Conditions of Possibility for Cultural Production and Circulation

Early Modern European drama owes its remarkable transnational persistence and consistency—hence (formal) comparability—to various factors, among which a widespread set of rules concerned with how to formulate texts dedicated to specific purposes (that is, a standardized rhetorical system) is certainly not the least important one. If rhetoric is, by definition, a system based on the question of how to convey a certain, preconceived message (or intention) to a specific audience in the most effective way conceivable, one might ask in which way this applies to drama.¹ Evidently, audiences were highly diverse (in terms of their social status and level of education, for instance); elocutional preferences tend to vary, and are multifarious on the whole; tastes have always differed; hence what is considered an exaggerated rhetoricization (in terms of léxis, elocutio) in one place, might have been welcome in another as ‘quite right’ (sc. prépon, aptum)—meaning, as being in accordance with the audience’s preconceived expectations as to how a well-wrought text (whether a play or an oration, a dialog or a sermon, etc.) should sound and look like.

The following essay suggests hypotheses as to the conditions of possibility both of cultural production, and of the latter’s mobility (circulation) within a conceivable ‘virtual network of culture’. The thesis at the basis of this essay can be characterized as follows: it was not a (somewhat abstract and lofty) common Humanistic ideal of a well-wrought text shared throughout (Early Modern) Europe that constituted the basis for the factual omnipresence of a shared set of rules for formulation (sc. the rhetorikè téchnè). Rather, the permanent and sustained activities (whether deliberate or accidental and incidental) of a plethora of transcultural agents and agencies (monastic, regal, economic, etc.) yielded the basis for this common system—initially, in terms of its dissemination

¹ Generally thereto, see Küpper (Diskurs-Renovatio 300).

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and circulation; and then, for its being widely practiced and embraced until what is called the age of Romanticism. Typically (at least in the period under scrutiny here), the floating of cultural material within what I term the ‘virtual cultural net’ is mediated by human beings, such as merchants and missionaries, tutors, diplomats and spouses, warriors, courtiers and courtesans, skilled artisans and artists—among which are, also and of course, theater troupes, playwrights, actors—etc.²

This enumeration is evidently heterogeneous, seeing that it comprises both active and deliberate agents of cultural transfer (such as missionaries, actors, artists), and individuals or groups, who effectively act in this capacity, but without the above intention; in other words: they evince a (relatively) high mobility, and their travels indeed facilitate and promote the circulation of cultural material, albeit incidentally. Since the latter (such as merchants and warriors) are also human beings—meaning, individuals with a cultural ‘background’—it is inevitable that they not only transport goods or arms, but also the entire range of cultural material they ‘carry’ in their minds: words (idiomatic expressions, verbal and textual structures, rhetorical devices and techniques), local recipes and practices, social norms, patterns of behavior, culturally conditioned tastes, body language and prosody, as well as the memory of works of art appreciated in the past (and retained to some extent).³ One might be tempted to state that, during the greater part of human history, much (if not most) cultural transfer took place in (literally) such a ‘by the way’ fashion; in other words: it occurred without the (conscious) intention of causing such, or indeed any, circulation of cultural material.

The entire historical process providing the basis for (what later became, and we now call) Europe is produced, at least in its beginnings, by such ‘accompanying’, incidental ‘export’ of culture. When the Romans first conquered present-day France, and then parts of what are now Britain or Germany, their intention was not primarily to disseminate Greco-Roman culture.⁴ Initially, they wanted (and needed) to stop the barbarian incursions into Roman territories.

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² A book containing the comprehensive theorizing of cultural development by way of the metaphor of a (virtual) cultural network is forthcoming in 2017.

³ Typically, the elements of structure—formal composition (patterns), arrangement of content (plot)—tend to be a most memorable aspect; this immediately relates to the rhetorical téchne.

⁴ Naturally, economic interests played a significant role, specifically in later times of relative peace: one might mention the flourishing trade along and across the so-called ‘limes’, which indubitably facilitated a transfer both of goods (consumables, but also tools and even arms), and of cultural (including ritual) matters—and not simply for properly material reasons only, but also with a view to more abstract aspects such as personal or collective prestige, etc.
which were typically motivated by material greed. Still, the prerequisite for sustaining the *pax Augusta* was to definitively subjugate these limitrophe tribes—that is, to install Roman garrisons on foreign territory, to construct and maintain a well-kept network of (initially military and supplies-related, then also trade) roads. Since these *coloniae* were places where Roman troops lived on a permanent basis, there was a need for ‘Roman’ culture—in terms of the everyday (supplies, tools), but also (and increasingly so) for its more sophisticated facets, such as arenas and amphitheaters qua places suited for public performances of various kinds. As time went by, the subjugated locals began to take an interest in these (cultivated, urbane) instances of Mediterranean civilization and culture transferred to Western and Northern Europe. Some centuries later, when the Roman Empire collapsed under the military pressure exerted by tribes from parts of present-day Europe that had not been conquered (mainly from the East and North, from Scandinavia), the people in what are now France, England, Southern and Western Germany had assimilated Roman culture—initially imposed by way of a violent military conquest—to such an extent that they considered it their ‘own’; and they even succeeded in convincing the newly arrived ‘barbarian’ tribes likewise to adopt this very culture—the origins of which largely lie in Mesopotamia, Egypt, present-day Israel, and Greece.

Cultural exportation as a decided and deliberate pattern of behavior seems so natural to present-day Westerners that it might be difficult to conceptualize to what extent it is a highly specific way of dealing with culture. I would hypothesize that there is one indispensable prerequisite for intentionally propagating one’s culture beyond its ‘original’ area of influence: this requirement is the notion of universalism—meaning, the (at least conceptual) conviction that all human beings are equal (in theory, anyway), and are thus potentially capable of living

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5 Later movements and ‘Barbarian Invasions’—such as those of the Migration Period (*Völkerwanderung*)—had additional, and perhaps more (self-)defensive reasons, of course, seeing that local (Germanic) tribes had increasingly come under pressure by raids from further East, and ultimately from Asia. Indubitably, it is also the mobility due to flight (and not only conquest or domination) that shaped modern-day Europe, considering e.g. the transfer of cultural aspects (certainly semantic, and also governmental structures, perhaps) by the Visigoths across Europe, as far south as Andalusia and even Northern Africa. This form of necessitated or enforced cultural transfer or exchange was certainly of a very different nature when compared to the more lasting forms on the parts of the Romans and the Arabic or Berber tribes later; yet it cannot be discounted.

6 It is by no means incidental that Germanic languages immediately in contact with the *imperium* adopted a Roman term to refer to an excellent road network (*Straße*, ‘street’ < *via strata*).
within comparable, if not identical cultural frameworks. This idea—revolutionary in the history of humankind—seems to have first originated as a tendency within certain philosophical schools in Greece (particularly the Stoa), while owing its definitive breakthrough and universal prevalence to the emergence and ascendancy of Christianity. The concept of ‘(universal) human rights’ is not based on the notion of a corporeal, but on an ‘essential’ equality of all human beings. Whatever this essence might be, its postulation is mapped onto the level of observable phenomena as the assumption of cultural equality: that is, (equal) rights, (equal) wishes and aspirations, (equal) norms of ‘good and evil’. One might gain the impression that, in regions of the planet where an autochthonous ideological universalism does not seem to have emerged (India or China, for instance), deliberate and calculated forms of cultural exportation do not seem to be observable to such a pervasive degree as those which originated in the West.

Seeing that (at least in principle) the timeframe under consideration here is not only the past 2000 years, but an era commencing with the emergence of the first beings of the genus *homo sapiens sapiens* (for the purposes here, roughly 150,000 years), it is important to accentuate that most cultural transfer is a ‘parasitic’ phenomenon. As an intentional overall agenda and particular activity, it is bound to specific ideological constellations. Moreover, it is not without reason that today’s global culture is a (predominantly) Western phenomenon. In principle, Islam could become the hub of a universalistic global culture, as well.7

Selected Agents of Cultural Circulation in Europe and Beyond: the Church, the Nobility, Scholars, Academies, the Jewry, Merchants

The Church

When limiting the scope to the age of universalism, one might add the (verifiable) existence of agencies of transculturation to the panorama of features facilitating the floating of material in the virtual network of culture. Within the work of the research group ‘DramaNet’ (providing the larger context for this essay), one study may be of particular importance as far as the issue under scrutiny here is

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7 However, it may be held back by its tradition; as to possible reasons for this difference between cultures with a Christian, and such with an Islamic background, see Küpper (“Säkulare Welt” passim).
concerned; for to consider the Škofjeloški pasijon (the Škofja Loka Passion Play)—the earliest dramatic text in the Slovene language still extant (1725–1727)—may be expedient to illustrate a constellation that is frequently overlooked in a period whose basic parameters continue to be heavily influenced by the notion of ‘national cultures’. As the title establishes, the text in question is a Passion play that, in this specific case, was performed during a procession. It evinces many peculiar characteristics that render it a useful source to be studied within a project on Early Modern European drama; these pertain not only to content (which is obvious), but also to its respective rhetoricization. In a more theoretical perspective, it is crucial that the play’s plot has nothing particularly ‘Slovene’ about it, and that a procession play—which levels or at least significantly reduces the distance between stage and audience, leading to an enhanced emotional involvement of the latter—is nothing that would pertain to a specifically Slovene culture. From the Middle Ages onward, plays representing Christ’s Passion are documented in many European countries; and their being performed during processions—which may have existed everywhere in the West—is particularly well-documented for Spain, and also Southern Germany, for instance.

This state of affairs will not be unfamiliar to a scholar of the historical and literary scenario in question. Even so, it is frequently ‘forgotten’ or passed over when talking about (European) culture as such. One will have to take into account that cultural items were not only transported (more or less intentionally) by traveling individuals (merchants, courtiers). In Early Modern Europe, there were various transnational cultural agencies, for whose (economic, diplomatic, etc.) activities ‘national’ and linguistic borders were hardly insurmountable; on the contrary, cultural osmosis was a conscious aim. In the epoch under scrutiny, the Roman Catholic Church is by far the most significant and effectual of such agencies conceiving of cultural transfer as a major task—and not, as in the case

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8 Thereto, cf. Drnovšek (passim). With regard to the rhetoric of this and similar passion plays, one will have to take into account their indebtedness to Baroque sermons in terms of structure and the rhetorical devices employed (vis-à-vis ‘docere’). As to elocutio, the primary means are admonitions and exhortations immediately directed at the audience. In terms of dispositio, a Passion play’s content, its sequence and arrangement is, of course, predetermined by the Scriptural account, with the crucifixion as the climactic event (vis-à-vis ‘movere’). I am indebted to Jaša Drnovšek for the above remarks regarding the rhetorical dimension of this specific drama.

9 As to the latter, one well-known event staging a passion play in the form of a procession continues to flourish in Southern Germany until today: the Oberammergauer Passionsspiel, performed every ten years. In terms of its current function, it has (at least to some extent) turned into an element of today’s visual ‘event culture’, where the religious or ritual background is of secondary import only (if that).
of other (economic, political) organizations, as a concomitant feature of several diverse activities. Its dogma is always already universalistic, seeing that it expressly intends to divulgate the Christian belief to all human beings, regardless of their language and ethnicity. Right from its establishment as the ‘official’ Church of the Roman Empire (that is, from the fourth century onward), the Catholic Church—due to its radically ‘global’ attitude—was a most powerful agent in terms of decidedly expanding the cultural net (both in its virtual and in its physical structures), and of promoting the floating processes within.

Without doubt, the system of rhetoric proved a most expedient tool facilitating these dynamics: it was (emphatically) taken up from Greek and Roman educational systems, and refunctionalized for Christian purposes, such as the divulgation of the gospel (say, in the writing of epistles, sermons, and consolationes), or the (partial) refutation and (selected) incorporation of pagan elements (most notably by, arguably, that most ‘Ciceronian’ Church Father of all, Augustine of Hippo); in this way, decidedly rhetorical structures entered the corpus of Christian literature from the outset. At the same time, and concomitant therewith (typically to suit hermeneutic and productive needs), the rhetorikê téchne also became an indispensable part of the Christian education (not only in letters); for even during and after the age of the denominational wars and the eventual Schism, this framework structure remained in place as a dependable basis (with variants in the details, of course).

The literally and assertively ‘universal’ (sc. ‘Catholic’ καθολικός, katholikós) Church not only exported its ‘cultural’ material—the same as its facilitating structures, and the forms for shaping it—from its main ‘seat’ (the see of the Roman bishop) to all European countries. After the (Spanish and Portuguese) conquest of other parts of the world, this agenda of dissemination and propagation entered virtually any kind of regional or ‘national’ culture. Accordingly, Christian didactic drama (and its rhetorico-structural design) was not only ‘exported’ to Latin America after 1492; the respective plays were also being performed in the more ‘exotic’ parts of the world: in Goa (India), in Macau (China), or on the Japanese Isles, for instance.

As an aside, it may be worth noting that, in the aforesaid Slovene Passion play, allegories of the non-European continents (America, Asia, Africa) appear on stage, in order to express their gratitude for the ‘grace’ evinced by the fact that Catholicism brought salvation to their respective people.10 This straightforward

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10 The motif as such seems to have been widespread—also beyond the dramatic genre. A similar agenda is presented in the fresco, which Tiepolo painted onto the cupola overarching the central staircase at Würzburg Residence (Germany) in 1752/1753: the personified continents, depicted
universalistic message is all the more remarkable, since Slovenia was by no means involved in the process of spreading Christian-European culture all over the world.

The human agents of the Church’s ‘networking’ activities were mainly supplied by various monastic orders (the Capuchins, the Jesuits later). As a matter of course, dignitaries from the ecclesiastical hierarchy—such as bishops—also featured prominently; for these were individuals whose self-description was not primarily focused on their ‘national’ (let alone ‘ethnic’) belonging; instead, they tended to accentuate their calling as ‘ministers’ (that is, ‘servants’) of a God that, according to their belief, had created, and then redeemed all humankind through the self-sacrifice of His son.11 Those who, by Divine Grace, had been given access to the revealed truth had to then (and continually) earn (mereri) this Grace—one way being that of promulgating the gospel to those who had not been granted the privilege of (a) ‘first’ access.

There is one additional point to be made with regard to this most powerful and transnational cultural agency of the period in question. The institution of the Church is linked to a specific ideology. Consequently, it has a strong tendency not only to work as a propagator of cultural material, but also as an agency of regulation, monitoring, and censorship. What was actively circulated by the Roman Church was a carefully chosen and prudently shaped set of cultural features.12 Since the circulation was mainly facilitated, and in fact performed, by human beings (and not only by simply ‘shipping’, say, rhetorical manuals or dramatic textbooks per se)—by monks or ecclesiastical dignitaries from Spain, Italy, France, who (frequently) traveled or even ‘migrated’ to countries like Slovenia, Goa, Brazil, or Japan—it was more or less inevitable that they also carried their local, personal, educational, intellectual background (that is, their ‘mental’ valises, their memoriae) with them; rather naturally, the latter also ‘contained’ all sorts of (virtual) cultural material that might actually have been considered problematic from the viewpoint of a strictly defined religious

with an animal (Africa on a camel, Asia on an elephant, America on an alligator), point to Europe; cf. http://www.residenz-wuerzburg.de/englisch/residenz/treppe.htm.

11 Nor was this attitude without ecclesiastico-historical precedent (one might adduce Paul of Tarsus, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, and virtually any other).

12 Needless to say, the system of rhetoric proved highly instrumental in the formal, structural aspects thereof (specifically: dispositio, elocutio); certain genres immediately related to these dynamics (sermons and epistles, above all) are always already conditioned by the rhetorical téchne to an exceptional degree.
orthodoxy. While the primary focus of their deliberate cultural activities was certainly on propagating a specific message, and on ‘controlling’ any potential heterodoxy, it may very well have been the case that an unintentional dialectics was at work, here. For, in the final analysis, even a highly ‘orthodox’ person can be so only by constantly repressing anything that might not be systematically orthodox within his or her own thinking; consequently, such a person inevitably becomes a vehicular device for cultural material exceeding the (rather severe) limits of religious orthodoxy.

This predicament (from an orthodox viewpoint) is reinforced by one central characteristic of the Christian religion that may seem to distinguish it, at least to some extent, from the second universalistic religion: its ‘absorptive’ attitude with regard to previous traditions, in particular Jewish and pagan Mediterranean ones. The dogma itself, its ritualistic practices (including some holidays) and religious arts (architecture, painting, catechizing texts, performances), are all assembled from preexisting material, with a very limited set of additional, ‘novel’ concepts—and even the latter are usually not at all ‘new’ in an emphatic sense, but only with respect to the different context, into which they were transplanted and (to a certain extent) integrated. Since Christianity emerged on the terrain of a firmly

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13 In the age of Humanism—but also before, and certainly after the Council of Trent—the pagan litterae would, at least in a non-redacted or expurgated form, prove a stumbling block also as such. (In terms of rhetoric, one might adduce Augustine’s Cicero once again; or, more generally, the evidently needful ‘Christianization’ of pagan texts as evinced in the Medieval Ovide moralisé). Generally thereto, see Küpper (Diskurs-Renovatio passim). On the whole, the (standardized) rhetorical education—necessary (as part of the trivium) for any (including ecclesiastic) official of Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern time—inevitably carried along standard and exemplary writings taken from a non-Christian (Greco-Roman, pagan) background, which had literally become ‘textbook’ instances; along with their rhetorical form (which will have been the primary aim of studying them), the sedimented contents (typically problematic from a Christian perspective, even if subjected to rigorous redaction and hermeneutic ingenuity) were inevitably also retained and transported.

14 To give but one example: the ethical component of Christianity may be described as a continuation and partial radicalization of the set of norms contained in the Decalogue—that is, of the Jewish tradition; the emerging religion detaches this ethical fund from the overall complex of ritualistic practices, into which it had been embedded in the source context. To this residual ethical component, it adds elements derived from Eastern Mediterranean mystical religions, mainly of an Egyptian hue (cf. the aspects of divine incarnation by way of ‘regular’ birth, of resurrection and eternal life). In order to clearly distance itself from the (ultimately tribalistic) Jewish religion, it attaches vaguely elaborated universalistic tendencies implied in other cults widespread at the time (Isis, Mithras) to this assemblage, while simultaneously fusing them with Monotheism, leading to their radical accentuation. In addition, certain Greek tendencies towards universalism—metaphysically articulated in Plato, and rendered functional for this
established script culture—which, for that very reason, had also developed techniques and locations for ‘storing’ cultural material, such as libraries—the elements from which the Christian discourse had been (and continued to be) assembled, remained present (and literally ‘current’) within the cultural net in their non-assimilated version also. As may be extrapolated from European cultural history, this presence ‘sub utraque specie’ was a permanent invitation to all users of the cultural net to disassemble the cultural syndromes constituting what we have become accustomed to call Christianity, and to make use of these elements for secular purposes.\textsuperscript{15}

Considering the facilitation of, and immense contribution to, the literal ‘transport’ and virtual conveyance of diverse cultural materials in either direction (from the ‘West’ to the colonies, and vice versa), and performed by members of the various religious orders—above all, by the Jesuits—one might think that Catholicism, when compared to Protestantism, was (and perhaps continues to be) the by far more influential human ‘device’ enabling and propelling the dynamics of material (virtually) floating in the cultural net.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, the (in)direct consequence of a Protestant accentuation of a believer’s immediate access to Divine revelation (as mediated by \textit{Scripture}) was (and is) that all Reformed denominations are ultimately linked to specific linguistic communities. The Protestant pretense to universalism—which, in principle, is a feature of Christianity in general—tends to be restricted by the abolishment of the mediating role of the clergy in connection with the access to the Divine; the result is an individualism translating into a (relative) parochialism at the level of the respective communities.\textsuperscript{17} In addition, the Reformation had allowed religious officials to have families; consequently, it was to a considerably lesser degree that Protestant ministers were ready (or able) to dedicate their energies to the

\textsuperscript{15}A prime example is the ‘subjugation’ of Greek myths by way of allegorizing—and the ‘liberation’ of the mythical fund from this (Christianizing) superstructure, which occurred in the era we are used to call ‘the Renaissance’; thereto, see Küpper (\textit{Diskurs-Renovatio} 94–229 passim).

\textsuperscript{16}For the Jesuit case, see e.g. Fothergill-Payne (passim); as well as Küpper (“Jesuitismus” passim).

\textsuperscript{17}As a variant of Christian belief, Protestantism shares the universalistic frame of Christian monotheism; but one of its basic tenets, namely, the accent on \textit{Scripture} and the ensuing postulate that every believer should read the Holy Text by himself, hence, the various vernaculars as primary means of inner-Protestant communication, make Protestantism into one of the most powerful agents of the emergence of separate ‘national cultures’.
interaction with the believers (both actual and potential), when compared to Catholic priests, monks, or nuns.\(^1^8\)

This constellation notwithstanding, there were significant Protestant missionary activities in ‘non-Western’ regions. The cultural transfer processes attending these activities had, in part at least, a slightly different profile from those accompanying Catholic proselytizing. The marital status allowed Protestant missionaries to have children; the latter typically grew up in parts of the world whose cultural parameters differed (often rather drastically) from those of the West. Almost all of them were educated; some actually became ministers, and many of them chose to work in the secular realm; as is the case in the ‘homelands’ of Protestantism, quite a few became scholars or scientists. In a considerable number of cases, they remained in the countries where they had been born and raised; as a consequence of this chain of conditioning factors, many became ‘professional’ agents of cultural transfer. They taught the locals the Western sciences and concept of the humanities, and they turned the local flora, fauna, and human culture into objects of Western-style scientific or scholarly scrutiny. As regards 19\(^{th}\) century China in particular, the role of these descendants of Protestant ministers for the (scientific, scholarly) opening up of a community, which had retained its self-sufficiency much longer than Western cultures, seems to be of considerable significance. The structural difference between the mediating activities of this group and the Catholic missionaries will be that the former were ‘professionals’ in their respective fields, whereas the latter were dilettantes in the very literal meaning of the term.\(^1^9\) Specifically in an age when

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\(^1^8\) As to the rhetorical training Protestants received during and after the Reformation, and specifically in the form initiated and promoted by Melanchthon, see e.g. Knox (passim).

\(^1^9\) Generally thereto, see Burckhardt’s remark in defense of a ‘dilettantism’ in this sense: “Of course, ‘with all that, much dilettantism is indeed being planted, which takes pleasure in that wherein others laudably toil!’ The word ‘dilettantism’ has fallen into disrepute due to [its implication in] the arts, where, of course, one will either have to be nothing, or a master and give [one’s] life to [one’s] task, seeing that the arts essentially presuppose perfection. In scholarship [‘den Wissenschaften’], however, one can only be a master in a very limited area, namely as a specialist, and, somewhere, one must be [a specialist]. Yet so as not to forfeit the capacity of a more general overview, [and] indeed the appreciation thereof, one should also be a dilettante in as many other areas as possible, at least on one’s own account, for [purposes of] expanding one’s own insights and enriching [one’s] perspectives; otherwise one will, in that which exceeds one’s specialty, remain an ignoramus, and perhaps an unrefined fellow on the whole. Conversely, the dilettante, seeing that he loves the things [he deals with], may very well, over the course of his life, also be able to actually attain to a certain depth [sc. deepen his knowledge] in various areas” (22f.; trans. dsm). “Freilich ‘mit alledem wird ja lauter Dilettantismus gepflanzt, welcher sich ein Vergnügen aus dem macht, woraus sich
(Western) research (both scientific and scholarly) was systematized according to identifiable disciplines—that is, from the early 19th century onward—the ‘floating’ of the cultural material in question, which was mediated by these professionals, might have had a (significantly) greater impact than had been the case with the earlier, ‘dilettante’ variant; and this particularly, since these individuals (or groups) did not primarily (let alone exclusively) transport ‘contents’, but also methodological (scientific), that is, transferable parameters, patterns, techniques.

**The Nobility**

Apart from the Roman Church, a number of other transnational cultural agencies are to be mentioned as effectual during the period in question; these display a much greater ideological flexibility than the Roman Church. At first sight, such may seem to render them more important factors of transnational ‘floating’, when compared to a (relatively) rigorous Ecclesia; even so, their effective impact is limited by the fact that, in contrast to the Church, these agencies are ‘elitist’ in terms of their self-description, and as regards their interactions with the respectively local, receiving societies at large.

While restricted in numbers, the upper strata of the ruling class should not be neglected as a vital agency; as far as the European higher nobility is concerned, ‘nationality’ did not count as a feature of their self-description at all. If deemed politically opportune, their members were ready to migrate to, and dwell in, any part of the ‘civilized’ world—as spouses of kings, queens, or as heirs to thrones, for which there was no legitimate or acceptable successor in the realm in question.  

It will hardly need to be mentioned that this indifference as to ‘national belonging’ was balanced—to a considerable degree, at least—by the specifically universalistic (that is, Christian)
This is also of particular import with regard to both rhetoric and drama; for, being the elite, the aristocracy was, as a matter of course, highly educated, and their public appearances and relations, including their semiotic (also verbal) comportment, were closely observed—and, of course, imitated (for reasons of flattery, and of taking on some of their external, ‘rhetorical’ color with a view to status). Moreover, it was particularly the nobility that had an (ut ita dicam) ‘existential’ need to adequately represent itself—and see itself represented—in public; as the historical evidence evinces (with Renaissance Italy, Elizabethan England, and Baroque Spain as particularly striking examples), dramatic works—conceived of as ‘mirroring’ life, the respective society—were exceptionally highly valued, and consequently tended to be lavishly subsidized; this would lead to a flourishing (even hypertrophy) of the rhetorico-verbal ornatus (in terms of elocutio), as well.

To return to the aspect of the nobility’s mobility, one might hint at some particularly important cases—in addition to those everyone knows (the two Italian Medici, who became queens of France; the German princess that became tsarina). In the period in question, Spain’s global empire was governed by a German dynasty, the Habsburgs, whose members were rapidly Romanized, creating a Latinized variant of Teutonic culture that is still extant today, and which differs from German culture overall, namely Austria. For this very reason, individual emperors such as Charles V (Carlos I of Spain)—emphatically reigning over ‘an empire where the sun never sets’ (as the saying went)—traveled all over and across Europe (due to wars, diets, treaties, administrative and judiciary duties, etc.), and with him veritable legions of courtiers, clerics, clerks, etc. At the framework, within which these forms of mobility took place. For this reason, I label this highly mobile higher nobility ‘European’. There does not seem to be a comparable set of data with regard to the marriage practices of Non-European dynasties; one reason might be that monogamy (if it existed notionally in the respective parts of the globe at all) was not practiced with the same rigor as under the rule of Christian morals. I am not aware of a well-documented case where a Chinese emperor would have proposed to a Japanese or Indian princess (or vice versa); and when such exogamy indeed occurred, it was an exception—and registered and treated as such: Alexander the Great’s marriage to the ‘barbarian’ princess Roxane thoroughly scandalized his Greek compatriots. Yet the above is not concerned with the exceptions; for pan-European ‘migration’ is a normal and regular pattern of behavior within the European ruling class, historically traceable at least to a period around the year 1000 CE; and there is a terminus ad quem as well, for this practice disappeared with the shift of power from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie. In constitutional monarchies, the waning of this mobile mode in marriage matters seems to be bound up with the complete loss of political power that occurred after World War II. Marriage practices in Europe’s ‘ruling’ dynasties today typically follow the same ‘Romantic’ patterns that might apply to any other Western individual.
end of the period in question, the British invited a German prince to become their king (from the House of Hanover). Marie Antoinette, the last queen of pre-revolutionary France, was a Habsburg princess, the same as King Louis XIV’s mother, Anne. Henry VIII’s first wife, Catherine, was of Spanish origin; and so on. The transnationality of the ruling class was significantly greater during the ages of Feudalism and Absolutism, when compared to the period commencing with the French Revolution.

Regardless of their hardly ‘tribal’ self-description, all of these ‘migrating’, highly mobile princesses and princes were, of course, deeply imbued with their local origins, the ‘national’ cultures (tastes and education) of their countries of birth. When leaving their homeland, and typically without rendering problematic their mobility—without thinking or talking about ‘hybridity’ or ‘internationalization’—they inevitably brought their cultural background (including their schooling) with them as part of their ‘mental valise’, ‘unpacking’ it in the places where they settled down. During the Early Modern period, a significant degree of cultural exchange is facilitated and promoted by this highly mobile, transnational ruling class. While it should be taken into account that such forms of circulation primarily affect artifacts as appeal to the social elite, a ruling class is able to maintain its position only if it has at its disposal effective techniques for controlling the vulgus (the ‘masses’, the common people). Accordingly, it seems likely that power techniques utilizing any form of ‘culture’—and including such (virtual) artifacts as might target, and be deliberately aimed at, a non-elite audience—will have circulated via the same aristocratic (physical and virtual) networks qua routes of exchange; specifically, the respective modi and artificia would also comprise various semiotic (verbal) forms of public relations and manipulation—including manifold types of self-representation (also, and par excellence, in and via plays), as well as politico-rhetorical manuals, such as the widely circulated (and translated, reproduced and reprinted) ‘mirrors for princes’.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) That peculiar manual on the part of the arch-sophist and -rhetorician of the Early Modern Age (sc. Machiavelli) spread most rapidly all over Europe; and to such an extent that e.g. the (politically motivated) rumor intimating that Catherine de’ Medici had brought \textit{The Prince} to France, applying it in the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, seems to have been utterly plausible from the viewpoint of certain or many contemporaries. At the (apparently) other end of the ethical spectrum, one might also mention Castiglione’s highly rhetorical (in terms of its content) and rhetoricized (as to its form) \textit{Il Cortegiano}; this might pertain to what one could call a ‘rhetoric of comportment’ (the ties with the respective tradition being specifically localizable in the term ‘decorum’, as well as associated areas).
Scholars

The third agency of ‘transculturation’ one will have to draw attention to—and one particularly relevant for both rhetoric and drama, as well as their nexus—is the decidedly pan-European community of scholars, often referred to as the res publica litteraria.\textsuperscript{22} Rather than the vernaculars, their common language was the lingua franca Latin. Already in Medieval times, but certainly during the period in question, the institutions of higher education—mainly universities, but colleges as well—displayed a homogeneity of organization that by far exceeds what has been attained today, in this (so-called) age of ‘globalization’. During the Early Modern Age, the biographies of eminent humanists, scientists, and artists—including architects, (military) engineers and inventors, the same as painters or sculptors—evince an often strikingly high mobility and transnationality. Having been a student in Bologna, to then accept a position in Paris or Oxford, while ending one’s life as a professor in Prague, Heidelberg, or Wittenberg, was hardly unusual during that period. Naturally, the main reason for these and comparable constellations was that, in terms of its self-conception, (humanistic) scholarship and the emerging natural sciences thought of themselves as universal (it is not without reason that we still call the respective institutions ‘universities’). In particular, the studia humanitatis were not concerned with contemporary phenomena; the study of literary texts written in the various vernaculars acceded to the status of university disciplines only in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Early Modern humanities were directed at the patrimony shared by all European ‘nations’: the two Classical languages and the latter’s systems of diction (both grammar and rhetoric), as well as Christian theology and Greek philosophy (particularly dialectic). There was absolutely no reason during that age to conceive of a particularly British or French style for performing the studia humanitatis. There were no (significant) differences as to the material studied, nor as to the devices whereby it was studied (dialectic and rhetoric, but also grammar, via Scriptural and Ancient exempla textually preserved). As stated already, the homogeneity was facilitated by the existence of an academic lingua franca (Latin), as well as by a structurally standardized cursus (here specifically: the Medieval trivium of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) that, in variations, persisted well into Early Modern times.

In terms of spatial and social reach, the vehicular effects produced by the aforesaid, highly mobile scholars were more limited than those produced by the Roman Church, for the same reasons mentioned with regard to the nobility. This

\textsuperscript{22} Thereto, see Bloemendal’s contribution in this volume.
limitation is balanced by the fact that people living in the ivory tower tended to be the educators of the younger generation at the time—not in its entirety, but certainly of all those who, later in their lives, would be socially placed to have a significant influence on cultural production. The relatively standardized system of rhetoric here served as one crucial vehicle, seeing that its terms and structures were, on the whole, being taught in a comparable fashion, and were generally being applied in a recognizable manner throughout all disciplines, regardless of the specific local, vernacular, and even denominational background. To précis the above: while the recipients of what scholars transported in their ‘mental valise’ are thus restricted in quantity, the role and prestige of academics as active means and facilitators of the vehiculation of cultural material cannot be underestimated. Naturally, the latter remark holds true for the nobility, as well.

**Academies**

As regards literary culture in particular, one important institution ‘propelling a floatation of material in the virtual network of culture’ in the age under scrutiny are the academies proper. They first came up in Cinquecento Italy, as a vague or suggestive imitation of the Classical Greek academies established by Plato or Aristotle. In Renaissance Italy, their primary task was to incite their members to produce literary texts also in the vernacular, to discuss the respective drafts in manuscript form, and then to improve the texts before they were widely circulated in print. The academies provided an institutionalized ‘infrastructure’ for cultural production; again, the system of (particularly Ciceronian) rhetoric proved vital, both as a standard blueprint for the corresponding poetics, and as a system providing certain hermeneutic tools for decoding the respective productions. Moreover, if individuals within the academies shared a ‘style’, it was the rhetorical (or rhetoricized) dialog or (Humanistic) *disputatio*; in other words: in the form of going about their ‘business’, they did not differ, whatever their content-related differences may have been.

It was not only the ‘output’ of these institutions that circulated beyond the borders of particular vernaculars or (geo-)political regions, but also the abstract idea underlying such institutions. Only roughly seven decades after their emergence in Italy, one may observe the rather sudden flourishing of a number

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23 As may be observed in the case of Russia, one single princess from abroad who succeeds in ascending to the throne—as Catherine the Great—might change the cultural map of her host country in a most dramatic way.
of academies in Spain—a country closely linked to parts of (present-day) Italy by political (during the age in question: by dynastic) bonds—followed by the establishment of what, to this very day, is the most famous academy of all times, the Académie française (1635). It will not be necessary here to demonstrate the scope of the influence that the French academy had on the country’s cultural production. The latter case immediately renders patent that these institutions simultaneously served as sites of a particularly intense and systematic circulation and resynthesizing of cultural material, and also as instances controlling the output from at least three, closely intertwined points of view: the aesthetic, moral, and political perspective. In that sense, academies differed from the other aforesaid agencies (specifically: the Church, the nobility, individual scholars): for it is hardly possible to overestimate their role as an institutionalized site of (programmatically) intense production based on exchange and transfer—which is basically neutral to the material absorbed, and then resubmitted to an ongoing circulation. At the same time, the difference is a qualitative one: since academies tended to be strictly linked to the political sphere, they also served as instruments defining ‘national’ borders in terms of culture. This said, the quantitative aspect seems to be the more important one: from the age of the academies onward, cultural production—at least in Europe—is transformed from what was typically a random or commissioned (patron-induced), that is, occasional process (of writing, painting, composing) into intentional processes of systematic production. In terms of both quantity and quality, the invention of such institutionalized knots or nodes marks a decisive threshold with regard to the productivity and mobility within the cultural net.

During the age of Romanticism and after, the traditional academies lost their influence, being judged places where ingenuity is repressed by formal and aesthetic ‘rules’, as well as by the principle of authority. Even so, the abstract concept of institutionalized infrastructures for cultural circulation and production persists. Such institutions take on a more flexible shape, which might, at times, veil the fact that they are institutions—meaning, rather restricted circles of human beings working together according to relatively strict rules, and with (more or less) well-defined goals or purposes. This would apply to literary or cultural festivals, to the ramified systems attributing (cultural, including literary, scholarly) prizes and awards, etc.

The possible consequences of the remodeling of the ‘original’ Italian version of the academies qua institutions under Spanish and French auspices is a

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24 See the detailed studies by Gvozdeva (passim) and Bung (passim).
To illustrate the point in question with one sentence: the highly centralized French variant—one sole academy, controlled by the King and his acting ‘prime minister’—differs dramatically, both from the polycentric Italian pattern and from the even more ‘fluid’ shape the concept of such ‘academias’ took on in Spain. In accordance with this state of affairs, there is a rather clear-cut idea of what ‘French’ literary culture is or means, while there hardly is such a representative concept—rendering conceivable the encapsulation of the ‘entire’ cultural production of the country in question—in the cases of Italy, or (and even more so) of Spain and Germany.

The Jewish Population

The fifth agency of transculturation to be mentioned is the Jewish population of that age. Historically, it was their fate to live under diasporic conditions. From an external perspective, the combination of a strongly particularistic self-description (meaning, cohesion) and enforced de-autochthonization led to a situation that rendered the European Jewry a very powerful instrument of transnational cultural exchange. Even most dire events, such as persecution and expulsion (of the English Jewry after 1290, of the French Jewry after 1306, of the Rhineland Jews in the course of the crusades, of the Spanish Jewry after 1492) may have had remarkable long-term effects—from the viewpoint of a conception of culture as a process of ongoing floatation regardless of ‘national’ borders. It was only the emancipation of Jewish people from their status as second-class citizens, as well as their ensuing assimilation into the various national cultures of Europe, which may have reduced (while not annihilated) their role as active (and partially inadvertent) instruments of transnational cultural floating processes.

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25 These and other relevant questions are discussed within the framework of the aforementioned studies by Gvozdeva and Bung.
26 Relevant information may be gathered from Ruderman (passim).
27 In a way, this process was inverted by the fact that Nazi Germany coerced people of Jewish origin into returning to tribalism. The survivors of the holocaust are much less committed to the ‘national’ cultures of their (European) countries of residence than, say, French or German Jews had been before 1933; for the latter often conceived of themselves as ‘patriots’, that is, as citizens not only in legal terms, but also as emotionally committed to their country. After the Shoah and until today, people of Jewish origin have become what are perhaps the most active and engaged human agents of cultural exchange. Their commitment to the culture of their respective country.
Tying in with the above paragraph, this may seem to be the appropriate place to insert a brief excursus discussing the intricate question of ‘negative’ variants of mobility, including cultural ones. As problematic, even devastating, as such enforced mobility is likely to have been for the individual human beings involved—from the perspective of cultural history, one will have to state that even forms of mobility caused by physical enforcement tend to have far-reaching repercussions on cultural history. One decisive example from Occidental history would be the ‘floating’ of Classical Greek philosophy, and specifically the work(s) of Aristotle, from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Christian West, which took place along with the Muslim conquest of Northern Africa and the Iberian Peninsula—events which were certainly bellicose and most aggressive. Cultural transfer caused by violent expulsion would, for instance, be represented by the events occurring at the end of this ‘chapter’ of Mediterranean religious history; for the very year of the definitive Christian *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula was also that of achieving an ‘intra-religious’ homogenization—by expelling Spanish Jews from the country. In their enforced flight to places such as Antwerp, Amsterdam, Bordeaux, or Hamburg, they took with them the entire cultural material available on the Iberian Peninsula—including the material the Muslim conquerors had brought with them several centuries before.

Accordingly, one might ask, whether cultural circulation is always a ‘good thing’. The experience of 21st century intellectuals—as being always ‘on the move’—may very well lead to such an assumption. Yet (formerly) colonized communities might have a very different view of such processes. At the same time, it may indeed be the case that—after many generations—the descendants of the colonized ultimately deem positive the processes of cultural transfer accompanying even events as violent as war and subjugation: that is, as an evolution, which brought the achievements of ‘modernity’ to their communities. Basically, the above question cannot be answered, at least not within a scholarly framework. It may be that a world populated by small, self-sufficient, isolated communities—a Rousseauist world, a world without a comprehensive cultural net—would be experienced as an idyll. At the same time, it may very well be that

(in terms of citizenship) seems to be less ‘deeply rooted’ than it had been during the period from the emancipation to the middle of the 20th century; at the same time, their commitment to the faith of their ancestors may have become somewhat less intense, as is the case with regard to (nominally) Christian Westerners. These two parameters provide for a framework of intellectual mobility that may very well be higher than in the case of people with other cultural backgrounds. As a (necessary) supplement to this observation, one should highlight that Israel, the nation state established by the survivor generation, may be considered a sort of laboratory of highly intense cultural exchange—as an (approximate) miniature version of the global cultural net.
such a world (if in fact established) would be considered a consummate prison, or even an earthly variant of hell. Perhaps one need not shy away from at least posing the question, whether the circulation of Greco-Roman and Christian culture from the Mediterranean to Northern Europe (a circulation propelled and mediated by war and conquest) was a catastrophe—or actually a blessing; nor from the complementary query, whether present-day Europeans and North Americans would have a more blissful life, had they preserved their identity and continued to pray to Woden and Thor, and to live in the woods; or indeed, whether ‘happiness’ may be a viable measure for such inquiries at all. Be that as it may: the net is a fact, the same as progress. The theories and hypotheses at hand aim at being descriptive; their evaluation is left to the respective reader.

Trade, Merchants, and Incidental Transfer

At this point, it is also necessary to mention agencies factually facilitating or enacting a systematic cultural transfer and circulation of the respective material, while this very process was an inadvertent, accompanying, accidental, even unexpected side effect of other ventures and endeavors. Undoubtedly, the British East India Company will be one of the most prominent examples in this respect. Its activities consisted in economic exploitation based on previous physical conquest and political subjugation.

Another example for such an agency of incidental cultural transfer—which, in contrast to the East India Company, was relatively free from the more violent forms of hegemonic endeavors—was the Deutsche Hanse. The organization known by this name was a league of German cities, whose economic activities mainly consisted in trading—the largest one being Hamburg, which continues to refer to itself as Freie und Hanse-Stadt Hamburg. Like the latter, almost all of the respective towns were harbor cities: Bremen, Lübeck, Greifswald, Rostock, to only name the most important ones. The ‘commercial net(work)’ these cities were beginning to set up, and to continually expand, from the 12th century onward is important for the aspects and phenomena here discussed, insofar as it expressly intended to go beyond the temporary or transitory contacts typically accompanying commercial exchange. All over Northern and Eastern Europe, including places such as Nizhny Novgorod, the Hanse established small outposts of German merchants; the latter ascertained the manufactured goods that might

28 For a more detailed discussion of this intricate question, see Küpper (“Some Remarks on World Literature” passim).
be needed in the hosting cities, informed their partners residing in the towns of the Hanse league, later welcomed the incoming ships, accommodated their crews, and sold the goods to the locals, whose language and habits they had learnt. Economically, the Hanse was so successful that it established the basis for the fact that the largest member of its league, Hamburg, is still the wealthiest community in continental Europe.

The specificity of the ‘colonies’ mentioned is that they were governed by a legal status that became obsolete in Europe with the era of the democratic revolutions, but which we can trace back to Ancient Greece. It was widespread during the European Middle Ages, as well as in Early Modern times. It is still used in many Islamic countries until today, there referred to as ‘dhimma’. The Greek term is ‘metic’—in its original spelling: ‘métoikos’, a person who moved (‘met-’) his household (‘oikos’). The concept’s implication is the archaic notion that one’s home should typically be located in one’s place of birth. Metics were the exception to this rule; they were permitted to reside in cities where they had not been born—such as Spartans in Athens. While permitted to engage in craftsmanship and trade, they were not given citizenship, not even as second- or third-generation residents. They had no ‘rights’, only ‘privileges’—that is, guarantees, unilaterally conceded, which could be revoked at any time. They were obliged to pay a considerable surtax. When committing crimes, they were severely punished; if citizens proper perpetrated crimes against them, the consequences were not all that grave. In a nutshell: their situation was far from comfortable. Having no other choice, or incited with a view to an economic advantage to be gained, it seems as though they accepted this state of affairs; as did the diasporic Jews in Europe, prior to the era of emancipation: for they lived under the exact same legal status—as Christians and Jews residing in territories conquered by Islamic powers did, and sometimes still do. In this context, the important point is that the status of metic implied that there was no pressure, not even an invitation or expectation, to assimilate to the respective autochthonous culture. In terms of cultural patterns, Spartan métoikoí remained Spartans, as German Hanse merchants remained Germans, or pre-emancipation Jews remained Jews, etc. At the same time, the (typically economic) necessity to interact with the locals caused metics to develop the corresponding skills—including those pertaining to the locally customary semiotic systems. As a consequence, they were able to communicate in two different cultural frameworks, whereby they turned into prototypical agents of cultural transfer incidentally, and usually inadvertently. The men of the Hanse paved the way for a phenomenon of on-going virulence: the high receptivity of Eastern Europe concerning all kinds of cultural items of German origin. This applies even today.
The atrocities committed during the Nazi era notwithstanding, the German language, culture, and, along with them, manufactured goods, have a greater importance and standing in post-Soviet Eastern Europe than in any other territory of the world—including Germany’s Western partners within the European Union.

Applicability Beyond Europe

It remains an open question, transcending both the geographical and the historical boundaries of this essay, whether or not there are comparable transnational agencies in other parts of the world and at other times. Some selected remarks will have to do, in this regard.

As already mentioned, universalistic ideologies—whether religious or secular—seem to be powerful agents with regard to promoting the floating of cultural material. In addition to the Roman Church, one would have to consider the role of the umma—that is, the community of those who pray to Allah. In countries far removed from its territory of emergence—such as Indonesia, or (sub-Saharan) West-Africa—one may observe its activities as an agency of cultural transfer. For reasons of disciplinary competence, I shall leave it at the following speculations concerning a consideration of the cultural impact of Christian and Muslim religions in a comparative perspective. One relevant point that indeed requires being discussed is the virtually complete rejection of staged performances in traditional Islam. The type of drama qua mass media, which emerged in Western Europe during the age under scrutiny here, simply does not exist in (traditional) Islamic societies. In that sense, one might hypothesize that Islam as an agency of cultural transfer is primarily dedicated to its faith and related religious practices, while its contribution to a spreading of more secular cultural practices and items is comparatively limited, at least in this specific era. By contrast, it might be noted that the Roman Church exported the religious drama created in Spain (the *auto sacramental*), as well as its Jesuit analogs, to the ‘exotic’ places mentioned above. Seeing that, in terms of form and structure, these post-Renaissance didactic plays were heavily influenced both by the system of rhetoric, and by Humanistic (Aristotelian) principles of composition, this process may also have paved the way for the subsequent reception of secular European drama in the respective regions.

On the other hand, one should not discard the fact that, after Antiquity, the philosophical basis of the West was laid by the reception of an *œuvre*, which probably would have remained unknown in the Christian Occident (at least until the fall of Constantinople) had not the highly cultivated Muslim conquerors of Northern Africa and the Iberian Peninsula carried it with them, along with their
weapons, and then established it in the conquered territories—quite the same as their faith, their mosques, their medical practice, etc. Military conquests driven by nothing but material greed might encompass a certain cultural transfer, as well (one might adduce the case of the Mongol tribes, who, from the 13th century on and under their leader Genghis Khan, had begun to expand their areas of influence from central Asia to the entire region later known as the Ottoman Empire). Typically, however, such does not go along with a systematic *translatio studii*, in contrast to cases of military conquests fueled by universalistic ideologies. Yet with respect to the question of Islam as an agency of secular cultural transfer, the transmission of the Aristotelian corpus might be a singular case.\(^{29}\)

### Outlook: Early Modern Times and the 21st Century

With regard to secular universalism as a catalyst of floating processes in the cultural net, one would have to take into consideration the concept of ‘human rights’, and the pretension of the political model of democracy to universal applicability and expediency. It might be superfluous to comment on the cultural side effects of modern universalistic ideologies, since they are potentially open to everyone’s view each day, when watching the news. There is literally no Western military endeavor that is not immediately followed by massive attempts at implementing—in the respective conquered or ‘freed’ territories—structures, rules, and narratives, whose main or even sole task is to facilitate and then propel the unrestricted floating of cultural material from the Western metropolises to the regions thus ‘integrated’ (or ‘re-integrated’) into the ‘universal’ net, a process decidedly aided by the respective rhetorical techniques in public relations and global(ized) corporate ‘mission statements’.

One might inquire as to what may have changed over the course of the centuries separating our day from the Early Modern age. The role of the Christian Churches for contemporary circulating processes concerning cultural material has diminished drastically, which is in line with their general loss of influence.

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\(^{29}\) This point raises many questions difficult to answer in a non-speculative way; even if it were true that the leading Arabic Aristotelians had been converted Jews, there still remains the question of why the religious authorities tolerated their activities. A tenable suggestion or observation in this respect might be the following: Islam does not need a concept such as Original Sin; consequently, an unrestrictedly positive evaluation of abstract reason is possible, at least in principle; the case is different, the more the level of abstraction is lowered.
As a transnational ruling class, the higher aristocracy has vanished.\textsuperscript{30} For the abovementioned reasons, the importance of people of Jewish origin as agents of ensuring a floatation of the material in the net may have increased even. The transnational community of scholars and artists is still of great importance. At the same time, it must remain an open question (at least for now), whether or not the community of scholars will manage to recover from the blow to its transnationality inflicted by the age of ‘national cultures’.

Certain agencies of transculturation did not emerge until Modernity proper. Of course, the most important one is the (visual) media industry (radio, film, television, the internet), which did not begin to deploy its revolutionary activities until the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Global capitalism is said to have reached its state of maturity during the last decades. This economic model is a relevant factor, also in the sphere of culture and cultural goods or commodities—and not only since the age of Imperialism (the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century); for its early stages may be traced back to Antiquity. When taking the epithet ‘global’ literally, it is, of course, a phenomenon that emerges with the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. It may very well be the case that the evaporation of a shared concept(ion) of rhetoric—which occurred during the age of Nationalism, and along with the respective consolidation of (apparently) ‘national cultures’—has already been superseded in our time by a transnational (and trans-European) ‘semiotico-rhetorical’ system, whose main mediating basis will no longer be language, but visually encoded patterns.\textsuperscript{31}

Within the framework of the essay at hand, these more recent agencies cannot be discussed in detail. As far as cultural transfer is concerned, one might

\textsuperscript{30} Present-day heirs to the throne typically marry women (or men) from their own country; in order to avoid frictions with their peers, they sidestep the members of their country’s aristocracy. The concept of ‘dynastic bonds’ beyond particular borders, and utilized as a political tool, has evaporated along with the complete loss of effective power on the part of the ‘Royals’. Their status is that of common ‘high-profile individuals’. In order to preserve this status, they are obliged to fulfill the needs of the readers of the yellow press. For a girl or a young man working as a hairdresser, it is easier to fantasize about being a journalist or a fitness instructor of their own country, than to be some snobbish aristocrat from abroad.

\textsuperscript{31} This observation is not meant in a strictly dichotomic way; the actual performance of the speech on the rhetorician’s part—that is, a form of visual encoding—has always been a component of rhetoric. Present-day global mass media rely not only on visual codes, but also make use of language, of course (albeit in a way that is rather reduced, at least from the standpoint of a person educated before the ‘iconic turn’). Still, the relative weight of linguistic and visual mediation seems to have been inverted. This said, the formal standardization (‘rhetoricization’) of visual encoding in today’s globally distributed motion pictures seems to be no less strict than the standardization of verbal patterns had been during the age(s) of rhetoric.
say that their activities do not differ from the pursuits of their predecessors in terms of quality (for instance: printing companies, Medieval *scriptoria* copying manuscripts; traders, associations of traders, trading companies). The difference is (evidently) in quantity, and the future will tell whether or not the exponential increase of cultural material distributed via the internet will bring about qualitative change as well—meaning, a change, to which the above description (concerning the processes of cultural floatation in the past) might no longer apply.
Bibliography


