- 6 Vivo? Non lo so

- 7 E incontro anche te
- 8 Che corri a pregare un po' Dio
- 9 La strada la so...
- 10 E penso che un tempo quel tempio era mio
- 11 E mi chiedo perché un giorno ho detto addio

- 12 Corro via, ma non so se
- 13 Fuggire o rincorrere
- 14 Qualcosa, forse chi
- 15 Sono qui e dentro me
- 16 Sangue impazzito che
- 17 Mi spinge fino a voi

- 18 Correte di più
- 19 Sognando un futuro così
- 20 Vi guardo da qui
- 21 E penso che un tempo quel campo era mio
- 22 E mi chiedo perché un giorno ho detto addio

- 23 Un giorno ho detto...