

CULTURAL TRANSFER: CONCEPT AND HISTORICAL REALITY

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the concept of cultural transfer has become increasingly important. In the closely connected modern world, social sciences and humanities have turned toward researching the constant exchange of cultural goods and cultural hybridity that results from it. Cultural history has adopted this approach as well. The author demonstrates the content of the concept, examines its elements, and discusses its aspects. The presentation and discussion are focused on the Early Modern Period. Many examples from this period, both from world history as well as from the Slovene history, are described to illustrate the way the concept operates. Its lack of use in Slovene historiography is explained by the Slovene historians' rather general mistrust of using concepts and models in their research. Nevertheless, their empirical work has produced results similar to those of the researchers who do use the concept. The author argues that the advantages of the concept outweigh the problems it involves.

Keywords: cultural transfer, exchange of cultural goods, decontextualisation, recontextualisation, adaptation

TRANSFER CULTURALE: IL CONCETTO E LA REALTÀ STORICA

SINTESI

Il concetto di transfer culturale fa riferimento a fenomeni di uno scambio costante e di circolazione dei beni legati alla cultura e all'ibridismo culturale che ne risulta. Si tratta di un concetto che è emerso e ha ricevuto sempre più importanza negli ultimi decenni, in una fase d'intensa globalizzazione e di fitti legami del mondo contemporaneo. Indagini incentrate sui più diversi tipi di scambio si sono fatte strada anche in ambito storiografico, poiché scambi e legami tra persone, idee e cose hanno avuto anche nel passato un ruolo estremamente rilevante. Il discorso affrontato si focalizza sui contenuti abbracciati dal concetto in questione, ne presenta gli elementi basilari e ne analizza le prospettive, per passare quindi a illustrarne l'applicabilità attraverso dei confronti tra la storia slovena e quella mondiale nella prima fase dell'Età moderna. L'autore constata che nella storiografia

grafia slovena il concetto di transfer culturale è pressoché assente in quanto gli storici sloveni sono piuttosto restii ad adottare concetti teorici, ciononostante i risultati cui giungono, già per le caratteristiche del passato sloveno, sono molto simili a quelli degli storici che lo usano. Da parte sua è dell'avviso che il concetto di transfer culturale sia uno strumento pregnante e di utile applicabilità seppure il suo uso celi dei problemi.

Parole chiave: transfer culturale, scambio di beni culturali, decontestualizzazione, ricontestualizzazione, adattamento

INTRODUCTION: THE PRESENT, THE PAST, AND CULTURAL TRANSFER¹

Anyone who would even hint that as of the last spring, Slovenians would take part in scenes previously reserved for the footage and photographs of the Japanese, Malaysians, Koreans, and other inhabitants of Eastern Asia, where people in the overcrowded means of public transport protect themselves from seasonal flu epidemics by wearing face masks, would be the target of strange looks. People would roll their eyes, smile suggestively, or merely wave away such an idea as a peculiar custom from foreign places. However, today – only half a year later, due to what were initially even contradictory recommendations of doctors and because of government decrees – we have worn masks in Slovenia for quite a while already. We rub our hands with disinfectants, distance ourselves from anyone we talk to, rarely meet friends and family or even stay away from them, and deny ourselves any travels to foreign places and countries. Alternatively, we can resist the situation, basing our decision on the opinions circulating the social networks and statements of some (admittedly very rare) doctors who claim the virus is not so very dangerous, or even believe that this is all a conspiracy by the authorities with the aim of abolishing democracy and implementing their devious plans. Be that as it may, this year's events, the speed at which the disease keeps spreading, confusion and uncertainty, as well as the similarity of reactions all over the world once again point at the inseparable inter-connectedness of the modern world. Moreover, the events that we do not merely witness but in fact willingly or unwillingly participate in represent a dynamic and vigorous example of cultural transfer, as, during these

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developments, the biological, social, political, and cultural factors keep operating, combining, transferring, unravelling and reconnecting.

The biological agent – which has apparently jumped to people because of the traditional cultural practices in a market of a metropolis several thousand kilometres away and then spread all around the world due to modern means of transport – has resulted in the disease reaching an incidence rate of epidemic and pandemic proportions. Initially, this has triggered responses in which the social agents (e.g. individuals, various social and professional groups, economists, politicians, scientists, and various institutions) have spontaneously and/or intentionally changed their behaviour, implemented measures, and adapted their actions. If we generalise a little, we could state that the social and cultural practices have changed: people wear masks all around the world now, universities and schools are combining live lessons with remote teaching, scientists are feverishly looking for a vaccine, the economy is facing a crisis, employees are afraid for their jobs even more than usual, people strive to adapt, some of them are protesting, while the politicians lack any clear ideas of how to manage the society and the economy. Granted, the masks – probably the most noticeable feature of the new social practices – have certainly not only resulted from the geographical transfer from faraway Asia. They have been decontextualised from a relatively clearly defined and specific field of medicine and then recontextualised in everyday life. In the process of the recontextualisation, however, we can notice every day how the users often adapt their mask use to their own perception of the masks' protective function, their momentary disposition and attitude to their utilisation, and sometimes even their aesthetic taste. Sometimes masks are even used as political statements, as was evident from the red star on the mask of one of the members of the Slovenian National Assembly.

We can add that such an adaptation of the transferred elements and their integration in a new area is nothing new. In 1720, when Count Khevenhüller was looking for a French chef to employ in his Viennese palace, he expected the candidate to cook and bake in the French *as well as* the German way (Hayden-Hanscho, 2013, 166) – that he would therefore be able to adapt the French cuisine to the ingredients and practices already known in Vienna. By comparing two different facts that are completely dissimilar in terms of content as well as three hundred years apart, we have touched upon one of the characteristics of the historical science, its associative properties, and openness for the present: the present triggers associations regarding the past and brings up research problems for the historians to tackle.

The question of cultural transfer and the related cultural exchanges, as well as intercultural dialogues or polylogues, represents an issue that surfaced, in such a conceptualisation, as one of the prominent topics of cultural history (Hyden-Hanscho, Pieper & Stangl, 2013, 7) during the period of the intense modern globalisation. Moreover, cultural transfer is a concept that pushes cultural contacts and cultural exchanges towards the focus of historical consideration. By emphasising the constant circulation of cultural elements among various societies, it allows for a better understanding of the past, as “exchanges and connections between people, ideas, and things have, in the past, played a much more prominent role than sug-

gested by the established historical records” (Calic, 2019, 11). As the concept of cultural transfer underlines the societal permeability that allows for all sorts of exchanges, it also questions the validity of the culturalistic schemes that involve monolithic cultural blocs. It underlines the often neglected forms of cultural entanglement and mixing (*métissage*). According to the French researcher Michel Espagne, such neglect results from focusing on the search for group identities, which endeavour to conceal cultural mixing even when the formation of identities results from precisely such mixing (Espagne, 1999, 1). The historian Patric Boucheron is very clear as well: in the introduction to the collective work *Histoire mondiale de la France*, he states that the work aims to “mobilise a pluralist conception of history, opposite to the identitarian narrowing that dominates the public discourse nowadays” (Boucheron, 2017, 7). The concept of cultural transfer deconstructs the ideas of pure cultures and seeks the elements of their mutual influences and interconnection precisely in the times when the questions of intercultural relations keep arising in all their severity (Abdellatif et al., 2012, 14). To put it in the words of the Viennese historian W. Schmale: “a new definition and partial overcoming of the concept of national states in connection with the redistribution of tasks between the European, national, and regional European institutions” (Schmale, 2003, 41) belongs among the fundamental changes at the beginning of the 21st century. The concept of cultural transfer places the specific problem of the contemporary societies, together with the unease that accompanies it, into the historical perspective – just like climate changes have encouraged the development of environmental history; like the feminist movement well over half a century ago has resulted in the foundations of the history of women and later history of gender; or like the workers’ movement and mass politicisation at the beginning of the 20th century has given rise to social history. If the role of the concept under consideration is therefore obvious in the humanities and social sciences, it must also be defined; while we must also ascertain which contents, elements, and aspects characterise it. In the present discussion, we will focus on the Early Modern Period – the time when the five continents “started to integrate, and the integration gradually progressed to form the single world we live in today” (Reinhard, 2014, 10).

THE CONTENTS OF CULTURAL TRANSFER: THE CONCEPT AND HISTORICAL REALITIES

Cultural transfer is one of the heuristic, methodological, and interpretative starting points used by the various humanities and social sciences, including historiography, to analyse connections, interlacement, and co-dependence in the present and past societies as well as the consequences of this co-dependence. From the viewpoint of historiography, cultural transfer is closely related to the approaches and starting points that historians have conceptualised under a variety of names. The decades around the end of the second millennium witnessed the formation of *histoire croisée*, entangled history, connected history, shared history, transnational

history, global history, and world history (Gruzinski, 1999; Benjamin, 2009; Pernau, 2011, 37–84; Saunier, 2013, 3–5; Komlosy, 2011, 9–14; Yun-Casalilla, 2013, 25; Bentley, 2011, 345–349; Osterhammel, 2019, 22–30; Bayly, 2011, 4–6, 16–23). All these fields of history often share a common focus or supplement each other regardless of what communities (national, pre-national, or defined with other criteria) and/or spatial horizons (local, translocal, regional, transregional,² or global) represent the subject of their research. In their perception of cultures and cultural spaces, they systematically research exogenous factors, emphasise their combined effects with the endogenous ones, and underline the dynamics, instability, and (re) shaping of the individual cultures. As a rule, they shift the focus away from Europe and the European understanding of the past.³

Cultural transfer does something similar. Its referential contents in historiography involve the mobility of cultural goods and their creators as well as proponents among a variety of cultural spaces in the past. This means that cultural transfer applies to the movements of people, all sorts of objects, concepts, words, ideas and ideological systems, discourses, information and knowledge, social institutions and religious systems, symbols and imaginaries, behavioural patterns and emotions, gestures and images, animals, plants, and diseases. These movements result in the interaction and mixing of the elements of various cultures (Rossini & Toggweiler, 2014, 5; Schmale, 2013, 220–221; Abdellatif et al., 2012, 24–26; Roeck, 2007, 16–18; Landwehr & Stockhorst, 2004, 287–290; Middel, 2000, 18; Mitterbauer, 1999, 23). Cultural transfer therefore involves the transfer of material and immaterial cultural elements from the original to the target culture. In this regard, material goods should not be strictly separated from the non-material ones as individual physical objects are related to immaterial contents, i.e. with their use or a particular sort of behaviour. To be of any use to their owners, *tric-trac* game tables, which can be found in the inventories of the 18th-century Carniolan nobility (Štuhec, 2011, 377), or *jeu de paume* racquets, inventoried at the same time in Dornava Mansion in Styria (Weigl, 2003, 200–201), required the knowledge of the games' rules and some modicum of skill. The use of differentiated tableware and utensils, for example forks – in the West an invention of the Renaissance Italy (Kekewich, Webb & Lentin, 2000, 30–31) – and the manual for good behaviour, written by the Carniolan estates official Siezenheimb in 1659, have not only established and altered the external appearance of the tables of the Carniolan nobility but also shaped the behaviour of people sitting at such tables (Štuhec, 1994, 3–7). New behavioural patterns and social communication were also dictated by coffee, tea, and chocolate – three exotic drinks that asserted themselves among the Carniolan social elite in the first half of the 18th century (Štuhec, 2009, 240–244).

2 In the context of these concepts, regions are often understood as extensive geographical areas, for example South-Eastern Europe, the Atlantic, Central Europe.

3 The *Geschichte der Welt* series represents one of the emblematic characteristics of this decentering. In the work that focuses on the world's oceans and empires between 1350 and 1750, only the last chapter is dedicated to Europe (Reinhard, 2014, 669–831).

ACTIONS AND ACTORS OF CULTURAL TRANSFER

Cultural transfer as a historical fact is a process that consisted of three actions: decontextualisation (removal from the initial, original cultural space), followed by a transfer, which, in turn, was followed by recontextualisation⁴ – i.e., adoption in the new, target cultural space. In this process, an interaction developed that changed both spaces.

The intensity of changes and interactions varied. Perhaps there were no changes whatsoever in the original culture, or they were minimal. On the other hand, they could be downright pivotal. For example, the transfer of the *tric-trac* game from the French cultural space among the Carniolan social elite could not have had any effect on the original culture, but it certainly influenced the manner of socialisation, leisure time, perception of money, and the meaning of the game among those who played it in Carniola. Therefore, the transfer influenced certain segments of the target culture and co-shaped them. The changes that the societies and cultures of colonised regions had to endure lie on the other end of the scale of intensity of the potential changes in the original culture. Apart from the other actions of the conquistadors, the theft of Aztec treasures had a catastrophic effect on the Aztec cultural space. Meanwhile, in European cultures, these objects garnered admiration, wonder, and greed. Albrecht Dürer was so impressed that he described them enthusiastically in his journal after seeing them in Brussels (Meyer, 1996, 58). Among the European intelligentsia and politicians, the transfer of information about new continents and people that Europeans had known nothing about and which the Holy Bible did not discuss triggered a series of cognitive discrepancies and moral dilemmas (Armstrong & Chmielewski, 2013, 41–42). Thus, it altered the established knowledge schemes and at least theoretically contributed to new moral behaviour guidelines. As target cultural spaces, the Central American and South American societies were influenced by the transfer of the Spanish social institutions like the *encomienda*, Christianity, and diseases, as all of them radically changed their social, economic, political, settlement, and cultural structures (Crosby, 2006, 234–237; Lane & Restall, 2012, 44, 67–99) – regardless of the various forms of resistance that these societies organised against the conquerors; the syncretisms that took shape in these societies; and the fact that even the European conquerors, colonists, and merchants would need and accept the assistance, skills, and knowledge of the aboriginal population (Benjamin, 2009, 273). The intensity and scope of the changes in the original and target cultures very much depended on the motives, needs, wishes, means, agents, and methods that accompanied all three stages of the transfer.

The adoption of the transferred cultural goods was usually not automatic. Normally, it was accompanied by selection, filtering, and adaptation. It also depended on the motivations focused on a particular good in the original culture.

4 P. Burke (Burke, 2004, 19–21; Burke, 2016, 27–31) writes vividly about the decontextualisation and recontextualisation in connection with the Renaissance.

If the adoption was voluntary, the target cultural space did not necessarily adopt all the elements of the offered cultural transfer, but rather selected, adapted, and supplemented the native elements or changed their role and significance. Recontextualisation was an active process. For example, in Carniola, the taste of coffee was altered with the addition of a native product, milk, as is evident from Baron Raigersfeld's visit to his sister, abbess of the Convent of Poor Clares in Škofja Loka in June 1759 (ARS, AS 730, fsc. 199, 449).⁵ Speaking of coffee, let us merely mention the importance of coffee houses as a spot where in the 18th century, new ideas would form while people enjoyed this exotic drink. There, the public was born; businesses would be conducted; and unlike taverns, intended for men from the lower social strata, they were the gathering places of the educated bourgeoisie and nobility (Outram, 1995, 15–20; Horn Melton, 2001, 240–250). From their initial cultural context of prayer mats, another sort of objects – Turkish carpets – became, in the process of recontextualisation, a sort of decoration whose vivid colours brought life to what were generally black chests and tables in the dwellings of the Carniolan nobility (Štuhec, 2006, 121). The agents of the transfer were able to adapt the subject of this process to such a degree that in the original culture, this adaptation was understood as too much of a deviation from the original essence and purpose and, if possible, forbidden. The Jesuits in India, China, and Japan (until their expulsion in 1639) almost completely adapted to the local cultural norms regarding clothing, cuisine, and behaviour. Thus, they triggered a debate that concluded in the years between 1742 and 1744 with the Roman headquarters forbidding their accommodational missionary approach (Wendt, 2007, 63–67).

The adoption could differ in terms of duration as well. It could be (relatively) permanent or temporary. For example, the adoption of the Reformation in Slovenia was temporary rather than permanent like, for example, in Saxony or Brandenburg. The permanence or temporariness of the adoption of a cultural element depended on a number of factors, for example on the need for it in a certain society or social group, logistical possibilities, infrastructure, and support or opposition by the decisive holders of social power or influence.

The direction of cultural transfer indicated a type of relations between various cultural spaces. When it took place only in a single direction or the exchange during a longer period of time was not symmetrical, it could develop into various levels of dependence and hierarchisation – particularly when it was a consequence or a result of a violent confrontation between two cultures and the subjugation of one to the other (Roeck, 2007, 18). The directions of cultural transfers were closely related to the formation of the centre as well as semi-periphery, periphery, and external areas (Wallerstein, 1974).

5 “Dan bin ich mit meiner fr Hallerstein in ein mit 3 pferden bespanten Birotsche u Micherle zu pferdt nach lack, meine schwester die abesse haimzusuchen arriierten daselbst um 8 uhr, nahmen ein milch caffè und dan machten ein visite bey dem hauptmanishen br paumgarten.”

However paradoxical this may seem, doubts regarding the goods introduced from another cultural space and resistance against them were a part of active adoption. Until as late as the last quarter of the 17th century, the attitude towards coffee, for example, was very ambivalent in European societies. Medical discussions ascribed it with a range of negative side effects like headache, a laxative effect, impotence, and lust (Baghdiantz-McCabe, 2015, 126–127). Should we wonder, then, at the discussion on the pages of Valvasor's *Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* between the undisputed medical authority, provincial doctor De Copini, and the learned editor of *Glory*, Francisci? While the former claimed, based on the opinion of a certain Danish doctor, that coffee caused semen to dry up and resulted in impotence (Valvasor, 1689, III, 333), the latter argued against this resolutely, citing the opinions of other doctors as well as his own positive experience (Valvasor, 1689, III, 339–341). Jurij Gladič, member of the learned society of Ljubljana Academia operosorum, clearly expressed his resistance against the cultural transfer from a certain cultural area by writing, in Latin, a belligerent poem against the French towards the end of the 17th century (Gantar, 1994, 97). The proponents of the resistance could be individuals, groups (for example merchants, afraid of the competition), or government structures. With considerable protective customs tariffs, the policies of mercantilism prevented or restricted the importation of foreign goods and thus systematically impeded cultural transfer, although the restrictions were, in the form of dress codes, also supported with moral arguments about unnecessary luxury and urgent preservation of the division between the estates (Iseli, 2009, 40–41). However, as the French Controller-General of Finances Colbert strived to restrict the importation of mirrors from Venice, lace from the Netherlands, and silk from Italy, he in fact contributed to the creation of the conditions for the transfer of knowledge by spying in Venice and inviting foreign experts (Nassiet, 2006, 176–177). Colbert – a man with one of the most important social roles and significant social influence in the leading European country of the second half of the 17th century – controlled the directions and contents of cultural transfers to some degree.

The transfer itself – i.e., the action intervening between appropriation and adoption – was implemented through various activities and with the assistance of different actors. Purchases and sales, travels and voluntary or forced migrations, gifts, imitation, production, learning and experimenting in line with foreign models or templates, teaching in educational institutions, meetings and discussions in academies and learned societies, preaching, narrating and observing, reading books in private and public libraries, writing letters, and, last but not least, looting, military actions, and war all constituted forms of transfers. The Renaissance spread to France during the Italian Wars (Cornette, 2000, 86–87); Venice developed its glass industry mastery based on glass waste imported from the Orient (Wendt, 2007, 25); Armenian immigrants opened the first coffee houses in Paris (Baghdiantz-McCabe, 2015, 129); while the expelled Huguenots brought their artisanal expertise and stories to the German territory. Officers who served in the

borderland of the Military Frontier, where they acquired Turkish objects as war trophies, gifts, or purchases, would also introduce these objects to Carniola and Styria (Matjašič, 1992, 60).

Just as the manners of transfers were different, their proponents were diverse as well. Individuals, professional merchants and artisans, scholars and clergy, learned societies and educational institutions, humanists and artists, pilgrims, missionaries, and soldiers, travellers, research expeditions, as well as the postal service had the function of couriers and channels that encouraged and connected various cultural spaces. Cultural transfers could also take place in the silence of studies and studios. For example, every evening, Machiavelli would put on formal clothes, as if he was about to be received at a royal court, and head into his study to commune with the ancients (Rice & Grafton, 1994, 77). Transfers of cultural elements could, however, also take place in the lively mass of merchants, artisans, money lenders, aristocrats, peasants, monks, prostitutes, teeth pullers, snake charmers, and acrobats who would buy, sell, trade, dance, yell, jostle, eat, argue, and preach at the Campo de' Fiori square (Boone & Porfyriou, 2007, 249–250). Model objects like, for example, the fashion mannequin shipped around Europe from Paris to bring the attention to fashion trends (Baš, 1992, 150), cabinets of curiosities, museums, public libraries, encyclopaedias, conversation lexicons, newspapers, magazines would spread information and knowledge as well (Burke, 2000, 168–172, 190). Janez Danijel Erberg, a prominent Carniolan erudite at the end of the 17th century, read *Journal des savants*, among other publications (ARS, AS 309, fsc. 12, lit. E No. 24, 398); in the middle of the 18th century, the member of the Carniolan Representation and Chamber Baron Raigersfeld subscribed to a newspaper from Brussels (ARS, AS 730, fsc. 199, 593); while Baron Zois engaged in extensive correspondence with foreign scientists and scholars (Šumrada, 2001; Vidmar, 2010, 64–74, 85–128) as well as owned a rich library so that his erudition was noticed even by foreign visitors (Farinelli, 2020, 24). Meanwhile, a group actor – the Academia operosorum, whose members would often travel around Italy – actively strived to alter the architectural and urban image of Ljubljana in accordance with the model of the baroque Rome or Venice (Vidmar, 2013, 129, 178–179).

Among the agents of cultural transfer, we should especially underline the individuals and communities that crossed the borders of the various cultural spaces already during their primary socialisation – with bilingualism, as descendants of parents from different cultures. The descendants of Portuguese men and Asian, African, or South American women are model examples of cultural intermediaries between very different cultures (Disney, 2007, 305). Meanwhile, Žiga Zois was, so to say, an emblematic model of an intermediary between two neighbouring cultures, even though he opted for the nascent Slovenian culture and contributed significantly to its formation despite being schooled in Reggio Emilia (Kacin, 2013, 1). Regarding the Slovenian territory, we should not forget its partial multilingualism. According to Valvasor, Slovenian, German, and Italian languages were used in Ljubljana (Valvasor, 1689, XI, 708). Although the use and knowledge of these three

languages were not equally and evenly distributed neither socially nor situationally, Valvasor's statement, as well as the guest appearances of foreign theatre and opera groups (Kotnik, 2012, 26–32; Ludvik, 1976, 40–41), attest to the reception of foreign-language cultural products by the particular social groups in Carniola, especially the nobility and educated bourgeoisie.

To sum it all up: the appropriation, transfer, and adoption – as well as the selection and adaptation of the transferred cultural elements – resulted in a certain level of cultural hybridisation and intercultural enrichment. Communication and social interaction were at the centre of cultural transfers. Besides everything that we have just defined as the contents of transfers, social interaction also involves the exchange of various actions as well as verbal, non-verbal, motivational, and expressive influences, which can, through mediators of social influence, affect motivations, standpoints, beliefs, norms, values, cognition, emotions, and feelings of individuals (Nastran-Ule, 1992, 29–33). Therefore, we should consider defining cultural transfer as a socio-psychological interaction, taking place at the macro and micro level.

ASPECTS OF CULTURAL TRANSFER

When we speak of the aspects of cultural transfers, we are discussing geographical (spatial), social, intersectoral, intergenerational, intragenerational, and temporal dimensions of the phenomenon under consideration. The geographical or spatial ingredient is definitely its most obvious aspect, as it is a part of the very definition of the concept and the related phenomena. Some authors refer to this aspect as a horizontal cultural transfer in the spatial sense (Roeck, 2007, 23–24). Such a designation does not seem very appropriate to us, as horizontal transfer is analysed in combination with vertical transfer. The latter, however, is understood as the transfer taking place between social classes, strata, and different positions in the social structure (Roeck, 2007, 24–25). In our opinion, instead of horizontal transfer in the spatial sense, it is better to use the term geographical transfer or merely spatial transfer (without adding the word “horizontal”). Of course, it is sensible to use the concept of vertical transfer when discussing the transfers of cultural goods or elements between the various social classes and strata, while reserving the concept of horizontal transfer to describe and analyse transfers within the same social class or stratum. When in 1707, Princess Auersperg explained to those who inventoried her husband's property that the linen, clothes, and lace, discovered after the death of her husband, were divided among his two chamberlains; that the red taffeta duvet went to Barbara Šarf, the wife of one of the chamberlains; that three writing desks were left to his servants; while his saddle and three embroidered saddle pads were given to his Steward Gregor Golob (ARS, AS 309, fsc. 2, lit. A, No. 31, 10–15), she described what modern historians could refer to as vertical transfer of elements of (noble) material culture from the ruling class to the subordinate class. However, when in 1662, the French high nobility started painting the heels of their shoes red after they had noticed the red heel of the King's brother – who had spent the night in the taverns near the butcheries of Paris and happened to step in a pool of animal blood (Erlanger, 2004,

145) – this was an example of horizontal transfer. In social reality, cultural transfer would not only occur vertically or horizontally. Its directions could be diffuse or radial as well. The Reformation was triggered by Luther in Wittenberg, but its transfer had an impact on all of the social classes and strata – or all estates, to use a concept that Luther’s contemporaries used to understand their social structure.

Geographical transfers took place in a wide variety of geographical scales. At the transcontinental level, for example, the transfer of firearms from Europe to Japan occurred (Wendt, 2007, 42,); while the transfers of humanism and the Renaissance from the Italian Peninsula over the Alps to the other European regions were transregional (Nauert, 1995, 95–123). However, not only sublime ideas, artistic practices, and precious Oriental products, but also the knowledge of meadow and pasture management, exchanged between the Carinthian and Upper Carniolan peasants, crossed the Alpine mountain passes (Zwitter, 2020, 61–62). This transfer belongs among translocal transfers.

The temporal viewpoint focuses on the time that passed since the emergence of a cultural good in the original culture until its transfer to the target culture. In this regard, the duration required for the target culture to familiarise itself with a certain cultural good should be distinguished from the time during which the cultural good was accepted or rejected. The intermediate period – the time of hesitation, consideration, and disputes – is, in our opinion, an important indicator of the characteristics and relations within the target culture.

In our opinion, at least three other aspects of cultural transfer are also somewhat neglected by the users of this concept. The first of these is the transfer that we refer to as inter-sectoral or inter-segmental. It involves transfers of cultural elements between various sectors or segments of culture. The outcomes of such transfers represent a synthesis rather than a hybrid, as they may result in completely new cultural products. In the case of printing press technology, Gutenberg and his associates adapted and creatively brought together the elements that had already been known in various technological sectors and segments, and were used for pressing grapes, fine jewellery design, engraving, oil painting, the printing of playing cards, and paper-making (Rice & Grafton, 1994, 3–5). Simultaneously, the principles of printing playing cards and making paper are also model examples of the spatial transfer of technologies originating in Asia (Malanima, 2009, 227). The transfer of cultural elements would also take place between and within generations. Therefore, we can also discuss intergenerational and intragenerational cultural transfer. Intergenerational transfer encompassed everything associated with the primary socialisation in the family – from learning the fundamental means of communication, i.e. language, through expressing and controlling emotions and bodily functions, to communicating the most basic realisations about the world and the rules of finding one’s bearings in it. It also involved all of the functional and intentional activities in the various social situations, communities, and institutions, like, for example, working the fields, apprenticing with village or city artisans, serving with farmers in the neighbouring village, or attending a Jesuit college. One of the ways in which it was expressed was by the older generation passing on its material goods to the

younger generation. In 1709, the enumerators who inventoried the property of Baron Tauferer near the town of Višnja Gora stated that they had not found anything valuable and that “whatever was found is used by the young masters” (ARS, AS 309, fsc. 47, lit. T, No. 48, 54).⁶ Meanwhile, intragenerational transfer involves the cultural elements formed among peer groups and actions that such groups conduct, for example ridiculing men who had been cheated on or beaten, or protecting the village girls eligible for marriage (Muchembled, 1992, 121–122).

A SHORT DIGRESSION: CULTURAL TRANSFER IN SLOVENIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SLOVENIAN HISTORY

The transfer of cultural transfer into Slovenian historiography could be used as an example of a null transfer, i.e. of the transfer that has never happened. This, however, is not surprising. Slovenian historiography has never been particularly fond of using concepts, especially those that stemmed from other disciplines – except perhaps in the times when the Marxist explanatory paradigm was prevalent, and even then, Marxist concepts were mostly used for the sake of appearances and, at least so it seems, with reservations. Conceptual indifference or at most a spontaneous and logical use of concepts is characteristic of a considerable part of Slovenian historiography. However, the characteristics of the Slovenian past kept steering historians towards researching and explaining the historical phenomena that correspond precisely to the concept of cultural transfer. For this reason, the question of the interactions between the Slovenian territory and the neighbouring or geographically even more remote areas has always been an important – even unavoidable – subject of research. However, historians have never defined these interactions with simple and contextually relatively strictly defined concepts like the one we are discussing presently; but rather described them semantically, with somewhat more diffuse everyday terms like influence (Troha, Šorn & Balkovec, 2008), spreading, resonance, relations, or contacts. Already Josip Gruden in the *History of the Slovenian Nation (Zgodovina slovenskega naroda)* wrote about pilgrimages as a form of establishing contacts with “foreign countries” as well as about foreign trade that was “much more important than any deal back home” (Gruden, 1912, 59, 413). A century later, two syntheses of the Slovenian history in a single title thematised the junctureness⁷ and intermediateness of the Slovenian territory (Štih & Simoniti, 2009; Luthar, 2008). Meanwhile, the introduction to *Slovenian History (Slovenska zgodovina)* from 2016 (Štih, Simoniti & Vodopivec 2016, 9)⁸ argues against the schemes that entail monolithic cultures; announces the sort of history that places multicultural contacts to the forefront; and is, in terms of its contents, very close to the standpoints on questioning the schemes

6 “... Was aber sunst zu finden würdet von die jungen herrn verbraucht.”

7 This word cannot be found in the dictionaries of the English language, but how to make an adjective out of the word juncture?

8 “The history of the Slovenian territory and the people who lived in it is – like everywhere in Europe – far too complex to be restricted merely to the history of a single national community.”

involving monolithic cultures that we summed up and analysed in the opening part of the present discussion. After all, two phenomena from the Early Modern Period that are of crucial importance for the Slovenian history – Reformation and the beginnings of the national “rebirth” – resulted from cultural transfer. The Reformation – which strived, for religious motives, to integrate the speakers of the Slovenian dialects into a religious linguistic community based on language – is an example of a cultural transfer because the literary works of the Slovenian Protestants were in fact a recontextualisation and adaptation of Luther’s *sola scriptura* principle. According to this principle, language was not only a means of communication like in the case of the humanists, but also a path to redemption. The beginnings of the formation of the modern Slovenian nation resulted from cultural transfer as well, as they were encouraged by the ideas that were modern in the 18th century (Vodopivec, 2006, 16). If Slovenian historiography could therefore endure without using this concept while it nevertheless focused on similar topics and built on similar foundations as those that contributed to the formation of the concept and its assertion, then we could ask ourselves what the point of the concept actually is. The answer we can offer is the following: the use of this concept, as well as others, can clarify the historians’ optic so that they can notice and more precisely define historical facts, find similar contents, place them in a context, and underline those aspects of the issues that might otherwise remain obscured. The use of concepts contributes to the nomological dimension of historiography and the resolution of the tensions between the concrete empirical facts and meaningful generalisation.

CONCLUSION

In our opinion, the concept of cultural transfer is a useful thinking tool. Apart from what we have just underlined, it allows for a better understanding of the past in particular. However, just like any other concept, it may also involve a pitfall or two – for example, the question of how to define cultural space in the time before the creation of modern national communities. The solution is most likely to seek the advice of anthropologists. The deconstruction of the convictions that involve cultures as singular phenomena and the decentering of the Euro-centric outlook on history can also be a slippery slope. The deconstruction of the perceptions involving monolithic cultural blocs and the decentering of the European perspective undoubtedly represents an important result of applying the concept of cultural transfer. However, the deconstruction can easily become a reverse stereotype of whatever we are deconstructing. Regardless of the malleability of the specific cultures, apart from the “soft” elements, they nevertheless include “solid” ones as well – for example languages (Thornton, 2012, 313; Allwood, 2019, 93) and characteristics that are stable or even transcultural, as they are based on the general characteristics of the human functioning (Dunér, 2019, 6). When it is used too zealously, the concept of cultural transfer can therefore slip into a new ideology. However, with meaningful application and in a constant dialogue with various humanities and social science disciplines – in particular with anthropology, literary sciences, and art history – it is broad and flexible enough that it should be used more often and more intensively.

KULTURNI TRANSFER: KONCEPT IN ZGODOVINSKA REALNOST

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POVZETEK

Vprašanje kulturnega transferja in z njim povezanih kulturnih izmenjav je v takšni konceptualizaciji vzniknilo v času sodobne, intenzivne globalizacije. Kulturni transfer je koncept, ki kulturno izmenjavo pomika proti središču zgodovinskega premisleka. S poudarjanjem stalnega kroženja kulturnih prvin med različnimi družbami omogoča boljše razumevanje preteklosti. Ko koncept kulturni transfer poudarja prepustnosti družb za vsakovrstne izmenjave, presprašuje veljavnost kulturalističnih shem, ki govorijo o monolitnih kulturnih blokih in opozarja na pogosto zanemarjene oblike kulturnih prepletov in mešanj. Zgodovinopisje ga uporablja, kadar govori o mobilnosti kulturnih dobrin ter njihovih ustvarjalcev in nosilcev med različnimi kulturnimi prostori v preteklosti. To pomeni, da se nanaša na gibanja ljudi, vsakovrstnih predmetov, besed, idej in idejnih sistemov, diskurzov, informacij in znanja, družbenih institucij in verskih sistemov, simbolov in imaginarijev, vedenjskih vzorcev, stališč in čustvovanj, gest in podob, živali, rastlin in bolezni. Izid teh gibanj sta interakcija in mešanje prvin različnih kultur oziroma hibridizacija. Kulturni transfer kot zgodovinsko dejstvo je proces, ki so ga tvorile tri prvine: dekontekstualizacija, to je odvzem iz prvotnega, izhodiščnega kulturnega prostora, prenos in rekontekstualizacija to je sprejem v novem, ciljnem kulturnem prostoru. Poleg vsebine in prvin kulturenga transferja razprava obravnava tudi njegove vidike in nosilce. Avtor razprave v zvezi z vidiki kulturnega transferja govori o geografskih, socialnih, medsektorskih, medgeneracijskih, znotrajgeneracijskih in časovnih vidikih ter ugotavlja, da so zlasti medsektorski ter medgeneracijski in znotrajgeneracijski vidik v dosednjih raziskavah nekoliko zapostavljeni. Med nosilci kulturnega transferja obravnava posameznike, poklicne trgovce in obrtnike, učenjake in duhovnike, učena društva in izobraževalne institucije, humaniste in umetnike, romarje, misijonarje in vojake, popotnike in raziskovalne odprave ter poštno službo, ki so opravljali funkcijo prenosnikov in kanalov, ki so vzpodbujali in povezovali različne kulturne prostore. Avtor razprave s primeri iz slovenske in svetovne zgodovine zgodnjega novega veka ilustrira uporabnost koncepta. Ugotavlja, da koncept v slovenski historiografiji skoraj ni navzoč, ker so slovenski zgodovinarji do teoretskih konceptov precej zadržani. Kljub temu pa so rezultati slovenskih zgodovinarjev že zaradi narave slovenske preteklosti zelo podobni rezultatom zgodovinarjev, ki ta koncept uporabljajo. Avtor sodi, da je koncept uporabno miselno orodje kljub nekaterim problemom, ki jih skriva.

Ključne besede: kulturni transfer, izmenjava kulturnih dobrin, dekontekstualizacija, rekontekstualizacija, adaptacija

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