Abstract: The main objective of this article is to analyze a frequent phenomenon in Brazilian music: the production of musical versions, in Portuguese, based on English-language songs. Among these versions, our study emphasizes versions associated with the concept of “brega style” and original songs associated with “rock”. We aim to discuss the singularities of this cultural transfer and the problematic of stylistic and qualitative attribution, given that this attribution is very dissimilar, even though versions keep the same melodies of the original songs. The theoretical basis of this article is principally constituted by the concept of “cultural transfers”, developed by Walter Moser and other researchers in Canada. Besides Moser, authors like Michel Espagne and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink also gave great contributions to the development of this concept. Considering this perspective, a cultural transfer involves more than the object itself; it implies at least two different cultural backgrounds, divergent conceptual networks, sociohistorical relations and the issue of otherness. Stylistic and qualitative classification of original songs and versions is determined according to discursive practices that produce meanings and knowledge (about music and styles, for instance) within a culture.

Keywords: Cultural transfers; music versions; discourse.

Resumo: O principal objetivo deste artigo é analisar um fenômeno frequente na música brasileira: a produção de versões baseadas em canções anglofonas. Dentre tais versões, nosso
estudo enfatiza versões associadas ao conceito de “estilo brega” e canções originais associadas ao conceito de “rock”. Objetivamos discutir as singularidades dessa transferência cultural e a problemática da atribuição estilística e qualitativa, tendo em vista que tal atribuição é bastante dessemelhante, embora as versões mantenham as melodias das canções originais. O arcabouço teórico deste artigo é constituído principalmente pelo conceito de “transferências culturais”, estudado por Walter Moser e outros pesquisadores no Canadá. Além de Moser, autores como Michel Espagne e Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink também deram grandes contribuições para o desenvolvimento desse conceito. Considerando essa perspectiva, uma transferência cultural envolve mais do que o objeto em si; ela implica ao menos dois sistemas culturais diferentes, redes conceituais divergentes, relações sócio-históricas e a questão da alteridade. A classificação qualitativa e estilística relativas às canções originais e versões é determinada de acordo com as práticas discursivas que produzem sentidos e conhecimento (sobre música e estilos, por exemplo) no interior de uma cultura.

**Palavras-chave:** Transferências culturais; versões musicais; discurso.

This article aims to develop a study about Brazilian versions, with lyrics in Portuguese, of some songs that are originally sung in English. We use the word “version” because these Brazilians songs were based on melodic structures that already exist in English-language songs. The study focuses on a polemic issue: the versions, in general, are pejoratively qualified as “brega” or “tecnobrega” (notions that will be discussed throughout this article). On the other hand, the English-language songs are unanimously classified as rock songs. The corpus of the research is constituted by eighteen songs: nine English-language songs and their respective versions in Portuguese. One example is
the song *Me diz o que fazer*, by Brazilian group Calcinha Preta, based on the original song *Always Somewhere*, by Scorpions. It must be said that the selection of the corpus considered the mentioned regularity in qualitative and stylistic attribution.

The “brega style”, in Brazil, is commonly associated with poor music taste and bad quality. This way, some critics of this style argue that brega melodies are too simple and brega lyrics are too sentimental. Many authors tried to translate the word “brega” into English. For instance, in *Brazilian music*, by Murphy (2006), there is a topic called “Música brega: sentimental songs loved by millions”. This author translates “brega” as “tacky” or “tasteless” and describes elements to characterize this style: “It is played by amateur vocalists who accompany themselves on MIDI keyboards and bands whose name starts with *Banda* (band) or solo acts whose name ends with *e seus teclados* (and his or her keyboards)” (MURPHY, 2006, p. 51). According to Schreiner (2002, p. 224), the expression “shallow background music” sums up the brega style. Attributing superficiality to the lyrics and massive characteristics to this style, he also associates the concepts “brega” and “kitsch”. Schreiner affirms (2002, p. 182) that brega songs are “over-sweet, sentimental songs that almost always feature love as their content”. Other words, such as cheesy and corny, have similar meanings in relation to the Portuguese word “brega”, even though their linguistic values are significantly different and the cultural systems where these concepts operate are constituted by specific issues that must be considered.

The main objective of our study is to investigate the singularities of this cultural transfer, especially the differentiation concerning to the reception, since the association between a song and “brega style” generally results in a pejorative attribution, even if versions have the same melody of original songs. Statements produced by the audience and critics in situations of musical and artistic evaluation constantly manifest the operation of enunciative “rules” that determine possible enunciations for
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each singular discourse, besides the stabilization of pre-constructed representations and concepts. The consideration of the songs themselves (melody and lyrics) is also important, given that these materialities are significant parts of the discursive process. However, the main focus of the study is the production of meanings in the reception of a cultural transfer, which involves more than a supposed “inner essence” of artistic objects. Moreover, the study of cultural transfers often implies a reflection about identities. When people use words like “brega” or “rock” to characterize artists or groups of listeners, for example, specific representations about identities are raised.

We base our hypothesis on the idea that the determination of classificatory operators in music is not a mere identification of intrinsic aspects of the songs, like the supposed “quality of the melody” or “quality of the lyrics”. Instead of considering only these immediate materialities, we argue that the concepts of styles are fundamentally constructed throughout history. In other words, the use of concepts like “rock” and “brega” is determined by pre-constructed representations that constitute a network of enunciation. These pre-constructed representations are related to many aspects, such as: the different publics involved, the way people conceive the idea of musical group and the idea of “rock band”, the image of artists in the media, the way artists of each style behave on stage, the stabilization of regular symbols and the circulation of these cultural products in peculiar places.

The analysis of cultural products in the modernity must reflect on the constant development of new technologies and the consequent rapidity of the information. Objects such as books, songs and movies, for instance, can be distributed electronically all over the world. This panorama makes possible, by the way, the growing production of Brazilian versions of English-language songs.

The article is divided in three parts. The first part will focus on the emergence of the concept of cultural transfers, which
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is the concept that provides the theoretical base to our analysis. Secondly, some contributions by Walter Moser will be presented, considering the possible relations between the concept of cultural transfers and the phenomenon that we analyze. At last, the third topic contains a reflection about the research object and its characterization as a cultural transfer.

“Cultural transfers”: the emergence of the concept

The emergence of the concept of cultural transfers is linked to the creation of the research group called “Transferts culturels franco-allemands” in 1985. Michel Espagne, one of the founders of this group, and other researchers, including philosophers, historians, historiographers etc., have been studying, thenceforward, how German thought was released in France, especially in the nineteenth century. Espagne and Werner (1987, p. 969) conceive “the phenomenon of cultural transfers as a historic object that is concretized in texts, documents”\(^1\). The project of Espagne and his group includes, at the same time, the demonstration of examples and a theoretical elaboration. Besides examples analyzed by each researcher, it is important to question what are the identifiable generalities in cultural transfers and how the singularities of each case can be analyzed in accordance with a conceptual framework. For this reason, concepts such as culture, transfer, subject and object, for example, must be delimited in order to specify the aims of this theoretical perspective.

Most of the examples of cultural transfers, in Espagne’s studies, concern to the introduction of German philosophy in France. According to Espagne and Werner (1987, p. 972), “a

\(^1\) “Les phénomènes de transfert culturel comme un objet historique qui s’est concrétisé dans des textes, des documents”.
cultural transfer correspond to an attempt of reinterpretation”\textsuperscript{2}. During the French Revolution, for instance, some German refugees tried to “transform” Kant’s philosophy into Jacobinism in an effort to support specific ideological issues. Then, a cultural transfer is constituted by a hermeneutic problematic, which brings into play two or more cultural groups, with particular objectives and strategies of argumentation.

Besides authors like Michel Espagne and Michaël Werner, the German scholar Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink has developed significant studies about cultural transfers, corroborating the consolidation of this theoretical perspective. Lüsebrink (1995; 1997) studies, for instance, the Francophone African Literature in twentieth century, analyzing how writers and their literary works deal with the politic domination, the cultural resistance and the post-colonial situation.

In spite of the diversity of examples, some issues are constant, like the importance of reception. Espagne (1992) highlights the conjuncture of the culture that receives the transfer. According to him, the principal aspects of a transfer are not intrinsic to the object. The most important issue is the meaning construction of the cultural product, which implies the relation between two different cultural systems. The idea of “authenticity” of a cultural product must be abandoned and replaced by the idea of practice (ESPAGNE; WERNER, 1987, p. 986), which considers each singular context of reception.

The theoretical perspective of Espagne (2005, p. 2) and his group intend to “privilege the phenomena of reappropriation and resemantization of a imported cultural object, considering what does this process reveal about the context of reception”\textsuperscript{3}. In a sense, cultural objects, when transferred from a place to

\textsuperscript{2} “Un transfert culturel correspond à une tentative de réinterprétation”.

\textsuperscript{3} “Privilégier les phénomènes de réappropriation et de resémantisation d’un bien culturel importé, en tenant compte de ce que ce processus révèle sur le contexte d’accueil”.

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another, are not the same, since they become part of other cultural system, being constituted by a different network of concepts.

Lüsebrink (1996, p. 51), in his turn, analyzes the contexts of reception by means of a reflection about dialectic relations between a collective identity and representations of the “Other”. Each culture comprises ideological and discursive aspects that corroborate the construction of an image of itself and a series of images about other cultures:

In this perspective, an intercultural literary critic necessarily implies a constructivist dimension that constitutes its object based on a series of defined concepts and questions. It places a literary text, firstly studied by means of semantic registers and narrative logic, within a variable network of ideological and discursive formations that represent, as it happens, the figures of alterity

(LÜSEBRINK, 1996, p. 61).

According to Lüsebrink (1996), the perception of otherness can result in three possibilities: the fascination, the negation (or exclusion) and the desire of curiosity. These types of perception can effectively change the status of a cultural product, depending on the circumstances of its transfer. It is important to say that the representations of the “Other” are permeated by stereotyping processes, aspect that is constantly highlighted by Lüsebrink in the analysis of literary works.

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4 “Dans cette perspective, une critique littéraire interculturelle implique forcément une dimension constructiviste qui constitue son objet à travers une série de concepts et questionnements définis. Elle place un texte littéraire, étudié dans une première étape à travers ses registres sémantiques et sa logique narrative, dans un réseau variable de formations idéologiques et discursives représentant, en l’occurrence, des figures d’altérité”
In situations of transfer, the presence of conflicts between cultural groups is commonly observed. These conflicts raise relations between cultural transfers and the concept of ethnocentrism. “As the allegation of national or ethnic superiority, the ethnocentrism exalts the greatness of a group, of a people, that it symbolically aggregates, and it simultaneously diminishes the “others” against which it stands in opposition” (ESPAGNE, DENOIX et al, 2004, p. 214). However, each cultural group develops different ways of managing plurality. While there are cases of extreme rejection, there are also cases of harmonious coexistence between cultural identities. Besides that, “within many societies, exogeneity has more prestige than autochtonity” (ESPAGNE, DENOIX et al, 2004, p. 213). In other words, there are some groups that exalt the “foreign” culture instead of having attitudes of repulsion against imported cultural products.

Given that a theoretical perspective must delimitate a series of concepts, Espagne and Werner (1987, p. 970) defines the concept of “culture”, according to Edgar Morin, as a circuit that ensures exchanges between individuals and makes them communicate existential experiences and constituted knowledge. This concept of culture is fundamentally linked with the concept of “network”, that is “a system of collective elaboration of an ideology and, more particularly, of an intercultural reference” (ESPAGNE; WERNER, 1987, p. 985). Within a culture, it is possible to identify pre-constructed representations that operate as “truth” for a group of people. For this reason, the discourse is

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5 “En tant qu’allégation de supériorité ethnique ou nationale, l’ethnocentrisme exalte la grandeur d’un groupe, d’un peuple, qu’il agrège symboliquement, et il abaisse simultanément des « autres » par rapport auxquels il se situe en s’opposant”.
6 “Dans de nombreuses sociétés, l’exogénéité [...] est plus prestigieuse que l’autochtonité”.
7 “Un système d’élaboration collective d’une idéologie et plus particulièrement d’une référence interculturelle”.
constantly constituted by ideology, which, in its turn, is an important notion for the definition of “culture”.

According to Espagne and Werner (1987, p. 984), “the initial manifestations of a transfer are not the works […], but individuals exchanging information or representations and constituting themselves in networks”\(^8\). This perspective about cultural transfers converges with the definition of “culture” and with the abandon of the idea of inner “authenticity”, since the apprehension of meanings transcends the cultural product itself. It does not mean the complete denial of the object; however, it affirms the fundamental existence of interpretative issues involving cultural groups.

Although the concept of cultural transfers is constantly used in analysis of transfers between two national cultures, the idea of nation is not the unique possible reference in processes of transfer. A cultural transfer can comprise, eventually, concepts such as place or identity. Moreover, it is almost impossible to affirm the homogeneity or the essentialism of a nation. “There is no society isolated enough to have developed a pure culture” (ESPAGNE, DENOIX et al, 2004, p. 211)\(^9\). With this in mind, it is necessary to consider the singularities of each country, principally the coexistence of different social, economical and cultural groups. Besides analysis about transnational cultural transfers, this non-exclusive approach also makes possible analysis about transfers between different regions of the same country, as well as between different identities in an even more restricted space.

Considering that a transfer involves two or more cultural systems, there are particularities concerning the use of concepts within each culture. These particularities are constituted, for

\(^8\) “Les premières manifestations d’un transfert ne sont pas des œuvres […], mais des individus échangeant des informations ou des représentations et se constituant progressivement en réseaux”.

\(^9\) “Il n’existe aucune société assez isolée pour avoir développé une culture pure”
instance, by differences of value between linguistic signs. “Talking about “völkerkunde” [German word] or talking about “ethnologie” [French word] is not the same thing, even if the two words are considered translations in dictionary” (ESPAGNE, 1992, p. 153). For this reason, a cultural transfer implies not only the transfer of a single object, but also, and fundamentally, semantic and conceptual issues inherent to the nations or cultural groups involved.

The development of the concept of cultural transfers by Espagne’s research group denies the idea of power relations merely centered in the determination of “dominants” and “dominated”. According to Espagne, Denoix et al (2004, p. 212), “It is convenient to abandon a dual conception of societies based in dominants and dominated, the established and the excluded etc., and to show that, in many cases, the dominants leave a contact situation very different than they were before”11. In view of this perspective, the unidirectional conception “dominant-dominated” is reductionist, because it sidesteps what constitutes the issue of power. With this in mind, the cultural group that receives a transfer is not the only susceptible of modifications in its cultural identity and in its way of being. The relation of influence or determination is a mutual process. “Within the group, individuals appropriate cultural features of another group, activating each stratum of their identity depending on context, dealing with the complexity of the world which is offered to them” (ESPAGNE, DENOIX et al, 2004, p. 218)12

10 “Parler de ‘völkerkunde’ et d’ethnologie, c’est parler de deux choses différentes, même si les termes sont traduits l’un par l’autre dans le dictionnaire”.

11 “Il convient parallèlement de sortir d’une vision trop duale des sociétés avec les dominants et les dominés, les établis et les exclus, etc., et de montrer que, dans de nombreux cas, les “dominants” se sont fait digérer ou sont sortis de la situation de contact bien différents de ce qu’ils étaient au départ”

12 “Au sein du groupe, les individus s’approprient les traits culturels de l’autre groupe, [...] activant chaque strate de leur identité selon le contexte, jonglent avec la complexité du monde qui leur est proposé”.

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Three elements of a cultural transfer

“Cultural” and “transfers” are words commonly used in everyday situations. However, the conceptual and scientific use of the expression “cultural transfers” implies precise definitions about its characters. There is a semantic field that approximates “transfer” and other words, such as transmission, translation, transport, due to the prefix *trans*, that means “across”, “beyond” or “through”. The radical *feri*, in its turn, complements the signification of the lexeme with the meaning of *other side* (Moser, 2000). Therefore, the definition of “transfer” suggests displacements that involve at least two reference places and, consequently, the presence of different cultures. These displacements, in a sense, can also constitute semantic displacements or, in certain cases, diachronic displacements.

In order to formalize a conceptual network, Moser (2013, p. 6) proposes a nuclear sentence that offers a definition of the occurrence of cultural transfers: “there is cultural transfer when an identifiable agent (subject) transfers a cultural object from a system to another in concrete historic conditions”\(^{13}\). This sentence, formed in a subject-verb-object structure, presents three elements that need to be contemplated: the subject, the act of transfer and the object. The idea of a system, in its turn, basically implies relations of interdependence between its constitutive elements. For instance, in Saussurean Linguistics, the elements are the signs and the system is the language. A cultural system, in its turn, can contain a series of cultural products, the work of critics, the conceptions about art and styles, the participation of the media etc.

\(^{13}\) “Il y a transfert culturel quand un agent (sujet) identifiable tranfère un matériau culturel (objet) d’un système à un autre dans des conditions historiques concrètes”.

First of all, the subject is an agent that assumes the responsibility for a cultural transfer. He is capable of conceiving an execution project and choosing the methods of its realization. However, it is hard to identify, in most cases, an individual and an anthropomorphic agent. Although individuals can play the role of partial agents, the function of subject is exercised by collective instances, such as groups of musicians (what happens in our research object, for instance), groups of writers, social classes, identities etc. This instance called subject is plural and it is not provided with full consciousness of its ideologies and discourses. In other words, the subject is not conceived in a radical objective way. It is an element that the researcher must accurately identify within a concrete historic system.

Another important question in the definition of the subject is the role of technologies and the media. In the modern world, most of the transfers are mediated, for example, by Internet or TV, technologies that make possible the rapid exchange of cultural products. In view of this question, Moser (2013, p. 9)\textsuperscript{14} believes that “the agency of transfer is shared between the human being and the machine, in variable proportions depending on the case”. Concerning to our study, the technologic issue is fundamental, because the divulgation of Brazilian versions mostly occurs on the Internet. Besides that, the process of creation of versions requires the use of various technological tools. With computer softwares, a subject can remove vocals, add new musical instruments or vocals, modify the tone or the tempo of the song etc. Minutes after, eventually, the “new song” would be available on the Internet.

The act of transfer can be motivated, according to Moser (2013, p. 12), “by profound desires, determined by mechanisms resulting from a mismatch between supply and demand, lack and abundance, but also by inequalities of value and prestige, which

\textsuperscript{14} “La agency du transfert est à partager entre l’être humain et la machine, et ceci dans des proportions qui varient de cas en cas”.

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are evidences of asymmetrical relations of power”\textsuperscript{15}. The reception of a cultural product in a transfer situation is not always well regarded. In the case of our study, Brazilian fans of English-language rock songs generally do not appreciate the versions, because they believe that there is a sharp qualitative decrease when an artist of a different style appropriates a rock song. Interestingly, the negative reaction from this public is related to the national cultural product, not to the imported object.

At last, the object of the transfer must be contemplated. Moser (2013) proposes five types of objects involved in cultural transfers. The first is the \textit{material and single object}. It is a unique object, such as an original picture or statue and, consequently, it cannot be transferred without a physical displacement. The second is called \textit{serial object}. It is an object that can be located in two places or more simultaneously, because there are multiple “copies”. The distribution of these cultural products, such as movies, songs, TV series, is rapid and massive. The third type of object is the \textit{semiotic or symbolic object}, concept that focuses on a relative independence of the object concerning to material supports. A text that constitutes a novel, for instance, exists independently of the book, a material object. Because of this, it can be transferred easier and faster than an original statue, for example. The forth is called \textit{matrix object}. It is not a single object, but a formula that establishes a virtual configuration for the production of a series of concrete cultural products. And the last type is the \textit{immaterial object}, which includes values, ideas, concepts and styles. It must be said that even immaterial objects have the need of material supports to circulate and be transferred.

In the case of our study, the object of transfer can be classified as a serial object, given that the songs are not single objects. In other words, they can circulate in many places at the

\textsuperscript{15} “Par des désirs profonds, déterminé par des mécanismes découlant d’un décalage entre offre et demande, manque et abondance, mais aussi par des inégalités en termes de valeur et de prestige, ce qui renvoie à une relation asymétrique de pouvoir”.

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same time. Even though it is not possible to absolutely affirm that this transferred object is a formula, there is a kind of virtual configuration for the production of versions: all of them remove the original vocals, keep the same melody and add new lyrics. Besides that, the last type, *immaterial object*, is also important for the phenomenon, because the existence of songs and versions is constantly dealing with the stabilization of concepts, values and styles. Notions such as “artistic writing”, “cheesy music”, “brega style”, “rock attitude” are commonly raised when subjects evaluate and qualify the songs.

**Brazilian versions of English-language songs**

Cultural transfers are processes that imply artistic conceptions, power relations, politic decisions and the issue of identity. Thus, the role of the researcher is to accurately demonstrate how transfers are operated and what are the consequences for the cultural systems involved, especially the one that receives the objects. In doing so, the operation of concepts like “brega” and “rock” constitutes a fundamental issue to analyze the meanings produced by the songs. According to Moser (2008, p. 12), concepts “are human constructs. As such they are the results of human endeavors guided by interests and often subject to conflicts, responding to specific epistemic as well as world-view needs that develop in particular historical situations”. Since there are not ahistorical concepts, the analysis of cultural phenomena must consider singularities raised by each discursive practice.

The presence of English-language songs in Brazil is not the main transfer identified in our study, given that the entry of these songs is a continuous process motivated by globalization. For this reason, English-language songs sound “natural” to Brazilian listeners in most places. The main cultural transfer we
analyze is the transformation of these songs by Brazilian musical groups. It results in some polemic differences, especially related to public and stylistic classifications. The audience that listens to rock songs is not the same audience that listens to brega versions. Moreover, rock bands and brega groups do not have the same cultural status. Many Brazilian artists, for example, reject the denomination “brega” because of its pejorative meaning.

The example of the song *Salve o nosso amor*, by tecnobrega group Mulheres Perdidas, version of *I remember you*, by rock band Skid Row, can illustrate the phenomenon. The original song was produced in 1989 and it became known by rock fans all over the world, including in Brazil. Although this song is a ballad and has a sentimental theme, the artist is almost unanimously associated with rock style. On the other hand, *Salve o nosso amor* was produced in 2002 in the Northeast of Brazil. In many cases, the public that listens to this song does not necessarily know that the original version is an English-language rock song. In spite of that, the expectations of this public can be satisfied, since the song eventually sounds like just another song of the group, within the same “stabilized” music style.

The version keeps the melodic structure of the original song. For this reason, everyone (specialist in music or not) who listens to these two cultural products is able to identify the connection between the songs. On the other hand, the execution of the melody differs in some aspects. In the song *I remember you*, there is a predominance of acoustic guitars during the verses, together with bass and drums. However, distorted guitars, one of the characteristics of rock style, are used in the chorus and during the guitar solo. *Salve o nosso amor*, in its turn, begins with the execution of the chorus. Next, two new musical instruments are added to the song, accordion and triangle, which are instruments commonly associated with the Brazilian music style called *forró*. There is also distortion in some short guitar licks, which do not

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16 This denomination is used to characterize some brega groups influenced by electronic music. It is more popular in the North and Northeast of Brazil.
constitute a guitar solo, as observed in *I remember you*. Another difference is the tempo of the songs, which is a little faster in the version, especially due to the frenetic execution of the accordion.

With regard to the lyrics, the two cultural products share more similarities than differences. Love is the main topic in both songs. As we commented before, the negative meaning of brega music style is based on conceptions that associate these songs with an exaggerated way of describing sentiments. The status of brega artists is fundamentally constituted by this aspect, even if there are eventual discussions about what is over-sentimental or what actually an artistic writing is. *I remember you* and *Salve o nosso amor* are songs about loving relationships that are over. In both songs, a man exalts the past with the beloved woman, crying out for her return. The comparison between their choruses can exemplify this aspect. The chorus of the song by Skid Row is “Remember yesterday/ Walking hand in hand/ Love letters in the sand/ I remember you/ Through the sleepless nights/ Through every endless day/ I’d wanna hear you say/ I remember you”, while the chorus of the song by Mulheres Perdidas, translated into English, is “I will not forget you/ I will not lose you/ Now, think about it/ Save our love [repeated twice]” (“Não vou te esquecer/ Não vou te perder/ Agora, pense/ Salve o nosso amor”). Even though the version does not constitute the so-called “literal translation”, some parallelisms can be observed. The two similar verbal expressions “remember” and “don’t forget”, for example, resonate within each song, constituting a nostalgic panorama. Expressions of exaggerated feelings, which base a frequent argument for the characterization of brega style in Brazil, are present in both songs. The verses “I would do anything for your affection”, by Mulheres Perdidas, and “I’d live for your smile and die for your kiss”, by Skid Row, have manifest similarities, like the verbal organization and the presence of close relations between love and dependence. All these similarities raise questions about what supposedly makes the brega style more exaggerated than others concerning expression of feelings.
Considering remarks of Espagne (1992), it is possible to affirm that the constitution of a cultural transfer is not reduced to the shared existence of an object itself. In the case of our study, the isolation of inner aspects of each song is not enough to the analysis. “The reasoning in terms of communicability or incommunicability between two cultures, in terms of fidelity or infidelity to a model loses relevance in favor of a social history of practices and intercultural exchanges” (ESPAGNE, WERNER, 1987, p. 988). This way, the analysis of the resemantization of a cultural product is not an analysis of fidelity, strictly based on the mere comparison of objects. A social history of practices, on the other hand, determines why people classify some songs as “brega” or “rock”.

When an object is transferred from a system to another, it becomes part of a different network of practices and concepts. The focalization of the “rock style”, for this reason, is not based on a universal existence of rock. In other words, the same object, like rock, becomes different depending on the context of reception. It delimits its place in relation with the other concepts of styles, for instance. With this in mind, the fact that a cultural transfer implies two or more cultural systems must be highlighted. What are the relations between elements within a culture and how they constitute a system? These questions suggest that cultural transfers are not merely physical transpositions. Besides the transferred objects, there are immaterial objects (like the idea of music styles) that partly delineate the meanings.

In Brazil, the coexistence between “brega” and “rock”, besides other music styles, is one of the aspects that singularize a cultural system. Even though there are possible English translations of the word “brega”, the operation of the concept can
only be “experienced”, in a sense, within this culture. Espagne’s example (1992) about the words “völkerkunde” and “ethnologie”, commented in the first topic, can illustrate this theoretical issue, so important to the definition of a cultural transfer. In other words, the concept of “brega” has an operation in Brazilian reception that does not belong to the context of the original songs.

Keeping the melodies and altering lyrics, Brazilian versions produce significant displacements. When we state the presence of semantic changes, our arguments are not only based on the analysis of lyrics and melody, but also and mainly, on the consideration of a cultural background, which involves the construction of the image of artists. Returning to the example of Salve o nosso amor and I remember you, it is possible to affirm that there are, on the one hand, similarities in lyrics and the presence of the same melodic structure. On the other hand, comparing their backgrounds, the differences between these two cultural objects become more palpable.

The first issue is the pre-constructed idea of “rock band”, as opposed to the idea of “tecnobrega group”. Considering some possible variations, the idea of rock band generally comprises four or five members, including guitarists, bassist, keyboardist, drummer and vocalist. The figure of the guitarist and his instrument often constitutes a stereotyped symbol of rock, for instance. A “tecnobrega group”, in its turn, is basically composed by vocalists and dancers. In many cases, there are male and female vocalists, who somehow represent the romantic atmosphere. The musicians, in general, are backing musicians; their presences are not as emphasized as in rock bands. A brief description in the official site of the tecnobrega group Calcinha Preta can exemplify this characteristic: “Presently formed by four vocalists: Silvânia Aquino, Anajara Gouveia, Dennis Nogueira e Jobson Mascarenhas plus nine musicians, Calcinha Preta has
many music hits”\textsuperscript{18}. While the official site names the vocalists, the musicians are only described as “plus nine musicians”.

These issues produce effects, for example, in concerts and other musical performances, such as in TV shows. The positional configuration of a rock band on stage is very different when compared with tecnobrega groups. Except for drummers, guitarists and bassists generally share the front of the stage with vocalists. During guitar solos, in many cases, the guitarist assumes the center of attention. In concerts of tecnobrega groups, by contrast, the foreground is generally occupied by dancers and vocalists, while musicians stay in the background. Therefore, even if a rock band and a tecnobrega group play the same melodies on stage, the stereotyped images of these artists, when associated with music styles, are absolutely dissimilar. In this process of cultural transfer, as we discussed before, the inner object, such as the transferred melody, loses importance in favor of a conjuncture established in the reception. The representation of a rock band and the behavior of artists on stage are just two examples that constitute this network of meanings raised in the act of transfer. We could also cite album covers, particular vestments and band logotypes, for example.

The resignification of these cultural products also implies the relation between musical tastes and construction of identities. Concerning to Brazilian rock fans, our research observed a significant rejection. This audience frequently interprets Brazilian versions of English-language rock songs as a “profanation” of rock classics. It is other evidence that a music style is not only constituted by melodic issues (since versions keep the melodies), but also by determined construction of an exteriority, a cultural background. “If tastes, like any other symbolic system of classification and hierarchization of the world, are not objectively determined by any transcendent

\textsuperscript{18} “Atualmente, formada por quatro vocalistas: Silvânia Aquino, Anajara Gouveia, Dennis Nogueira e Jobson Mascarenhas e mais nove músicos, Calcinha Preta acumula sucessos”. 

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principle in human nature, we can conclude that they are necessarily the product of social relations” (OLLIVIER; FRIEDMAN, 2009, p. 268). In this way, an identity related to music style always delimits its space with regard to the otherness. When the subject affirms the identity of “rocker”, implying singularities in social relations, he is also assuming a series of negations, especially if the Other is stigmatized, such as the identity associated with “brega”. The perception of otherness, in this case, results in negation/exclusion, one of the possibilities pointed out by Lüsebrink (1996).

The issue of national culture is important when we propose to explore the relation between Brazilian listeners and imported cultural products. We do not believe that there is simply a devaluation of Brazilian culture performed by Brazilian people, given that this rejection occurs with more intensity when the evaluators assume the identity of rock fans. In most of the cases, a cultural transfer cannot be strictly reduced to the opposition between national cultures, as discussed by Moser (2013). Moreover, we do not conceive identities as established and immutable “spots”.

In cultural and literary studies, we are continually confronted with so-called, “members of cultures” that do indeed drastically change or even reject traditional institutions set up by their “cultures”; in fact, the very designation of individuals as members of cultures seems increasingly out of tune with the cultural practices to be actually encountered in the contemporary world (SCHULZE-ENGLER, 2009, p. 162).

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19 “Si les gôuts, comme tout autre système symbolique de classification et hiérarchisation du monde, ne sont pas objectivement fixés par aucun principe transcendant à la nature humaine, on peut en conclure qu’ils sont nécessairement le produit de relations sociales”
In this way, pejorative meanings attributed to Brazilian versions of English-language rock songs do not represent an “escape” from the national culture, since these “members of culture” are increasingly constituted in a heterogeneous and fragmented way. For this reason, we have to consider some cultural subsystems eventually sustained by determined discourses. For instance, the ideas of “low culture” and “mass culture”, pointed out by Moser (2013), are constantly raised when subjects try to define the concept of “brega”, especially in academic texts and dictionaries.

All things considered, we can identify two main reasons for the pejorative attribution in this process of cultural transfer. At first, when a rock melody is played by a group considered “brega”, the stigmatization of this music style becomes a factor that determines negative connotations. The association between names of artists and the word “brega” brings into play some pre-constructed representations, which transcend the melody itself. The second factor is the singular manner with which the identity associated with rock style manages its relation with otherness. Brazilian rock fans mark symbolically their identities with particular clothing, such as shirts of rock bands, for example. It indicates that rock style notably transcends the musical taste and becomes a way of being and behaving (more than most of the music styles in Brazil). This peculiar build up identity is fundamental to the definition of the relation with otherness; after all, affirming an identity is also denying other identities. And, for this reason, the intensity of this assumption significantly modifies the apprehension of cultural products.

As we mentioned before, Espagne and Werner (1987) affirm that a cultural transfer is performed by individuals exchanging representations, not only by the works themselves. In a sense, this theoretical appointment summarizes our analysis, given that the meanings of cultural products are produced in social relations. Brazilian versions of English-language rock songs, therefore, are results of a tension between the materialities
of the songs (which includes changes in lyrics and the execution of melodies) and a discursive background established in each culture and operated by each identity.

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