II

Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality

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*T*ransculturality is a concept that captures some of the living traits of cultural change as highly diverse contemporary societies become globalized. Most importantly, it offers a conceptual landscape for considering cultures as relational webs and flows of significance in active interaction with one another (expanding on Geertz 1973). As a provisional definition that will be further explored and discussed in the coming pages, transculturality suggests departing from the traditional, yet very current view of "cultures" as fixed frames or separate islands neatly distanced and differentiated from one another. Instead, as suggested by Welsch (1999), transculturality invites us to consider the intermingling of presumably distinct cultures and the blurry lines between them, and to carefully examine the "global situation" (ensuing Tsing 2000, and echoing Robertson 1990 on the "global condition") of individuals, communities and societies that increasingly draw from expanded, tremendously pluralized cultural repertoires in their everyday life practice and imaginary. Yet, transculturality is a puzzling

word to some, often confused with other terms used in the scientific literature about cultural diversity and historical or social change, such as "transculturation", "multiculturalism" or "interculturality". However, as argued below, it is a separate concept that designates specific processes inadequately captured by these other terms. This paper examines each of these terms, specifying how they differ from the concept of transculturality, and outlines the useful research agenda this notion suggests.

Debating Culture: Stability and Boundaries in Question

Culture is the central concept referred to in the terms "multiculturalism", "interculturality" and "transculturality" examined in this chapter. It is a much-disputed complex concept even in anthropology and cultural studies, the disciplines most dedicated to its study. In a famous introductory chapter seeking to establish anthropology as the scientific study of culture (with ethnography as its primary method), Bronislaw Malinowski claimed culture as a "totality" and a machinery that allows humans to confront and solve problems. The functionalist perspective pioneered by Malinowski defined culture in opposition to nature, as the systemic totality of human fabrications to satisfy their basic needs for food, security, shelter or reproduction (Malinowski, 1944: 36–38). Culture was largely viewed as a causally determined "coherent ensemble" of practices, representations and beliefs that could be scientifically studied, mostly as closed systemic entities. Current discussions of culture have largely retained the functionalist systemic view of cultures as distinct, autonomous and stable ensembles of practices and beliefs proper to a human collectivity and transmitted from one generation to the other. Yet, this view applied mostly to rather small human collectivities, such as tribal and indigenous groups from the Third World, often considered in isolation from other collectivities for the sake of

scientific precision, even though complete isolation of human groups is an exception rather than the rule.

While functionalism remains highly influential in the common acceptation of the term culture—generally understood as *a stable system of practices and beliefs belonging to a specific bounded collectivity*—, other early anthropological schools such as Boasian diffusionnism, argued against the view of culture as a closed or stable system, developing instead a view of culture as a highly permeable context "in a constant state of flux" when considered in a historical perspective (Boas 1920/1940: 284). This view re-emerged as an important theoretical current in the 1970s with the interpretive turn pioneered by Clifford Geertz and extended by post-modern anthropology and critical cultural studies (such as Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; or Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Geertz (1973) proposed that culture be viewed no longer as an isolated system or coherent whole, but as a much more permeable and highly dynamic "web of significance" woven by human practices and representations, and a living context for understanding these in a given collectivity.[1] Interpretive anthropology (rather than explanatory or causalist), as it came to be coined, proposed to study culture as webs and flows (rather than as a stable structure), and as a human-made context that must be examined from the "thick" perspective of social actors, striving—never wholly successfully—to better understand what they do and mean from a highly contextualist perspective. The idea of culture as a web led to greater criticism of the functional-essentialist conception of cultures as isolated or bounded systems, and promoted the more relational view of cultures as complex configurations, where inter-connectedness is key (Inda and Rosaldo 2002) and whereby given collectivities could no longer be studied in total isolation from one another (Boas 1920/1940).

These definitional debates about culture are not only pertinent to the field of anthropology: today, with the development of an extensive literature on the cultural

dimensions of globalization in sociology, cultural studies, international relations and literary studies, reflections on how culture is to be defined are important to ponder. Globalization—broadly defined as an unprecedented world stage of increasing economic, social and cultural interconnectedness (according to widely-cited authors Held and McGrew 2000)—renders even more evident the need to better understand the phenomenon of cultural change, which, for many scholars, is central to contemporary societies. New communication and media technologies, accelerating migration flows and mobility, greater access to cultural products from the world over, together with ethnic tensions and conflicts within and among societies, show that the dynamics of greater and more complex cultural proximity and adversity are important contrapuntal features of globalization. Interestingly again, the same debate over culture as bounded or unbounded, stable or dynamic, marks many of the contemporary discussions about nationalism, cultural diversity, conflict and, more generally, cultural change under globalization. In particular, political scientist Anthony Smith (1990; 1995) has strenuously argued for an essentialist view of national cultures and against cosmopolitan conceptions of culture, defining the term as a collectively shared sense of language, ethnicity, territory and memory which is specific and exclusive to a given group that may react conflictively when its integrity is threatened. In Smith's view, stability and boundedness are again central. Similarly, widely cited international relations author Samuel Huntington (1993) somewhat echoed Smith in the *Clash of Civilization*, positing the existence of vast world cultural ensembles or "civilizations" along linguistic-religious lines, inevitably at risk of confronting each other for survival and perpetuation. These highly influential views have been intently questioned by other scholars, mostly arguing for the constructed, non-fixed character of national cultures and the fundamental interconnectedness of cultures across the

world. This, they argue, complicates the clear-cut compart-
mentalization along national, ethnic or religious lines, as
suggested by Smith, Huntington and other proponents of
the essentialist view (see Eley and Suny 1996, on constructed
nationalisms; Pieterse 2006 on globalization as cultural
hybridization; or UNESCO-sponsored publications on the
theme of "intercultural dialogue" as an alternative formula to
Huntington's "cultural clash" in UNESCO 2008).

Like the essentialist view, and independent of current
developments in anthropology and cultural studies since the
interpretive turn of the 1970s, much of the existing literature
about cultural diversity and change under globalization tends
to assume that cultures can be simplified as fixed and isolated
systems, often struggling for survival when confronted with
adversity or difference. These three interrelated assumptions
about cultures, viewed as *systemic totalities that are separate, stable
and conflict-prone*, are particularly prevalent in the literature on
multiculturalism, to which our discussion now turns.

Multiculturalism and Interculturality

With few exceptions, most societies around the world are
culturally mixed, and national boundaries rarely enclose
populations that are culturally or ethnically homogeneous.
Since early anthropology, migrational flows and ethnic miscege-
nation are recognized to have continuously drawn and redrawn
world societies and cultures (on human history as continuous
cross-cultural contact, see Bentley 1993 and Pieterse 2001;
see Kraidy 2005 on cultures as hybrids). Yet, terms such as
"transculturation", "multiculturalism" and "interculturality",
suggest that some sort of "pure" (in the sense of non-mixed)
culture exists or precedes the mixture, or that cultural diversity
and change are novel features of a globalizing world marked by
accelerating and more volatile migrational flows. More than
novelty, increasing migrational flows and geographical mobility

have only rendered the dynamic state of continuous proximity and cultural mixedness more visible, making it more difficult to neatly isolate cultures from one another or consider them as separate islands to be studied on their own. As discussed here, the concept of transculturality is different from transculturation, multiculturalism and interculturality. It captures more adequately the sense of movement and the complex mixedness of cultures in close contact, and better describes the *embodied situation of cultural plurality* lived by many individuals and communities of mixed heritage and/or experience, whose multifaceted situation is more visible under globalization.

The concept most often confused with transculturality is that of transculturation, coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s (Ortiz 1947) to offer an important alternative to "acculturation", and study the processes of resistance, exchange and appropriation that occur between culturally differentiated populations that have come into close contact with one another in the context of Cuban slaver economy since colonial times. More recently, post-colonialist anthropologists, sociologists and commentators (such as Pratt 1992; Butz and Besio 2004; and Millington 2007) have updated the concept in order to study "zones of contact", mostly in developing countries, where groups and communities from dominant and non-dominant cultures interact.[2] Central to the term transculturation is the notion of dominance, with culturally non-dominant groups engaging in the process of appropriating and transforming some of the cultural practices and representations of the culturally dominant group, a process that may also occur to some extent in the other direction. Although the concept of transculturation views cultures as adaptive and dynamic, it also emphasizes the idea that the cultures in contact with one another are distinct and structurally embedded in a historically established power relation where one tends to dominate the others (e.g., a modern metropolitan culture on local traditional or ethnic cultures). By comparison, transculturality puts emphasis on the rapidly

changing situations of cultural mixedness, where power relations are more difficult to identify because, with increased mobility, the sense of a single dominant culture is more difficult to establish as it is not necessarily considered the sole referent to adapt or resist to, but one among many others. Furthermore, the concept of transculturality is mostly used in a literature that is more concerned with contemporaneity under cultural globalization than with colonial history.

Another concept that is often considered in relation to transculturation is that of multiculturalism, sometimes used interchangeably with cosmopolitanism to qualify societies that experience a high degree of cultural diversity through migrational inflows and/or openness to such diversity. More properly, multiculturalism is used to characterize specific public policies for managing culturally diverse societies in the industrial world, the leading case studies generally being Canada, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom (for comprehensive discussions about multicultural policies around the world, see UNESCO 2003a, 2003b and Inglis 1996). In the Canadian context, multiculturalism has been in use since the 1970s, both as a descriptive term to qualify cultural diversity in the population and as a set of programmatic measures conducted by the State to support and encourage such diversity in a non-assimilationist view (*mosaïque* or the *melting-pot* sense of the term multicul-turalism). These measures concern immigration, labor market, education, public media policies, and regulations as well as support for the arts and culture, sustaining the general view that respect for cultural pluralism is central to Canadian culture (see Heritage Canada's annual reports on Canadian multiculturalism; and Houle 1999 for a historiography of the policy).

Regularly criticized for encouraging groups and communities to maintain and cultivate differences instead of relating or adapting to neighbours and host cultures, multiculturalism often raises debates about the contours and contents of Canadian culture, and about shared values, representations

and practices that could be considered key to a national culture (for a review of recurring critiques, also see McAndrew *et al.* 2002; on multiculturalism as the "ghettoization" of cultural communities and individuals, see Bissoondath 1994). Central to many of these critiques is the idea that multiculturalism describes diversity as the amalgamation of separate communities and tends to favour the stereotypical view of cultures as immutable or irrevocably different. Transculturality basically differs from multiculturalism in that it does not qualify public policies or programs, is never used as a descriptive term for cultural pluralism, and is rooted in a theoretical perspective that questions the idea that cultures are separate, stable or even, for that matter, different from one another. The transcultural traverses cultures, bringing to light what is common or alike amid what seems to be different.[3]

A third important term in the literature is interculturality. In the Canadian case, multiculturalism is seen as a political attempt to erode Québec's sense of a distinct culture in the larger national pot. Political commentators and scholars have instead emphasized the need for Québec to develop its own government policies on cultural diversity, which has (mostly) been termed as "interculturality", or support for cultural diversity, not precluding the defence of Québécois culture, mostly via the defence of French as the primary language of expression in the province (on interculturality as an alternative to Canadian multiculturalism, see the research of Will Kymlicka, in Kymlicka 2003; also more recently, the commission report by Bouchard and Taylor 2008).[4] Interculturality has also come to account for the relations between Québec and the rest of Canada, or rather between a Francophone minority population of Catholic heritage, and an Anglophone majority of protestant origins. It is often also used in the Canadian context to illustrate the relations between the Québécois of French ancestry and expression and the rest of the population, including Anglophones, Aboriginals and immigrants.[5]

Beyond the specific case of Québec, the term interculturality is often used to express the right to difference in relations of a dualistic nature between minorities or marginalized cultures and the majority or dominant cultures (not always the majority demographically speaking, in the Latin American case, for instance), which have historically tended to be tense or conflictive.[6] Since the mid-1980s, with the World Decade for Cultural Development (1987–1996), UNESCO has often used the term in either education or in international relations to express the need for greater dialogue between groups, communities and nations that perceive themselves as culturally distinct collectivities driven to defend and cultivate their right to difference (be it ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, etc.). In education or business studies, the term has also come to be used to qualify models of intervention for the schooling or management of culturally diverse populations and groups. Particularly in business studies, interculturality can also designate management strategies for situations of misunderstandings or conflicts of a cultural nature among workers, or between a foreign firm and its environment (see Davel, Dupuis and Chanlat 2005; Hofstede 2001).

On a comparative basis, transculturality does not share interculturality's premise of cultural boundedness, difference or propensity to conflict, which mostly derives from classical anthropology and the essentialist views of cultures discussed earlier. It places a distinctive emphasis on commonality and connectedness, viewing cultures as mobile flows in close interaction with one another, where negotiation and change operate alongside conflict. The transcultural does not dualize or polarize cultures as essentially different or potentially antagonistic, as the term interculturality can often suggest. Like the other concepts discussed earlier in this section, transculturality is not synonymous with interculturality, the former actually designating other complex processes and situations

which are inadequately captured by these other terms, and for which a more precise term is needed.

In this section, I attempted to position transculturality as an alternate to transculturation, multiculturalism and interculturality. Transculturality was briefly discussed as a distinct concept which is not interchangeable with the others, but can be considered as an additional conceptual tool that provides a nuanced description of cultural situations and processes inadequately captured by the other terms. I mainly argued that transculturation is a useful term to qualify historically sedimented configurations of power relations between dominant and subordinated groups; that multiculturalism describes specific state policies for managing cultural diversity that account for the right to difference; and that interculturality aptly qualifies the more dualistic and antagonistic relations between groups, communities and nations that perceive themselves to be culturally distinct from one another, and that are struggling to maintain that distinction. In all three cases, transculturality was presented as a separate concept which neither subsumes nor is subsumed by any of the others because it designates social and cultural processes not entirely captured by them, and because the concept stems from theoretical perspectives that view cultures as relational webs rather than separate or dualistic entities (e.g., self-contained "systems" or "worlds"). Transculturality could certainly contribute to broaden these other concepts, but more importantly, it communicates different characteristics for which a separate and more specific term is needed. Having considered what the concept is not, let us now examine more closely what the term transculturality means according to the body of literature that uses it.

What is Transculturality?

Central to the notion of transculturality is the heightened interdisciplinary landscape in which many authors work. Far

from constituting a concept exclusive to one field of study, it is a flexible concept used for a range of purposes by a great array of disciplines, including psychiatry, nursing, communications, business and management studies, urban design, visual arts, ethnomusicology, international relations, anthropology, literature, philosophy and sociology. Also striking is the fact that the term is slightly nuanced for every author using it. For many authors, it is a neologism that could be easily substituted with "cross-cultural" (that which cuts across cultures and can be considered alike), while for others it is a sense of cultural identity that is not nationally bounded or that is plural and highly mobile depending on location or experience. In the literature, transculturality is most often used in the following meanings: *cross-cultural competence*, *identitary continuum* and *plural sense of self*.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

A first body of literature views transculturality as either the possibility to identify clusters of significances and practices that are similar across cultures, or the need to cautiously understand the differences between cultures when studying a given phenomenon in a multicultural environment. The first tendency can be viewed as universalist, while the second builds on the premises of relativism. Both orientations are closely related to interdisciplinary dialogues involving anthropology and cultural studies, along with health, education or social work studies; they also tend to discuss transculturality as that which cuts across national cultures and can be considered alike.[7]

In particular, scholars in psychiatry and psychology have pioneered the use of the term transculturality with the establishment of a transcultural psychiatry movement in the 1950s,[8] which studied the currency of mental diseases across cultures, and discussed whether some core diseases exist in all cultures, or whether illnesses and their symptoms tend to be

culturally specific (see the excellent historiography provided by Bains 2005, as well as the discussion of Western-centrism in the development of psychology by Pewzner-Apeloig 2005).[9] The first tendency tried to establish the universal nature of diseases as biological entities, regardless of symptoms that were widely agreed to vary across cultures, in an effort to develop an international chart of mental diseases for health professionals across the world. The second tendency emphasized the culturally specific nature of mental illnesses, with culture not only shaping the illness but also the very way we conceive it, name it, and treat it (Pewzner-Apeloig 2005; Bains 2005).

Beyond the conceptual debate, both tendencies have opened the way for mental and more generally physical health practices to become more culturally sensitized to non-Western understandings of illness, seeking in the first case to define universally valid treatments, regardless of cultural contexts or variations in symptoms, and in the second, to examine and appropriately treat illnesses with greater attention to the patients' cultural or ethnic background, and avoid applying Western medical concepts to non-Western cultures and experiences with illness. The second tendency has been particularly influential in English and American psychiatry, as well as general health practices, with the establishment of transcultural health societies and institutes that address racial biases in the treatment of ethnic and racial minorities. Some researchers showed, for instance, that members of ethnic minorities were disproportionately "psychiatrized" and diagnosed schizophrenic. A non-racial, transcultural approach specifically addresses the fact that universalizing conceptions of illness could distort the diagnoses and treatment of illnesses, which could be understood and treated otherwise if practitioners were *more competent at understanding the patients' cultural backgrounds*, including race, language and spiritual/religious beliefs.

Even more important than these debates on human health and illness in a culturally sensitive perspective, and

whether symptoms, diagnoses and treatments should be universal or highly relativized, transcultural psychiatry and health studies opened up rather interesting directions for the social study of multicultural societies. These include current international relations research into the possibility of articulating "transcultural understandings" in global justice frameworks or through transnational social movements (Clark 2007; McIntyre-Mills 2000); cultural philosophy research into the possibility of establishing a "metalanguage" to express common knowledge or significations across cultures[10]; business studies research into developing cultural skills and strategies that will allow workers and businesses to competently interact within multicultural or foreign environments (Elashmawi and Harris 1993; Gatley and Lessen 1995); urban studies and design research into landscaping public spaces that are adaptable to a diversity of cultural practices and contexts (Chang 2005); and social work research and popular education about transcultural mediation with immigrant families and communities in legal hardship (Latour 2003). Like its predecessors in psychiatry studies, this prolific line of literature primarily understands transculturality as a close equivalent to the "cross-cultural", which is often primarily engaged, in its universal tendency, in identifying core practices that cut across cultures or, in its relativist orientation, in advocating for culturally sensitive social or professional interventions that take into greater account the diversity and differences across groups and communities.

TRANSCULTURALITY AS A CONTINUUM AND A PLURAL SENSE OF SELF

Another cluster of authors echoes Caribbean writer Patrick Chamoiseau, for whom transculturality is the passage of cultural currents in time and space, and cultural currents themselves composed with the correlation and inter-retro-action of distinct imaginaries.[11] In spite of highlighting the constitutive

plurality of the cultural currents examined ("inter-retro-action"), this view also speaks of a cohesive force by using the term "current," which suggests strength and directionality: one is *in* the current or *out* of it, rarely in between. Transculturality in this view tends to designate the *continuous coherence of certain traits, beliefs, and practices that transcend geography or history*, as is the case for diasporic populations, or populations of given ethnic ancestry that define themselves under the shared umbrella of a collective identity, that is not always territorially ascribed. Chamoiseau applies this to the idea of *créolité* (creoleness), a cultural identity mostly associated with French-speaking Caribbeans of African ancestry but which also designates communities of African origin around the world, established through slavery, which have developed a hybrid expression of their own within the idiom and practices of the dominant culture. Chamoiseau particularly illustrates this process through his fascination with the richness of local vernacular language and expressions on the francophone island of Martinique; which are expressive of a collective imaginary. Deeply influenced by novelist Édouard Glissant, Chamoiseau explore these ideas in several novels such as *Texaco* (1992) and in more sociological essays such as *Éloge de la créolité* (1989). His conception of transculturality as the capacity of certain cultural identities, however plural they may be, to transcend time or space is unique in that it calls for the examination of the specificity or distinctiveness of these composite identities in order to explain their ability to cohere and sustain themselves along a *continuum*. A similar perspective can be found among scholars studying cultural identities that are not territorially bounded; leading examples in the literature from the Americas are studies that use terms such as "indianness" or "africanness" (and *négritude*), and perhaps some of the literature about "americanity", all of which tend to propose the existence of core traits that constitute the essence of a given collectivity. In this sense, transculturality refers to the varying capacity of different

"cultures", considered as cohesive and distinctive frameworks of significations and practices, to traverse time, migrate across space, adapt to new contexts, ant yet retain their distinctive traits. Although the term may not be perfect—since authors working from the perspective of non-nationally bounded cultural identities often characterize them as hybrid or highly relational in origin yet stable in currency—, the perspective does posit an *identitary continuum*.

In contrast to the view of transculturality as cohesive currents or the capacity of given cultures to transcend time and space, a last body of literature sees transculturality in fractal or pluralist terms, mostly as a fluid transformative process in which people no longer perceive themselves under one single culture. Transculturality here refers to an *embodied situation of cultural plurality* lived by many individuals and communities of mixed heritage and/or experience whose multifaceted situation is rendered more visible under globalization. Central to this third perspective is the view that cultures are not actually stable or clearly distinct from one another. It highlights the mutability of cultures, their embeddedness and relatedness, in contrast to the dualizing and more antagonistic view suggested by a term such as interculturality.

Africanist anthropologist Jacky Bouju (2003, 2) defines transculturality as "la reconnaissance réciproque d'un univers de significations partagées" [the reciprocal recognition of a universe of shared significations]. This conception not only points to the possibility of cross-cultural understandings, as does the first view of transculturality discussed above, but more importantly, it questions the separateness of cultures that were socially and historically constructed as different for the sake of nation-building and the legitimatization of colonial rule. Bouju shows that Mali's Dogons, often held in the anthropological literature as an archetype of traditional African culture, were never isolated from neighbouring communities and groups, whether through trade, alliances or confrontation, and that their very sense of "tradition"

was developed in constant interaction with surrounding groups and communities. In short, this view emphasizes the relatedness of cultures, arguing against the error of viewing them as isolated islands that have developed autonomous systems of signification erected as frontiers between the "us" and "them".

Relatedness is the core of transculturality viewed through a pluralistic lens. Using the term in the global contemporary framework, philosopher Wolfgang Welsch (1999, 197) defines transculturality as the "consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures […], which also interpenetrate or emerge from one another". It furthermore designates "the entanglement with new realities and the validation of new, hybridized worldviews [which] usually have the consequence of unsettling hitherto stable or monolithic identities" (101). Central to this perspective is the idea that transculturality reveals these composite identities and social interactions that belie the view of culture as monolithic, and bounded by clear frontiers. In addition, the contemporaneous character of transculturality is emphasized: it is a fluid and dialogical process of cultural construction that has become more visible in the current era of globalization, where individuals, groups and communities from different cultural backgrounds are in more continuous contact in their daily transactions or experiences.

This view also corresponds to a similar idea explored from a postmodernist stance by Welsch (1999) and Kraidy (2005), and in cosmopolitan liberalism by Hannertz (1996) and Beck (2002), that individuals and communities are now developing the ability to continuously shift between cultural flows and worlds, and to compose a new sense of self that is not monoculturally ascribed. This can be the case for second and third generation immigrants: the Chicanos in the United States, who do not recognize themselves as either entirely Mexican or American or merely as a hyphen between the two; Peruvians of Chinese ancestry who feel at ease with both Andean and Asiatic heritages; communities living in border zones between countries

or mixed linguistic communities such as Franco-Ontarians in Canada; individuals living in global cities continuously exposed to a variety of cultures; and more generally, people who have come to develop a practical or imaginary sense of homeness in the world and worldness at home, who can no longer entirely recognize themselves in a single national or ethnic culture (as powerfully explored by Patrick Imbert 2009 in this volume). Indeed, and beyond the view that transculturality is only a different word for hybridity or *métissage* (as particularly emphasized by García-Canclini 2000 and extensively analysed by Kraidy 2005 who advocates for a critical "transculturalism"), we can understand it from an agent-centred perspective as a multifarious process and a multiplicity of cultural referents that is not as stable or results-oriented as the word "hybrid" suggests, and where cultural ascriptions are often negotiated and shifted depending on the context. Novelist Pico Iyer captures transculturality brilliantly as a chameleonic capacity to culturally adapt to a variety of parameters, and draw from an enlarged repertory of codes in order to fit the moment, feeling at times quintessentially national or ethnic depending the location, moment or context (Iyer, 2000, 18):

> [a 'global soul' might be] a person who had grown up in many cultures all at once—and so lived in the cracks between them [...]. She might have a name that gave away nothing about her nationality [...], and she might have a porous sense of self that changed with her location.

In a similar vein, transculturality as multi-situatedness can be used to qualify cultural productions in music, literature, food, film, clothing, and more generally works of art that deal with inner and more distant diversity, and combine material from differing cultures to create new shapes, genres and discourses that seek not only to remain significant for the cultures they reference, but also to produce new meanings that can no longer

be proclaimed authentic or otherwise with regard to their original components. The music industry, and perhaps even more particularly the world music industry, offers numerous examples of cultural borrowings reinscribed in a variety of cultural contexts, as well as genres, instruments, techniques, rhythmic and melodic exchanges and transactions between musicians (see some of the excellent work in ethnomusicology on world music as transcultural practice in Steingress 2003 or the material of the online journal *Transcultural Music Review*). Transcultural production may be a cacophonic world ensemble that aggregates sounds from diversified cultural origins, or a smooth fusion that blends together disparate elements, creatively rearranging sound materials from around the world to generate new musical genres through the cultivation of diversity.

To close, the example from ethnomusicology can be applied to transculturality from a sociological perspective. The term does much more than describe individuals and communities circulating through compartmentalized cultures and selecting what fits from each, nor does it simply refer to the melting together of diverse cultural components which subsequently lose form and content through fusion. Transculturality designates a chameleonic disposition for strategically rearranging one's sense of cultural identity by drawing from an expanded repertoire— according to the moment context or location. As a competence, identity, disposition or situational strategy, transculturality is not necessarily valid for everyone, yet it may be a useful term for those individuals who, by virtue of a mixed background or lived experience, participate in a plurality of actively connected cultural flows and worlds, and need a precise term to express their mobility and multifaceted identity.

Conclusion: The World at Home

The term transculturality is a newcomer to current discussions about cultural diversity, where terms such as "interculturality"

or "multiculturalism" are more common. Derived from theoretical perspectives of cultures as relational and dynamic, transculturality can be understood as a cross-cultural competence, a cohesive identity that transcends frontiers or time, or a plural sense of self for individuals and communities who see themselves as continuously shifting between cultural flows and worlds, rather than identifying with a single, monolithic culture.

Yet, beyond terminological exercises, what does such a term offer to the study of cultural dimensions of globalization? It can provide many directions, including the following one, which is more central to the purpose of this paper. The term transculturality points to the need to better understand that, under globalization, local cultural diversity is likely to continue to expand, with people traveling out, migrating in, and being more exposed to otherness and difference through contact, information, communication and consumption. If we continue to view cultures as separate islands or distant worlds in which greater proximity will raise anxiety, misunderstanding or rejection, this will not exactly help us to live together better or find societal ways to establish common grounds in multicultural contexts. While primoridialist against the culturally different other will certainly continue to be expressed, the concept of transculturality suggests alternative ways of relating to otherness in times when diversity is likely to continue and expand. These alternative ways require further empirical study in order to get a better understanding of this important aspect of cultural globalization from an agent-centred, day-to-day perspective, and explore different views of culture as dynamic, porous and contextual.

The world is home, and the world is at home. Transculturality can be considered as a cultural form that is no longer reserved for the elite and the privileged, who access the world at their leisure by traveling the globe and choosing what to adapt, adopt or reject. The term suggests that under

global contemporaneity, we need no longer travel great distances to experience the world, bring home what pleases us and leave behind what doesn't. For many people living in industrial societies, the world in most of its diversity can be experienced at home, without travelling much farther than a few blocks, without moving too far away from their computer, sound system, library, kitchen or bed. We can continue to view such diversity at home and in the world as the fragile cohabitation of predatory cultural species, and see cultural encounters with otherness as a source of anxiety or estrangement, and yet, it is not the only way to experiencing cultural difference. To be sure, transculturality does not preclude the possibility of conflict, but it does add to it a few elements of desire and seduction, the desire to live in and understand otherness, the seduction of establishing a sense of understanding that may reduce the distance from what we perceive as different.

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Notes

[1] Geertz (1973: 4) defined culture as follows: "The concept of culture as espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."

[2] In particular, Marie Louise Pratt (1992) has adapted the concept of transculturation to a world-system reading, recontextu-

alizing national locations in systems of power relations between centres and peripheries. She views transculturation as "how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from the materials transmitted to them by a dominant metropolitan culture" (Pratt 1992, 6). She also invites researchers to view their practice as transcultural interaction, through which they can come to be perceived and emulated by research subjects as embodying some of the traits of the dominant metropolitan culture. In practice, the reappropriation of the term by contemporary fieldworkers encourages, among other things, "auto-ethnography", a self-reflexive and critical stance in which the researchers voluntarily place themselves within the larger, world-systemic power relations configuration that they will study locally.

3   Many artistic or academic projects exemplify how a transcultural lens fundamentally differs from a multicultural one. Research projects such as McDonald's (2003) discussion of museum exhibitions in multicultural societies, and how works of art can reinforce a sense of transculturality by substituting artistic pieces that represent cultural communities as separate and different, with works that highlight connectedness and co-production of cultural artifacts among communities. Other examples in urban development include the presentation by Chang (2005) of public landscaping projects in multicultural neighbourhoods where a transcultural lens is applied by having the designer become familiar with the cultural demographics of the area in order to create a public space that can be shared by all in spite of cultural differences in how green spaces are usually used by each community (e.g., for dog-walking, jogging, tai-chi practice, folkloric dance rehearsal, etc.). In both these cases, the transcultural lens opens a discussion about defining common ground between allegedly different cultures, and encouraging greater connectedness by the support of initiatives in public settings that promote greater proximity between them.

4   Debates over the Québécois' cultural identity under "interculturalism" are very current, recently fuelled again by negative media and public reactions to the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (also

known as the Bouchard-Taylor Commission) in 2007–2008. While welcomed by some for many reasons, including the creation of a public space to speak about the "identity malaise" in Québec, racism and the perceived bias of immigration policies, the itinerant Commission which travelled extensively throughout Quebec for public hearings in 2007–2008, was also the object of strong criticisms, due to the fact that it fuelled popular expressions of intolerance and ignorance by giving them a public stage, and that the Commission's final report was too prudent to take the debate further than recognizing existing tensions between Francophone Québécois of white Catholic ancestry and other immigrant communities, and the praising of interculturality posing French as the province's primary language of expression. Full access to the report can be found at http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/index-en.html (last consulted August 13, 2008).

5   Several examples of a transcultural reading of seemingly intercultural situations could be given. The case of Québec is often presented as one of the leading cases of a national minority historically struggling against the majority for the right to its distinct culture, as well as the case of a regional majority historically struggling in its own territory to defend its right to protect and cultivate a distinct culture, starting with French as the main language of expression of the province. Less often raised, however, is the fact that Québécois culture is itself largely the historical product of ethnic miscegenation between Native and French populations, and of these two with flows of migrants of increasingly diversified origins, with South European settlers counting among the oldest immigrant communities. The figure of the *métisse* (or mixed-race, as developed by Van Schendel 2008 in this book) is thus central to properly define Québec's cultural origins. Here, a transcultural lens would qualify Québec's struggle for a distinct culture as antagonistic to its national framework (as would an intercultural reading), but it would also stress the mixedness of its ethnic composition (in origins and contemporaneity), taking the discussion of Québécois cultural identity beyond the use of essentialist or dualist terms, and

potentially rendering thereby some of the current public debates about Québec's cultural identity more inclusive and compelling.

6 In the Americas, the term interculturality is often used in relationship to indigenous people, to express cultural distinct-iveness from non-indigenous populations. This use can be problematic, however, especially because it obscures the fact that many countries of the hemisphere encompass a highly mixed population where dualistic distinctions are not always easy to establish (e.g., indigenous vs. non-indigenous). Furthermore, reading the interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous people as solely intercultural can tend to overemphasize difference and historical clash, while missing the fact that some overlaps are occurring and have occurred, as is the case, for instance, with the reappropriation of some Catholic saints and biblical myths into indigenous religious practices, precisely because they were not always alien to them, and because these appropriations allowed for spiritual survival strategies of a transcultural nature (see Lafaye 1974, on the Mexican case; and the brilliant chapter by Tuer 2008, in this book, that looks at North-Eastern Argentina).

7 This view of transculturality as what transcends national frontiers largely corresponds to the definitions provided by UNESCO, as in Goucha 2004.

8 McGill University pioneered this movement with the establishment in 1956 of a project on Transcultural Research in Mental Health Problems, in its scholar journal *Transcultural Psychiatry*. The university still has a special program in the Faculty of Medicine called the Social and Transcultural Psychiatry Division (see http://www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych/ [last accessed May 1, 2008]).

9 Pewzner-Apeloig (2005) notes, for instance, that depression is not experienced and understood similarly in Black Africa and the Western World. For the former, it tends to be associated with a persecution complex, and for the latter, with a sense of guilt. A similar argument is made by Pradelle de la Tour (2003) describing a project of "transcultural" mediation with African immigrant families established in Parisian suburbs, where the sons'

> legal hardships tended to be interpreted as signs of persecution by powerful forces.

10   See for instance the ambitious project under the Transcultural International Institute created in 1988 at Bologna University by semiologist Umberto Eco with anthropologist Alain le Pichon, together with African and Chinese scholars, whose leading concern is about developing a "reciprocal anthropology" that suspends familiar (Western European) modes of knowledge in order to better absorb other knowledge modes and translate those modes into terms that are valid both for the observed and the observer's cultures. For the Institute, the purpose of the transcultural approach is mostly to progressively establish a meta-language, a common corpus of words and key concepts in order to better understand the conflicts and misunderstandings that arise from intercultural encounters. The Institute is partic-ularly interested in the cultural relations between Europeans and non-Europeans: "to answer the growing demand for reciprocal knowledge between cultures." Here the term transcultural seems to work not only as a stand-in for cross-cultural, but also to suggest the core differences among the cultures studied (European/ Non-European). Hence, one of the Institute's goals is to establish transcultural methodological frameworks, understood as universal, and which would cut across intercultural situations or relations. See http://transcultura.jura.uni-sb.de, (last accessed June 15, 2008)

11   The expression was used in an interview of Patrick Chamoiseau conducted by Michael Peterson (*L'imaginaire de la diversité*) towards the end the 1990s, available on the Potomitan literary website dedicated to the promotion of creole cultures at: http://www.potomitan.info/divers/imaginaire.htm (last accessed May 7, 2008).