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TRANSCULTURALITY: THE CHANGING FORM OF CULTURES TODAY

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"When we think of the world's future,
we always mean the destination it will reach
if it keeps going in the direction we can see it going in now;
it does not occur to us
that its path is not a straight line but a curve,
constantly changing direction."

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 1929

A simple question was occasion for me a decade ago to develop the concept of transculturality. I had the impression that our present concepts of culture were no longer suited to their object, today's cultures. Put the other way round: Contemporary cultures seemed to be exhibiting a constitution different to that asserted, or suggested by our concepts of culture. So we'd better develop a new conceptualization of culture. This I attempt to do under the heading 'transculturality'.[1]

The following account comprises four sections: firstly a critique of the traditional concept of single cultures, secondly a critique of the more recent concepts of multiculturality and interculturality, thirdly a detailed discussion of the concept of transculturality, and fourthly some further perspectives. The concept of transculturality, it seems to me, is for both descriptive and normative reasons the most appropriate to today's cultures.

[1] The first version of this conception was published as "Transkulturalität – Lebensformen nach der Auflösung der Kulturen" (in: *Information Philosophie*, 2, 1992, pp. 5-20). It was developed further in "Auf dem Weg zu transkulturellen Gesellschaften", in: *Die Zukunft des Menschen – Philosophische Ausblicke*, ed. Günter Seubold (Bonn: Bouvier, 1999), pp. 119-144.

One thing beforehand: I will certainly, in some respects, schematize, extrapolate and exaggerate the development which I believe can be witnessed. There will be several things in this to criticize. However, firstly, if one wants to say anything at all, then one must exaggerate. And secondly, exaggeration is a principle of reality itself; tomorrow's reality will be the exaggeration of today's; it is this which we call development.

I. The traditional concept of single cultures

Why do I think that the conventional concepts of culture are no longer suited to the constitution of today's cultures? How was the traditional conceptuality of culture comprised, and what are the new realities which no longer submit to the old precepts?

1. 'Culture' in the tradition

a. From a special to a general concept of culture

'Culture' first developed into a *general concept*, spanning not only single, but all the reifications of human life, in the late 17th century. As a general concept of this type, 'culture' appeared for the first time in 1684 with the natural rights scholar Samuel von Pufendorf.[2] He denoted as 'culture' the sum of those activities through which humans shape their life as being specifically human – in contrast to a merely animal one.[3]

Prior to this the noun 'culture' had not had an absolute usage such as this. Culture had been a relative expression, bearing only on specific realms or activities. Accordingly, in antiquity, Cicero had spoken of the "cultura animi" ("care of the spirit"),[4] patristics propagandized the "cultura Christianae religionis",[5] and in the Renaissance, Erasmus or Thomas More pleaded for

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[2] In the second edition of his script *De jure naturae et gentium libri octo* (Frankfurt, 2nd ed. 1684) Pufendorf effected, in several places, the transition from the traditional concept of a specific 'cultura animi' to the new talk of a general 'cultura' (Book II, Ch. 4, § 1). Prior to this, he had already spoken of "vera cultura" in a letter to Christian Thomasius of 19th January 1663, that is, strictly speaking, made absolute use of the expression 'cultura' for the very first time (the letter is printed in: Christian Thomasius, *Historia juris naturalis*, Halle 1719, Appendix II, Epistola I, pp. 156-166, here p. 162).

[3] Cf. Samuel von Pufendorf, *De jure naturae et gentium libri octo*, II, 4.

[4] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, II, 13.

[5] Cf. Wilhelm Perpeet, "Zur Wortbedeutung von 'Kultur'", in: *Naturplan und Verfallskritik.*

the "cultura ingenii" – the culture of the inventive spirit.[6] For centuries, the expression 'culture' appeared only in such compounds and related to *specific* realms of activity.

With Pufendorf 'culture' became a collective singular and an autonomous concept which now – in a presumptuous unification – claimed to encompass the *whole of* a people's, a society's or a nation's activities. A hundred years later this global concept of culture obtained through Herder – especially in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* which appeared from 1784 to 1791 – a form which was to remain exemplary for the time to follow.[7,8] Many among us still believe this Herderian concept of culture to be valid. It's not only traditionalist minds that do this, rather we are presently also witnessing various revivals of this conception: they stretch from ethnic fundamentalism through to Huntington's talk of "civilizations".

b. Herder's concept of culture

In terms of its basic structure, Herder's concept is characterized by three determinants: by social homogenization, ethnic consolidation and intercultural delimitation.[9] Firstly, every culture is supposed to mould the whole life of the people concerned and of its individuals, making every act and every object an unmistakable instance of precisely *this* culture. The concept is unificatory. Secondly, culture is always to be the "*culture of a folk*", representing, as Herder said, "the flower" of a folk's existence.[10] So the concept is folk-bound. Thirdly, a decided *delimitation* towards the outside ensues: Every culture is, as the culture of one folk, to be distinguished and to remain separated from other folks' cultures. The concept is separatory.

Zu Begriff und Geschichte der Kultur, eds Helmut Brackert and Fritz Wefelmeyer (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), pp. 21-28, here p. 22.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1966). The work first appeared in four separate parts, each of five books, in the years 1784, 1785, 1787 and 1791, published by the Hartknoch press in Riga and Leipzig.

[8] Cf. for the history of the concept of 'culture': Joseph Niedermann, *Kultur. Werden und Wandlungen des Begriffs und seiner Ersatzbegriffe von Cicero bis Herder* (Florence: Bibliopolis, 1941); Perpeet, "Zur Wortbedeutung von 'Kultur'", l.c.; Jörg Fisch, "Zivilisation, Kultur", in: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992), vol. 7, pp. 679-774; Gyorgy Markus, "Culture: the making and the make-up of a concept (an essay in historical semantics)", in: *Dialectical Anthropology* 18 (1993), pp. 3-29.

[9] I shall not take account of Herder's particularities here, but rather concentrate on the typology of his concept of culture.

[10] Herder, op. cit.

2. Obsolete features

All three elements of this traditional concept have become untenable today. First: Modern societies are differentiated within themselves to such a high degree that uniformity is no longer constitutive to, or achievable for them (and there are reasonable doubts as to whether it ever has been historically). T. S. Eliot's Neo-Herderian statement from 1948, that culture is "the *whole way of life* of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep",[11] has today become an obviously ideological decree.[12] Modern societies are multicultural in themselves, encompassing a multitude of varying ways of life and lifestyles. There are – firstly – vertical differences in society: the culture of a working-quarter, a well-to-do residential district, and that of the alternative scene, for example, hardly exhibit any common denominator. And there are – secondly – horizontal divisions: gender divisions, differences between male and female, or between straight, lesbian and gay can constitute quite different cultural patterns and forms of life. – So already with respect to this first point, homogeneity, the traditional concept of culture proves to be factually inadequate: it cannot cope with the inner complexity of modern cultures.

Secondly, the ethnic consolidation is dubious: Herder sought to envisage cultures as closed spheres or autonomous islands, each corresponding to a folk's territorial area and linguistic extent. Cultures were to reside strictly within themselves and be closed to their environment. – But as we know, such folk-bound definitions are highly imaginary and fictional; they must laboriously be brought to prevail against historical evidence of intermingling. Nations are not something given but are invented and often forcibly established.[13] And the political dangers of folk-based and ethnic fantasies can today be experienced almost worldwide.

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[11] T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 31.

[12] The ethnology of the 20th century also worked for a long time with the notion that culture is a structured and integrated organic whole in itself. Ruth Benedict's book *The Patterns of Culture* (Boston and New York: Houghton Miffin Company, 1934) is representative of this. From the sixties and seventies onwards doubts about this premiss were increasingly expressed (see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973). Margaret Archer called the "myth of cultural integration" the dubious "legacy of ethnology" (Margaret Archer, *Culture and Agency*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 2 ff.).

[13] This was effectively noted by Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm: "The central mistake committed both by the friends and the enemies of nationalism is the supposition that it is somehow *natural* [...] The truth is, on the contrary, that there is nothing natural or universal about possessing a 'nationality'" (Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*, London: Weidenfeld

Finally, the concept demands outer delimitation. Having noted that "every nation has its *centre* of happiness *within itself* just as each sphere its centre of gravity",[14] Herder typically enough continues: "Everything which is still the *same* as my nature, which can be *assimilated* therein, I envy, strive towards, make my own; *beyond this*, kind nature has armed me with *insensibility, coldness* and *blindness*; it can even become *contempt* and *disgust*."[15] – As you see: Herder defends the double of emphasis on the own and exclusion of the foreign, the traditional concept of culture being a concept of inner homogenization and outer separation at the same time. Put harshly: It tends – as a consequence of its very conception – to a sort of cultural racism.[16] The sphere premiss and the purity precept not only render impossible a mutual understanding between cultures, but the appeal to cultural identity of this kind finally leads to separatism and paves the way for political conflicts and wars.[17]

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and Nicholson, 1964, p. 150 f.). "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it *invents* nations where they do not exist" (ibid., p. 168). "[...] the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the 'invention of tradition'" (Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", in: *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983, p. 14).

[14] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* [1774] (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), p. 44 f.

[15] Ibid., p. 45. Herder continues: "[...] see how the Egyptian *hates* the shepherd, the vagabond! how he *despises* the frivolous Greek! So it is for each two nations whose inclinations and circles of happiness *clash* – one calls it *prejudice*! *vulgarity*! insular *nationalism*!" (ibid., p. 45 f.) Against this Enlightening objection, Herder explains: "Prejudice is good [...] for it makes for *happiness*. It forces peoples together to their *centre*, makes them firmer at their stem, more flourishing *in their kind*, more fervent and then happier too in their *inclinations* and *aims*" (ibid., p. 46). He further says: "The least knowing, most prejudiced nation is, so considered, often the first: the age of wandering desires and hopeful voyages abroad is already *illness, flatulence, unhealthy corpulence, death's apprehension!*" (ibid.).

[16] A type of racism is – with the island, or sphere axiom – built in, one which is even retained wherever biologically ethnic racism is discarded, that is, where the respective culture is no longer defined with recourse to a folk's nature, but with resort instead to definitional substitutes such as nation, state, or even – circularly – to a "cultural nation". For, in changelessly clinging to the autonomous form of culture, one continues to advocate structurally a kind of *cultural* racism. – In a highly regarded speech to the Unesco in 1971, Lévi-Strauss pointed out the relevance of specifically cultural racism. 'Race' is, according to him, to be understood not so much as the basis, but as a *function* of culture. Every culture, to the extent that it autonomously develops itself and delimits itself from other cultures, tends to cultural racism (Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Race et Culture", in: Lévi-Strauss, *Le regard éloigné* (Paris: Plon, 1983), pp. 21-48, in particular here p. 36). – For the strategic function of racism in the modern state, cf.: Michel Foucault, "Faire vivre et laisser mourir: la naissance du racisme", in: *Les Temps Modernes*, 46, 1991, no. 535, pp. 37-61.

[17] This separatist complex can be formulated harmoniously. You then say: Every culture is immediate to God. (With this, I am varying Leopold von Ranke's formula "every epoch

To sum this up: The classical model of culture is not only descriptively unserviceable, but also normatively dangerous and untenable. What is called for today is a departure from this concept and to think of cultures beyond the contraposition of ownness and foreignness – "beyond both the heterogeneous and the own", as Adorno once put it.[18]

II. The concepts of multiculturality and interculturality

I now want to discuss the more recent concepts of multiculturality and interculturality. I will point to the disadvantageous manner in which – in spite of all apparent progressiveness – they still remain bound to the traditional concept.

1. Multiculturality

In contemplating the very multitude of different forms of life within one and the same society, the multiculturality concept seems to escape the dilemmas of the conventional concept of culture. But in continuing to understand the different cultures as being things independent and homogeneous in themselves, it still conceptually complies with the conventional understanding of culture. Therein lies its principal deficiency.

The concept tries to face up to the problems which different cultures have living together *within one society*. And this certainly does represent a progression compared with the old demands for societal homogenization. But for its part the concept is incapable of contributing to the solution of the problems *resulting* from plurality for the very reason that it still sticks to the old idea of culture's design. This it does, to be sure, not with regard to the erstwhile large cultures, but with respect to the many cultures within society upon which it focuses. It still conceives of these single cultures as being homogeneous and well delineated – that is, in precisely the old-fashioned Herderian style.

On the basis of this conception, a temporary respite in issues of tolerance, acceptance and avoidance of conflict between the different cultural groups might be attained, but never a real understanding or even a transgression of

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is immediate to God".) It can also be formulated realistically, then you must say: in this way, culture becomes a ghetto.

[18] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, in: Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6 (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 3rd ed. 1984), p. 192.

the separating barriers. Rather the multiculturality concept has the supposition and acceptance of these barriers as its basis. Hence it can – conditions in the US have demonstrated this for years – even be used to justify and reinforce appeals for demarcation.[19] The concept thereby threatens to favor regressive tendencies which, in appealing to cultural identity (a construction which is most often gained from the imagination of some yesteryear), lead to ghettoization and cultural fundamentalism.[20] In this way the burden inherited from its antiquated understanding of culture comes to the fore. Cultures which are apprehended in principle as being autonomous and like spheres *cannot* ultimately understand one another, but *must* rather – according with the logic of this apprehension – set themselves apart from one another; they must ignore, fail to recognize, defame and combat one another. This was, by the way, shrewdly expressed by Herder when he said that spheres of this type can only "*clash with one another*" and that their rebuttal of other cultures is a condition for their happiness.[21] In the context of multiculturalism, the

[19] Cf. Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism. E Pluribus Plures", in: *American Scholar* (1990), pp. 337-354; Hilton Kramer, "The prospect before us", in: *The New Criterion*, 9/1 (Sept. 1990), pp. 6-9; John Searle, "The Storm Over the University", in: *The New York Review of Books*, 6 Dec. 1990, pp. 34-42; *Multi Kulti: Spielregeln für die Vielvölkerrepublik*, ed. Claus Leggewie (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1990); Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York – London: Norton, 1991); Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmid, *Heimat Babylon: Das Wagnis der multikulturellen Demokratie* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1992); *Pluralisme culturel en Europe: Culture(s) européenne(s) et culture(s) des diasporas*, ed. René Gallissot (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993); *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America*, ed. Ronald Takaki (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1994); *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); *Multikulturelle Gesellschaft: Modell Amerika*, ed. Berndt Ostendorf (Munich: Fink, 1994); Wolfgang Kaschuba, "Kulturalismus: Kultur statt Gesellschaft?", in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 21 (1995), pp. 80-95; Richard Bernstein, *Dictatorship of Virtue: How the Battle Over Multiculturalism Is Reshaping Our Schools, Our Country, and Our Lives* (New York: Knopf, 1995); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[20] One complies with the maxim that cultures are to be their own – and they are exactly this, above all, when contrasted with other cultures and contrasted with a common culture. "Back to the roots" reads the magic formula, or "only tribes will survive". Salmon Rushdie once articulated a similar danger when talking to his fellow Indian writers: "[...] of all the many elephant traps lying ahead of us, the largest and most dangerous pitfall would be the adoption of a ghetto mentality. To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers, would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which in South Africa is called the 'homeland'" (Salmon Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands" [1982], in: *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, London: Granta Books, 1991, pp. 9-21, here p. 19).

[21] Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, p. 46.

continued influence of the old cultural notion of inner homogeneity and outer delimitation more or less logically induces chauvinism and cultural separatism.[22] – And it seems to me that several adherents of the concept don't even want to solve but rather to reinforce the resulting problems.

2. Interculturality

A similar reservation seems to apply towards the concept of interculturality.[23] For all its good intentions it too continues *conceptually* to drag along with it the premisses of the traditional concept of culture: the insinuation of an island- or sphere-like constitution of cultures. It does recognize that this constitution necessarily leads to intercultural conflicts, and attempts to counter these with intercultural dialogue. It's just that as long as one goes along with the primary thesis of an island- or sphere-like cultural constitution these problems will not be soluble, because they *spring from* the primary thesis named. The classical concept of culture with its primary trait – the separatist character of cultures – *creates* the secondary problem of the difficult coexistence and structural inability to communicate between these cultures. Hence the resulting problems cannot be solved on the basis of this concept.[24]

So, in just the same way as the multiculturality thesis, the interculturality thesis doesn't get to the actual roots of the problem, but operates on a subsequent level, so to speak cosmetically. – Both the multicultural and intercultural issues ought to be addressed in a different manner from the outset: in view of today's permeation of cultures.

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[22] It is not enough here to point out cultures' factual endeavours towards delimitation. These would be less cogent if they were not backed up by the multiculturality concept and driven into the dead end of ghettoization. Cultural terms influence cultural self-understanding.

[23] Cf. for this concept Franz Wimmer, *Interkulturelle Philosophie* (Vienna: Passagen 1989), vol. 1; *Philosophische Grundlagen der Interkulturalität*, ed. Ram Adhar Mall and Dieter Lohmar (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993); Archie J. Bahm, *Comparative Philosophy: Western, Indian and Chinese Philosophies Compared* (Albuquerque, N.M: World Books revised edition 1995).

[24] This becomes very clear in Wang Bin's article "Relativismo culturale e meta-metodologia" (in: *Sguardi venuti da lontano. Un'indagine di Transcultura*, eds Alain Le Pichon and Letizia Caronia, Milan: Bompiani, 1991, pp. 221-241): if cultures are autonomous islands to begin with (ibid., 222), then a real understanding between them will first come about precisely when this premiss is done away with, when that is, the cultural differences de facto no longer exist (cf. p. 236). The island-basis creates the problem, which it can't solve – but from which one can appreciate that a solution can only be brought closer by overcoming the island-thesis.

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My criticism of the traditional conception of single cultures, as well as of the more recent concepts of multiculturality and interculturality can be summarized as follows: If cultures were in fact still – as these concepts suggest – constituted in the form of islands or spheres, then one could neither rid oneself of, nor solve the problem of their coexistence and cooperation. However, the description of today's cultures as islands or spheres is factually incorrect and normatively deceptive. Our cultures de facto no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness, but are characterized through to the core by mixing and permeations.[25] I call this new form of cultures transcultural, since it goes *beyond* the traditional concept of culture and *passes through* traditional cultural boundaries as a matter of course. The concept of transculturality – which I now want to set out – seeks to articulate this altered cultural constitution.[26,27]

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[25] We are mistaken when we continue to speak of German, French, Japanese, Indian, etc. cultures as if these were clearly definied and closed entities; what we really have in mind when speaking this way are *political* or *linguistic* communities, not actual *cultural* formations.

[26] The prefix 'trans' in 'transculturality' has a double meaning. First it denotes the fact that the determinants of culture are becoming more and more cross-cultural. In this sense 'trans' has the meaning 'transversal'. In the long run, however, this development will increasingly engender a cultural constitution which is beyond the traditional, supposedly monocultural design of cultures. So, whilst having the meaning 'transversal' with respect to the mixed design of cultural determinants, 'trans' has the sense of 'beyond' with respect to the future and compared to the earlier form of cultures.

[27] I must admit that I held the term 'transculturality' for a new one when I began working on this topic in 1991. Transversality – which I'd spoken of previously only with an eye to questions of reason (for the first time in my *Unsere postmoderne Moderne* Weinheim: VCH Acta humaniora, 1987, Chap. XI; most recently in: Welsch, *Vernunft. Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft.* Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1995, stw 1996) – now in cultural theory too – this was my idea. In the meantime I have learned that 'transculturality' – or at least the adjective 'transcultural' – isn't quite so rare after all. But my usage of the term does not, as is usual in an older tradition, target transcultural invariances. With this term I seek far more to account for the historically modified structure of *today's* cultures.

III. Transculturality

1. Macrolevel: the altered cut of today's cultures

a. Networking

Firstly the old homogenizing and separatist idea of cultures has been surpassed through *cultures' external networking.* Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures. The way of life for an economist, an academic or a journalist is no longer German or French, but rather European or global in tone. The new forms of entanglement are a consequence of migratory processes, as well as of worldwide material and immaterial communications systems and economic interdependencies and dependencies. It is here, of course, that questions of power come in.

A consequence and sign of such permeations is the fact that the same basic problems and states of consciousness today appear in cultures once considered to be fundamentally different – think, for example, of human rights debates, feminist movements or of ecological awareness which are powerful active factors across the board culturally.[28] According to the old model of culture and its fiction of difference things such as these would have been quite impossible – which in turn is evidence of the obsolescence of this model.

b. Hybridization

Secondly, cultures today are in general characterized by *hybridization.* For *every* culture, all *other* cultures have tendencially come to be inner-content or satellites. This applies on the levels of population, merchandise and information. Worldwide, in most countries, live members of all other countries of this planet; and more and more the same articles – as exotic as they may once have been – are becoming available the world over; finally the global networking of communications technology makes all kinds of information identically available from every point in space.[29]

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[28] This is not a straightforward matter of exporting Western ideas, rather retroactive modifications also come about: The affirmation of property, for example, which Indian women's rights campaigners said represented an indispensable prerequisite for their emancipation, has caused some Western critics of private property to think again. – I owe this observation to Martha C. Nussbaum.

[29] Places like Mammoth – a Californian ski station, where you find numerous names such as St. Moritz Road, Chamonix Place, Cortina Circuit, or Megeve Way (in the surroundings you also have a Matterhorn Peak) are curious examples of the trend to

c. Comprehensiveness of the cultural changes

Cultural mixing occurs not only – as is often too one-sidely stated – on the low level of Coke, McDonalds, MTV or CNN, but in high culture as well, and this has been the case for a long time – think, for example, of Puccini and Chinese music; of Gauguin and Tahiti; of Picasso and African sculpture; or of Messiaen and India. Moreover, culture in the sense of forms of life, of daily routine is more and more becoming cross-cultural too. Germans, for example, today have implemented more elements of French and Italian lifestyle than ever before – even Germans today know how to enjoy life.

d. Dissolution of the foreign-own distinction

Strictly speaking there is no longer anything absolutely foreign. Everything is within reach. Accordingly, there is no longer anything exclusively 'own' either. Authenticity has become folklore, it is ownness simulated for others – to whom the indigene himself belongs.[30]

I want to provide two examples. These days it is supermarket products, telecommunications articles and T-shirts from famous universities above all that belong to potlatch – the ritual of exchange and waste among today's successors of native North Americans. Representatives of Indian culture themselves consider it highly questionable that their ancestors would still recognize today's customs as a continuation of the old rituals. But this doesn't worry them. They seize the foreign as their own. As can be seen, transculturality can reach all the way down to the most emphatic rituals of identity.

But while these First Nation People are still aware of the orginally heterogenous source of the articles named, this often no longer seems to be the case in Japan. There the foreign is considered the own as a matter of course. In Kyoto, accompanied by Japanese friends, I entered a restaurant in which everything appeared genuinely Japanese and asked my companions

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hybridization. One has the whole world (insofar as it counts for a specific purpose) in one place.

[30] The rhetoric of regional cultures is largely simulatory and aesthetic; in substance most things are transculturally determined. What's regionally specific has become décor, superficies, aesthetic enactment. This is, of course, one of the reasons for the eminent spread of the aesthetic noticable today (cf. *Die Aktualität des Ästhetischen*, ed. Wolfgang Welsch, Munich: Fink, 1993). – One might, just once, seek out a Tirolean ski resort: Tirolean merely exists still as atmospheric enactment, as ornamentation. On the other hand, the basic structures – from the ski lifts through to the toilets – are exactly similar to those in French ski regions or at international airports. Significantly, the cuisine too has changed. What is put before one, looks like and calls itself Tirolean Gröstl, Kasnocken or Schupfnudeln, but it is – corresponding with international standards – drastically calorie-reduced. In short: The appearance is still Tirolean, but in substance everything has changed. Originality exists only as an aesthetic production.

whether everything here really was completely Japanese, including the chairs which we had just sat down on. They seemed astonished by the question, almost annoyed, and hastily assured me that everything there – including the chairs – was completely Japanese. But I knew the chairs: they were a model "Cab", designed by Mario Bellini and produced by Cassina in Milan. I didn't then ask the next question – whether the crockery was completely Japanese (we were eating from Suomi series plates produced by Rosenthal). – It's not that European furniture should be found here that's astonishing, but that the Japanese held them to be products of their own culture. That the foreign and own has become indistiguishable for them serves witness to the degree of factual transculturality.

Expressed as a principle this means: The selectivity between own-culture and foreign culture is gone.[31] Today in a culture's internal relations – among its different ways of life – there exists as much foreignness as in its external relations with other cultures.[32]

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[31] Incidentally, this is also reflected in a famous theorem within analytic philosophy. According to Quine and Davidson, the problem of translation *between different* societies and languages is structurally no different and in no way greater or more dramatic than within *one and the same* society and language. Rorty comments: "Part of the force of Quine's and Davidson's attack on the distinction between the conceptual and the empirical is that the distinction between different cultures does not differ in kind from the distinction between different theories held by members of a single culture. The Tasmanian aborigines and the British colonists had trouble communicating, but this trouble was different only in extent from the difficulties in communication experienced by Gladstone and Disraeli. [...] The same Quinean arguments which dispose of the positivists' distinction between analytic and synthetic truth dispose of the anthropologists' distinction between the intercultural and the intracultural" (Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity", in: *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 21-34, here p. 26).

[32] Sociologically viewed, this is a familiar fact today: "[...] people belong to many different cultures and the cultural differences are as likely to be *within* states (i.e. between regions, classes, ethnic groups, the urban and rural) as *between* states" (Anthony King, "Architecture, Capital and the Globalization of Culture", in: *Global Culture: Nationalism, globalization and modernity*, A Theory, Culture & Society special issue, ed. Mike Featherstone, London: Sage, 1990, pp. 397-411, here p. 409). "[...] cultural diversity tends now to be as great within nations as it is between them" (Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 231). "It is natural that in the contemporary world many local settings are increasingly characterized by cultural diversity. [...] and one may in the end ask whether it is now even possible to become a cosmopolitan without going away at all" (Ulf Hannerz, "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture", in: *Global Culture: Nationalism, globalization and modernity*, pp. 237-251, here p. 249).

2. Microlevel: transcultural formation of individuals

a. Several cultural origins

Transculturality is gaining ground moreover not only on the macro-cultural level, but also on the individual's microlevel. For most of us, multiple cultural connexions are decisive in terms of our cultural formation. We are cultural hybrids. Today's writers, for example, emphasize that they're shaped not by a single homeland, but by differing reference countries, by Russian, German, South and North American or Japanese literature. Today this applies not only for advocates of high-culture, but increasingly for everyone. Since the Germans have been travelling *en masse* to hot countries, as studies show, their attitude to summer days earlier considered unbearably hot has changed significantly; all of a sudden people enjoy these days. Or if you speak to the chefs of a completely normal restaurant: they can explain to you how our taste has changed within the last twenty years, how much of what was once exotic is considered normal as a matter of course. Or think of young people and how they are shaped by pop and music culture: role-models can no longer be sorted nationally at all. In this way transculturality is today advancing in the most natural manner and is determining the formation of individuals' cultural identity. The cultural formation of subsequent generations will presumably be even more strongly transculturally shaped.[33]

b. Sociological diagnoses

Sociologists have been telling us since the seventies that modern lives are to be understood "as a migration through different social worlds and as the successive realization of a number of possible identities",[34] and that we all possess "multiple attachments and identities" – "cross-cutting identities", as Bell put it.[35]

Even in the thirties Paul Valéry had already pointed out that external social pluralization also brings about an internal pluralization of the individual;[36] and the Chicago sociologists praised then the advantages of a

[33] Amy Gutmann states that today "most people's identities, not just Western intellectuals or elites, are shaped by more than a single culture. Not only societies, but people are multicultural" (Amy Gutmann, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics", in: *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 22, no. 3 [1993], pp. 171-206, here p. 183).

[34] Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger, Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind. Modernization and Consciousness*, New York: Random House, 1973, p. 77.

[35] Daniel Bell, *The Winding Passage. Essays and Sociological Journeys 1960-1980*, Cambridge, Mass.: Abt Books, 1980, p. 243.

[36] According to him the present-day means a state in which "a series of doctrines, schools of thought and 'truths', which vary greatly amongst themselves, or are even

multiple or fragmented self for urban life, as Richard Sennett has recently pointed out.[37] "By virtue of his different interests arising out of different aspects of social life, the individual acquires membership in widely divergent groups", said Louis Wirth.[38] "A fragmented self is more responsive".[39]

c. Historical precursors

Such internal multiplicity which is rapidly increasing in modernity and postmodernity, is of course not totally new. Montaigne had already confessed: "I have nothing to say about myself absolutely, simply, and solidly, without confusion and without mixture, or in one word."[40] "We are all patchwork, and so shapeless and diverse in composition that each bit, each moment, plays its own game."[41] Novalis declared that one person is "several people at once" since "*pluralism*" is "our innermost essence".[42] Nietzsche said of himself that he was "glad to harbour [...] not ‚one immortal soul', but *many mortal souls* within",[43] and he coined the formula of the "subject as a multitude" in general.[44] Or remember Walt Whitman's "I am large ... I contain multitudes"[45] or

completely contradictory, are acknowledged in equal measure" and even – this is decisive – "exist alongside one another and act within the same individuals" (Paul Valéry, "Triomphe de Manet", *Œuvres*, II, Paris: Gallimard, 1960, pp. 1326-1333, here p. 1327). Today "in all cultivated minds" there exist "the most varying of ideas and opposing principles of life and cognition freely alongside one another [...]." "The majority of us will have several views about the same object, which easily alternate with one another in judgments" (Paul Valéry, "La crise de l'esprit", *Œuvres*, I, Paris: Gallimard, 1957, pp. 988-1014, here p. 992; Valéry, "La politique de l'esprit", pp. 1014-1040, here p. 1017). Already in 1890 Valéry had written to his friend Pierre Louis "je crois plus que jamais que je suis *plusieurs*!" (Paul Valéry, Letter of 30 August 1890, in: *Lettres à quelques-uns*, Paris: Gallimard, 1952, p. 17 f., here p. 18).

[37] Cf. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 127.

[38] Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" [1938], in: *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*, ed. Richard Sennett (New York: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 156.

[39] Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 127.

[40] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 242 [II 1].

[41] Ibid., p. 244.

[42] Novalis, *Schriften*, eds Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel, vol. 3: *Das philosophische Werk II* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1983), p. 571 [107] and p. 250 [63] resp.

[43] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister. Zweiter Band*, in: *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, eds Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), vol. 2, p. 386 [II 17].

[44] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente. Juli 1882 bis Herbst 1885*, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 11, p. 650 [August – September 1885].

[45] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* ["Song of Myself"], 1855 (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 84 [1314-1316].

Rimbaud's "JE est un autre".[46] Today what once applied to outstanding persons only seems to be becoming the structure of almost everybody.[47]

d. Cultural identity in contrast to national identity

A cultural identity of this type is, of course, not to be equated with national identity. The distinction between cultural and national identity is of elementary importance. It belongs among the mustiest assumptions that an individual's cultural formation must be determined by his nationality or national status. The insinuation that someone who possesses a Japanese, an Indian or a German passport must also culturally unequivocally be Japanese, an Indian or a German and that otherwise he's some guy without a fatherland, or a traitor to his fatherland, is as foolish as it is dangerous.[48] The detachment of civic from personal or cultural identity is to be insisted upon – all the more so in states, such as ours, in which freedom in cultural formation belongs among one's basic rights.[49]

Wherever an individual is cast by differing cultural references, the linking of its transcultural components with one another becomes a specific task in identity-forming. Work on one's identity is increasingly becoming work on the integration of components of differing cultural origin.[50] And only the ability to transculturally cross over will guarantee us identity and competence in the long run.[51]

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[46] Arthur Rimbaud, Letter to Paul Demeny [May 15, 1871], in: *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), pp. 249-254, here p. 250).

[47] Vgl. zum Thema des pluralen Subjekts Verf., "Subjektsein heute – Überlegungen zur Transformation des Subjekts", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 39. Jg. (1991), Heft 4, 347-365; ferner: *Vernunft. Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1995), Zweiter Teil, Kap. XIV: "Transversalität und Subjektivität", 829-852.

[48] This insinuation stems from the classical concept of culture in so far as this is folk-based and commands homogeneity.

[49] Of course, civic and cultural identity can overlap. In many cases they will. The point is that they are not to be *equated.*

[50] Zehra Çirak, a Turkish born writer who has lived in Germany since the age of two, says on this: "I prefer neither my Turkish nor my German culture. I live and long for a mixed culture" (Zehra Çirak, *Vogel auf dem Rücken eines Elefanten*, Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1991, p. 94).

[51] Cf. my *Vernunft: Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft*, especially pp. 829-852.

3. Intermediate summary

To sum this up: Cultural determinants today – from society's macrolevel through to individuals' microlevel – have become transcultural. The old concept of culture has become completely inappropriate. It misrepresents cultures' actual form, the type of their relations and the structure of individuals' identities and lifestyles.[52] Every concept of culture intended to pertain to today's reality must face up to the transcultural constitution.[53,54] The gesture made by some cultural theorists, who prefer to cling to their customary

[52] Wherever this concept continues to be represented, it acts as a normative corset, as a coercive homogenization precept.

[53] Ulf Hannerz' concept (or "root metaphor") of "creole cultures" and "creolization" is quite close to my perspective of transculturality. "Creole cultures come out of multidimensional cultural encounters and can put things together in new ways" (Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity*, p. 265). "Something like creole cultures", Hannerz suggests, "may have a larger part in our future than cultures designed, each by itself, to be pieces of a mosaic" (ibid., p. 267). In 1991 Michel Serres held an impressive plea in the spirit of transculturality (Michel Serres, *Le Tiers-Instruit*, Paris: Éditions François Bourin, 1991). His thesis is that what matters for present-day culture and education is to transcend the traditional alternatives of own and foreign and to think in terms of intersection, mixing and penetration. Whoever wants to move in the present-day world must be able to deal with a medley of cultural patterns.

[54] A further conceptual clarification may be helpful. The diagnosis of transculturality refers to a transition, or to a phase in a process of transition. It's a temporary diagnosis. It takes the old conception of single cultures as its point of departure, and it argues that this conception – although still seeming self-evident to many people – is no longer descriptively adequate for most cultures today. Instead, the diagnosis of transculturality views a present and future state of cultures which is no longer monocultural but cross-cultural. The concept seeks to conceptually grasp this transition. One point, however, might seem confusing in this talk of transculturality. It may appear contradictory that the concept of transculturality which points to a disappearance of the traditional single cultures nonetheless inherently continues to refer to 'cultures', and to a certain extent even seems to presuppose the ongoing existence of such cultures – for if there were no longer such cultures, where should the transcultural mixers take their components from? The point can easily be clarified. The process of transition obviously implies *two* moments: the ongoing existence of single cultures (or of an old understanding of culture's form) *and* the shift to a new, transcultural form of cultures. With respect to this double character of the transition, it is conceptually sound and even necessary to refer to single cultures of the old type *as well as* to point the way to transculturality. But what will be the case after the transition has been made? Won't it, at least then, be contradictory to continue speaking of 'cultures' on the one hand and of 'transculturality' on the other? Not at all. Because the activity of weaving new webs will, of course, continue to take existing cultures as its starting-point or reservoir for the development of further webs – but now these reference cultures themselves will already have a transcultural cut. The duo of reference cultures on the one hand and new cultural webs on the other remains, the difference however is that the reference cultures will now already be 'cultural' in the sense of 'transcultural'.

concepts and, wherever reality doesn't yield to these, retreat to a "well so much the worse for reality", is ridiculous.

IV. Supplements and outlooks

Having so far developed the general features of transculturality, I would now like to append some supplemental viewpoints and prospects.

1. Transculturality – already in history

First: Transculturality is in no way completely new historically. It has, to be sure, been the case to a larger extent than the adherents of the traditional concept of culture want to admit. They blindly deny the factual historic transculturality of long periods in order to establish the nineteenth century's imaginary notion of homogeneous national cultures. – Take whatever culture you want as example. Take your own or, for instance, Japanese culture: It obviously cannot be reconstructed without taking Chinese and Korean, Indian, Hellenistic or modern European culture into account.

Carl Zuckmayer once wonderfully described historical transculturality in *The Devil's General*: "[...] just imagine your line of ancestry, from the birth of Christ on. There was a Roman commander, a dark type, brown like a ripe olive, he had taught a blond girl Latin. And then a Jewish spice dealer came into the family, he was a serious person, who became a Christian before his marriage and founded the house's Catholic tradition. – And then came a Greek doctor, or a Celtic legionary, a Grisonian landsknecht, a Swedish horseman, a Napoleonic soldier, a deserted Cossack, a Black Forest miner, a wandering miller's boy from the Alsace, a fat mariner from Holland, a Magyar, a pandour, a Viennese officer, a French actor, a Bohemian musician – all lived on the Rhine, brawled, boozed, and sang and begot children there – and – Goethe, he was from the same pot, and Beethoven, and Gutenberg, and Mathias Grünewald, and – oh, whatever – just look in the encyclopaedia. They were the best, my dear! The world's best! And why? Because that's where the peoples intermixed. Intermixed – like the waters from sources, streams and rivers, so, that they run together to a great, living torrent".[55] – This is a realistic description of a 'folk's' historical genesis and constitution. It breaks

[55] Carl Zuckmayer, *The Devil's General*, in: *Masters of Modern Drama* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 911-958, here p. 930 [translation modified].

through the fiction of homogeneity and the separatist idea of culture as decreed by the traditional concept.

For everyone who knows their European history – and art history in particular – this historical transculturality is evident. Styles developed across the countries and nations, and many artists created their best works far from home. Albrecht Dürer, who is considered an exemplary German artist, first found himself in Italy, and he had to seek out Venice a second time in order to become himself completely. The cultural trends were largely European and shaped a network linking the states.[56] In general, Edward Said's observation holds: "All cultures are hybrid; none of them is pure; none of them is identical to a 'pure' folk; none of them consists of a homogenous fabric."[57]

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[56] Recently the exhibition "Il Rinascimento a Venezia e la pittura del Nord ai tempi di Bellini, Dürer, Tiziano" (Venice, Palazzo Grassi, 1999) caused a stir by getting by completely without "national identity determinations and dues" (Matin Warnke) – it was guided by the way things were, by the many influences and mixtures.

[57] Edward W. Said: "Kultur und Identität – Europas Selbstfindung aus der Einverleibung der Welt", *Lettre International* 34 (1996), pp. 21-25, here p. 24. In the same spirit Wolf Lepenies has said: "There are now only hybrid cultures" (Wolf Lepenies, "Das Ende der Überheblichkeit", in: *Die ZEIT*, no. 48, 24 Nov. 1995, p. 62). Similarly, from a philosophical point of view, J. N. Mohanty stated, "that talk of a culture which evokes the idea of a homogeneous form is completely misleading. Indian culture, or Hindu culture consists of completely different cultures. [...] A completely homogeneous subculture is not to be found" (Jitendra N. Mohanty, "Den anderen verstehen", in: *Philosophische Grundlagen der Interkulturalität*, pp. 115-122, here p. 118). Mohanty also notes generally: "The idea of cultural purity is a myth" (ibid., p. 117). Jacques Derrida notes: "*It is peculiar to a culture, that it is never identical with itself.* There is no culture and no cultural identity without this difference *towards itself*" (Jacques Derrida, "Das andere Kap", in: *Das andere Kap. Die vertagte Demokratie – Zwei Essays zu Europa*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1992, pp. 9-80, here p. 12 f.) Rémi Brague has pointed out how European identity is characterized by the sense of its distance from a double origin: "What's specific to European identity lies in its 'cultural secondariness': in the knowledge of its not being original, but having before it something else, something prior – culturally Greek antiquity, religiously Judaism" (Rémi Brague, *Europa – Eine exzentrische Identität*, Frankfurt-Main/New York: Campus 1993). – As soon as one observes the cultural fictions of purity more closely and realistically, they rapidly break up into a series of transcultural entanglements. Traditionally, and at least in the occident, mixtures of peoples came about particularly through conquest. In this, aspects of a conquered culture were integrated in the new, hegemonic culture. "Santa Maria sopra Minerva" is the formula for such processes. The difference to today lies in that the present-day blending has little to do with territorial, political expansions or conquests: It is far more a matter of transversal cultural interchange processes.

2. Cultural conceptions as active factors in respect of their object

Conceptions of culture are not just descriptive concepts, but operative concepts.[58] Our understanding of culture is an important *active factor* in our cultural life.

If one tells us (as the old concept of culture did) that culture is to be a homogeneity event, then we practice the required coercions and exclusions. We seek to satisfy the task we are set – and will be successful in so doing. Whereas, if one tells us or subsequent generations that culture ought to incorporate the foreign and do justice to transcultural components, then we will set about this task, and then corresponding feats of integration will belong to the real structure of our culture. The 'reality' of culture is, in this sense, always a consequence too of our conceptions of culture.

One must therefore be aware of the responsibility which one takes on in propagandizing concepts of this type. We should be suggesting concepts which are descriptively adequate and normatively accountable, and which – above all – pragmatically lead further.[59] Propagandizing the old concept of culture and its subsequent forms has today become irresponsible; better chances are found on the side of the concept of transculturality.

3. Annexability and transmutability

The concept of transculturality aims for a multi-meshed and inclusive, not separatist and exclusive understanding of culture. It intends a culture and society whose pragmatic feats exist not in delimitation, but in the ability to link and undergo transition. In meeting with other forms of life there are

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[58] Generally, concepts are schemata, with which we make our world understandable for ourselves and organize our actions. They preset grids and ways of viewing things which entail behavioral patterns and disturb facts. In this light, Deleuze determined the task of philosophy as being the creation of concepts: "La philosophie [...] est la discipline qui consiste à *créer* des concepts" (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1991, p. 10).

[59] Hence critical reflections on cultural concepts, such as I undertake here, are – from time to time at least – necessary. No one would claim that an alteration of the concept *eo ipso* already alters reality. That would be overly simplistic idealism. But, conversely, the way in which the conscious and subconscious effectuality of cultural terms codetermines cultural reality should not be overlooked. The subcutaneous and officious effectuality of the old concept of culture – one thinks automatically, or even states explicitly that culture is to be homogeneous, national etc. – contributes to separatisms and particularisms of the obsolete sort. Work on conceptual enlightenment is called for to counter this.

always not only divergences but opportunities to link up, and these can be developed and extended so that a common form of life is fashioned which includes even reserves which hadn't earlier seemed capable of being linked in. Extensions of this type represent a pressing task today.

It is a matter of readjusting our inner compass: away from the concentration on the polarity of the own and the foreign to an attentiveness for what might be common and connective wherever we encounter things foreign.

Transculturality sometimes demands things that may seem unreasonable for our esteemed habits – as does today's reality everywhere. But transculturality also contains the potential to transcend our received and supposedly determining monocultural standpoints, and we should make increasing use of these potentials. Diane Ravitch – an American critic of separatistic multiculturalism – reports an interesting example: In an interview a black runner said "that her model is Mikhail Baryshnikov. She admires him because he is a magnificent athlete". Diane Ravitch comments: "He is not black; he is not female; he is not American-born; he is not even a runner. But he inspires her because of the way he trained and used his body. When I read this, I thought how narrow-minded it is to believe that people can be inspired *only* by those who are exactly like them in race and ethnicity".[60] – Once again: We can and should transcend the narrowness of traditional, monocultural ideas and constraints, we can develop an increasingly transcultural understanding of ourselves. I am confident that future generations will more and more develop such transcultural forms of communication and comprehension.[61]

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[60] Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures", p. 354.

[61] Incidentally, it is not only recent developments in the constitution of cultures, but in the same way in science and with day-to-day problems which make an analogous transition to thought forms of mixing necessary for us. They call for a shift away from the old preference for clean separation, division of the world and unilinear analysis and for a transition to web-like, entangled, networked thought forms (I have set this out in more detail in my *Vernunft*). Thus in reality too we are finding ourselves confronted more and more with issues which result from networking effects. Even when problems arise locally their effects transcend borders, become global. Our old separatist thought forms however are unsuited to react to this. For them such transcending of borders is merely an "undesired side effect" – which you accept with a shrug of the shoulders and which you are helplessly confronted with. But of course it appears only to be a "side effect" because one has thought separatistically in the outset. The causal chains of reality however do not stop at this small-minded desire for division. Hence we must shift away from separative thinking and make the transition to thought forms of entanglement in economic, ecological, and all questions of planning.

4. Internal and external transculturality

Furthermore, the individuals' discovery and acceptance of their transcultural constitution is a condition for coming to terms with societal transculturality. Hatred directed towards foreigners is (as has been shown particularly from the psychoanalytic side) basically projected hatred of oneself. One takes exception vicariously to something in a stranger, which one carries within oneself, but does not like to admit, preferring rather to repress it internally and to battle with it externally.[62]

Julia Kristeva writes: "In a strange way, the stranger exists within ourselves: he is the hidden face of our identity [...] If we recognize him within ourselves, we prevent ourselves from abhoring him as such."[63] Indeed she also states a precondition for this recognition of the stranger within oneself: "Those who've never lost any of their roots, seem incapable of apprehending any word which could relativize their position. [...] The ear opens itself to objections only when the body loses the ground beneath its feet. To hear a dissonnance, one must have experienced a sort of imbalance, a tottering upon an abyss."[64]

Perhaps that sounds more dramatic than it is. For who today could be so conceited as to consider their roots to be the only ones possible? Not even to value his own roots does he have to do this. It is quite the reverse: insight into the specificity of these roots makes it possible to justify their particular estimation. But one cannot then simultaneously present them as being the best roots of all humankind altogether (with most others simply not having had the luck to receive these roots in the cradle). One's own roots are roots *for oneself* – not for everyone. Others can and may well value their own roots in the same way. The preference of one's own origin at the same time logically demands recognition, although not necessarily the adoption of other possible

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[62] Freud had already pointed to an analogy between the inner topology of repression and the outer topology of the relation to strangers: "[...] the repressed is foreign territory to the ego – internal foreign territory – just as reality (if you will forgive the unusual expression) is external foreign territory" (Sigmund Freud, "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis", in: Freud, *The Standard Edition*, ed. James Strachey, vol. XXII, London: Hogarth, 1973, pp. 5-184, here p. 57 (31st Lecture). Musil has clearly recognized the mechanism of projection of disinclinations: "Now, ethnic prejudice is usually nothing more than self-hatred, dredged up from the murky depths of one's own conflicts and projected onto some convenient victim, a traditional practice from time immemorial" (Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, trans. Sophie Wilkins, New York: Knopf, 1995, vol. I, p. 461). "[...] the good Christian projects his own faults onto the good Jew, whom he accuses of seducing him into committing advertisements, high interest rates, newspapers, and all that sort of thing" (ibid., p. 559).

[63] Julia Kristeva, *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), p. 9.

[64] Ibid., p. 29 f.

origins. One should remind oneself of this precisely in one's weak moments, those in which one might be in danger of drifting into the trap of making claims to exclusivity.

Against such temptations I would like to remind you of an inheritance of our tradition: in Greek ξένῐος meant both the stranger and guest. In other words, strangers were welcome as a matter of course. – If one is to appeal to European tradition at all, then please to this one too.

It is precisely when we no longer deny, but rather perceive, our inner transculturality, that we will become capable of dealing with outer transculturality.

5. Transculturality = uniformization?

Let me turn to a penultimate point. It's a crucial one. I want to respond to a potential misunderstanding. One might think that the concept of transculturality simply means and recommends the acceptance of an increasing homogenization of cultures and the coming of a uniform world-civilization, whereas it does not care about cultural diversity and its disappearance. But this is not the case at all. Transculturality does not mean simple uniformization. It is even intrinsically linked with the production of new diversity. For two aspects need to be distinguished.

First of all, it is indeed the case that cultural diversity in the old sense is diminishing. Today's and tomorrow's cultures will no longer be homogeneous, monolithic, clearly delimited (neither factually, nor in their own understanding of themselves). It is just this which comprises the content of the transculturality diagnosis.

But even with regard to this uniformization one should not only see gray. Whereas uniformization brings with it cultural losses on the one hand, greater communicability between people of different origins – as is seen particularly in the younger generation – ensues in its wake. Understanding each other is becoming more a matter of course and it is becoming easier to get on with each other in everyday life than was the case in any earlier generation. These could be signs of the formation of a world-internal society. The uniformization processes might perhaps lead us close to the old dream of a Family of Man and of a peaceful global society. *For this* one might very well accept some losses at other levels.

As transculturality pushes forward, diversity does not simply vanish, but its mode is altered. Diversity, as traditionally provided in the form of single cultures, does indeed disappear increasingly. Instead, however, a new type of

diversity takes shape: the diversity of different cultures and forms of life, each arising from transcultural permeations and exhibiting a transcultural cut.

Consider just how these transcultural formations come about. Different groups or individuals which give shape to new transcultural patterns draw upon different sources for this purpose. Hence the transcultural networks they are shaping will vary already in their inventory; and they will do so even more in their structure, because even the same elements, when put together differently, result in different structures. The transcultural webs are woven with different threads, and in different manner. Therefore, on the level of transculturality, a high degree of cultural manifoldness arises once again – certainly no less than that which was found between traditional single cultures.[65] It's just that now the differences no longer exist between clearly delineated cultures, but result between transcultural networks of identity which are no longer bound to geographical or national stipulations. The new situation can be described as follows: the same or similar identity networks can turn up at different places in this world; at the same time quite different forms of identity can exist in the same place. Neither would be possible according to the old, monocultural model. This shows once again the extent of the changes that are linked with transculturality.

All of this applies not only on the level of groups, but already on that of individuals. The global spread of the same content and signs in no way means the inception of a uniform human. Instead selective screening is often carried out quite differently, as is additionally the attribution of meaning. Even someone who makes the same selections as another person can give the chosen elements a quite different meaning in his cultural cosmos from those of the other.[66] Hence instead of a purported uniformity there exists from now on a diverse network of common features and differences between individuals.[67]

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[65] Similar views to mine are forwarded by Ulf Hannerz who says "that the flow of culture between countries and continents may result in another diversity of culture, based more on interconnections than on autonomy" (Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity*, p. 266) and by Mike Featherstone, who argues "against those who would wish to present the tendency on the global level to be one of cultural integration and homogenization" (Mike Featherstone, *Consumer culture & postmodernism*, London: Sage, 1991, p. 146).

[66] "Even if the possibility of global communication has come about among young people and changed societies throughout the world, this doesn't mean that the uniform young person has now made its entry on the world stage. A global semiotic community has arisen, but the signs have manifold meaning" (Reinhold Görling, *Heterotopia. Lektüren einer interkulturellen Literaturwissenschaft*, Munich: Fink, 1997, p. 37).

[67] Max Scheler had already pointed out the simultaneity of the adjustment between cultures and the increase in individual differentiation. He did this in a 1927 lecture entitled "Man in the Era of Adjustment" (in: Max Scheler, *Philosophical Perspectives*, Boston: Beacon,

This new type of cultural diversity exhibits a great advantage over the old one. Transcultural networks always have some elements in common while differing in others, meaning that there exist between them not only differences, but at the same time overlaps. Since they include parts which also occur in other networks, they are altogether more capable of affiliation amongst one another than the old cultural identities ever were. So in terms of its structure the new type of difference favors coexistence rather than conflict. Forms differing transculturally are free from the old problems of *separatistic* difference.

6. Comparing the concept of transculturality to the gloabalization and particularization diagnoses

To conclude, I'd like to compare the concept of transculturality with two other concepts which are much talked about today: the concept of globalization and that of particularization. My thesis is that these concepts are too one-sided, and that particularization is a wrong, yet understandable reaction to the likewise insufficient globalization diagnosis. The transculturality concept however, it seems to me, is able to fulfill the legitimate demands of both competing concepts, because it explains uniformitarian processes on the one side and the emergence of new diversity on the other side within a single framework.

The concept of globalization assumes that cultures are becoming the same the world over.[68] Globalization is obviously a concept of uniformization (preferably following the Western model) – and of uniformization alone. But this view can, at best, represent half the picture, and the champions of globalization must be having a hard time ignoring the complementary resurgence of particularisms worldwide.[69] Their concept, however, is by its

1958, pp. 94-126). Scheler denoted the "adjustment" as the "inclusive trend of this era" (p. 102).

[68] Cf. *Global Culture: Nationalism, globalization and modernity.*

[69] Incidentally, it is by no means evident that globalization processes are correctly defined when they are only described as unilinear expansion of Western culture. One would, at the same time, have to be attentive to considerable alterations which the elements of the initial culture experience in their acquisition. Stephen Greenblatt has pointed out such ambiguities in the "assimilation of the other". He describes this, for instance, in the way the inhabitants of Bali deal with video technology in a ritual context: "if the television and the VCR [...] suggested the astonishing pervasiveness of capitalist markets and technology, [...] the Balinese adaptation of the latest Western and Japanese modes of representation seemed so culturally idiosyncratic and resilient that it was unclear who

very structure incapable of developing an adequate understanding of these counter-tendencies. From the viewpoint of globalization, particularisms are just phenomena which are retrograde and whose destiny it is to vanish.

But particularisms cannot in fact be ignored. The "return to tribes" is shaping the state of the world just as much as the trend towards a world society.[70] In my understanding – and that of many others – this rise in particularisms is a reaction to globalization processes.[71] Tribalism fights globalism.[72] This certainly creates an explosive situation, because the particularisms often refine themselves through the appeal to cultural identity to nationalisms or fundamentalisms producing hatred, ethnic cleansing actions and war.[73] Enlightenment people don't like these particularisms, and this too

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was assimilating whom" (Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, p. 4). Hence not even with respect to economy – its paradigm sphere – does the globalization diagnosis seem to be fully appropriate. – Ulf Hannerz discusses similar phenomena under the heading "creolization": the uniform trends of a 'world culture', he demonstrates, are quickly bound into national or regional cultural profiles and thereby experience considerable diversification and transformation (cf. Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity*, esp. p. 264 ff.).

[70] Recent years – especially where hegemonic superstructures have broken down – have often seen the emergence of small-state constructs. Moreover on a higher level, beyond the particular cultures, large cultural alliances are forming which appeal to a cultural commonality – often one religiously based – and want to assert it politically. Samuel P. Huntington calls these large alliances 'civilizations' and outlines the future scenario of a "clash of civilizations" (Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", in: *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, 72/3, pp. 22-49).

[71] Cf. Roland Robertson, "Globalization Theory and Civilizational Analysis", in: *Comparative Civilizations Review* 17, 1987, pp. 20-30.

[72] Cf. Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, New York: Ballantine, 1996.

[73] As understandable as it may be to recur to the resources of cultural identity (to the "roots") in a situation of oppression from outside, since they represent a potential for resistance to foreign domination, the consequences are just awkward when the basis of resistance is retained unaltered at the moment of its victory and made the new state's *raison d'être*. It is then, under the appeal to cultural identity, that reactionary, anti-pluralist and tendencially totalitarian states come about. They exercise inner oppression just as they had previously been oppressed from the outside. This danger was pointed out by Jean François Lyotard: "Proud struggles for independence end in young, reactionary States" (Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 181 [262]). Over the past few decades this has been observable repeatedly in Africa and most recently in the disintegration of the Eastern sphere of power. Nation states arose with exorbitant fictions of inner homogeneity and defences against outer heterogeneity (cf. Ralf Dahrendorf, "Europa der Regionen?", in: *Merkur* 509, August 1991, pp. 703-706, here p. 704). Already Popper, as early as 1945, had warned that the recourse to roots and tribes would lead to inner dictatorship: "The more we try to return to the heroic age of tribalism, the more surely do we arrive at the Inquisition, at the Secret Police, and at a romanticized gangsterism" (Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 195).

is quite understandable. But it is not sufficient. As concerning as one may find these phenomena, we won't be able to get by without taking seriously the demand for a specific identity. People obviously feel compelled to defend themselves against being merged into globalized uniformity. They don't want just to be universal or global, but also specific and of their own. They want to distinguish themselves from one another and know themselves to be well accommodated in a specific identity. This desire is legitimate, and forms in which it can be satisfied undangerously should be determined and promoted.[74] Future cultural forms will have to be such that they also cater for the demand for specifity.

This makes clear the advantage of the transculturality concept over the competing concepts of globalization and particularization. The concept of transculturality goes beyond these seemingly hard – but all-too one-sided – alternatives. It is able to cover both global and local, universalistic and particularistic aspects, and it does so quite naturally, in terms of the logic of transcultural processes themselves. Globalizing tendencies as well as the desire for specifity and particularity can be fulfilled *within* transculturality. Transcultural identities comprehend a cosmopolitan side, but also a side of local affiliation.[75] Transcultural people combine both.

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[74] In so doing, every more detailed look at particularisms – at their motives and their problems – shows that they will be capable of remaining stable to some extent only when they face up to the demands of plurality and the constitution of transculturality. They are internally affected by both in several ways. Firstly, this is evident on the motivational level: the new particularisms obviously react to the overcoming of traditional identities by processes of cultural crossover. Secondly, any particularistic formation of identity finds itself confronted by the transcultural constitution of its own history. Within historical identities a certain identity must be selected, which is then declared to be *the* identity – alternatives however exist, and differing preferences of identity are sometimes at odds with one another within particularistic movements. Thirdly, it seems inconceivable that particularistic cultures might, in the long run, actually become homogeneous and remain protected against the rise of plurality within themselves. Not even totally closing the territorial and communicational borders could guarantee this, for even now there are already too many nuclei of plurality within each given culture. Fourthly, everyday life is characterized by transcultural elements everywhere, even where the most forceful identity rituals are found. – In general: Features of plurality and transculturality reach through to the core of particularistic identities. Therefore every particularism which simply tries to deny this plurality and transculturality and instead to establish forcefully monocultural purity – take fundamentalisms as example – is to be criticized argumentatively and pragmatically has poor chances of stability in the long run. Only those particularisms which acknowledge and permit plurality and transculturality can expect long term success.

[75] Cf. Robertson's term "glocalization" (R. Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage, 1992). Cf. also Hannerz, "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture".

Of course, the local side can even today still be determined by ethnic belonging or the community in which one grew up. But it doesn't have to be. People can make their own choice with respect to their affiliations, and they should be allowed to do so.[76] Your actual homeland can be far away from your original homeland, which was perhaps just constriction, prison and anguish. *Ubi bene, ibi patria*, as was said in antiquity. Or, in a contemporary formulation, with Horkheimer and Adorno: "Homeland is the state of having escaped."[77] – I am not saying that it *has to be* this way, that one can *only* find a home far away from one's first home or original roots. But I am emphasizing that this is a *possible case worthy of recognition.* In a certain sense even one's first home is only really home as a second home. One must (in view of other possibilities) have consciously opted for it, subsequently have chosen or affirmed it for oneself. Only then is 'home' not an outshoot of nature, but a cultural and human category.

Unlike the globalization concept, then, the transculturality concept points out that in the midst of globalizing uniformization processes new cultural differences are forming *at the same time.* And, unlike the particularization concept, it shows that particularisms are co-determined through to the core by unifying factors. Its advantage lies, put briefly, in that it is not monocular, but binocular. It makes both current uniformization phenomena and processes of new formation of difference perceptible and understandable. It faces up to the *dual figure* of formation of unity *and* difference[78] and is hence able to do justice to both the globalizing and localizing aspects of the development. Both become comprehensible in terms of the logic of transcultural processes.

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With regard to the old concept of culture I have shown how badly it misrepresents descriptively today's conditions and which normative dangers its continuation or revival bring about for cultures' living together. I have contrasted this with the concept of transculturality which draws a different picture descriptively and normatively of the condition and relation of cultures: not one of isolation and conflict, but of entanglement, intermixing and

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[76] "Grant that we cannot stand outside of *any* culture. We need not therefore be standing inside of one and only one particular culture" (Gutmann, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics", p. 192).

[77] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, transl. John Cumming, New York: Continuum, 1994, p. 78.

[78] On this current signature of phenomena of difference *and* entanglement generally see my *Vernunft*, l.c.

commonness. If the diagnosis given is to some extent correct, then the tasks of the future – in political and social, scientific and educational, artistic and creative respects – are best addressed through approaches which decidedly take transculturality into account.