

Christian Huck & Stefan Bauernschmidt, eds. (2012), *Travelling Goods, Travelling Moods. Varieties of Cultural Appropriation (1850-1950)*, Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 261 pp., € 34.90, ISBN 978-3-593-39762-7.

Readers of Christian Huck and Stefan Bauernschmidt's collection *Travelling Goods, Travelling Moods. Varieties of Cultural Appropriation (1850-1950)* are instantly made aware of the significance of the topic in the preface: "We wake up in Swedish beds and Bangladeshi pajamas, shave using American razors and put on French perfume [...]" (9). Not only are we faced with the effects of globalisation and the seemingly borderless routes of objects but also with our potential ignorance about the origin of the products we use in everyday life. The collection proposes to answer why origin and destination not only matter economically but also culturally: "things", Bauernschmidt and Huck emphasise, "are nothing without a context, and by their association with context they are attuned to a certain mood, a certain disposition. When we encounter goods we cannot but react to these moods" (10). The editors divide their volume into three sections focussed on three main goods, "food, books and machines" (10), explaining that "[t]hese represent anthropological necessities (*food*), key cultural products (*books*) and technologies central to modern civilizations (*machines*)" (10). One big advantage of this structure is that it offers a sufficient overview of the subtleties of cultural appropriation and may well "inspire [...] [readers] to scrutinize processes of cultural appropriation from a multiplicity of angles" (10-11).

In her introduction to the first section, Doris Feldmann highlights the close relationship between identity and food (39). This is definitely borne out by the three studies and it becomes apparent that a successful integration might rely on whether or not the product is accompanied by migrants of the same cultural origin. The chapters offer historical approaches to the cultural appropriation of food. While they do not necessarily stand out in their variation of methodology, they supply ample insight into the necessities of successful cultural appropriation by contrasting it with an unsuccessful example, namely the attempt to introduce British fish and chips to Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. In this article, Ole Sparenberg shows that despite huge marketing investments, Germans were not enticed to consume fried fish. Sparenberg concludes that the *Fischbratküchen* "had little to offer in the way of atmosphere or exotic allure" (72) – unlike the Italian restaurants that provided Germans with the coveted associations of an Italian lifestyle (71).

Sonja Weishaupt elaborates on what it took for Chinese food to reach American households by analysing "food articles published in newspapers and magazines, and [...] Chinese cookbooks published for an English speaking market" (45). Margrit Schulte Beerbühl focuses on the

success of German sausages in Great Britain by investigating the documentation of the migrant lives of German butchers. Both articles emphasise that the goods fulfilled certain needs and desires. In the case of Chinese food, it was the attractive exoticness (47), low cost and healthy ingredients that appealed to the growing nutritional awareness (49). The appropriation also meant that Chinese recipes were adapted to their new cultural context by including local ingredients (54). The German sausages were adapted to the customers' "taste preferences" (90) and were considered to be an ideal alternative to fresh meat (89). They also profited from a good reputation, at least up until World War I (90).

In the second section, Susanne Scholz introduces books as a "special type of good" (99) because they are "[a]t once material objects and containers of meaning [...]" (99). Books are considered to be "literary capital" (100) and the intrinsic complexity of their economic and cultural value (101) is well reflected in the different perspectives on travelling texts in the following articles. Christian Huck's discussion of the dime novel and its journey to Germany highlights the mechanisms behind the cultural appropriation of a literary genre. This analysis should prove highly valuable to other researchers of cultural appropriation as it offers tools such as the "sociological model of gatekeeping" (105) that, as he convincingly claims, "could be useful in analyzing the transcultural appropriation of [other] foreign goods" (105). With the help of the gatekeeper-model, Huck draws up the contradicting forces of publishers (who want to sell the dime novel) and moral agents such as the press or teachers (who deem their content "inappropriate", 119). The focus on gatekeepers emphasises the role of agents and mediators in the process of cultural appropriation, something which is relevant to all of the chapters in this collection. Another major insight that emerges from this article (and which is not necessarily brought to the fore by others in the collection) is that the selection of goods (and their value for a particular cultural context) happens at a professional level by a relatively small group of mediators and not necessarily on the collective level of the masses. Huck states: "Long before individual consumers appropriate goods to fit their household needs, a cultural appropriation has taken place; the consumers, however, are the ones who decide whether the process of appropriation will be a success" (107).

The extent to which 'consumers' influence cultural appropriation is also analysed in Olivia Anne M. Habana's study of American schoolbooks that were used to impose American ideologies on Filipino children in the early twentieth century. This study is straightforward and less original than others but may serve as a prime example of how ideologies are transformed in the process of their application to a colonial context. In Frederike Felcht's study of Hans Christian Andersen's literature and its

transnationalisation, agency becomes attributed to the text itself. Andersen's autobiographies, for instance, increased his popularity, thus supporting the success of the cultural appropriation of his fairy tales in other countries.

The last section is devoted to the appropriation of machines. Compared to books, machines may at first seem like objects with very little cultural baggage. However, Stefan Bauernschmidt theorises the interconnection between culture, or more precisely national identity, and cars by investigating the Germans' resistance to American Ford cars. The negative image of America in Weimar Germany was heavily influenced by visualisations in marketing that seemed to underline the "American threat" (169) Ford posed for the German market. The confrontation between American and European innovation in the car industry is also the focal point of Gijs Mom's detailed study on the development of ignition systems in cars and their effect on culture. This is by far the most complex but highly rewarding investigation of how a small technical element becomes fundamental in the development of car culture. Mom elaborates how the less reliable American system of battery ignition pushed the European magneto ignition from the market. This is shown to be a multifaceted process of cultural appropriation, or as Mom suggests, "domestication" (189). One of the major conclusions to be drawn from this contribution is that the automation and electronification of cars has led to an appropriation that requires less technological understanding and skill: "[c]ulture [...] was now built into the car's technology, attitude had become electronics and had 'hardened' to bits and pieces" (204).

Similar to Habana's study on schoolbooks mentioned earlier, the last essay by Patricia Irene Dacudao highlights a case in which the main focus is not the product that travels but a certain American work ethic that brought a "Western spirit of invention and experimentation" (215) to the wilderness of Davao in the Philippines at the beginning of the twentieth century. The invention of the *bagotan*, a "hemp stripping machine" (218), represents a joint process of transcultural appropriation, as the Filipinos and the Japanese participated in the drive of perfecting an ideal tool. Hence, they appropriated the American 'spirit' while adding their own values in the form of "communal cooperation" (209), which the use of the *bagotan* required.

All in all, *Travelling Goods, Travelling Moods* succeeds in its embedded discussion of theoretical aspects. Hans Peter Hahn's introduction to cultural appropriation at the beginning of the volume and Huck and Bauernschmidt's revisiting of this research tool at the end form a (mostly) sound basis and framework for the individual essays. However, while the editors have taken great care to define transcultural appropriation and its components, they fail to integrate the concept of mood. It would have

been helpful to situate this concept in relation to other (related) notions such as myth, atmosphere, anti-Americanism, or meanings and values. Apart from this point of criticism, the collection may be recommended for its great variety of perspectives on cultural appropriation. The most enriching contributions in terms of variation are the ones that focus on the less obvious interstices between "contact zones" (238) and surprise the reader with the huge cultural impact a small detail such as a car ignition can have. The collection's balance between theory and practical examples make it a useful handbook for anyone working on the transfer of cultural goods.

Daniela Keller (Basel)