

# On the Emergence and Spread of the Concept Pedigree of “Transculture”

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to use a divergent perspective to recognize “transculture” and its derivatives, which have emerged in recent decades and gradually been widely used. In fact, the word “transculture” appeared only in the 1990s, which came from the compound word “transculturation” in the 1940s. Since then, there have been a series of derivative words with “transculture” as the root, such as adjective “transcultural”, noun “transculturalism” and “transculturality”. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the meaning of these words in different regions and contexts, as well as the background and route of their emergence and dissemination, and then summarize the development trend of “transculture” and its derivatives in order to better understand the new trend of cultural exchange under the background of globalization. Latin American scholars’ understanding of “transculturation-” words have not yet risen to the level of ideology. However, European and American scholars’ understanding of “transculture” and its derivative words “acculturation” and “transculturalism” is more inclined to construct them as a method of cultural communication and a complete set of theories. Although different scholars have different perspectives, they all form their own systems. European and American scholars’ understanding of “transculture” and its derivatives tends to be commendatory, and they have hopes for cultural exchanges. No matter from the perspective of ideology, or from the perspectives of politics and cultural studies, scholars generally emphasize the positive role of “transculture” and its derivatives in the cultural exchanges of individuals, and generally believe that “transculture” and “transculturalism” have more advantages than before. The cultural strategy must have excellent potential.*

**Keywords:** *Transculture, Spread, Multiculturalism, Culture*

## 1. Introduction

“Culture” is an enduring topic. In the international environment, we talk about global culture, in the wave of global economy, we talk about consumer culture, in the division of countries and regions, we talk about national culture. However, the complex discussions increasingly highlight the plural nature of culture. Therefore, it is necessary to make a strategic plan for plural culture. As a result, western scholars are no longer limited to the definition and classification of the connotation and characteristics of different cultures, but began to reflect on the attitudes and ways of treating many different cultures, thus giving birth to the ideas of multiculturalism, cross-culturalism or interculturalism, and even transculturalism. These ideas

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are compound words rooted in culture, with different prefixes to express different attitudes towards culture. And their successive appearance also represents people’s different understanding of culture at different stages. However, apart from advocating different suffixes of “ism”, these English words combine into a new cultural form, such as multicultural, intercultural, transculture and so on. These words are rooted in “culture”, and “culture” itself is a neutral word, from the Latin “colere”, with the meaning of living, farming, protection and respect [1]. Although scholars have been trying to define culture in one way or another, it is still unsatisfactory. In fact, from the perspective of etymology, the word “culture” itself contains a wide range of meanings. In addition, later generations continue to endow “culture” with various connotations such as politics, society, history and so on, so the meaning of the word “culture” will only become more and more complex. Therefore, if we use a scattered perspective to accommodate the branches and branches of “culture” itself and admit its “growth”, we don’t have to wander and hesitate in the definition of “culture”.

Therefore, this paper attempts to use a divergent perspective to recognize “transculture” and its derivatives, which have emerged in recent decades and gradually been widely used. In fact, the word “transculture” appeared only in the 1990s, which came from the compound word “transculturation” in the 1940s. Since then, there have been a series of derivative words with “transculture” as the root, such as adjective “transcultural”, noun “transculturalism” and “transculturality”. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the meaning of these words in different regions and contexts, as well as the background and route of their emergence and dissemination, and then summarize the development trend of “transculture” and its derivatives in order to better understand the new trend of cultural exchange under the background of globalization.

## **2. 1940s: The birth of transculture in Latin America**

Since the 19th century, various countries in Latin America have begun a bumpy national independence movement, followed by scholars in various countries also began to reflect on their own culture, and tried to find the root of culture in order to seek cultural independence different from the West. However, the culture of Latin America has long been mixed with Indians, blacks, whites and yellow people. It is difficult to draw a clear cultural image for a time. Therefore, in the process of seeking cultural independence, we have to use new terms to express our cultural situation. In the 1940s, the word “transformation” was born. The suffix “-ation” generally means the process, state, nature and result of behavior, which is very consistent with the cultural situation at that time. “Transculture” examines Latin American culture from the perspective of crisscross time and space, which means that Latin American scholars have reached a new stage in their grasp of their own cultural situation and laid a foundation for the development of “transculture” pedigree.

### **2.1. The occurrence of transculturation**

The term “transformation” was coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) in 1940, aiming at the social and economic situation of Cuba at that time, to replace the term “acquisition”. Ortiz points out that the word “acquisition” is mainly used to describe the process of one culture changing to another, implying the meaning of acquiring another culture. However, he believes that the term “transculture” is more suitable to Express Cuba’s never interrupted, strong and complex process of cultural integration among Indians, whites and blacks. What’s more, this word expresses that in the process of cultural integration, there are not only gains, but also the loss or even eradication of the original culture. Ortiz calls it

cultural atrophy. Through the process of adjustment, disadjustment, read adjustment, or deculturation, acculturation, transformation, each of them has lost its native cultural background and formed a new culture on the basis of the three cultures [2].

After decades of fermentation, scholars in Latin America continue Ortiz's thinking on transculturation. In the mid-1970s, the Peruvian novelist and anthropologist José María Arguedas (1911 – 1969) wrote *Formación de una cultura nacional indoamericana* was edited and published. In this work, the author inherits Ortiz's point of view, and still thinks that "transculturation" is a dynamic process. Since the Spanish invasion, Peru's original culture has been placed in the communication with the West for a long time, thus forming a "mixed race" culture. In judging this new culture, we can neither use the standard of Eurocentrism nor return to the gap of prehistoric original culture [3]. Then, in the early 1980s, Uruguayan scholar Ángel Rama (1926-1983) applied the word "transformation" to literary research. Because of the social and political factors, and because of the far-reaching influence of the western culture led by Spain, the writers of the third world generally deny the consequence that a large number of rural residents flow to the city due to the influence of the western culture, which makes the further loss of the original culture, moreover, they unconsciously use the western discourse to fight against hegemonism. Ángel Rama summed it up as "transculturación narrativa". Therefore, in the process of transculturation, Ángel Rama calls for attention to the voice against transculturation, because it contains the appeal of preserving the original culture [4]. Moreover, it should be pointed out that Ángel Rama follows Ortiz and Arguedas's understanding of "transculturation", and stands from the perspective of colonial countries, so as to see the helplessness of native culture to violent "transculturation", and the harm of "transculturation" to passive native culture.

## **2.2. Background of transculturation**

In Latin America, scholars have paid close attention to the word "transformation" ever since it appeared. In fact, this is deeply related to the modern history of Latin America and the political turmoil of the 20th century. Most countries in Latin America, such as Cuba, Peru, Venezuela and Colombia, have experienced the process of transculturation as understood by Ortiz. In 1492, Columbus discovered the new continent of America. Since Columbus mistook America for India, the identity of Americans began to be misunderstood. Moreover, the arrival of the white Spanish massacred the Indians savagely and cruelly, and burned a large number of local ancient books, which made the American culture, which had developed for thousands of years, fall into a state of aphasia. Most of South America became colonies of Spain and Portugal, which made language and religion westernized. In addition, white people from different countries poured into America because of gold fever, competition for raw materials and other reasons. The suzerain countries brought African black people to America for enslavement, which made America experience unprecedented, strong and shocking cultural exchanges. From race to country, from barbarism to civilization, from backwardness to advancement, Indian, white and black have formed their unique Latin American culture after countless times of unimaginable conflicts, running in and coordination. However, until the mid-20th century, the political environment in Latin America was not optimistic. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Latin America has opened the curtain of national independence movement, but after independence, native white people have taken over the power of most independent countries. However, the pursuit of equality and freedom has always been the aspiration of the people of Latin America. Therefore, they seek help from Marxism and Leninism [5]. Therefore, the left wing of Latin America also has certain

strength, such as the Cuban revolution in the 1950s, the election of Chilean socialists as president in the 1970s, and so on. It shows the complex ideology of the people of Latin America in politics, which makes them in the cultural revolution. They also have the consciousness of opposing Western cultural hegemonism. In the 1960s and 1970s, the writers thought deeply about the historical, social, political and cultural problems of their own countries and regions, which led to the “literary explosion” in Latin America. Literary works such as Marquez’s one hundred years of solitude, Asturias’s corn man, Juan Rulfo’s Pedro balamo, Llosa’s green house and ect. In addition to expressing the good wishes of opposing dictatorship, pursuing national independence, freedom and equality, on a deeper level, it actually reflects on the local issues of “Modernity”, “cultural identity” and “ideology”. This is a further reflection from the perspective of postcolonialism, the relationship between Latin American culture and the West, especially European culture, the former colonies and the former suzerain countries Cultural relations. It can be seen that cultural integration has never been an overnight process. Latin American people’s understanding of cultural integration has roughly gone through the process from history to politics, and then to Literature and culture, which is roughly consistent with the occurrence and development of the word “transformation”. Therefore, through the shaping of the word “transformation” by several generations of scholars, we can see that Latin American people are full of complex feelings in the face of the formation of modern history and culture. When they are trying to find the root of culture, they find that they have no way to start in economic, political, historical, social and other aspects, therefore, there are some helpless meanings in the understanding of “transculturation”. But at the same time, it shows that they are willing to face up to the courage and determination of “transculturation” that has happened and is still happening.

### **3. 1990s: The development of the “transculture” conceptual pedigree in Europe and America**

With the attention of European and American countries to Latin American literature and culture, the word “transformation” has also attracted the attention of western scholars. The spread of relevant ideas and theories of transformation in western countries is not limited to Ortiz’s point of view, but also deepened and expanded. The most direct reason is that scholars began to think in the context outside Latin America. Therefore, the term “transculture” was born out of the term “transculture” created by Latin American scholars, and its derivatives began to become rich, such as “transcultural”, “Transculturality”, “transculturalism” and so on. It can be said that the pedigree of “transculture” is gradually improved in the hands of European and American scholars.

#### **3.1. development of transculture and its derivatives**

In the early 1990s, Mary Louise Pratt (1948-), a professor of Spanish and Portuguese, believed that “transculturation” was a phenomenon in her “contact zone”. The author uses the linguistic “instant messaging” meaning of “contact”, therefore, the so-called “contactzne” refers specifically to the aboriginals and colonists in the colony who were scattered due to geographical or historical reasons, but during the colonial period political pressure, racial inequality, conflicts and other situations, gradually communicate and establish areas of continuous contact [6].

Mikhail Epstein, a Russian scholar who studied in the United States after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Because of the impact and integration of thought, especially ideology, we

should think about “transculturation” in a broader context and put forward some suggestions “Transcultural world” means that the world is not independent of all existing cultures, but in these cultures, just like multidimensional space, all dimensions are gradually displayed in the process of history, at the same time, it is also a continuous space, where unrecognized and potential elements have the same meaning as “real” elements. Therefore, he believes that in the existing and potential cultures, “transculture” contains richer connotations than all known cultures in general [7]. The author believes that it is from Mikhail Epstein that “transculture” emerged from the earliest “transculturation” and has its unique and rich connotation.

Specifically, Mikhail Epstein believes that “transculture” is not a new type of culture, but a cultural model, derived from the overall culture itself, with various components interacting organically [4]. Transculture first means the self-transformation of culture from theory to practice, liberating culture from its own repressive mechanism. Secondly, as it transcends the so-called natural and initial cultural boundaries, transculture appears as an open symbol selection system. “Transcultural practice” will not weaken or deny our cultural self, but will expand the boundaries of our race, profession, language and other identities, thereby achieving new uncertainty and “virtuality”. Finally, transculture is a metaparadigm, it is a cultural model and symbol system [8]. At the same time, it is also an integral part of itself. A series of cultures, classics, traditions, knowledge, and worldviews coexist dynamically due to the role of transculture, rather than linearly replacing and replacing them [9].

When Mikhail Epstein proposed Transculture, he also proposed “transculturalism”, mainly to distinguish it from “multiculturalism”. In his view, although “multiculturalism” advocates accepting and valuing differences, its ultimate is often its ignorance of differences: one is totalitarianism, which suppresses differences under the banner of pluralism, it is extreme tolerance for differences. So that the difference has lost the value of existence [7]. And “transculturalism” implies the meaning of transcending differences in many cultures and crossing cultural (man-made) boundaries, in order to appreciate the limitations and limitations of our own culture [10]. Therefore, he believes that in addition to globalization and multiculturalism, “transculture” is a new way out, and “transculturalism” can be used as a new policy to emphasize culture seeking complementarity in open communication and interaction, for individuals, it emphasizes adoption “transculturalism” perspective to achieve the effect of jumping out of any cultural (including country, race, gender ideology, etc.) framework (Epstein, 2009327-351)

In the 21st century, there has been increasing interest in transculturalism across Europe and the United States. Canadian scholar Donald Cuccioletta (1945-) cut from the political perspective of cultivating world citizens, and showed a similar attitude to Mikhail Epstein in his attitude towards “multiculturalism” and “transculturalism”. Donald Cuccioletta: It is necessary to distinguish between multiculturalism and social multiculturalism as a policy. Multiculturalism, as a Canadian policy, has not only failed to promote the integration of immigrants into Canadian society, but has instead created more boundaries between immigrants and locals. He regards social multiculturalism as “transculturalism”, which can help cultivate immigrants with multiple identities and even global citizens regardless of the cultural center-periphery premise. Therefore, as a political method to adapt to globalization, the government should shift from supporting multiculturalism to supporting “transculturalism” [11].

In addition, American sociologist Richard Slimbach (1956-) believes that “transculturalism” is rooted in the pursuit of cross-cultural and cross-border common interests and common values. Therefore, the “transcultural” era has come. Even if people do not go abroad, they have to be exposed to other cultures in terms of material, consumption, film and

entertainment. From a personal perspective, he proposed that every person in this era should have a "transcultural" attitude, as well as the corresponding ability and competitiveness, so that he can quickly adapt to different races, ethnicities, languages, religions, and ideology, social class, etc.[12].

With the expansion of the connotation of "transculturalism", some scholars have shown another context for its understanding. Australian scholar Jeff Lewis (1965-) put "transculturalism" in the framework of contemporary British cultural studies, linking it with the studies of Raymond Williams and the Birmingham School. Jeff Lewis understood "transculturalism" as a new theoretical model based on Richard Jossion's "culturalism" and expanded Gramsci and Foucault research. In short, he believes that "transculturalism" emphasizes the expression of contemporary cultural relations, cultural meaning construction, cultural power forms, and other issues in the discourse, moreover, "transculturalism" is always vigilant with its own discourse to prevent it from falling into the trap of discourse hegemony [13].

However, although "transculture" and its derivatives seem to be a new paradigm of cultural reflection that has attracted much attention from scholars, some scholars maintain a certain critical attitude towards it, on the contrary, this is exactly in line with the "transculturalism" advocated by Jeff Lewis. American scholar Richard A. Rogers believes that although "transculturation" strives to confirm the complexity behind cultural power and cultural invasion, this concept still originates from the model of "cultural rule and cultural subordination" [14].

### **3.2. The development background of "transculture" and its derivatives**

Comparing the understanding of "transculture" and its derivatives by Latin American scholars and Western scholars, we can find that the emphasis of the two is different. Although Western scholars have also learned about the history of its occurrence in Latin America after being exposed to this term, half a century has passed since Oriz proposed "transculturation" in the 1940s. Regardless of the contemporary situation in the West and Latin America. There are great differences in the Americas. The Western world in the 1990s was faced with different era problems, making their demands for "transculture" quite different from the original intentions put forward by Latin American scholars.

In the early 1990s, the disintegration of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War. It also meant that both capitalism as an institution and capitalism as ideology, at least on the surface, achieved a full victory. However, both the remaining socialist countries and the capitalist countries are facing their own development crises.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and some Eastern European countries are facing a huge ideological change. For example, Mikhail Epstein, the scholar mentioned above, went to the United States to teach after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, he summarized his experience in the Soviet Union and the United States as "transcultural experience". For transculture's proposal, if Mikhail Epstein is missing The experience of either side of the United States and the Soviet Union will never The high acceptance of different cultures sometimes comes from Is not interested, but the Soviet Union always tries to put different languages Into a single whole, therefore, Mikhail Epstein I hope "transculture" can transcend these two extreme dimensions. It also shows that "transculture" implies an ideology Beyond.

And in Western Europe, the United States, Canada and other countries, they have to face a series of uncertainties in the new international environment. Especially after the end of the

Cold War, a large number of immigrants from Eastern Europe flooded into Western developed countries and, to a large extent, changed the social structure of Western developed countries. In addition, an increasing influx of immigrants has clearly changed the ethnic composition of these western developed countries. Therefore, on the one hand, there is the problem of refugees and immigrants integrating into Western society and culture, on the other hand, there is also the problem of Western people accepting and tolerating other ethnic cultures. And I have to point out that in the culture of refugees and immigrants, one of the most sensitive issues of Western people is involved: Religion and race.

The contradiction between Christianity and Judaism, and the contradiction between Christianity and Islam, have always bred wars from ancient times to the present. However, it should be seen from behind the religious contradictions that it is the subtle connections behind different religions, not the conflicts between the creators of complete estrangement. Therefore, although religion is exclusive, there should be a space for peaceful coexistence between different religions and cultures where they care for each other because of their relationship. At present, European and American scholars have not projected the vision of “transculture” between different religions and cultures, but with globalization, the exchanges between peoples and soils of different religions have become more frequent, and the cultural exchanges of different religions can eventually transcend narrow religious wars. Get a better solution.

The most prominent problem of race is the marginalization of black culture. Modern western colonists crossed the Atlantic Ocean and even the Pacific Ocean, trading African blacks as commodities. Although the black people solved the problem of labor force in the west, promoted the prosperity and development of capitalism and even imperialism in the west, and sacrificed for the rich life of the western people, the white people in the West discriminated against and even hated the black culture, which in turn made the black people have certain cognitive barriers to their own culture and identity. Moreover, it should be admitted that in the past 20 years, there has not been a better solution to the problem of cultural integration of refugees and immigrants in the west, and we should be alert to the narrow nationalist tendency of returning to the tide in the face of globalization.

Whether it is ideological issues, religion, ethnicity, etc., in the context of globalization, they become more complicated. On the one hand, most people can see the positive effects of globalization. On the cultural level, cultural exchanges are becoming more and more frequent, which helps eliminate some misunderstandings caused by cultural barriers. But on the other hand, many people worry that globalization will make the form of culture develop in the same direction. More extreme, some weaker cultures are in danger of disappearing. Therefore, from multiculturalism’ to “cross-culturalism” and then to “transculturalism”, it actually implies Western people’s way of solving cultural communication problems, that is, in their attitude towards “the other”, only the attitude becomes more and more modest. Only by becoming more open and inclusive can we find better solutions.

Therefore, it is worth noting that whether in the construction of “transculturation” or “transculture” pedigree, the position of Western scholars is not exactly the same as that of Latin American scholars. Latin Americans always reflect in a dimension that concerns their own cultural identity, while European and American scholars think more in the dimension of how to face the culture of others. In the postmodernist trend of thought, some Western scholars have realized the limitations of Western centrism, so discourses such as “inter-subjectivity” and “otherness” have appeared. At the level, or at the practical level of cultural exchanges, good results have not been achieved. The terminology construction of

“transculture” and its derivatives is another effort they tried to break through their own thinking difficulties.

#### **4. The spread of the concept of “transculture” in Asia in the early 21st century**

Around the 21st century, terms such as “transculture” and its derivative words “transcultural” and “transculturality” entered Asia in the context of “cross-cultural”. The so-called “cross-cultural” actually implies at least two levels at the beginning: cross-cultural and intercultural. Cross-cultural studies (generally translated as Crosscultural Studies) in the West probably started in the 1950s. A number of research societies were established in different places, and periodicals on cross-cultural studies were established, and many universities were also set up. Research institute. In Asia, intercultural is used after cross-cultural. Some scholars sometimes confuse the two and use both in the context of “cross-cultural”.

After entering the 21st century, as transculture’ and co-derived words spread more and more internationally, a group of scholars studying foreign languages and cultures in Asia were the first to come into contact with them. “Transculture’ is generally compared with “cross-culture’ and “interculture’, and these three words are generally translated as “cross-cultural”. However, the prefixes of the three are different, which in fact represent three subtle differences in culture. The prefix “trans-” is different from “cross’ “Inter-’and has a more complicated meaning.

“Cross” itself is a word from the Latin “cruc”, which refers to the Christian cross. As an adjective, it has the meaning of “crossing” and “opposite”, as a prefix, it implies the meanings of “horizontal” and “intersecting”. “Inter-” comes from the Latin synonymous prefix, which has the meaning of being in, “interval”, and “connecting with...”, implying the meaning of coexisting with other things, interacting with each other and maintaining a distance.

The prefix “trans-” also comes from Latin. With different contexts, “trans-” shows different meanings: it has the meaning of “cross”, such as “transept”. it also has “pass over”. It means to pass and exceed, such as “transgress”: “go beyond” means “transcend”, and “bring over” means transformation, such as “transform”. even “fulfill” means fulfillment and satisfaction, Such as “transfigure”.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Through the above analysis, we can see that Latin America, Europe, America and Asia have certain uniqueness in their understanding of “transculture” and its derivatives, which is actually due to the different contexts contained in different times and regions. On the other hand, through the study of “transculture” and its derivatives, we can also understand the urgent demands behind it. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the future development trend by comparing the pedigrees of “transculture” in three time and space.

Used by Latin American scholars, the term “transculturation” tends to describe the long and intense process of cultural fusion, that is, the difficult transgression or transition after the leaping involved in “trans-”, and it also emphasizes the transformation brought by cultural fusion. The result of the two-way profit and loss is the negative effect of the realization and surpassing behind the “trans-”. More importantly, they all agree with “Ortiz’s” point of view that transculturation did not start when the Spanish whites invaded South America, but has existed since the handover of the New Paleolithic. It can be seen that the “transculturation” they agree with is not only historical, but also continuous, and even more dynamic. This is because for them, transculturation is a neutral term that summarizes the history of intricate



cultural fusion. The term itself is only an objective statement of the changes between cultural communicators and cultural recipients, without making a value judgment on the process of cultural integration. Of course, in the process of “transculturation”, it will definitely have a good or bad influence on the original culture and foreign culture. They did not try to hide this fact.

Latin American scholars’ understanding of “transculturation-”words has not yet risen to the level of ideology. However, European and American scholars’ understanding of “transculture” and its derivative words “acculturation” and “transculturalism” is more inclined to construct them as a method of cultural communication and a complete set of theories. Although different scholars have different perspectives, they all form their own systems. For example, Mikhail Epstein has published several monographs on the subject of “transculture”: rising stars such as “Jef Lewis” have taken a different approach and put “transculturalism” in the pedigree of British cultural studies, so that they can assume the responsibility of cultural studies. More obviously, the two words “transcultural” and “transculturation” have been included in the latest dictionaries due to the tendency of Western scholars to learn physics and chemistry.

In addition, European and American scholars’ understanding of “transculture” and its derivatives tends to be commendatory, and they have hopes for cultural exchanges. No matter from the perspective of ideology, or from the perspectives of politics and cultural studies, scholars generally emphasize the positive role of “transculture” and its derivatives in the cultural exchanges of individuals, and generally believe that “transculture” and “transculturalism” have more advantages than before. The cultural strategy must have excellent potential.

It can be said that the genealogical development of “transcultural” itself has a strong “transculture” atmosphere, because it is fully developed in the spread of different regions. Although the pedigree of “transculture” has been expanded mainly in the hands of scholars in Europe and the United States, and the academic circles at home and abroad also agree with their concepts, this does not mean that the pedigree of transculture has been completed, compared to transculture’s own requirements for transcendence and transformation. This is actually just the beginning of the “transculture” lineage. In the author’s opinion, the reason why the prefix “trans-” is more advanced than “multi”, “cross-” and Inter-” in contemporary times is not only that it is broader than diversification, more subtle than spanning, and more advanced than interaction. Intimacy is also necessary, but because it has an unfinished meaning in itself. Therefore, as long as the genealogy of “transculture” no longer falls into the shadow of the power of discourse, they can always maintain vigorous vitality and realize their original intention.

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