

Beyond the “Casa Portuguesa”: analysis of popular music exchanges between Brazil and Portugal

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Abstract

This paper identifies and discusses the silences and the asymmetrical relations that characterize the exchanges of popular music between Brazil and Portugal. At the same time that our perception of the contemporary Portuguese culture seems mediated by a "mythical common sense" deeply influenced by the discourse of tradition, Portugal became an enthusiastic consumer of our "modern" media culture. Such asymmetries are visible in the huge success of Brazilian artists and bands in Portugal, whose counterpoint is the absence of Portuguese contemporary musical production in Brazil, especially those related to pop/rock. This paper aims to question the socially constructed nature of such speeches, and thus contribute to the elucidation of some aspects of local-global dynamics in the industry of entertainment, related to the musical consumption practices of the urban youth.

Key words: Brazil-Portugal relations, popular music, cultural consumption

INTRODUCTION

For a country whose relations with Brazil exceed five centuries of history, the presence of Portugal in our media culture is fairly small. If in the political-diplomatic field these relations, most of the time, are harmonious and cordial, the same cannot be said of the symbolic field. In the past few years, the frequency of cultural exchanges between the two countries seems to be linked to specific events, such as the commemoration of the 500 years of our Discovery, in April 2000.

In 2008, due to the celebration of the 200 years of D. João VI arrival in Brazil, Portugal and the portuguese culture came back to our media culture during the second half of 2007 on a thousand ways: special reports were published in the most important daily newspapers of Rio de Janeiro¹. Also, the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro) hosted an exhibition focussed on the roman and arab heritage that formed Portugal². This theme attended such unlike contexts as the traditional interview program "Roda Viva" on TV Cultura and the weekly show hosted by Hebe Camargo on SBT network³.

¹ "The invention of a country" (published on November 29, 2007 by O Globo) and a special edition of the Caderno Mais (published on November 25, 2007 by Folha de São Paulo) are the most significative.

² "Lusa – a matriz portuguesa", in Rio de Janeiro until February 10th, 2007.

³ Here I concern to the participation of the Portuguese ambassador in Brazil, Mr. Francisco Seixas da Costa, on September 17, 2007, in the program hosted by Paulo Markun. The "Globo Repórter" about Portugal shown on September 7th of the same year and the travel TV show "50 por 1", hosted by Alvaro Garnerio in Rede Record (which elected as "unforgettable experiences" of a visit to Portugal to eat "queijadas" in Sintra, visit the Museu dos Coches and take a ride by tram through the streets of Lisbon) also deserve mention.

There is a feature, however, which unifies all these "apparitions": Portugal is always perceived as a country deeply linked to the traditional forms and manifestations of its culture. The historiographical approach, for example, tends to privilege the Portugal of medieval castles, "quintas", discoveries and navigations that formed our colonial background. To look at portuguese culture today is to celebrate the coexistence between tradition⁴ and modernity (verified in urban centers as Lisbon and Oporto), in which the latter seems to be less important than the former: old grocery stores, fado houses, widowed ladies clothed in black, the typical religiosity of small villages (expressed in events such as the constant pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of Fatima) – traces of a country eminently agrarian and conservative, which was able to survive to a number of frames of modernity represented by the entry of Portugal in the European Union (Setti, 1992).

This article aims to investigate how the hegemony of this "mythical common sense", which mixes the modern Portugal with certain aspects of its traditional culture influences the perception that we, brazilian, have of contemporary portuguese music. Santos (2006) defines the mythical common sense as "the social beliefs (...) accepted as a rigorous way of thinking without rigor", which can be questioned by social sciences. Traces such as the eternal melancholy of fado, the sebastianism, the manuelin style and the spirit of adventure (related to the firts explorers of the seas) would form some kind of a "Portuguese national character" that is sistematically repeated and tend to be accepted as natural both by Portuguese themselves as by those who are in touch with these representations.

Initially, I work with the hypothesis that our perception of what is currenty produced in Portugal in terms of music suffered a sort of "temporal freezing", as if the symbolic imaginary brought by the latter immigrant flows that came from Portugal to Brasil in the 60's had not been updated after the 80's. Later, I briefly compare the history of brazilian and portuguese popular music genres related to the universe of pop/rock⁵, considering the lack of knowledge,

⁴ I conceive tradition as different kinds of articulation and association of various elements that constitute a specific culture (Hall, 2003), although a greater part of texts about portuguese music that I consulted for the drafting of this paper employ "tradition" as a synonym of the "persistence of old forms", with which I disagree.

⁵ Here I adopt the expression "pop/rock" and not "pop-rock", as usual, for one conceptual reason: the term "pop" in pop-rock may denote the occurrence of a variation within the rock, due to the influence of discourses and musical aspects related to the "pop world". Pop tends to be seen as non-authentic and strictly commercial, while rock would come in defense of values such as authenticity, attitude and community, among others. In my point of view, the expression "pop/rock" covers, indiscriminately, both artists fully associated with rock and pop, as those who are able to transit between the two universes. This view is in agreement with a contemporary theoretical perspective which postulates the dissolution of borders between genres and the transformation of the Ideology of Rock in an Ideology of Popular Music (Hesmondalgh, 1998; Monteiro, 2006).

here in Brazil, of portuguese artists and bands with more than 30 years in their carrers – still performing – that remains very important to the Portuguese urban youth. Then, I conclude this reflection using the relationship between the portuguese rock group Toranja and the fans of the brazilian band Los Hermanos as an example of a possible Brazil-Portugal musical exchange.

BRAZIL-PORTUGAL, 20TH CENTURY: NOISES, ASYMMETRIES AND THE MEDIATION OF THE "COMMON SENSE"

In the course of the 20th century, not only the intensity of the symbolic exchanges between Brazil and Portugal had been altered, as also the direction of its hegemonic flow: Brazil can no longer been treated as the periphery of the Ultramarine Empire, or as a main destination of the migratory flows from Portugal. In the last decades of the last century, Brazil became a sort of a center of a symbolic imaginary that Portugal seems to import in an enthusiastic way.

This process occurs since the 1960s, when brazilian cultural products (Jorge Amado novels, serial publications of the Editora Abril, our protest music) became more present in the portuguese everyday life. However, the Revolução dos Cravos, which put an end to the fascist political system ruled by Salazar in April 1974, happened at the same time in which Brazil lived under the most repressive period of its military dictatorship. The free spirit of the former contrasted with the violent mood of the latter, which may have contributed to curb the exchanges between the two countries, particularly in the Portugal-Brazil flow. Meanwhile, in the opposite direction, the flow became more intense, since many people sent off from Brazil because of political reasons (as José Celso Martinez Corrêa, Augusto Boal and Glauber Rocha) went to Portugal and, from May 1977, with the transmission of the first chapter of "Gabriela", brazilian soap operas began to be broadcasted there, with considerable success (Cunha, 2007).

The consequence of this structural change is the asymmetry in symbolic exchanges between the two countries: we know very little about what Portugal produces in terms of media and cultural artifacts today, while, in Portugal, the space occupied by brazilian culture (notably in the musical field and on television) only seems to be lesser hegemonic than the anglo-american cultural imaginary, which still occupies a dominant place.

Such asymmetry in the symbolic exchanges goes beyond the quantitative aspect of this relationship: what Portugal imports from Brazil is dynamic, urban, full of "frameworks of

modernity" whose impact in the more conservative portuguese mentality tends to be very intense (Cunha, 2007); the cultural imaginary related to Portugal that Brazil retains, however, is static, frozen in time, always referring to the past or to the more traditional aspects of portuguese culture⁶.

The case of popular music seems to be particularly symptomatic of such asymmetry: according to Tinhorão (2006: 27), the initial musical exchanges between the two countries date from the 18th century. Currently, due to the fact that the communication channels between the emigrants resident in Brazil and the portuguese community on the other side of the ocean are scarce or even uncertain (Monteiro, 2007), the portuguese music appears to survive only within certain institutions dedicated to the preservation of traditional forms of its culture. The activities developed by these "Casas" (Minho, Beiras, of Viseu) correspond to the scenario described by Setti (1992), which highlights the endogenous character of such manifestations.

There are, in Brazil, districts and quarters mainly inhabited by Portuguese emigrants (...) which organize feasts, dance numbers, presentations of groups of traditional music and, simultaneously, are the main consumers of these events (...). The distribution of the product is little representative for the Brazilian society overall. (...) Furthermore, these events seems to be based in musical and coreographic models best known and sistematically repeated, as the "caninha verde", "corridinho", "rei de gaio", "chamarrita" and others, not to mention the indispensable fado, always well accepted (Setti, 1992: 113-122).

In other words, beyond that circularity which characterises the production and consumption of Portuguese music in Brazil, there is an almost automatic reproduction of models enshrined in the common sense related to what the contemporary portuguese culture must be. Thus, artists such as the fadista Amália Rodrigues and Roberto Leal are converted in stereotypes of *some* Portuguese culture, taken by many as the *only one*.

An important part of the cultural policy sustained by the salazarism involved the affirmation of a supposed "portuguese identity" that should strength the singularity of Portugal in comparison with other nations. This strategy took place through the "imprisonment" of traditional elements of that culture (such as the folklore of the small villages, for example), which were emptied of its historical and political sense and disseminated (both internally and externally) only as something exotical. One of more symptomatic manifestations of that

⁶ For a cartography of the symbolic exchanges between Portugal and Brazil on literature and cinema, see Monteiro (2007).

perspective became known as "nacional-cançonetismo". The “nacional-cançonetismo” helped to reproduce a sort of clichés that still remain in our perception of portuguese culture, such as the figure of the "poor but honorable" portuguese and the "Casa portuguesa com certeza", which supported the exaltation of platitudes and, thus, obscured the real political situation of the country⁷. Although not necessarily subsumed under the label of nacional-cançonetismo, the fado and many folklore dances also fulfill this role; that’s the reason why, for many time, even Amália Rodrigues was unpopular between the leftist portuguese youth.

The end of the revolutionary euphoria of the April 25th and the rise of many market requests gave birth to a new form of nacional-cançonetismo (perhaps its more representative example is the singer Roberto Leal, very popular in Brazil during the 1980s), and also to a genre of songs called “pimba music”, perceived as kitsch or camp according to certain parameters of culture, or simply humorous and malicious, based on double meanings. The most popular figures in the pimba scene (in the numerical sense of the word "popular") are perhaps the accordionist Quim Barreiros (a kind of “portuguese Genival Lacerda”, always present in college and academic feasts and summer festivals), and the romantic singers Ágatha and Tony Carreira⁸.

For many (...), the Portuguese Music reduces itself to Emmanuel, Saúl, Agatha and other major *philosophers* of Pimba music. A strongly sexist music and saturated with mediocrity: the summit of bad taste and ignorance. (...) In radio shows (...) where Portuguese music is broadcasted, apparently no one has knowledge to talk about the modern poertuguese music, such as Da Waesel, Mind da Gap, Né Ladeiras, Marta Dias, João Afonso, Ithaka (...). Contrary to what people usually think, Fado is not the only portuguese musical style internacionally recognized. In 1999, the New Musical Express chose the portuguese groups Belle Chase Hotel and Cool Hipnoise as some of the best of Portugal and Europe. The Portuguese Hip Hop, or even electronic portuguese music, is much more important and valued than most of people think (Costa, 2007; highlighted by the author).

⁷ The song “Ó tempo volta pra trás”, composed by Antonio Mourão and performed by Francisco José, is a perfect example of the nacional-cançonetismo. Its lyrics put together some elements of our mythical common sense about Portugal, especially the melancholy and an eternal attachment to the past: “Ó tempo volta para trás/ Dá-me tudo o que eu perdi/Tem pena e dá-me a vida/A vida que eu já vivi/Ó tempo volta p'ra trás/ Mata as minhas esperanças vãs/Vê que até o próprio sol/Volta todas as manhãs” (Available in <http://letras.terra.com.br/antonio-mourao/478417>. Accessed on January 15th, 2008).

⁸ It’s important to look at Pimba music, as such to other “traditional” formats of portuguese music without prejudice, and not as if the songs in themselves were able to promote the

Migratory flows to Brazil were intense in the last decade that preceded the Revolução dos Cravos and may be understood in the context of the economic crisis which devastated Portugal since the 1950's, when all the primary sector of the economy suffered the consequences of a process of industrial concentration that led small producers to see the emigration as the only way out. It seems clear that the symbolic imaginary related to the Portuguese culture that circulates between us was not "updated", in order to also appear attractive for the younger generations, remaining attached to the same cultural formats brought from across the ocean by grandparents, uncles and parents that rushed to Brazil on the 50's and 60's⁹. By living far away from Portugal, under the control of information provided by the salazarism and suffering the absence of effective channels of communication, these people could only have reproduced this frozen imaginary¹⁰.

In short, it's a "Portugal of the past" (Setti, 1992, p. 114) that we know best: the same Portugal which produced the literature of Camões and Pessoa, the manuelin architectural style, the popular traditions of remote villages, in which the existence of rock bands with almost 30 years of career will always seem to be incongruent or even bizarre – that is why the next section of this paper is dedicated to the establishment of possible connections between the pop/rock made in Brazil and in Portugal, through a historiographical perspective.

THE PORTUGUESE-BRAZILIAN POP/ROCK: A PARALLEL TRAJECTORY

The consolidation of popular music genres related to the pop/rock universe was quite similar in Brazil and Portugal. This similarity lies not only in the major coincidence between cycles and movements, but also in the relation both tense and symbiotic between artists and discourses allocated under the label of "pop/rock" and that under the generic (and ideological)

"alienation of audiences" or to reproduce the mythical common sense about Portugal (a process that is certainly more complex than it seems to be).

⁹ After the April 25, the belief in structural changes in the country (that would be soon frustrated with the counter-revolution of November 1975), the atmosphere of euphoria and the consequent admission of Portugal in the European Economic Community helped to reduce this migratory flows, while for the same reasons the flow from Brasil to Portugal has been intensified (Secco, 2004).

¹⁰ Still according to Costa (2007), in such an aggressive mood, "the problem is that many portuguese emigrants were stopped in time, and for them Xutos & Pontapés still represents the most modern portuguese music! Portugal became modern; the emigrants, however, remain in the past!". Xutos & Pontapés is a rock band still performing whose career began at the end of the 1970's.

category best known as “música popular brasileira” ou “música popular portuguesa” (MPB/MPP, from now on).

It is true that any attempt to define what can be allocated under the label of MPB/MPP with precision and only through a theoretical framework of musicology tends to be unsuccessful – in part, because depending on the place of speech occupied by the person who made the classification, and the circumstances in which this classification is made, artists initially related to a MPB/MPP universe may, in another context of enunciation, be labelled as belonging to the universe of the pop/rock.

In this process, not only the record industry but also (and specially) the musical-oriented press plays a fundamental role. Besides, what some authors define (not kindly) as "slight music" (Correia, 1984) others will (proudly) classify as "modern music" (Duarte, 2006). That's the reason why this paper is guided by the concept of "popular music"¹¹ (which relates, in general, to a particular configuration of the dynamics of musical production, circulation and consumption of the post-war capitalist world) when referring to the portuguese music produced after the Revolução dos Cravos, not necessarily related to the pop/rock universe (Janotti Jr. & Cardoso Filho, 2006).

Just as in Portugal, with the rise of the generation of the “cantautores”, in Brazil MPB begins to operate as a taxionomic category in the 60's (in a context which includes, not necessarily in order of importance, the effects of the international celebartion of Bossa Nova, a sort of song festivals and the beginning of the military government). Became known as "cantautores", "trovadores" or "baladeiros" artists like Zeca Afonso, Adriano Correia de Oliveira and Jose Mário Branco, who took aspects of traditional/ regional Portuguese music and mixed them with urban elements, aiming to changing the songs into "peaceful and politically involved weapons against the oppression of the government". Influenced, above all, by the latin-american and brazilian protest song, the “cantautores” appeared during the mid 60's and for a long time had been accused of producing an "ellite folklore" for the academic youth (Correia, 1984).

¹¹ Note to the English version: the concept of “popular music” doesn't mean the same thing if the text is written in English and in Portuguese. “Popular music”, in Brazil (“música popular”), is closest to the english concept of “folk music”, and for this reason the portuguese version of this paper adopts the concept of “popular massive music” (elaborated by Jeder Janotti Jr, referring to the “popular music” adopted by Simon Frith and others) to avoid confusion. Besides, “popular music” as a concept is different of “pop music” as a genre (on this question, see note 5).

Brazil and Portugal were then living more or less similar historical moments, with the intensification of political regimes marked by authoritarianism. While the MPB/MPP played a central role in this context, rock occupied a secondary and almost outsider position – "outsider" not in the sense of opposition to the status quo, since media channels gave little attention to this genre and its sociocultural relevance was frequently disregarded.

Both the Brazilian "Jovem Guarda" (led by Roberto and Erasmo Carlos, Wanderléia and The Fevers) and the Portuguese rock-and-rollers of the 60's shared the same sources of inspiration: the music from Elvis Presley and The Beatles (before the album "Rubber soul"), which tended to be precariously translated to Portuguese or even performed in their original language (the accent, however, was impossible to disguise). Despite the eventual success experienced by some artists and bands¹², and the enthusiasm of a large part of the youth devoted to them, pop/rock was frequently criticized to stimulate the subservience to the Anglo-American musical model, disregarding the cultural references of the local and, consequently, sowing alienation between young people (Motta, 2000).

In the 70's, Brazil and Portugal witnessed the emergence of many bands influenced by the progressive rock, although here this influence didn't ignore the possibility of hybridization with local elements, as in the case of Mutantes, Novos Baianos or Secos & Molhados. It is also in the 1970s when symbolic exchanges between the two nations, until then frequent as a consequence of their common past and the migratory flows, begins to become scarce or asymmetric, for reasons already mentioned above.

The Revolução dos Cravos put down the musical borders that isolated Portugal from the rest of Europe. In a sort of post-revolution euphoria, cantautores music finally began to be broadcasted. At the same time, Portugal became more opened to the influences of the Anglo-American pop/rock in vogue at that moment. That's why the decade comprised between 1975 and 1985 will establish the turning point of this musical roadmap. As a side effect of the do-it-yourself punk discourse, both Brazil and Portugal will format a model of rock that, unlike previous attempts, will consolidate itself as hegemonic in terms of media visibility and occupation of market share.

In the Portuguese case, for example, the effects of the counter-revolution of November 1975 were decisive, in part because it sent "cantautores" off the media, now submitted to a

¹² In Portugal, rock and roll bands such as The Sheiks and Quarteto 1111 became very popular, not to mention countless groups that came from the academic universe and for that reason attended by Conjunto Acadêmico João Paulo or Conjunto Acadêmico Os Espaciais (Duarte, 2006).

ensorship more economic than political. As a consequence, the space occupied by rock from United States and England on radio and television became more representative. Here, in turn, was the "slow, gradual and secure opening" led by President Geisel that, little by little, expanded and authorised the increasingly penetration of anglo-american music, a process that was intensified during the next government, led by the General João Batista Figueiredo, already in the 1980s. In this context, media channels such as the Radio Fluminense FM and the Bizz Magazine¹³; certain individuals that functioned as mediators between Brazil and what was happening outside (journalists as Ana Maria Bahiana and Maurício Kubrusly, but also diplomats whose children created networks for the exchange of records yet not introduced on the brazilian market) and spots for shows like the Circo Voador, in Rio de Janeiro, played a strategic role¹⁴.

Therefore, it is impossible to dissociate the major success experienced by countless brazilian and portuguese pop/rock bands during the 1980s and the infra-structure of production, distribution and consumption that enabled that music to reach a wide public. In a brief space of time, for example, the improvement of recording technologies and the so-called "boom of portuguese rock" led many "Grupos de Baile" (which traditionally played at summer festivals in the small villages of the interior) to convert themselves into rock bands and sign a contract with some record company¹⁵; even the veteran "cantautor" Sergio Godinho was advised to become a rock musician (Correia, 1984).

For the journalist and researcher Arthur Dapieve, who created the term BRock to classify the brazilian rock production of the 80's, this would be

... A new brazilian rock, healed of the psychedelic-progressive purple-haze of the 70's (...), speaking in clear Portuguese about trivial things of the everyday life of a whole generation: love, ethics, sex, political, urban polaroids (...) – messages which were transmitted in the gaps of the redemocratization process initiated in the 80's (Dapieve, 1995: 195).

¹³ In Portugal, newspapers such as Musicalíssimo and Rock Week played a similar role.

¹⁴ In the portuguese case, the music hall Rock Rendez Vous, in Lisbon, played a similar role.

¹⁵ The "detonation of boom" tends to be associated with the huge success of the album *Ar de rock* (1980), by Rui Veloso, a musician whose career more related to the blues universe precedes this recording.

Note that, in both cases, was the market and mediatic visibility experienced in the 1980s that justified the adoption of a speech that legitimates this rock music as "national"¹⁶, especially if compared to the production of previous cycles. Since the occurrence of certain conditions of production and recognition is part of the structural constitution of popular music genres, we can conclude that both "rocks", the portuguese and the brazilian, are more discourses which meaning is socially constructed by the record industry, promoted by some sectors such like the music press and broadcasted to the consumers through selected media channels, than movements with inherent unity and cohesion (although they used to be treated as "natural" and "spontaneous").

After the euphoria of the 1980s and the saturation of some models in the early 1990s¹⁷, the "portuguese-brazilian" rock remained with the possibility of reinvent itself in the next decade. Once the protection of the old "national" shield-label was gone, it's in the links between regional and global that rests a glimmer of renewal (consider the metaphor of the "satellite dish stuck in the mud" proposed by Recife's Mangubeat scene, from where emerged Chico Science & Nação Zumbi, Mundo Livre SA and Fred 04).

As a consequence of its small territorial dimensions, in Portugal a new musical dynamic takes place on the cross between migratory flows (most of them, illegal) from ex-colonies in Africa¹⁸ (Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde) e from others peripheric countries of the European Union. Both here and there, the winds of indie rock and electronic music that blew from England and United States through internet enabled the articulation of several music scenes around the discourse of the independence and the underground (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre and also Lisbon and Coimbra).

In this sense, the case of pop/rock groups that choose to sing in English as a way of struggle for room in the anglo-american music market seems a little bit symptomatic, such as The gift, whose international career bypass a decade. The adoption of English as the official language of contemporary portuguese rock is also obvious if we compare the collections "O

¹⁶ For further considerations about singing in portuguese as an element able to articulate a sense of a national identity, see Monteiro (2008).

¹⁷ Of all the rock bands that came up during the "boom" of portuguese rock, only Xutos & Pontapés, GNR, UHF, Radio Macau and Rui Veloso remain in activity. A similar phenomenon can be verified in the Brazilian case: the commercial sucess of BRock forged groups that, despite an eventual outcome in the 1980s and sporadic nostalgic impulses a decade later, weren't able to survive the passage of time (Dapieve, 2000).

¹⁸ A valid example is Buraka Som Sistema, a portuguese group of electronic *kuduru* (a kind of Angolan funk which sounds very similar to the Carioca funk), very popular in Europe (Available in <http://revistatpm.uol.com.br/67/80myspaces/buraka.htm>. Accessed on Jul 25th, 2007).

melhor do rock português – Volume I" and "Volume II" (EMI/Valentim de Carvalho, 2003/2004), which covers artists revealed during the boom of the genre, between 1979 and 1985, and the double-CD "Novo rock português" (2007, Chiado Records/Farol Music). While in the first collection all artists sing in Portuguese, in the second, only 5 of 38 bands *don't* sing in English.

Paradoxically, in a context which the flows of information on a planetary scale is increasing, very little or nothing that Portugal produces in the pop/rock universe reaches us in Brazil. However, it's in the occasional exchanges with brazilian musicians that some portuguese artists became known in their own country, as shall be mentioned in the next section of this paper.

CROSSING THE OCEAN: THE CASE OF TORANJA

Shortly, the contemporary musical exchanges between the two nations could be summed up in three flows: the first flow goes from Brazil to Portugal, carrying musical traces more or less related to a discursive universe which can be named "pop mainstream". Artists who enjoy broad popularity (especially among the young public), sell a great amount of copies, are present in the great media and remain linked to a big record company are part of our "pop mainstream", may they flirt or not with musical elements or even discourses related to the pop/rock field – Pitty and Jota Quest¹⁹, but also Ivete Sangalo²⁰, are maybe the most significant examples²¹. In the hegemonic portuguese media channels (such as the young-listener-oriented

¹⁹ In Rock in Rio Lisbon festival occurred in 2006, artists related to the contemporary brazilian pop/rock scene as Marcello D2, Pitty and Jota Quest were put together with portuguese pop/rock bands from the "old school", as GNR, Rui Veloso and Xutos & Pontapés, and fresh names like the rappers Da Weasel (Available in <http://rockinriolisboa.sapo.pt/programacao.html?lang=pt>. Accessed in June 28th, 2007).

²⁰ "On tour in Portugal, at the beginning of last November, there were among 30 thousand people in the shows Ivete made in Lisbon and Oporto. The tickets were sold off with two weeks in advance. (...) Her CD *MTV ao vivo* recently won an "Gold disc", with more than 20 thousand copies sold, and her DVD, less than one month on the record stores, is in the list of the most popular" (Camargo, 2007).

²¹ Frith (1996) sets that genre conventions, according to the popular music dynamics, must be analyzed considering the intersection between three spheres/rules: economic, semiotics and technical-formal. Even if, according to the latter sphere, to equate Ivete Sangalo and Pitty appears to be something that makes no sense, if we pay attention to the way both singers produce meaning through their songs and their media performance, there has been a gradual dissolution of the borders between the "pop" made by Ivete and the "rock" sung by Pitty (both of them use the idea of authenticity to legitimate their practices). According to the economic sphere, in turn, the logic of production, distribution and consumption of both singers also would allow the equivalence.

Antenna 3 radio station), these artists divided broadcast space with local artists of the same orientation which, however, are unknown here in Brazil.

The second flow, less intense than the first, goes from Portugal to Brazil and reinforces a common sense perception about contemporary portuguese music production. This becomes evident when we observe the only cases of contemporary portuguese artists that can be released in the brazilian market. Groups such as Madredeus, and singers like Dulce Pontes or Mariza, achieved considerable success in Brazil by re-shaping traditional rhythms as Fado, and probably these are the only recent artists of portuguese music that reach some sort of projection in Brazil because of the dialog established with that familiar and traditional formats.

However, as an hypothesis, I believe in the existence of a third flow which moves in the interstices of big media channels and makes use of some tools enabled by the new technologies of information and communication, in order to conect the symbolic imaginary and musical repertoires of both countries. The content that goes through this flow tend to adopt musical elements, as well as to sustain discourses and practices close to what's used to be recognized as part of the underground universe (Janotti Jr. & Cardoso filho, 2006). Here, I use the example of the concerts that the portuguese rock band Toranja performed in Brazil, together with the brazilian rock group Los Hermanos, during June 2007.

The musicians of Toranja discovered Los Hermanos work during a journey to Rio de Janeiro and took the influence of the brazilian band into their compositions. "What unites them (...) is their sudden rise and the melodic rock and roll sustained by well-elaborated lyrics, here inspired by the samba mixed with the metal section, there by the fado played with two guitars, piano, bass and battery" (Rodrigues, 2006). Subsequently, their entrepreneurs promoted a meeting between the groups, when emerged the idea of a series of concerts to be performed in Portugal and in Brazil²².

Without space in the (so called) "broadcast media", without massive transmissions in any brazilian youth-oriented radio station or even in the local MTV, the opening concert of Toranja for the Los Hermanos performance in Rio de Janeiro was followed with surprising enthusiasm by the public. In a context in which the difficulties of comprehension of the Portuguese language in the way it is spoken (and sung) in Portugal is identified as the main reason for our ignorance of contemporary portuguese music, it is intriguing that most part of

²² While the career of Los Hermanos comprises four albums, Toranja's comprises only two. Since the last year, both bands suspended their careers temporarily.

the public seems to know Toranja's lyrics by heart. In March 22, 2006, the daily newspaper O Globo published an interview in which the keyboardist of Los Hermanos, Bruno Medina, said that "in Portugal, MPB is treated by the department of portuguese music. That is, MPB is not considered foreign music". The vocalist of Toranja, Tiago Bettencourt, in turn, offers a less celebratory perspective for portuguese music in Brazil: "when I was there, I had to talk like a Brazilian because nobody understood me. Sometimes, people thought that I was italian. In concerts, I am afraid that people do not understand the lyrics, because they're a very important part of our work" (Rodrigues, 2006).

In a former paper (Monteiro, 2008), I questioned the common sense of "language as an obstacle", by defending the argument that, under the discourse of our difficulty in understanding the Portuguese spoken in Portugal, lays the ideological, political, social and economic constructs that make some imaginaries became hegemonic and others not, creating a myth about such productions, obstructing the circulation of many other by emphasizing series of pre-concepts which certainly will influence the consumer. It's important to consider that the pleasure involved in the appreciation of pop music not only depends of the understanding of what is being said - non-verbal elements also play a key role; besides, despite of being full of peculiarities, structurally the Portuguese language as spoken in Portugal is still more familiar to us (since is derived from the Latin) than the English; and, last but not least, if the linguistic aspect is the cause of the asymmetry, Portugal would probably be an enthusiastic consumer of Portuguese music, since only portugueses would be able to understand and appreciate its own music production. It is not the case, since the portuguese pop/rock sung in portuguese seems not to be well accepted within its own country.

It would be not a surprise if Toranja had become known in Brazil through the sharing of .mp3 archives between fans of the brazilian group, through MySpace, Orkut or even from references of the portuguese band in the Los Hermanos website. In the largest virtual community dedicated to Toranja in Orkut²³ (with more than a thousand members), there is a topic entitled "How did you know the band?": of 79 topics, about 20 mentioned the brazilian band²⁴.

If we think that the link (both related to the musicological aspects and to the semantic recognition conditions that are capable of doing Toranja's music seems undoubtedly familiar to

²³ Available in <http://www.orkut.com/Community.aspx?cmm=32633>. Accessed on January 22th, 2008.

²⁴ Repeated responses to posts issues were not considered.

Hermanos's fans) established between the two bands enabled a process of legitimation of the portuguese group, perhaps we can conceive the "ephemeral phenomenon" of Toranja as a good example of the occasions in which the value attributed to a particular musical manifestation usually perceived as having a scanty symbolic value suffers a considerable increase.

The case of Toranja only constitutes the exception that confirms the rule: however, if the musical dialog between Portugal and Brazil seems to be an one-way flow when related to the hegemonic media channels, the example above shows that are perhaps through the alternative media vehicles that a less assymetrical exchange could happen.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The globalisation process currently in vogue introduces the possibility of conceive the "sense of local" from linguistic, cultural and tradition affinities, which, at least in theory, would favour the symbolic (and musical) exchanges between Portugal and Brazil (Cunha, 2007). At the same time, this speech of approximation may live together in high tension with the discourses of affirmation of identity, which often implies a desire to break radically with the same elements that bring us together.

Today, more than ever, to defend the existence of a pure and impenetrable national culture, immune to the interferences of the transnational media imaginary seems to be a virtually impossible task (Prysthon, 2003). However, it is also undeniable that the hybridizations and the symbioses tend to promote an imbalance between the global symbolic imaginary and the productions more impregnated with local culture. Given the sociopolitical circumstances involving the participation of Portugal in the European Union over the last decade, the portuguese culture contemporary appears to be found in the same crossroad, living a moment in which the commitment to the traditions of the past appears to be more and more out of time; on the other hand, the available hybridizations seems to increase the asymmetries and the overvaluation of the place by the global.

The conclusions here obtained do not have the pretension to drain the subject to his last drop, considering that this paper represents a first move to the research theme of my thesis, to be developed during the next four years in the Program of Post-Graduation in Communication of Universidade Federal Fluminense. I believe, however, that this reflexions have been able to demonstrate the potentiality of the hypothesis that see in small niches and circuits located on

the periphery of hegemonic media channels a possible path not only to restore a dialog between the musical imaginary of Brazil and Portugal, but also to increase the symbolic gains that this relation should bring.

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