Introduction

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In order to place cultural exchange within the perspective of early modern research, one must first define 'culture'. Both cultural studies and the older *Kulturgeschichte* (cultural history) have offered a broad spectrum of definitions, which need not be mentioned here.[1] One extreme position claims that historical realities can only be understood as culture, thereby making 'cultural history' superfluous by collapsing history into 'culture', which includes human actions. Unfortunately, this definition renders the object of research extremely unclear and difficult to grasp. Consequently, cultural studies offers readers a wide spectrum of articles dealing with 'culture', which resemble salad bowls with ingredients which sometimes stimulate the appetite but sometimes taste insipid.[2]

Thomas Nipperdey's recent reductionist attempt to define culture as 'works, work systems and built-up institutions',[3] certainly does not resolve this dilemma, although one must admit that this perspective

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[1] For definitions of 'cultural history', see Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 118–26; Ute Daniel, *Kompendium Kulturgeschichte: Theorien, Praxis, Schlüsselwörter* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2001), pp. 7–25; David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, *Culture and the State* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 2; and most recently, Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

[2] See the overview by Bernd Roeck, 'Visual turn? Kulturgeschichte und die Bilder', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 29 (2003), 294–315.

[3] Thomas Nipperdey, 'Kulturgeschichte, Sozialgeschichte, Historische Anthropologie', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 55 (1968), 145–64, reprinted in Wolfgang Schieder and Kurt Gräubig (eds.), *Theorieprobleme der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977), pp. 286–310 (quote, pp. 287f).

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on culture has some merit, considering the dominance of post-modern notions of culture. Beyond such things as terraced houses, detergents, comic strips or rap music, 'culture' also deals with such items of 'high' art as paintings and symphonies, which offer extremely revealing sources for historical analysis. Without reverting to an overtly elitist notion of culture, one cannot neglect such things, as 'cultural studies' often do. Moreover, reconstructing their history helps explain the ways they were perceived aesthetically, thereby providing a valuable point of reference which historians rarely consider, but which nevertheless offers a feasible approach to any history of culture and enriches the anthropological dimension of research in cultural history.[4] Without including such aims, 'cultural history' becomes a mere smorgasbord of curiosities. It is essential to define and investigate exactly *what* poses important problems for the history of cultural transfers. The relevance and legitimacy of case studies results from research objectives where realisation and interest are firmly linked. Therefore we will offer some examples of pertinent questions, showing why the history of cultural transfers and exchanges has been – and remains – important.

CULTURAL TRANSFER AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Although the term is relatively new and has seldom been subjected to theoretical reflection, cultural transfer has been an area of research for a very long time.[5] The concept must not be reduced to transfers

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[4] See Daniel, *Kompendium Kulturgeschichte*, pp. 7–25; from an anthropological perspective, Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (eds.), *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and from an art history perspective, Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: Fink, 2001).

[5] See Louis Hay, 'La génèse d'une recherche: l'équipe Heine à l'ENS', in Michel Espagne (ed.), *L'Ecole normale supérieure et l'Allemagne* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1995), pp. 221–30; Michel Espagne, *Les Transferts culturels franco-allemands* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999); Peter Burke, 'Kultureller Austausch', in *Kultureller Austausch* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000), pp. 9–40; Wolfgang Schmale (ed.), *Kulturtransfer: kulturelle Praxis im 16. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2003); Rebekka Habermas et al. (eds.), *Interkultureller Transfer und nationaler Eigensinn: europäische und anglo-amerikanische Positionen der Kulturwissenschaften* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2004); Michael North et al. (eds.), *Land und Meer: kultureller Austausch zwischen Westeuropa und dem Ostseeraum in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004).

and exchanges between 'national' cultures, because exchange processes are an elemental precondition of every culture. No culture arises autonomously, outside a specific space and time, or without some type of communication. Cultural exchange and transfer have therefore always been common and frequent phenomena.

Every art historian trying to reconstruct 'influences' among artists must deal with cultural transfer; so must every description of regional styles, or assessments of more general epochs like the Renaissance or the Baroque. The former, for example, integrated Greek, Flemish and oriental elements and redistributed them through Europe in varying combinations.[6] By being spread across Europe, Baroque culture ultimately became a colourful chimera of different cultures. Just like ceramics,[7] clothing styles[8] or the appearance of special types of furniture, such buildings as the cathedral of Regensburg, the castle of Amboise or the tsar's palace in St Petersburg result from very difficult processes of cultural transfer. Like technical inventions or Renaissance panels, gestures, dances and manners similarly result from cultural transfers.[9] One could say that the genesis and structure of every cultural epoch must be understood as the result of complex horizontal and vertical processes of cultural transfer – a differentiation we will address in detail. At the same time, cultural transfers often had a social and political dimension giving them the characteristics of a force imposed from outside. This is equally true of triumphant Counter-Reformation Baroque churches and of Coca-Cola bottles: one can do little more than look at or enter the church, or empty the bottle. Both represent actions of acquisition and perhaps even of subjugation.

For such reasons, one should differentiate between cultural transfer and cultural exchange. The former simply means that something has been 'transferred' from one culture to another – a process with an

[6] Cf. Bodo Guthmüller (ed.), *Deutschland und Italien in ihren wechselseitigen Beziehungen während der Renaissance*, Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung 19 (Wiesbaden: 2000).

[7] See chapters by Gaimster and Howard in this volume.

[8] See chapters by Paresys and Rublack in this volume.

[9] See Roodenburg and Dilwyn Knox in this volume, and the latter's many studies on gesture; also Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (eds.), *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); on dancing, see Nordera's chapter in this volume.

active giver and a completely passive receiver, something which almost
never occurred in historical reality. Cultural exchange, by contrast,
describes a much more dynamic process involving an interaction
between 'giver' and 'receiver' in which the differentiation between
them blurs quickly whenever two or even more cultures participate
in the processes. These exchanges can occur through conversations
which leave no, or barely noticeable, evidence; for historical research,
only the traces conserved in texts and objects become relevant, because
the original participants cannot be interrogated directly.

ICONOLOGY AND CULTURAL TRANSFER

Aby Warburg's complex system offers a starting point for theoreti-
cal reflection – always bearing in mind the problem of hermeneutics.
In a famous article on the *Schifanoia* frescos in Ferrara, Warburg
wrote about the 'migration of symbols' on a higher level than anyone
before him. His argument is widely known,[10] but two points deserve
to be underlined. The first concerns Warburg's insightful discussion
of Francesco del Cossa's 'Four Seasons' frescos, offering a solution to
their puzzle by identifying the planetary system lying at their centre.
He deciphers the symbols and figures of the imagery at Ferrara and
traces their travels through time and space. Some were borrowed from
antiquity, some came from the Orient, and some travelled from the
Middle East to Spain; all of them became part of the monumental
cosmology of the Italian quattrocento. The second observation con-
cerns Warburg's ambitious iconological method. He was convinced
that by interpreting the frescos at Ferrara, he could also identify the
process of civilisation, but he failed because of his eccentric psycho-
historical method, based on daring speculations about the relationship
between beauty and reason, which interpreted the triumph of the
Olympian gods during the High Renaissance as a triumph of rational

[10] Bernd Roeck, 'Psychohistorie im Zeichen Saturns: Aby Warburgs Denksystem
und die moderne Kulturgeschichte', in Wolfgang Hardtwig and Hans-Ulrich
Wehler (eds.), *Kulturgeschichte Heute* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1996),
pp. 231–54.

enlightenment over the dark and irrational forces of the 'medieval' Orient.[11]

Warburg's theory of cultural exchange and its role in a worldwide historical process illustrates not only the fascinating perspectives this subject embodies, but also the dangers of an uncritical methodological approach to works of art. Warburg did not reconstruct the social milieu of these frescos, as many have believed; instead, he used his knowledge of iconology to reconstruct social interrelations and transfer processes – an approach later applied to Florentine painting by Frederick Antal.[12]

IDENTITIES AND ALTERITIES

Exchange processes are vital to identity formation because cultural exchange awakens people to alterity. It was precisely confrontations with the 'other' which stimulated early forms of nationalism and later formed national identities.[13] This means that cultural exchange doesn't necessarily lead to cultural mixtures and hybrids, but that it also has meaning for constructing one's own culture. If Christianity became

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[11] Bernd Roeck, 'Schönheit und Krise – die Ästhetik der Vernunft in der Psychohistorie Aby Warburgs', in Damian Dombrowski (ed.), *Zwischen den Welten: Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte für Jürg Meyer zur Capellen* (Weimar: VDG, 2001), pp. 282–94.

[12] Frederick Antal, *Florentine Painting and its Social Background: The Bourgeois Republic before Cosimo de' Medici's Advent to Power, XIVth and Early XVth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948); also his *Hogarth and his Place in European Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).

[13] Wolfgang Brückner, 'Fremdheitsstereotypen: der ethnographische Blick als neues Wahrnehmungsmuster visueller Art in der Frühen Neuzeit', in Wolfgang Harms and Alfred Messerli (eds.), *Wahrnehmungsgeschichte und Wissensdiskurs im illustrierten Flugblatt der Frühen Neuzeit* (1450–1700) (Basel: Schwabe, 2002), pp. 145–62. Examples in Franz K. Stanzel, *Europäer: ein imagologischer Essay* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1997); Franz K. Stanzel (ed.), *Europäischer Völkerspiegel: imagologisch-ethnologische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1999); Christoph Danelzik-Brüggemann, *Ereignisse und Bilder: Bildpublizistik und politische Kultur in Deutschland zur Zeit der französischen Revolution* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1996), pp. 48f., 61, 71–8 (France); Walter Demel, 'Die Erfindung der gelben und der roten Rasse', in Martina Johanssen (ed.), *Schwarz-Weißheiten: vom Umgang mit fremden Menschen* (Oldenburg: Isensee, 2001), pp. 105–13.

the leading religion in the late Roman Empire, didn't it inherit some
elements from the widespread Mithras culture? Jesuit missionaries in
China tried to convert their audience to Christian belief by making
the rites and other externals of their religion conform to Chinese
practices.

Reactions to imported French customs and luxury goods like cloth-
ing in the Holy Roman Empire during the seventeenth century show
how meaningful the 'other' can become in forming identity. That of
Protestant Germans was mainly anti-Roman, while German Catholic
identity was often anti-Protestant. In seventeenth-century writings
and paintings, the 'upright', 'honest', 'old-fashioned' *Teutsche* con-
structed their identity by contrasting themselves as fundamentally
different from the Frenchified dandy.[14]

Obviously, 'self-invention' through rejecting some 'other' has a
problematic and even dangerous side. Promoting one's own civil-
isation requires deprecating others as 'savages' and 'uncivilised' –
something inferior which must be shut away in a ghetto or even oblit-
erated. The conviction of one's own moral superiority is founded on
the certainty that these others are evil, heretics, and perhaps even in
league with the devil. Nevertheless, experience of the other – some
'exchange' with it – always stands at the beginning of the construction
of identity. Sometimes it is simply amazement towards the foreign,[15]
but often it is also an experience marked by misunderstandings and
vague premonitions. Perceptions coagulate into stereotypes contain-
ing an explanation for rejection, and the claim of one's own superiority
provides maxims for dealing with another person who appears as an
adversary or an enemy.[16]

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[14] Winfried Schulze, 'Die Entstehung des nationalen Vorurteils: zur Kultur der
Wahrnehmung fremder Nationen in der europäischen Frühen Neuzeit', in Wolf-
gang Schmale and Reinhard Stauber (eds.), *Menschen und Grenzen in der Frühen
Neuzeit* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag, 1998), pp. 23–49.

[15] Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonders of the New World* (Chicago:
Chicago University Press, 1991); Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New
York: Harper & Row, 1985).

[16] Hildegard Frübis, '"Der wilde Mann und die Freiheit in der Wildnis": zur Rezeption
der Entdeckung Amerikas im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum des 16. Jahrhunderts',
in Rolf-Peter Janz (ed.), *Faszination und Schrecken des Fremden* (Frankfurt a.M.:

The history of cultural relations between Christian Europe and its
Jews or Moslems offers some examples. Similarly, conflicts between
different denominations, for example in France, in the Holy Roman
Empire, or in the Netherlands, were also necessarily based on processes
of exchange. One notices a rival's dogmas, religious doctrines and
ritual systems, but mainly their habits and lifestyles which differ from
one's own. Approaches and absorptions took place precisely in 'contact
areas', for example mixed-confessional towns, which the theory of
cultural transfer calls *métissage* – interdigitation and mixture of cultural
elements.[17] The notion, particularly widespread in colonial studies, can
also be applied to early modern Europe.

BOUNDARIES

As this example reminds us, both 'invisible' and visible boundaries are
decisive elements for research on cultural transfers. One culture must
be distinguishable from the other, sometimes by occupying different
political or ethnic spaces between which exchange processes occur,
or in 'experience communities' differentiated either through religion,
ideology or social strata. Of special interest is the formation of a third
area of 'mixed' zones, where cultural *métissage* becomes accessible
for analysis: zones of contact where different denominations coexist,
or fringe areas where the 'cohabitation' of different cultures creates
something new, a 'third' thing.[18] Here, people speak both languages
in addition to their own dialect, and wear costumes in which both
worlds are represented. In short, a characteristic tradition develops

Suhrkamp, 2001), pp. 107–24; Hildegard Frübis, *Die Wirklichkeit des Fremden: die
Darstellung der Neuen Welt im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Reimer, 1995); Urs Bitterli,
'Die "Wilden" und die "Zivilisierten": Grundzüge einer Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte
der europäisch-überseeischen Beziehungen* (Munich: Beck 1976); Urs Bitterli, *Alte
Welt – neue Welt: Formen des europäischen überseeischen Kulturkontakts vom 15. bis
zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 1986), pp. 17–54; also N. Broc, *La Géographie
des philosophes: géographes et voyageurs français au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Ophrys,
1974).
[17] Etienne François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg,
1648–1806* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991).
[18] See Schmale and Stauber, *Menschen und Grenzen*.

from such mixing, the central element of which involves the integration of different influences.

Integrating elements from different cultural systems represents one response to an identity problem. Because life in such fringe areas involves prolonged proximity to an 'other', experiencing such alternatives may appear either threatening, unpleasant or desirable. However, its significance for identity formation seems apparent. A rich merchant who clothes and adorns himself like a patrician does more than show his social ambition; he also documents a cultural exchange, a habitual incertitude to which he commits himself.[19]

A typical case of a 'third space' is the *Oberrheingebiet*, the region of Alsace with its cultural centre at Basel, where the cultural areas of Germany, France and the Swiss Confederation intersected. This region has always been crossed by migrants following important trade routes or military roads. Already during the Middle Ages, French, German and even Dutch influences had established a unique blend with a distinctive cultural physiognomy. The region spawned political and spiritual movements characterised by religious mysticism and humanistic intellectualism. The work of painter Martin Schongauer (*c*.1450–91) represents the culture of this area in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. His etchings (Schongauer was a virtuoso of this technique) spread across central Europe, but also around his home town. For example, the representations of scenes from Christ's Passion and other motifs on the altar retable of the parish church of Buhl (near Colmar) closely resemble Schongauer's original etchings. However, one can also perceive various themes associated with much less famous regional artists.

EUROPE AND BEYOND

Paintings, graphic art and other artworks often preserve unquestionable traces of cultural transfers, testifying to contacts with foreign

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[19] Examples by Neithard Bulst et al., 'Das Porträt als Rechtsverstoß. Verstöße gegen Kleider- und Luxusverordnungen in Bildnissen der deutschen Renaissance', *Forschung an der Universität Bielefeld* 20 (1999), 7f.

cultures in both Americas, Africa,[20] the Islamic world[21] and even the
Far East.[22] An Indian miniature served as Rembrandt's model for
his drawing of four sheiks, sitting amidst wide natural scenery and
drinking their tea, transforming the scene into 'western' space.[23] Of
course, cultural transfer also occurred in the opposite direction. Chris-
tian missionaries brought western art to the Far East in the sixteenth
century. Traces of European commerce and art can even be found in
north Indian Moghul painting, for example a sandglass or *putti*.[24] If
such exchange processes mainly interest historians of culture, they also

[20] Vittore Carpaccio's images offer African references, e.g. his miracle-representation
of the relic of the cross includes blacks, showing the presence of African slaves
in Venice. Documents depicting slavery were rare in early modern Europe; see
Robert Davis, 'Slave redemption in Venice, 1585–1797', in John Martin and Dennis
Romano (eds.), *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City
State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 454–87.

[21] Jürg Meyer zur Capellen, *Gentile Bellini* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985); Rosamond E.
Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: Univer-
sity of California Press, 2002); Deborah Howard, 'Venice between East and West:
Marc' Antonio Barbaro and Palladio's Church of the Redentore', *Journal of the
Society of Architectural Historians* 62 (2003), 306–25; see also Howard's essay in this
volume. Elisabeth Liskar (ed.), *Europa und die Kunst des Islam, 15. bis 18. Jahrhundert*
(Vienna: Böhlau, 1985); Hermann Goetz, 'Oriental types and scenes in Renaissance
and Baroque painting', *Burlington Magazine* 73 (1938), 62.

[22] Michael Stürmer, *Handwerk und höfische Kultur: europäische Möbelkunst im 18.
Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 1982), pp. 244, 251, 258f.

[23] Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie*, pp. 226f.

[24] See Julius E. Lips, *The Savage Hits Back or The White Man through Native Eyes*
(London: Yale University Press, 1937); on India, Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned
Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1977); Monica Juneja, 'On the margins of utopia – one more look at Mughal painting',
Medieval History Journal 4 (2001), 203–40; her 'Engel im Herrscherbild? Zur Assi-
milation abendländischer Motive in der höfischen Miniaturmalerei Indiens im 16.
und 17. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch der Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 36 (1999), 295–323; and
her 'Jahangir auf der Sanduhr: Überlegungen zu einer Visualität im Spannungsfeld
zwischen Eigenem und Fremdem', in Gerhard Schneider (ed.), *Die visuelle Dimension
des Historischen: Hans-Jürgen Pandel zum 60. Geburtstag* (Schwalbach: Wochenschau
Verlag, 2002), pp. 142–56. On Japan, see Mitsuru Sakamoto, 'Japanese adaptions of
European-style painting', in Thomas W. Gaethgens (ed.), *Künstlerischer Austausch
– Artistic Exchange. Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte,
Berlin 15.–20. Juli 1992*, 2 vols. (Berlin 1993), vol. II, pp. 581–7; and Yoshiaki Shimizu,
'Okyo's "realism": an encounter with a different kind', in *ibid.*, pp. 599–612.

demonstrate both *métissage* and conflicts among different mentalities
and habitual systems.

   European picture formulas also 'infiltrated' the iconography of
other cultures, as when the Mexican god Huitzlilopochtli was trans-
formed into a giant devilish figure called 'Vitzliputzli'.[25] It is difficult
to say if such transformations alienated Indians from worshipping
their old gods or prevented European Christians in South America
from infection by heathen Indians. Old picture formulas still served
as indoctrination in the nineteenth century; a fresco in a little church in
the Peruvian highlands, ascribed to a mestizo, Tadeo Escalante, shows
the damned being thrown down into hell – a pictorial tradition dating
from the late European Middle Ages, mediated here through a cop-
per engraving of 1615, illustrating a cultural transfer across enormous
intervals of space and time.

   Exchanges within Europe are much closer and far more frequent.
Titian's equestrian image of Charles V, now in Madrid's Prado, shows
the emperor wearing armour made in Augsburg by Desiderius Helm-
schmied. A portrait of Antonio Perrenot de Granvelle, now in Kansas
City, shows a pendulum clock also made in Augsburg. Both offer evi-
dence of close cultural relations between the Habsburg court and the
skilled German craftsmen who upheld its European rank.[26]

   'Mediterranean' art by such masters as El Greco or Giambat-
tista Tiepolo similarly provides examples of wide-ranging exchanges.
El Greco's superb Mannerist art, deeply appreciated in Counter-
Reformation Spain, shows beyond doubt the influence of both his
Venetian teacher Tintoretto and the icons in his Cretan homeland. The
evident convergence between his stylistic peculiarities and the men-
tality of Counter-Reformation Spain evidently fascinated patrons,
making his paintings important sources for the history of mentalities

[25] See Iris Gareis, 'Wie Engel und Teufel in die Neue Welt kamen: Imaginationen
   von Gut und Böse im kolonialen Amerika', *Paideuma* 45 (1999), 264f.; Peter Mason,
   'Portrayal and betrayal: the colonial gaze in seventeenth-century Brazil', *Culture and
   History* 6 (1989), 37–62.
[26] Cf. Gunter Schweikhart, 'Tizian in Augsburg', in Klaus Bergdolt and Jochen Brüning
   (eds.), *Kunst und ihre Auftraggeber: Venedig und Augsburg im Vergleich* (Berlin:
   Akademie-Verlag, 1997), pp. 37f.