

BEATLE BOOTS AND LENNON GLASSES – 1960s FASHION IN POP MUSIC

A TRANSLATIONAL ACT BY THE RECALLS

BEATLE BOOTS Y LENNON GLASSES – LA MODA DE LOS 1960s EN LA MÚSICA POP

UN ACTO TRANSLATIVO POR THE RECALLS

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Fashion is a phenomenon strongly connected with music. Artists are aware of what they wear on stage and in public spaces and how they present themselves via social media channels. In this way, they do not only create a certain image of themselves through this self-staging strategy, but they also show their affiliation to a certain scene. In the 1960s a specific kind of music was developed which was, therefore, also characterised by a particular way of dressing and style to the current music scene which owes its strong impact to the current music scene.

The Beatles as the maybe most influential band of the 1960s with a very interesting development regarding their own fashion serve as a model for the style of the Spanish-Chilean, Germany-based band The Recalls. Their specific kind of appropriation actualises, transforms and recontextualises as a translational act the fashion of The Beatles in a postmodern way. This approach underlines the chance of establishing a transcultural dialogue and tries to develop a new perspective on other border-crossing phenomena.

Keywords: The Beatles; fashion; 1960s style; transculturality; pastiche.

La moda es un fenómeno fuertemente relacionado con la música. Los artistas son realmente conscientes de lo que llevan en el escenario y en otros espacios públicos y cómo se presentan a través de los medios de comunicación social. De esta manera, no sólo crean una cierta imagen de sí mismos a través de esta estrategia de auto-es escenificación, sino que también muestran su afiliación a una determinada escena. En la década de 1960 se desarrolló un tipo específico de música que, por lo tanto, también se caracterizó por una forma particular de vestir y estilo que se ‘traduce’ debe a su fuerte influencia a la escena musical actual.

The Beatles, como la banda tal vez más influyente del decenio de 1960, con un desarrollo muy interesante en cuanto a su propia moda, sirven de modelo para el estilo de la banda hispano-chilena The Recalls, con sede en Alemania. Su tipo específico de apropiación actualiza, transforma y recontextualiza como un acto de traducción la moda de The Beatles de una manera posmoderna. Este enfoque subraya la posibilidad de establecer un diálogo transcultural e intenta desarrollar una nueva perspectiva sobre otros fenómenos transfronterizos.

Palabras clave: The Beatles; moda; estilo de los 60; transculturalidad; pastiche.

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Fashion is really connected with music [...] it's really important for a musician to look amazing on stage. And this is where fashion comes into play.
— Jonathan Neira, The Recalls

I feel sometimes, it's like being Superman, when he wears a cape, [...] he can fly, and wearing these clothes, we also fly.
— Javier Neira, The Recalls

1. Introduction

The jolt that went through (Western) societies in the 1960s was articulated in a wide variety of areas. Also the fashion of the time, which changed significantly over the course of the decade, is an expression of this attitude to break with traditions and to long for more freedom. This development can be very well traced in the style of The Beatles, probably the most famous and influential band of the 1960s. After their early days and their time spent in Hamburg as wild teddy boys in black leather jackets with quiffs, their manager Brian Epstein put the band in pretty suits and softened their image. This was one essential reason for the outbreak of Beatlemania, making The Beatles the dream of almost every (female) teenager (cf. Kapurch, 2020, pp. 248–252; Gregory, 2019, pp. 61, 127; Savage, 2017). Already their type of suits, e.g., because of their collarlessness, was interpreted as a break with traditional ideas regarding THE male garment, and the “mop top”, inspired by their German friends, irritated many people due to its length (cf. Kapurch, 2020, pp. 249–251; Miller, 2011, p. 78; Norman, 2008, p. 396; Marshall, 2000, pp. 164, 170; Sims, 1999, p. 24). In their second creative phase, at the latest from *Sgt Pepper* onwards, The Beatles finally emancipated from their look and image as ‘nice guys.’ With the colourful uniforms of the double album they started to wear longer hair, beard/sideburns/mustache, and hippie-like clothes, which were often admired and copied (Kapurch, 2020, p. 247; Gregory, 2019, p. 145; King, 2016, pp. 18, 30–33, 134–135; Norman, 2008, pp. 581, 618–619; Roessner, 2006, p. 152; Whiteley, 2006, pp. 57–58). Kapurch (2020, pp. 247–248) underlines:

The ability to change, to be “in the trend” [as Paul McCartney stated] rather than in front of or behind it, is a key factor in the sustained popularity of the Beatles and their cultural iconography. [...] Their now-iconic looks, which evolved as their music did, also invited imitation by fans. As such, the objects associated with their styles have graduated to the rank of iconography, sacred relics whose images stand in for songs, as well as the story of the band.

Neaverson (2000, p. 159) considers especially the films and music videos of The Beatles fashion-inspiring fields:

[...] the fashion and range of images popularized by the Beatles in their films and promos have become strongly integrated into the post-modern collage of styles which pervades contemporary pop culture. The psychedelic clothing sported by the group in *Magical Mystery Tour* (and their cartoon counterparts in *Yellow Submarine*) has returned to the centre stage of indie pop fashion, and the mid-1960s look of *Help!* (corduroy and suede jackets, sunglasses and leather boots) has also become integral to the look of many contemporary bands. Indeed, to scrutinize the visual style of popular Beatles admirers like Oasis is to witness a near perfect synthesis of fashions culled from different

periods of the Beatles' career and reassembled into a bricolage of styles which evokes a disturbingly schizophrenic sense of undifferentiated time.

Similarly, King (2016, pp. 134–135) explains that it is precisely through The Beatles' films that their fashion lives on and is appropriated in many different ways:

As texts they also transcend the period in which they were made. Given the popularity of the Beatles with second and third generation audiences and their continued global fame, the films still provide an opportunity for new audiences to look at the Beatles and, given the increasingly retro nature of the fashion and music industries, their 'look' in all four films can be read as strangely contemporary. They move from suited and booted loveable mop-tops in the midst of Beatlemania, through the exotic upwardly mobile travelogue of *Help!* (1965), featuring swinging London (via swinging India, swinging Austria and the swinging Bahamas), *Magical Mystery Tour*'s (1967) psychedelic kaftan and beads trip through England's counterculture, to the hairy, bearded, heading-for-the-'70s, up-on-the-roof-one-more-time-ness of *Let it Be* (1970).

Certain fashionable phenomena, such as John Lennon's Lenin-style cap or his 'Granny' glasses,¹ the Beatle boots, the 'mop top', are iconographically linked to the 'Fab Four', still playing an essential role in today's self-staging in the pop music field (Kapurch, 2020, pp. 247–248, 258; King, 2016, p. 134; Miller, 2011, p. 81).

In my exemplary analysis, I treat the phenomenon of fashion of the 1960s, and especially The Beatles, as it is unfolded via a translational act in the contemporary music scene. The Recalls are a four-headed, Spanish-Chilean, Germany-based band whose members are not only committed to a kind of 'vintage sound,' but also play with and allude to the 1960s and especially to The Beatles through their style. As I want to show, a translational perspective can broaden the view in the context of an analysis of (supposed) retro-fashion and provide new insights into the phenomenon of fashion in pop culture.

In this essay, I will first explain the concept of cultural translation as a theoretical basis, as well as discuss the phenomenon of pastiche as a key feature of postmodern pop culture. Then the contemporary 1960s fashion of The Recalls will be analysed as an act of creative appropriation and transformation, highlighting the transcultural component of this performative approach. In my conclusion, I will summarise my results and finally discuss the usefulness of a translational perspective for the analysis of fashion phenomena in pop music.

2. Cultural translation – the phenomenon of a globalised world

Translational processes as phenomena accompanying and shaping culture are an integral part of cultural practice. These include not only concrete translations in the definition of *translation proper* according to Jakobson (1981, pp. 189–198), thus the interlingual translation, and its accompanying products, but also cultural translation phenomena. Wagner (2009, p. 1, my translation) makes clear:

If 'translating' generally refers to the process of pouring a text from one natural language into another, 'cultural translation' departs from language and, above all, from the diversity of languages, and usually means the transfer of imaginary contents, values, thought patterns, behaviour and

¹ See for the appropriation of Edwardian style by the mod culture, Miller (2011, pp. 96, 121); Norman (2008, p. 87); Cohen (2002); and Hebdige (1979, p. 104). Hebdige's "bricolage" refers to "prominent forms of discourse (particularly fashion) [which] are radically adapted, subverted and extended by the subcultural bricoleur."

practices from one cultural context to another. Cultural translation in this sense can be achieved through literary and filmic representations, but also through practices of daily life and politics.

Translation becomes a “guiding perspective for action in a complex world, for all forms of intercultural contact, for links between disciplines and for methodologically sharpened comparative studies in a new perspective on cultural comparison” (Bachmann-Medick, 2014, p. 240, my translation).

In general, the idea of cultural translation goes back to the disciplines of ethnography and anthropology and was ultimately used particularly in the context of postcolonial studies. Referring to Bhabha’s work *The location of culture* (1994), the concept of cultural translation was used to describe hybrid cultural phenomena, processes of appropriation, transformation and negotiation seen as creative and subversive dynamics.

While cultural studies therefore speak of a *translational turn*, particularly with respect to the fertility of this metaphorical concept of translation, translation studies, however, are very critical of it. This can particularly be observed after their own cultural turn in the 1990s, which extended the perspective of the still young discipline beyond linguistic boundaries to include extra-textual or cultural, social and above all power-political aspects. Every translation takes not only place on a linguistic level in a “vacuum,” but is always contextually embedded.² In this discourse, different positions on a ‘broad’ and ‘narrow’ concept of translation can be identified (Heller, 2017). The argumentation of those who call for a renewed concentration on *translation proper*, refers – on a macro-structural level – not only to the inflationary use of the metaphor. The missing delimitation of the original term is, moreover, responsible for the loss of analytical sharpness, the term becomes useless for research purposes. Furthermore, translation studies are considered endangered in their scientific *raison d’être*, since they are threatened to become nothing more than an appendage of cultural studies. At the same time, there is a controversial debate as to whether the concept of cultural translation has only one perspective. There is a danger of losing sight of power differences, hegemonies and cultural diversity in favour of a Western-dominated discourse and an integration of all phenomena into Western categories – especially with regard to English as *lingua franca* (Sturge, 2011, p. 69). On a micro-structural level, the differences in terminology are discussed. While equivalence is one, if not the decisive feature for an interlingual translation, the concept of cultural translation focuses on its transformational aspect (Aizawa, 2010, pp. 58–59). Maitland (2017, p. 159), however, considers the feature of transformation the interface between the two concepts of translations:

[...] translation means *transformation*. It means mediation. It means *change*. In effect, and in answer to those who would force a separation of interlingual translation from its cultural pretensions, *all* translation is cultural translation, since no act of interlingual translation remains outside the hermeneutics of variance and contingency that radically alter the form and function of texts when they are translated.

Pym (2010, p. 159) underlines the closeness between an interlingual and a metaphoric use of the term “translation”:

It would be dangerous, though, to defend any original or true sense of the word “translation.” Is there anything wrong with the metaphors? After all, metaphors always map one area of experience on to

² See regarding this discourse Maitland (2017, p. 160); van Doorslaer (2017, pp. 37–38); Heller (2017); Bachmann-Medick (2014, pp. 243–244); Wagner (2009); Bassnett (1990).

another, and when you think about it, the words we use for the activities of translators (“translation,” “Übersetzen”, etc.) are no less metaphorical, since they propose images of movement across space (...).

Without going into detail at this point, I see with Wolf (2010, p. 52) the chance for translation studies, as a per se interdisciplinary field of research, to be established as a pioneer and “coordination discipline,” if cultural translation phenomena are not excluded from research interests.

3. Translational acts in pop culture – a postmodern approach

The discussion about a definition of postmodernism has been broad and controversial. The term is now partly regarded as a container and/or fashion term, which is understood, theorised or applied differently by almost every author. Nevertheless, some overarching characteristics can be identified. One essential feature of postmodernism consists in the end of the so-called ‘grands récits’ (Lyotard, 1979; Eagleton, 1987; Harvey, 1990, pp. 44–45), which goes hand in hand with a scepticism regarding the belief in a continuous progress of mankind. The emergence of many small ‘récits,’ sceptical of the universal claim of metanarratives and committed to particular and minority interests, is accelerated and intensified by the rapid development of new technologies and media that allow the dissemination of these small narratives and their organisation.

The mixing of the so-called high and popular culture does not only affect people’s everyday lives, but is also reflected above all in the field of art and thus in the scientific approach to art.³ One of the essential artistic strategies is an increasing inter- and transtextuality, as a dialogue between texts, under which I subsume media products of all kinds, and beyond. Following Spicer (2009, p. 350) postmodern art is the result of a “recycling of preexisting material in the service of creating a new work – [and this] is of course exactly what we have come to expect of artistic creation in our postmodern age.”⁴ Lyotard (1992, p. 76) characterises postmodernism as “the multiple quotation of elements taken from earlier styles or periods, classical or modern.” And Eco considers this kind of postmodern quotation primarily an ironic play which is characterised by a total loss of faith in any kind of originality (Eco, 1985).

With respect to pop, this attitude can also be observed as a penchant for retro, which is nostalgically reflected in fashion and music taste and music making (McRobbie, 1994, p. 147). Diederichsen (1999, pp. 38–39, my translation) considers pop a “transformation in the sense of a dynamic movement in which cultural material and its social environments mutually reshape each other.” Following Ernst (2001, p. 12, my translation), this is testified by a “creative handling of prefabricated, cited material.” This causes a “dialogue between all the possibilities of textual expression, whether linguistic or not-linguistic ones” (de Toro, 2006, p. 231, my translation). What can be observed is a trans- or intertextuality in a “deconstructionist, transformative form of references which results in another, new and subversive interpretation of historical facts (...)” (de Toro, 2014, p. 112, my translation; de Toro, 2006, p. 230).

³ De Toro offers a good overview regarding the definition of the term “postmodern”, its history, representatives, artistic and scientific application (de Toro, 2014; de Toro, 1996).

⁴ See furthermore Allen, 2001, p. 5.

Via this kind of dialogue and transformation, an actualisation of an already existing artwork is realised which is interpreted in new contexts with new meanings. Following Lefevere, this is also one of the key features of rewriting in general and translation in particular (Lefevere, 2009, pp. 84–85; Lefevere, 1985, p. 225). At this point, the connection between the transformative aspect of cultural translation phenomena, the translational rewriting as a recontextualisation of previous material and the postmodern approach to quote existing texts to create a new work via trans-/intertextual strategies becomes evident.

One essential stylistic device to apply this kind of trans-/intertextuality is pastiche. In general, “pastiche” is considered “a work of visual art, literature, theatre or music that imitates the style or character of the work of one or more other artists” (Greene et al., 2012, p. 1005). Whereas Jameson (1998, p. 131) sees pastiche as a “blank parody,” Hutcheon (1991, pp. 225–228) contradicts the often quoted “void” of postmodern art and underlines its (self-)reflexive and meaningful content:

The prevailing interpretation is that postmodernism offers a value-free, deorative, de-historicized quotation of past forms and that this is a most apt mode for culture like our own that is oversaturated with images. Instead, I would want to argue that postmodernism parody is a value-problematizing, denaturalizing form of acknowledging history (and through irony, the politics) of representations. [...] Postmodern parody is both deconstructively critical and constructively creative, paradoxically making us aware of both the limits and powers of representation – in any medium.

But this parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical. It is also not ahistorical or de-historicizing; it does not wrest past art from its original historical context and reassemble it into some sort of presentist spectacle. Instead, through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference. (Hutcheon 2002, p. 89)

In this essay, I want to combine the critical approach Hutcheon applies to postmodern art with Hoesterey’s (2001, p. 1) definition of pastiche – “Unlike parody, pastiche celebrates, rather than mocks, the work it imitates” – and plead for the use of a more dynamic understanding of the term “pastiche” (Tonelli, 2011, pp. 196–200).

4. Pastiche in fashion – a translational act by The Recalls

In the following section, The Recalls creative appropriation of the 1960s/The Beatles style will be exemplarily examined and interpreted as a translational act. Within this framework I would like to apply and test the outlined definition of pastiche as one strategy of inter-/transtextuality in a concrete way.

The Recalls present themselves to the public at their performances and especially through their social media channels as a fashion-conscious band that explicitly emphasises the influence that the 1960s do not only have on their music and the equipment they use, but also on their attitude and appearance.⁵ The guys associate themselves with the 1960s scene; they also publish their music on streaming services, but the ‘analogue’ version is only available on vinyl.⁶ In this context, The Beatles have

⁵ Although an increasing quantity of research regarding mens’ fashion can be noted, the traditional connection between women and fashion is still very strong, also in scientific studies (cf. Miller, 2011, p. 6).

⁶ Music and fashion are both means of expressing affiliation and identity (Diedrichsen, 2014, p. XII; Miller, 2011, p. 7; Sennett, 2003; Moore, 2001, p. 193; Frith, 1996). The Recalls act at this point as

a special influence on the style of the band. In particular, postings by Jonathan Neira, the band's songwriter, singer and rhythm guitarist, on his own social media channels often contain explicit references to John Lennon and quote from Beatles' lyrics. His songwriting is also partly inspired by Lennon/McCartney compositions, as, e.g., his piece "Wait for the sun" (2014, Moonshake Records) proves on a musical and lyrical level.⁷

The connection between fashion and music is not only underlined by Jonathan's statement quoted at the beginning of this essay. During one of my interviews with the band, bassist Javier Neira clearly emphasises the relevance of fashion for the music scene, especially regarding live performances:

Before I started with the band, I was more like dressing normal, and once we played in Bremen [a city in the North of Germany], I remember, and I was dressed with a t-shirt, normal trousers, and then I saw some guys from England. They also played there, and they wore Chelsea boots in white with high heels. And I said "oh my God, I also want ones of those [...]." Because, actually, when you are on stage, clothing is like the half of your show.⁸

The band is sponsored by the Stuttgart-based fashion label The Pogo, a brand for "mod, rock'n roll, vintage and indie fashion." On the shop's homepage the slogan "The Recalls – shop the looks" is used for advertising purposes.⁹ Especially thanks to the support of The Pogo, The Recalls' 1960s-style becomes attainable and realizable for the band, as Jonathan underlines:

We saw some videos of The Beatles and [...] they used this amazing Cavern boots, and I definitely wanted these boots. But in that moment when we started, we didn't have much money [...]. And in Germany, there are not so many places which have this kind of boots. So, we looked for some place in England, and the destiny got us in some point. When we played in the Cavern club where The Beatles started in Liverpool, we got to know the guy from Beatwear. This guy sells everything from The Beatles, the jackets, the trousers, the boots. We went to the shop [...] but it was impossible to buy them, because they were so expensive [...]. And we came back to Germany, we have [...] a really good friend, she has a shop in Stuttgart, and she started to sponsor us. And we were talking to her about that Beatle style from Liverpool, she got in contact with this guy, and he started to send all the clothes to her, and so we get all the boots that we want [*laughs*] and also the clothes. And then we discovered also all this psychedelic fashion from London, psychedelic shirts, paisley, trousers, [**Max**¹⁰: jackets] and we started to get everything for free [*laughter*].¹¹

The famous 'mop top' is also part of The Recalls' style:

Jonathan: Sometimes girls ask my brother [Javier] and me, if we wear a peruke.

producers and recipients or fans of a certain scene at the same time (see for a similar case regarding Michael Jackson Miller, 2011, p. 160).

⁷ On the musical level, there are influences deriving from "Strawberry fields forever," "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and "I am the walrus;" on the textual level, you can note a kind of non-sense lyrics with some parts of the verses inspired by "Strawberry fields forever" and "I am the walrus." The manner of Jonathan's voice performing reminds, furthermore, of Lennon's nasal, dream-like expression in "I am the walrus." See in detail Engelskircher, 2021 (coming up).

⁸ Quoted from my interview dated 26.6.2020. The field of pop music is considered an area where typical gender roles and corresponding identities are less stable, so that "[p]opular music has been home to diverse masculinities; in their modes of dressing, male musicians have been able to get away with more than ordinary men" (Miller, 2011, p. 77, *ibid.* pp. 109–111).

⁹ See <https://www.pogofashion.de/> (20.8.2020).

¹⁰ Until December 2020 Max Nogales was The Recalls' drummer.

¹¹ Quoted from my interview dated 26.6.2020.

Javier: I mean, also the hair, [...] all the people ask if it's fake hair. And I say, "no, it's my hair, touch it." [It's a little bit] like a Beatles haircut and Jonathan's, too, and Max', too.¹²

In fact, John Lennon's aunt Mimi, who raised him, also thought at the beginning of their career that The Beatles' wore perukes (cf. Norman, 2008, p. 560). King (2016, p. 157) underlines the relevance of the 'mop top' as a recognition factor at the The Beatles' starting:

Hair (and hair length) looms large in the Beatles' legend. In their early years they were known as 'mop-tops,' defined by the Beatle haircut, the style still clearly visible in *A Hard Day's Night*, although starting to grow out and become 'long.' Their hair was radical for the early 1960s. The brushed-forward 'feminine' style fashioned and photographed by Astrid Kirchher [*sic!*] [...] created a new Brylcreem-free hairstyle for men as it grew in popularity. At this time it was seen as radical and one of the things that made the Beatles a talking point.

Even though The Recalls 'borrow' various fashionable elements from The Beatles, in particular the hairstyle is an essential translational marker, as can be seen on each of the photos taken from Instagram and analysed in the following section.



Pic. 1 Instagram, (8.9.2019)

My first example is therefore not only concerned with the iconic hairstyle in the context of a translational appropriation, but also with the 'accessories' used by The Recalls. In the photo, in addition to the 'mop top,' a reference to The Beatles is made, through the suits from their early phase worn by Jonathan, Javier, Momo and Max, as well as through the black and white colouring of the picture, completing the "Fab" style (cf. Kapurch, 2020, pp. 248–252). In those

days, the special Beatles haircut was considered a political statement of rebellion against the past. Kapurch (2020, p. 250) makes clear:

The Parisian hairstyle was a post-war leftist political and philosophical response associated with the resurgence of existentialism. When adopted by the Beatles' German art-student friends, the hair was a specifically pro-European, anti-Nazi stance in a country still recovering from the horrors it had imposed on the rest of the continent.

Although in our times, such a haircut does not function anymore in this way, its recontextualisation by The Recalls transports a border-crossing element: Drummer Max holds a teacup and saucer in his hand, which can also be classified as a translational element, as The Beatles themselves often used this 'stereotype' of their home country as a kind of (self-)ironic reference to their British origins. However, the scene is also 'ruptured' in a more ironic way: on the one hand by Javier's (second from the right) casually held beer glass, a second beer glass under the bench, and the adaptation of

¹² Ibid.

teacup as an ‘accessory,’ which can be regarded as typically British by a Spanish-Chilean band living in Germany – to which the beer glasses in turn refer. I consider this a play with stereotypes of different origins, combined to form a transcultural pastiche in which origins are no longer relevant. On the other hand, Max’s shoes form an ironic marker. He does not wear the 1960s Beatle boots as his band colleagues do, but a pair of vans. Although this brand was also founded in the 1960s,¹³ a skateboard shoe would have been a fashion no-go for the early Beatles.¹⁴ The photo makes clear that it is not The Recalls’ approach to evoke an authentic image of the 1960s; rather, what can be seen is a joyful interaction with existing material that is confidently and ironically appropriated.¹⁵



Pic 2. Instagram, *therecalls* (17.12.2018)

The close-up of the boots, however, underlines the pastiche-like homage, also realised by the corresponding narrow trouser legs. These refer to the trousers worn by the ‘Fab Four’ “that made the Beatles’ legs appear long and youthful. The straight cut all the way down the leg to the hem accommodated their recently acquired footwear” (Kapurch (2020, p. 248). At the same time, the scene, reminiscent overall of The Beatles first film *A hard day’s night* (1964), is ‘ruptured’ in a slightly ironic way: on the one hand, the white paws of the cat can be interpreted as a playful element, in



Pic 3. Instagram, *therecalls* (17.12.2018)

¹³ In March 1966 Paul Van Doren and his partners James Van Doren, Gordy Lee and Serge D’Elia opened the first van shop in Anaheim (California, USA). The *Hi-Top* or *Sk8-Hi* was the world’s first skateboard shoe, launched in 1966.

¹⁴ Even if there are photos of some of The Beatles on a skateboard, they do not stage themselves as pioneers of this sport or wear the appropriate shoes at official events. Nevertheless, this small detail, known only to a few fans, can be interpreted in a very subtle way as another joyful game with the Beatles’ legacy.

¹⁵ Kapurch (2020, p. 247) underlines that The Beatles themselves used to play with their style in a joyful way: “Without seeming to take themselves too seriously, they mix elements that suit their needs, then discard them when they don’t.”

contrast to the black shoes. On the other hand, the ‘deviating’ shoes of drummer Max emphasise that again no authentic staging in the style of the 1960s is intended by the band, but rather a translational approach via playing with already existing material that is newly located: In the understanding of The Recalls, national und culturally determined borders are not important regarding their approach to fashion and music.

A similar kind of pastiche-like appropriation can be remarked in the case of the “jackets.” The Beatles own “playful adoption of Edwardian uniforms” (Kapurch, 2020, p. 252) is, again, combined with a political statement, this time with respect to the Anti-War-Movement in 1960s. Paul McCartney (2000, p. 248) states: “At the back of our minds, I think the plan was to have garish uniforms which would actually go against the idea of uniform.” McRobbie (1994, p. 132) emphasises the innovative component of the *Sgt. Pepper* style regarding a statement via fashion:¹⁶

(...) it was Peter Blake’s sleeve for the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper* album which marked the entrance of anachronistic dressing into the mainstream of the pop and fashion business. In their luridly coloured military uniforms, the Beatles were at this point poised midway between the pop establishment and hippy psychedelia. The outfits, along with John Lennon’s “granny” spectacles and the other symbols of “flower power” depicted on the cover, comprised a challenge to the grey conformity of male dress and an impertinent appropriation of official regalia for civilian anti-authoritarian hedonistic wear.

Designer Liv Schwarz makes custom and handmade jackets in military look for The Pogo, which are also used by The Recalls. Using this modified kind of the *Sgt. Pepper* uniform, The Recalls are in good company. Miller (2011, p. 81) underlines

(...) that military uniform and tailoring in its most literal sense has been a regularly occurring look for pop bands from a range of eras: The Rolling Stones, Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet and My Chemical Romance. At the Grammys in 2009, Coldplay wore a look created for their album *Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends* with ragged uniforms reminiscent of revolutionary France. Lead singer Chris Martin acknowledged the irony of having Paul McCartney in the audience, joking that they had stolen the ‘Sergeant Pepper’ look.



Pic. 4 Instagram, *the_pogo* (16.12.2019)

The three photos I want to analyse show The Recalls’ drummer Max in different outfits with a military touch, which in turn play with already existing material in a translational manner. The pastiche-like acting is again made clear as a homage to The Beatles – and ‘ruptured’ in the seriousness of its appropriation.

¹⁶ See for more details regarding the “Pepper” style and its nostalgic touch Kapurch, 2020, pp. 253–256.

In the first picture, the translational markers of the Beatle boots and the military jacket as quotations are transformed via the comic-like T-shirt worn under the jacket. The black and white photograph also ‘eliminates’ the pop-art element created by The Beatles with their garishly coloured *Sgt. Pepper* cover. The colourlessness of the uniform jacket in the second picture as well as the change of the shoes for worn out vans thwarts the intended reference to The Beatles. This is, however, in turn reinforced by the Lennon cap (see more in detail the following example), so that at this point, a mixture of fashionable elements from different Beatles phases is



Pic. 5 Instagram, *the_pogo*, (10.6.2020)



Pic. 6 Instagram, *the_pogo*, (20.8.2019)

realised by Max.

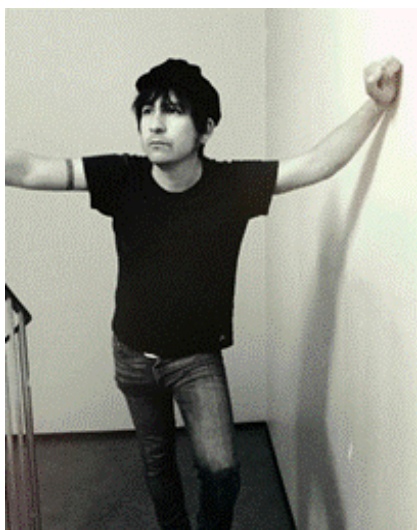
The third photo is similar to the second one, but the red of the jacket and the floral shirt underneath refer overall more strongly to the fashionable attitude of the later Beatles. The Hofner violin bass on the chair in the background refers, however, to the ‘early’ Beatles (played by Paul McCartney).

This exaggerated combination of iconic Beatles style elements from different phases of their career and current footwear contradicts the seriousness of pure homage. The original countercultural meaning of the *Pepper* uniform is replaced by a joyful transcultural citation, reviving the nostalgic touch of the original.

The next example focuses on Lennon’s ‘Lenin cap,’ Biographer Norman (2008, p. 477; *ibid.*, pp. 506–508) notes:

He [John Lennon] also stood out from his fellow mop-tops by starting to sport a black leather peaked cap reminiscent of male headgear in the 1917 Russian Revolution. Though other young Britons already possessed such caps, and thousands more now rushed to buy them, John wore his in a distinctive way, slightly tipped back with a faint but discernible revolutionary air – Lennon half-wanting to be Lenin.

In addition to the already analysed photos of drummer Max, the rest of the band (singer Jonathan left, bassist Javier centre, guitarist Momo Lebrón right) wears different versions of the Lennon cap on different occasions. The photos presented here are only a small selection of the pictures with this Beatles ‘accessory’ used by The Recalls. The iconic nature of the cap reveals the clear reference to Lennon. The Recalls thus assign themselves to an era which they celebrate in the context of a homage. The purely homageable pastiche, however, is again ‘ruptured’ in its seriousness: by not staging one member of the band as *the* Lennon revenant (and the others, e.g., as Paul, George and Ringo) and not using only Lennon-like fashion items, The Recalls underline their own

Pic. 7. Instagram, *nuwandapoet* (6.7.2020)Pic. 8 Instagram, *the_pogo* (10.11.2019)Pic. 9 Instagram, *the_pogo* (13.2.2020)

style. The latter is not intended to be a mere and meaningless imitation, but a playful transformation of fashionable fragments. This pastiche dialogues in a creative manner with 1960s material via using iconic quotations, but also transforms them for the band's own self-staging. The actualisation of past fashion in a new context with new meanings can, therefore, again be considered a translational act. Although the cap has lost in current fashion its revolutionary note, the transcultural potential inherent in The Recalls' approach can be supposed.

Pic. 10 Instagram, *nuwandapoet* (23.7.2020)

Singer Jonathan appropriates furthermore another Lennon 'accessory,' his famous round glasses. After Lennon had long refused to wear glasses at all (for reasons of vanity), he decided to keep them after shooting the film *How I won the war* (1967). In doing so, he oriented himself to the "obsession with nostalgia" (King, 2016, p. 205) that prevailed in the mid-1960s. His round "Granny glasses" (King, 2016, p. 204) contributed significantly to his appearance as a "rather prim Victorian ledger clerk" (Norman, 2008, p. 679; *ibid.*, pp. 618–619). Lennon's use of these "metal-rimmed glasses" (McRobbie, 1994, p. 132) in the 1960s can be considered

[...] a further element to that theme in the counter-culture suggesting an interest in the old, the used, the overtly cheap and apparently unstylish. [...] Lennon's cheap, shoddy specs became one of his trade marks. At the same time they came to represent one of the most familiar anti-materialist strands in

hippy culture. They suggested a casual disregard for obvious signs of wealth, and a disdain for "the colour of money."

Jonathan stages himself with the iconic visual aid in various colours. At this point, the translational approach becomes evidently clear. The Lennon glasses are no longer a

political statement in the context of the 1960s hippy style, but a clear fashionable accessory, thus translated – following Lefevere’s concept of rewriting – in a new context and ‘charged’ with a new meaning in the sense of a homage. This example of pastiche clearly underlines the significance of Lennon and his music for The Recalls’ singer.



Pic. 11 Instagram, *nuwandapoet* (19.3.2020)



Pic. 12 Instagram, *nuwandapoet* (19.8.2020)

The special kind of appropriation of 1960s fashion and particularly the play with stylistic elements used by The Beatles are unfolded in all examples as a transcultural performance by The Recalls. In this context, fashion knows as little national and cultural boundaries as the music that goes with it.¹⁷ Both are used to generate and stage identity and affiliation, in this case to the 1960s scene and The Beatles’ fan circle. But national affiliation is, as shown especially in my first example, ironically counteracted – and thus questioned. This can be considered part of the deconstructionist aspect of transtextuality and of the (self-)reflexive political potential inherent in postmodern art. It reveals a kind of political message behind the fashionable postmodern approach which is often considered a play only for play’s sake.

The supposedly nostalgic retro reference has also to be critically reflected with respect to the creative appropriation by The Recalls. Their translational act takes up the transformational aspect inherent in cultural translation. Thus, the band members emphasise that although they lean on the 1960s, they want to remain themselves and develop, express and live their own style. Javier makes clear: “I mean there are a lot of fans of the Beatles who wear a suit with a tie, but of course, we don’t want that, because we live now and we want to be ourselves. But the 60s fashion is really inspiring.”¹⁸ Also Kapurch (2020, p. 258) underlines that “The Beatles’ fashion and style iconography were – and still are – invitations to listeners to join the Fab Four, to find and express their own identities through imagination”. This goes hand in hand with an awareness of the past and present and that the former cannot be authentically evoked because of the

¹⁷ In general, the field of music is considered a very important one regarding “the construction, definition and redefinition of national identities” (Bennett, 2000, p. 190; see furthermore Stokes, 1994, p. 4; and Frith, 1987, p. 141).

¹⁸ Quoted from my interview dated 26.6.2020.

latter. What can be observed, is not a parodic appropriation of a past style, as Miller (2011, pp. 86–87), e.g., states for Japanese boy bands and Jameson claims for the postmodern pastiche. Rather, a positive ‘charged’ homage can be identified in the examined photographic pastiches in the understanding of Hoesterrey: This means a play with stereotypes in the sense of iconic Beatles ‘accessories’ which shows the joy of using already existing material, the survival of these ‘accessories’ through their quotation as an act of homage on the one hand; on the other hand, their transformative redesign and recontextualisation are used to stage the band’s own image, thus creating their own style with a high recognition value which is closely connected to their musical approach – which is, in turn, a transcultural one goes beyond Hoesterrey’s definition.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In my essay I applied the concept of cultural translation to the field of fashion in pop music. I analysed the appropriation of the 1960s style and especially the one of The Beatles by The Recalls as a translational act and examined their pastiche-like play, using some iconic Beatles features in the context of their self-staging. It was shown that this kind of appropriation does not fit in the definition of a pure (imitative) pastiche, nor in the definition of homage, but can be considered the development of a creative approach using existing material due to own purposes.

The approach of a homage regarding one of The Recalls’ musical idols and the era they were in is in any case tangible and comprehensible. However, the intention is not to evoke an authentic image of the 1960s, but rather to actualise corresponding fragments in a playful, affirmative-positive manner and recontextualise them transformatively through a dialogue between past and present. On the one hand, the slightly ironic way of appropriation that can be observed becomes clear through an overemphasis on features or a mixture of styles (“Fab” phase with “Pepper” elements), on the other hand, through fashionable elements from contemporary culture (vans). However, this kind of irony is by no means to be understood in a parodistic way, but as a homage ‘charged’ with the knowledge that a return to the 1960s is not possible, combined with an approach to create an image on their own. This translational act in the field of fashion can, therefore, be interpreted as an act of rewriting according to Lefevere.

It is, furthermore, a phenomenon that transcends cultural boundaries, generates transcultural affiliations to a particular scene and makes national identities in this field (almost) irrelevant. In that way, the pure playful manner of postmodern pastiche is contradicted. De Toro (2006, p. 231, my translation) describes transtextuality as a border-crossing phenomenon, as “[...] a transcultural and not national phenomenon because medial processes always have transnational and transcultural effects [...].” The Recalls, a group consisting of three Chilean and one Spanish guy, all living in Germany, influenced by a British group of the 1960s show how national boundaries are not useful for and applicable to transcultural phenomena like pop music and fashion which open up borders and create identity and affiliation without focusing on local or national patriotism. This can be described as “symptomatic of the pluralism which is increasingly becoming a feature” of postmodern societies and an opportunity to “rise new ways of looking” (Bennett, 2000, pp. 202–203) at (supposedly) nationally specific traditions in order not only to recognise the society you live in, but rather the one in which you wish to live (cf. Bennett, 2000, p. 203). Gómez Peña (1996, p. 70) underlines the significance of artists in this revisioning of nationality and transculturality:

The role that artists and cultural organizations can perform in this paradigm shift is crucial. Artists can function as community brokers, citizen diplomats, ombudsmen, and border translators. And our art spaces can perform the multiple roles of sanctuaries, demilitarized zones, centers for activism against xenophobia, and informal think tanks for intercultural and translational dialogue.

This perspective could be an opportunity to rethink other constructions in a globalised world and to strengthen a transcultural perspective also on a scientific level. Therefore, I would like to end with a quote by Jonathan which fits very well in this kind of discourse: “I never felt part of some country, I do music in my own world, it doesn’t matter where I am ...”¹⁹

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¹⁹ Quoted from my interview dated 19.2.2020.

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